

The Servant of Two Masters

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Translated by Edward Dent, Adapted by Carol Jordan

ACT I – SCENE I

(Pantalone's house. Silvio, Clarice, Pantalone, Doctor, Smeraldina, & Brighella are present)

Silvio: *(offering his hand to Clarice)* Beloved Clarice, here is my hand, and with it my heart.

Pantalone: *(to Clarice)* Come, don't be shy, give him your hand too. Then you'll be engaged, and soon you shall be married.

Clarice: Dear Silvio, here is my hand. I promise to be your wife.

Silvio: And I promise to be your husband. *(They take hands)*

Doctor: Well said. Now that is settled, and there's no going back on it.

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

Pantalone: *(to Brighella and Smeraldina)* You two shall be witnesses to this betrothal of my daughter Clarice to Signor Silvio, the worthy son of our good Doctor Lombardi!

Brighella: We will, sir, and I thank you for the honor.

Pantalone: Excellent! Let's have dinner together to celebrate! *(to Clarice and Silvio)* What do you say, children?

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

Smeraldina: *(aside)* Yes, that's the tastiest dish!

Doctor: My son is an honest young man; he loves your daughter and thinks of nothing else.

Pantalone: Truly we may say that this marriage was made in Heaven, for had it not been for the death of Federigo Rasponi, my business partner in Turin, he would have married my daughter instead.

Silvio: I consider myself fortunate, sir; I do not know if Clarice will say the same . . .

Clarice: You wrong me, dear Silvio. Don't you know how much I love you? I should have married Signor Rasponi in obedience to my father; but my heart has always been yours.

Doctor: Pray, sir, how did Federigo Rasponi die?

Pantalone: Poor wretch, he was killed one night in Turin on account of some affair with his sister. Someone ran a sword through him and that was the end of him.

Brighella: Alas, I am sorry to hear it.

Pantalone: *(to Brighella)* Did you know Signor Rasponi?

Brighella: Indeed, I did, sir. I spent three years in Turin. I knew his sister too—a fine high-spirited young woman—dressed like a man and rode on horseback. Who would have thought it?

Pantalone: Well, death waits for all of us. But come, no more talk of sad things. Brighella, prepare your finest dishes for us.

Brighella: With pleasure, sir. I'm sure you'll appreciate my talents in the -

Pantalone: *(A knock at the door)* Oh! Someone is knocking. Smeraldina, see who it is.

Smeraldina: Yes, sir. *(goes to the door)*

Clarice: *(wishing to leave with Silvio)* Father, may I beg your leave?

Pantalone: Wait. Let us hear who is there.

Smeraldina: Sir, there is a gentleman's servant who desires a word with you. He would tell me nothing. He says he'll only speak to the master.

Pantalone: Tell him to come in.

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

Clarice: May I go, father?

Pantalone: Where to?

Clarice: To, uhm – to my own room —

Pantalone: No, girl, no; you stay here. *(aside to Doctor)* These love-birds can't be left alone just yet.

Doctor: *(aside to Pantalone)* Prudence above all things!

(Smeraldina brings in Truffaldino)

Truffaldino: My most humble duty to the ladies and gentlemen. And a very fine company too, to be sure! Ve-ry fine, indeed!

Pantalone: Who are you, my good friend? What is your business?

Truffaldino: *(to Pantalone, pointing to Clarice)* Who is this fair lady?

Pantalone: That is my daughter.

Truffaldino: Delighted to hear it.

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

Truffaldino: I'm sorry to hear it. And who are you?

Smeraldina: I am her maid, sir.

Truffaldino: I congratulate her.

Pantalone: Come, sir. What do you want with me? Who are you? Who sent you here?

Truffaldino: Patience, patience, my good sir, take it easy. Three questions at once is too much for a poor man.

Pantalone: *(aside to Doctor)* I think the man's a fool.

Doctor: *(aside to Pantalone)* I think he's playing the fool.

Truffaldino: *(to Smeraldina)* Are you also getting married?

Smeraldina: Alas, no, sir.

Pantalone: Will you tell me who you are, or will you go about your business?

Truffaldino: If you only want to know who I am, I can tell you. I am the servant of my master.
(to Smeraldina) To go back to what I was saying—

Pantalone: But who is your master?

Truffaldino *(to Pantalone)* He is a gentleman who desires the honor of paying his respects to you. *(to Smeraldina)* We must have a talk about this marriage.

Pantalone: But who is this gentleman? What is his name?

Truffaldino: Oh, that's a long story. Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin, that's my master, and he sends his compliments, and he has come to see you, and he's down below, and he sends me to say that he would like to come up and he's waiting for an answer. Anything else, or will that do? *(All look surprised. To Smeraldina)* Let's begin again.

Pantalone: What the devil do you mean?

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

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

Truffaldino: Poor old gentleman! He must be deaf. (*Loudly*) My master is Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin.

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

Truffaldino: Dead?

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

Truffaldino: (*aside*) The devil! My master dead? Why, I left him alive downstairs! (*to Pantalone*) You really mean he is dead?

Pantalone: I tell you with absolute certainty, he is dead.

Doctor: It's the honest truth; he is dead; we can have no doubt about it.

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

Pantalone: Can I do nothing more for you?

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

Pantalone: What are we to make of this fellow? Is he knave or fool?

Doctor: Probably a little of both.

Brighella: I should say he's just a fool. He comes from Bergamo; I don't think he's a knave.

Smeraldina: He's not such a fool, either. (*aside*) I like that funny little fellow.

Pantalone: But what is this nightmare about Signor Federigo?

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

Silvio: If he is alive and here after all, he has come too late.

(*Re-enter Truffaldino.*)

Truffaldino: Gentlemen, I am surprised at you. Is that the way to treat a poor man? Is that the way you deceive strangers? Is that the behavior of a gentleman? I shall insist upon satisfaction.

Pantalone: What's the matter? What have we done to you?

Truffaldino: To go and tell me that Signor Federigo Rasponi was dead!

Pantalone: Well, what then?

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

Pantalone: Signor Federigo?

Truffaldino: Signor Federigo.

Pantalone: Rasponi?

Truffaldino: Rasponi.

Pantalone: Of Turin?

Truffaldino: Of Turin.

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

Truffaldino: The Devil take you there, sir! I tell you he's here, in the house, in the next room, bad luck to you.

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

Doctor: No, no, Signor Pantalone. Tell him to bring in this person he thinks is Federigo Rasponi. Let's see for ourselves.

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

Truffaldino: He may have been dead and risen from the dead, for all I know. That's no affair of mine. But he's alive now, sure enough, and you shall see him with your own eyes. I'll go and tell him to come. *(Angrily to Pantalone)* And it's time you learned how to behave properly to strangers, to gentlemen of my position, to honorable citizens of Bergamo. *(To Smeraldina)* My lady, we should chat again soon. *(Exit)*

Clarice: Silvio, I'm trembling.

Silvio: Have no fear; whatever happens you shall be mine.

Doctor: Now we shall discover the truth.

Pantalone: Some rogue, I dare say, come to tell me a pack of lies.

Brighella: Sir, as I told you before, I knew Signor Federigo; we shall see if it's him.

Smeraldina: *(aside)* That little fellow doesn't look like a liar. I wonder, now, if— *(To Pantalone)* By you good leave, sir.

(Exit. Enter Beatrice, dressed as a man.)

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

Pantalone: I beg your pardon. But, sir, who are you?

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

Pantalone: Extraordinary!

Brighella: *(aside)* What does this mean? This is not Federigo, but his sister Beatrice.

Pantalone: I rejoice to see you alive and in good health, after the bad news we had received about you. *(Aside to Doctor)* I tell you, I'm not convinced yet.

Beatrice: I know it was reported that I was killed in a duel, but, Heaven be praised, I was only wounded. Once I recovered, I came to meet you here Venice, according to our previous arrangement.

Pantalone: You seem honest, sir; but I have clear evidence that Signor Federigo is dead, and you will understand—that if you cannot give us proof of the contrary—

Beatrice: Your doubts are natural. Here are four letters from correspondents of yours whom you know personally as proof of my identity. You will recognize the signatures. *(Gives four letters to Pantalone who reads them to himself.)*

Clarice: Ah, Silvio, we are lost.

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

Beatrice: *(noticing Brighella, aside)* Heavens! Brighella! Why the devil is he here? If he betrays me— *(Aloud to Brighella)* Friend, I think I know you.

Brighella: Indeed yes, sir; do you not remember Brighella Cavicchio at Turin?

Beatrice: Ah yes, now I recognize you. *(Goes up to him)* And what are you doing in Venice, my good fellow? *(Aside to Brighella)* For the love of heaven do not betray me.

Brighella: *(aside to Beatrice)* Trust me. *(Aloud)* I keep an inn, sir, at your service.

Beatrice: Perfect! As I have the pleasure of your acquaintance, I shall come to lodge at your inn.

Brighella: You do me honor, sir. *(Aside)* Running contraband, I'm guessing.

Pantalone: I have read the letters. Certainly they present Signor Federigo Rasponi to me, and if you present them, I am bound to believe that you are—the person named therein.

Beatrice: If you are still in doubt, here is Master Brighella; he knows me and can assure you as to who I am.

Brighella: Of course, sir, I am happy to assure you.

Pantalone: Well, if that's so, then, dear Signor Federigo, I am delighted to see you and I beg your pardon for having doubted your word.

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

Pantalone: But of course he is.

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

Silvio: *(aside to Clarice)* Don't be frightened; you are mine and I will protect you.

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

Pantalone: That is my daughter Clarice.

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

Pantalone: Precisely, sir. *(aside)* Now I'm in a pretty mess.

Beatrice: *(to Clarice)* Madam, permit me to have the honor. *(Offers her hand)*

Clarice: *(stiffly)* Your most humble servant, sir.

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

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

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

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

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

Doctor: *(aside to Silvio)* Well said, my boy! Stand up for your rights!

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

Pantalone: My dear Signor Federigo, I had fully believed that you were dead, and so I had promised my daughter to Signor Silvio; but there is no harm done. You have arrived just in time. Clarice is yours, if you will have her. I will keep my word with you.

Silvio: But Signor Federigo will never consent to take a bride who has given her heart to another.

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

Silvio: Come, sir, you have arrived too late. Signora Clarice is to be my wife, and I will never yield her to you. Whoever tries to take Clarice from me will have to fight for her against this sword.

Doctor: *(aside)* That's the way, my boy!

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

Doctor: Sir, I must beg to inform you that you are too late. Signora Clarice is to marry my son. The law, the law, sir, is clear on this point.

(Exeunt Doctor and Silvio)

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

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

Pantalone: What, you minx! What did you say? *(Starts to run after her)*

Beatrice: Stay, Signor Pantalone; I am sorry for her and in the course of time I hope to win her favor. Meanwhile, let us go over our accounts together, for, as you know, that is one of the two reasons that have brought me to Venice.

Pantalone: Everything is in order. Your money is ready for you, and we will distribute it whenever you like.

Beatrice: I will call on you at a more convenient time. Now, if you will allow me, I will go with Brighella to settle some business.

Pantalone: If you need of anything, I am at your service.

Beatrice: Well, if you could advance me a little money, I should be greatly obliged; I did not bring much with me, for fear of being robbed on the way.

Pantalone: I am delighted to serve you; but the cashier is not here just now. The moment he comes I will send the money to your lodgings. Are you staying at my friend Brighella's?

Beatrice: Yes. But I will send my servant; he is very honest. You can trust him with anything.

Pantalone: Very well.

Beatrice: I thank you.

Pantalone: Farewell, sir. (*Exit*)

Brighella: May I ask, Signora Beatrice—?

Beatrice: Hush! For the love of Heaven, don't betray me. My poor brother is dead, killed in a duel with Florindo Aretusi. You remember, Florindo loved me, and my brother would not have it. They fought, Federigo fell, and Florindo fled from justice. I heard he was headed for Venice, so I put on my brother's clothes and followed him. Thanks to the letters of credit, which are my brother's, and thanks still more to you, Signor Pantalone takes me for Federigo. We are to make up our accounts; I shall draw the money, and then I shall be able to help Florindo too, if he needs it. Be my friend, dear Brighella, help me, please! You shall be generously rewarded.

Brighella: That's all very well, but I don't want to be responsible for Signor Pantalone paying you money in good faith and then finding he's been made a fool of.

Beatrice: Made a fool of? If my brother is dead, am I not his heir?

Brighella: True. Then why not say so?

Beatrice: If I do that, I can do nothing. Pantalone will begin treating me as if he were my guardian; then they will all worry about me and say my conduct is unbecoming and all that sort of thing. I want my liberty. Help me keep it. It will not last long.

Brighella: Well, you were always one for having your own way. I'll do my best for you.

Beatrice: Thank you. And now let us go to your inn.

Brighella: Where is your servant?

Beatrice: I told him to wait for me in the street.

Brighella: Where did you get hold of that idiot?

Beatrice: I picked him up on the journey. He seems a fool at times; but he isn't really a fool and I can rely on his loyalty.

Brighella: Yes, loyalty's a fine thing. Well, I am at your service. To think what love makes people do!

Beatrice: Oh, this is nothing. Love makes people do far worse than this.

Brighella: Well, you're off to a good start. If you go on this way, Lord knows what may come of it.

(Exeunt Beatrice and Brighella)

ACT I - SCENE II

(The street in front of Brighella's Inn. Truffaldino enters.)

Truffaldino: I'm starving! The clock struck twelve half an hour ago, and my belly struck two hours ago at least. If I only knew where we were going to stay! When they say we ought to serve our masters with love, they ought to tell the masters to make sure to feed their servants. Here's an inn. I've half a mind to go in and see if I could find something to eat; but what if my master comes looking for me? His own fault; he ought to know better. I'll go in—but, come to think of it, I haven't a cent. Oh poor Truffaldino! Rather than be a servant, devil take me, I'd—what indeed? There's no other work to be had.

(Enter Florindo in travelling dress with a Porter carrying a trunk on his shoulder)

Porter: I tell you, sir, I can go no farther; the weight's enough to kill me.

Florindo: Here is the sign of an inn. Can't you carry it a few more steps?

Porter: Help! The trunk is falling.

Florindo: You have no strength at all!

Truffaldino: Here's a chance for a tip. *(To Florindo)* Sir, can I do anything for you?

Florindo: Can you carry this trunk into the inn there?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir, let me take it, sir. See how I do it, sir. *(To the Porter)* You be off!
(Truffaldino lifts the trunk himself.)

Florindo: Well done!

Truffaldino: It weighs nothing. A mere trifle. *(Goes into the inn with the trunk)*

Florindo: *(To Porter)* There! You see. That's how it's done. *(turns to go)*

Porter: Please your honor—

Florindo: What do you want?

Porter: The money for helping you.

Florindo: How much am I to give you for a few measly steps?

Porter: I didn't count them. I want my pay. (*Holds out his hand*)

Florindo: There's twopence.

Porter: I want my pay. (*Still holding out his hand*)

Florindo: Lord, what obstinacy! Here's twopence more. (*Gives money*)

Porter: I want my pay.

Florindo: (*slaps his hand away*) Go and be hanged!

Porter: Thank you, sir, that's enough. (*Exit*)

Florindo: There's a humorous fellow! Well, let us go and see what the inn is like—

Re-enter Truffaldino.

Truffaldino: Sir, everything is ready for you.

Florindo: What's it like here?

Truffaldino: It's a very good place, sir. Good beds and a grand kitchen with a smell to it that is very comforting. You will be served like a king.

Florindo: What's your trade?

Truffaldino: Servant.

Florindo: Have you a master now?

Truffaldino: At the moment, I do . . . not.

Florindo: You are without a master?

Truffaldino: As you see, sir. I am without a master. (*Aside*) My master is not here, so I tell no lies.

Florindo: Will you be my servant?

Truffaldino: Why not? (*Aside*) If his terms are better.

Florindo: At any rate, for as long as I stay in Venice.

Truffaldino: Very good, sir. How much will you give me?

Florindo: How much do you want?

Truffaldino: I'll tell you: another master I had, who is here no more, he gave me a shilling a day plus expenses.

Florindo: Good, I will give you the same.

Truffaldino: You must give me a little more than that.

Florindo: How much more do you want?

Truffaldino: A halfpenny a day for snacks.

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

Truffaldino: If that's so, I'm your man, sir.

Florindo: But I should like to know a little more about you.

Truffaldino: If you want to know all about me, you go to Bergamo; anyone there will tell you who I am.

Florindo: Have you nobody in Venice who knows you?

Truffaldino: I only arrived this morning, sir.

Florindo: Well, well, I take you for an honest man. I will give you a trial.

Truffaldino: You give me a trial and you shall see.

Florindo: First of all, I am anxious to know if any mail has arrived. Go to the Post and ask if there are any letters from Turin for Florindo Aretusi; if there are, bring them to me at once. I shall wait for you.

Truffaldino: Meanwhile you will order dinner, sir?

Florindo: Yes, that's a good plan! I will order it. *(Aside)* He's a funny one, I like him. I'll give him a trial.

(Florindo goes into the inn)

Truffaldino: A halfpenny more a day, that's fifteen pence a month. It's not true that the other gentleman gave me a shilling; he gives me six pennies. Maybe six pennies make a shilling, but I'm not quite sure. And that gentleman from Turin is nowhere to be seen. While he's out, I shall go to the Post for my new gentleman.

(As he is going, Beatrice enters with Brighella and meets him)

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

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

Beatrice: And why are you waiting for me here, and not where I left you?

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

Beatrice: Well, go at once to the dock; fetch my trunk and take it to the inn of Master Brighella.

Brighella: There's my inn, you cannot mistake it.

Truffaldino: The devil! In that inn?

Beatrice: Oh, and you should also go to the Post and ask if there are any letters for me. Ask if there are letters for Federigo Rasponi and also for Beatrice Rasponi. That's my sister, so be sure to see if there are letters either for her or for me.

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

Beatrice: Be off with you to the Post and the dock. Fetch the letters and have the trunk brought to the inn; I shall be there.

(Exit Beatrice into the inn)

Truffaldino: Are you the innkeeper?

Brighella: Yes, I am. If you behave properly, I'll do right by you.

(Exit Brighella into the inn)

Truffaldino: There's luck! There are many that look in vain for a master, and I have found two. But what the devil am I to do? I can't wait on both of them. No? Why not? Wouldn't it be a fine thing to earn two sets of wages and eat and drink for two? It would be a fine thing indeed, if neither of them found out. And if they did? So what? If one fires me, I'll stay with the other. I swear I'll try it. Whatever happens I shall have done a remarkable thing. Here goes. Let's go to the Post for both of 'em.

(Enter Silvio and meets Truffaldino.)

Silvio: *(aside)* That is the servant of Federigo Rasponi. *(To Truffaldino)* My good man.

Truffaldino: Sir?

Silvio: Where is your master?

Truffaldino: My master? He's in that inn there.

Silvio: Go at once and tell your master that I wish to speak to him; if he is a man of honor let him come down; I wait for him.

Truffaldino: My dear sir—

Silvio: (*angrily*) Go at once.

Truffaldino: But I must tell you, my master—

Silvio: Don't talk back, or, by Heaven, I'll—

Truffaldino: But which one do you want?

Silvio: At once, I say, or I'll fight you too.

Truffaldino: (*aside*) Well, I don't know—I'll send the first one I can find.

(*Exit Truffaldino into the inn*)

Silvio: No, I will never suffer the presence of a rival. Federigo may have survived his last duel, but he won't be so lucky this time. Either he shall renounce all claims to Clarice, or he'll have to cross swords with me.

(*Enter Truffaldino with Florindo*)

Truffaldino: (*points out Silvio to Florindo*) There's the fire-eating gentleman, sir.

Florindo: I don't know him. What does he want with me?

Truffaldino: I don't know, sir. I'll go fetch the letters, sir! (*Aside*) Time to beat a hasty retreat!
(*Exit*)

Silvio: (*aside*) Federigo does not come?

Florindo: Sir, are you the gentleman who asked for me?

Silvio: I, sir? I don't even know you.

Florindo: But that servant who just left told me you were making threats and wanted to challenge me.

Silvio: He misunderstood. I said I wished to speak to his master.

Florindo: Very well, I am his master.

Silvio: You're his master?

Florindo: Certainly. He is in my service.

Silvio: Then I beg your pardon. Either your servant is exactly like another one I saw this morning, or he also waits on another person.

Florindo: You may set your mind at rest; he waits on me.

Silvio: If that is so, I apologize for disturbing you.

Florindo: No harm done.

Silvio: Are you a stranger here, sir?

Florindo: From Turin, sir, at your service.

Silvio: The man I hoped to challenge is also from Turin.

Florindo: Then perhaps I may know him; if he has given you offence, I shall gladly assist you to obtain just satisfaction.

Silvio: Do you know one Federigo Rasponi?

Florindo: Ah! I knew him only too well.

Silvio: He makes claim, on the strength of her father's word, to the lady who this morning swore to be my wife.

Florindo: My good friend, Federigo Rasponi cannot take your wife away from you. He is dead.

Silvio: Yes, we all believed that he was dead; but this morning to my disgust he arrived in Venice safe and sound.

Florindo: Sir, you petrify me.

Silvio: No wonder! I was petrified myself.

Florindo: I assure you Federigo Rasponi is dead.

Silvio: I assure you that Federigo Rasponi is alive.

Florindo: Take care you are not deceived.

Silvio: Signor Pantalone, the young lady's father, is in possession of incontestable proofs that he is here in person.

Florindo: (*aside*) Then he was not killed in the duel?

Silvio: I am surprised that you have not seen him. He was to lodge at this very inn.

Florindo: I have not seen him. They told me that there was no one else at all staying here.

Silvio: He must have changed his mind. Forgive me, sir, if I have troubled you. If you see him, tell him, that for his own welfare he must abandon this marriage. Silvio Lombardi is my name; I am your most obedient servant, sir.

Florindo: I shall be greatly pleased to have the honor of your friendship. *(Aside)* I am confounded.

Silvio: May I ask your name, sir?

Florindo: *(aside)* I must not reveal myself. *(To Silvio)* Your servant, sir, Orazio Ardeni.

Silvio: Signor Orazio, I am yours to command. *(Exit)*

Florindo: I was told he died on the spot. Yet I fled so quickly when accused of the crime that I had no chance of finding out the truth. Then, since he is not dead, it will be better for me to go back to Turin and console my beloved Beatrice, who is perhaps suffering due to my absence.

(Enter Truffaldino, with another Porter who carries Beatrice's trunk. Truffaldino comes forward a few steps, sees Florindo and fearing to be seen himself, makes the Porter retire.)

Truffaldino: Come along. This way—The devil! There's my other master. Go back, friend, and wait for me around the corner.

(Exit Porter)

Florindo: *(continuing to himself)* Yes, without delay. I will go back to Turin.

Truffaldino: Here I am, sir.

Florindo: Truffaldino, will you come to Turin with me?

Truffaldino: When?

Florindo: Now; at once.

Truffaldino: Before dinner?

Florindo: No, we will have dinner, and then we will go.

Truffaldino: Very good, sir. I'll think about it over dinner.

Florindo: Have you been to the Post?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir.

Florindo: Have you brought any letters?

Truffaldino: I have, sir.

Florindo: Where are they?

Truffaldino: I will give them to you, sir. (*Takes three letters out of his pocket. Aside.*) The devil! I have mixed up one master's letters with the other's. How shall I find out which are his? I can't read!

Florindo: Come, give me my letters.

Truffaldino: Directly, sir. (*aside*) What a muddle! (*to Florindo*) I must tell you, sir; these three letters are not all for your honor. I met another servant, who knows me; we were in service together at Bergamo; I told him I was going to the Post, and he asked me to see whether there was anything for his master. I think there was one letter, but I don't know which of them it was.

Florindo: Let me see; I will take mine and give you the other back.

Truffaldino: There, sir; I only wanted to help out my friend.

Florindo: (*aside*) What is this? A letter addressed to Beatrice Rasponi? To Beatrice Rasponi at Venice?

Truffaldino: Did you find the one that belongs to my friend?

Florindo: Who is this friend of yours?

Truffaldino: He is a servant—his name is Pasquale -

Florindo: Who does he wait upon?

Truffaldino: I do not know, sir.

Florindo: But if he told you to fetch his master's letters, he must have told you his name.

Truffaldino: Of course he did. (*Aside*) The muddle's getting thicker.

Florindo: Well, what name did he tell you?

Truffaldino: He wrote it on a slip of paper.

Florindo: And where is the paper?

Truffaldino: I left it at the Post.

Florindo: Where does this fellow Pasquale live?

Truffaldino: Indeed, sir, I haven't the slightest idea.

Florindo: How will you be able to give him the letter?

Truffaldino: He said he would meet me in the Piazza.

Florindo: (*aside*) I don't know what to make of it.

Truffaldino: (*aside*) If I survive this, it'll be a miracle. (*To Florindo*) Please give me the letter, sir, and I shall find him somewhere.

Florindo: No; I mean to open this letter.

Truffaldino: Oh, sir, do not do that, sir. It's wrong to open other people's letters.

Florindo: This letter is addressed to a person I have a connection to. I can open it without scruple. (*Opens letter*)

Truffaldino: As you will, sir.

Florindo: (*reads*) Madam, your departure from this city has given rise to much talk, and all believe that you have gone to join Signor Florindo. The Court of Justice has discovered that you have fled in man's dress and intends to have you arrested. If I hear any more news, I will forward it to you in Venice. Your most humble servant, Antonio.

Truffaldino: That's a nice way to behave! Reading other people's letters!

Florindo: (*aside*) What is all this? Beatrice has left home? Dressed like a man? To join me? Indeed she loves me! Heaven grant I may find her in Venice. (*To Truffaldino*) Here, my good Truffaldino, go and do all you can to find Pasquale; find out who his master is, and if he is a man or woman. If you can, bring them here to me, and you shall be handsomely rewarded.

Truffaldino: Give me the letter; I will try to find him.

Florindo: There it is. I count upon you. This matter is of infinite importance to me.

Truffaldino: But am I to give him the letter open like this?

Florindo: Tell him it was a mistake. Don't make difficulties.

Truffaldino: And are you going to Turin now?

Florindo: No, not any more. Lose no time. Go and find Pasquale. (*Aside*) Beatrice in Venice, Federigo in Venice! If her brother finds her, he'll kill her! I will do all I can to discover her first. (*Exit*)

Truffaldino: I'm glad he's not leaving. I want to see how my two jobs will work out. This letter, though, for my other master—I can't give it to him opened. I must try to seal it again. If I only knew how to do it! My grandmother sometimes sealed letters with chewed bread. I'll try it. (*Takes a piece of bread out of his pocket*) It's a pity to waste this little piece of bread, but

something must be done. *(Chews a little bread to seal the letter and accidentally swallows it.)*
 The devil! It has gone down. I must chew another bit. *(Same business.)* No good; nature rebels.
 I'll try once more. *(Chews again; would like to swallow the bread, but restrains himself and with great difficulty removes the bread from his mouth.)* Ah, here it is; I'll seal the letter. *(Seals the letter with the bread)* I think that looks quite well. Lord! I had forgotten the porter. *(Calls off)*
 Friend, bring the trunk here.

(Re-enter Porter.)

Porter: Here I am; where do you want it?

(Beatrice comes out of the inn)

Beatrice: Is this my trunk?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir.

Beatrice: *(to Porter)* Carry it into my room.

Porter: But where is your room –

Beatrice: Go!

Porter: But my fee –

Beatrice: Be gone! *(to Truffaldino)* Have you been to the Post?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir.

Beatrice: Any letters for me?

Truffaldino: One for your sister. *(Gives her the letter)*

Beatrice: This letter has been opened.

Truffaldino: Opened? No! Impossible!

Beatrice: Yes, opened, and then sealed with bread.

Truffaldino: I can't think how that could have happened.

Beatrice: You can't think, huh? Rascal, who opened this letter? I must know.

Truffaldino: Sir, I'll tell you, I'll confess the truth. At the Post there was a letter for me; I can't read very much, and by mistake, instead of opening my letter, I opened yours. I ask your pardon

Beatrice: If that was all, there's no great harm done.

Truffaldino: It's true, on the word of a poor man.

Beatrice: Have you read this letter?

Truffaldino: Not a word. I can't read the handwriting.

Beatrice: Has anyone else seen it?

Truffaldino: *(with an air of great indignation)* Oh!

Beatrice: Take care now—

Truffaldino: *(same business)* Sir!

Beatrice: *(aside)* I hope he is not deceiving me. *(Reads to herself)* Antonio is a faithful servant and I am obliged to him. *(To Truffaldino)* Listen; I have some business to attend to. You go unpack my things *(hands him a key to her trunk)*. When I come back, we will have dinner. *(Aside)* I have seen nothing of Signor Pantalone, and I am anxious to get my money. *(Exit)*

Truffaldino: Well, that all went well! I think a great deal more of myself than I did before.

(Enter Pantalone.)

Pantalone: Tell me, my good man, is your master in the house?

Truffaldino: No, sir, he is not there.

Pantalone: As soon as he comes home give him this purse with the money he requested. I cannot stay as I have business elsewhere. Good day to you. *(Exit)*

Truffaldino: And a good day to you, sir! He never even told me to which of my masters I was to give it to.

(Enter Florindo.)

Florindo: Well, did you find Pasquale?

Truffaldino: No, sir, I did not find Pasquale, but I found a gentleman who gave me a purse with money in it.

Florindo: A purse? What for?

Truffaldino: Tell me truly, sir, were you expecting money from anyone?

Florindo: Yes; I had presented a letter of credit to a merchant.

Truffaldino: Then this should be yours.

Florindo: What did he say when he gave it to you?

Truffaldino: He told me to give it to my master.

Florindo: Then of course it is mine. Am I not your master?

Truffaldino: *(aside)* Yes, but what about the other one?

Florindo: You won't forget Pasquale?

Truffaldino: I'll find him after dinner.

Florindo: Then let us go and order our meal. *(Goes into the inn.)*

Truffaldino: *(aside)* Food at last! Lucky I made no mistakes this time and gave the purse to the right one! *(Goes into the inn.)*

ACT I - SCENE III

(Pantalone's house. Pantalone and Clarice are talking)

Pantalone: I want no more objections – Signor Federigo is to be your husband. I have given my word and I can't go back on it.

Clarice: Father, I beseech you, this is tyranny.

Pantalone: When Signor Federigo first asked for your hand, you did not object.

Clarice: My fear of you, sir, and my respect, made me stay quiet.

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

Clarice: Nothing shall induce me to marry Federigo.

Pantalone: You dislike him so much?

Clarice: He is odious in my eyes.

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

Clarice: Silvio is too firmly embedded in my heart; and your own approval, sir, has rooted him there more deeply.

(Enter Smeraldina.)

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

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

Clarice: Alas! What torture!

Smeraldina: Why are you upset, Madam? Have you not noticed how handsome Signor Federigo is? If I had such luck, I would jump up and down for joy.

(Exit Smeraldina)

Pantalone: There, there, my child; you must not be seen like this.

Clarice: But my heart is breaking!

(Enter Beatrice in man's dress.)

Beatrice: My respects to Signor Pantalone.

Pantalone: Your servant, sir. Did you receive a purse I left for you?

Beatrice: No.

Pantalone: But I gave it to your servant just now. You told me he was trustworthy.

Beatrice: Yes, indeed; there is no danger. He will give me the money when I get back to the inn.
(Aside to Pantalone) What ails Signora Clarice?

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

Beatrice: *(to Pantalone)* Do me a favor, Signor Pantalone, and leave me alone with her a moment. I may be able to relieve her sorrow.

Pantalone: With pleasure, sir. My child, you must entertain your future husband for a bit. *(Softly to Clarice)* Be careful. *(Exit)*

Beatrice: Signora Clarice, I beg you—

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

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

Clarice: I shall abhor you for all eternity.

Beatrice: If you knew me, you would not say so.

Clarice: I know you're the destroyer of my happiness.

Beatrice: But I have the means of comforting you.

Clarice: There is no one but Silvio who can comfort me.

Beatrice: It's true, I cannot give you the same comfort as Silvio might, but I can at least contribute to your happiness. I have a secret to tell you.

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

Beatrice: You deprive me of the means to make you happy.

Clarice: You can never make me anything but miserable.

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

Clarice: Ah, I fear you would deceive me.

Beatrice: No, madam, I speak in all sincerity and if you will now promise me that discretion which you just refused me, I will tell you a secret which will put your mind at ease.

Clarice: I vow I will observe the strictest silence.

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

Clarice: What! You are a woman?

Beatrice: I am indeed.

Clarice: Then where is your brother?

Beatrice: He did indeed die in a duel, killed by the man I love when he opposed our marriage. It is this man I am seeking now in these clothes. I beseech you by all the holy laws of friendship and of love to not betray me.

Clarice: Won't you let me tell Silvio?

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

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

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

Clarice: I will be your friend indeed, and help you in any way I can.

Beatrice: I too swear eternal friendship. Let us embrace and promise to aid each other in the pursuit of love.

(They embrace. Enter Pantalone.)

Pantalone: Well done, well done; I congratulate you. *(To Clarice)* My child, you have adapted yourself quite quickly.

Beatrice: Did I not tell you, Signor Pantalone, that I would win her over?

Pantalone: Magnificent! You have done more in four minutes than I could have done in four years. We must have the wedding at once!

Clarice: *(aside)* This is worse than before. *(to Pantalone)* Do not too hasty, father.

Pantalone: What? In each other's arms but make no haste about it? No, no, I don't want any trouble. You shall be married tomorrow!

Beatrice: Signor Pantalone, we should first arrange the settlement and sort out our accounts –

Pantalone: We can do that today.

Clarice: Sir, I beseech you—

Pantalone: Madam, I am going straight away to tell Signor Silvio.

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

Pantalone: What? Do you want two husbands?

Clarice: Not exactly—but—

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

Beatrice: *(to Pantalone)* Listen, sir—

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

Clarice: But father –

Pantalone: We'll talk about it tonight. *(Exit)*

Clarice: Oh, Signora Beatrice, this is worse than before!

ACT II – SCENE I

(In front of Pantalone's house. Silvio is trying to get away from his father)

Silvio: Father, let go of me.

Doctor: Stay, answer me.

Silvio: I am beside myself.

Doctor: What are you doing at Signor Pantalone's house?

Silvio: He should either keep his word that he has given me, or that he will pay for this intolerable insult.

Doctor: But you cannot fight here. Leave it to me, my dear boy; let me meet with him – maybe I can talk some sense into him and ensure he keeps his promise. Go away and don't make a scene.

Silvio: But father, I—

Doctor: Son, listen to me.

Silvio: I'll obey for now, but if Signor Pantalone persists, he will have to deal with me. *(Exit)*

Doctor: Poor boy, I am sorry for him. Signor Pantalone ought never to have led him on if he were not certain that the fellow from Turin was dead.

(Enter Pantalone)

Doctor: Oh Signor Pantalone, your servant.

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

Doctor: Indeed? Good! I assume you were coming to assure us that your daughter is to be Silvio's wife.

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

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

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

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

Pantalone: You can hardly talk of an affront, when a previous contract—

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

Pantalone: Very true, but—

Doctor: And as you know, in matrimonial cases, a girl's wishes must not be sacrificed.

Pantalone: Have you finished?

Doctor: I have finished.

Pantalone: May I speak?

Doctor: You may.

Pantalone: My dear Doctor, with all your learning—

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

Pantalone: Will you let me speak?

Doctor: With pleasure.

Pantalone: I must tell you; I have the greatest respect for your knowledge of the law, but in this case it does not apply.

Doctor: So you mean to tell me that the other marriage is to take place?

Pantalone: For my part I have given my word and I cannot go back on it. My daughter is content; what impediment can there be? I am extremely sorry, but I see no help for it.

Doctor: I am not surprised at your daughter's behavior. But I am surprised at yours, sir, at your treating me in this disgraceful way. The marriage which was contracted this morning between Signora Clarice and my son cannot be dissolved by a mere word given by you to another party. Signor Pantalone, you have done me an injury, you have done my son an injury, you have done the house of Lombardi an injury, and the time will come when you will have to pay for it! *(Exit)*

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

(Enter Silvio)

Silvio: *(aside)* So much for talking to him!

Pantalone: *(seeing Silvio, aside)* Here comes the other.

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

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

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

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

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

Pantalone: Yes, sir, settled and concluded.

Silvio: I am amazed you have the nerve to tell me so. You are a liar and cheat.

Pantalone: Is that how you speak to a man of my age?

Silvio: I don't care how old you are; I have a mind to run you through with my sword.

Pantalone: You are a most impertinent young man.

Silvio: I swear to Heaven— *(Lays his hand to his sword)*

Pantalone: Help! Murder!

(Enter Beatrice with a drawn sword.)

Beatrice: *(To Pantalone)* I will defend you.

Pantalone: My dear son-in-law, I thank you.

Silvio: *(to Beatrice)* You are just the man I want to fight.

Pantalone: *(frightened)* Be careful –

Beatrice: It is not the first time that I have been in danger. *(points sword at Silvio)*

Pantalone: Help! Help!

(Pantalone runs away. Beatrice and Silvio fight. Silvio falls and drops his sword. Beatrice holds her point to his heart. Enter Clarice)

Clarice: *(to Beatrice)* Stop, stop!

Beatrice: Fair Clarice, at your request I give Silvio his life, and in consideration of my mercy, I beg you to remember your oath. *(Exit)*

Clarice: Dear Silvio, are you hurt?

Silvio: Dear Silvio! Faithless deceiver!

Clarice: No, Silvio, I love you, I adore you, I am indeed faithful.

Silvio: Lying jade! Faithful to me? You call that fidelity, to swear love to another?

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

Silvio: I heard him say just now you gave your oath.

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

Silvio: Then what did you swear?

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

Silvio: Why not?

Clarice: Because I am sworn to silence.

Silvio: And to whom have you sworn this silence?

Clarice: To Federigo.

Silvio: And you tell me you do not love him? Cruel deceiver, begone from my sight!

Clarice: If I did not love you, I would not have run here to save your life.

Silvio: Then I hate my life, if I must owe it to someone so ungrateful.

Clarice: I love you with all my heart.

Silvio: I abhor you with all my soul.

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

Silvio: I would sooner see you dead than married to another.

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

Silvio: Yes, that sword should avenge my wrongs.

Clarice: Then you want me dead? *(holds the sword to her throat)*

(Enter Smeraldina)

Smeraldina: Stop, stop! What on earth are you doing? *(Takes the sword away from Clarice, turns to Silvio)* And you, you dog, you would just watch her die? You're a charming fellow, that expects ladies to cut their throats for you! *(To Clarice)* Let this murderer go to the devil; and you come along with me. There's no shortage of men; I'll find you a dozen more before evening.

(She throws down the sword, Silvio picks it up)

Clarice: Ungrateful! Can it be that my death would not cost you a single sigh? But I shall die, a slow, slow death from grieving. And one day you will know that I was innocent, and then, when it is too late, you will weep for me and for your own barbarous cruelty. *(Exit)*

Smeraldina: I don't understand you. Here's a girl about to kill herself, and you stand there like you were watching a play on a stage.

Silvio: Nonsense! Do you think she really meant to hurt herself?

Smeraldina: How should I know? If I hadn't arrived in time, she might have been gone, poor thing.

Silvio: The blade was nowhere near her!

Smeraldina: Did you ever hear such a lie?

Silvio: You women always invent things.

Smeraldina: We would indeed, if we were like you. They say women are unfaithful, but men can cheat and break their vows with no consequences whatsoever. We get all the blame, and you all do as you please. Do you know why? Because it's men who make the laws. If the women had made them, you'd all be locked away. *(Exit)*

Silvio: Clarice faithless! Clarice a traitor! I will have my revenge. Federigo shall die, and my ungrateful Clarice shall see his corpse at her feet. *(Exit)*

ACT II - SCENE II

(Truffaldino is in a room at the inn)

Truffaldino: Just my luck! Two masters, and neither of them comes home for dinner. It's two o'clock, and not one to be seen. I'm sure they'll both come at the same time, and I'll be in a mess; I won't be able to wait on both together, and the whole thing will be found out. Wait, here comes one. Thank God!

(Enter Florindo)

Florindo: Well, did you find that fellow Pasquale?

Truffaldino: Didn't we say, sir, that I was to look for him after dinner?

Florindo: I am impatient to see him.

Truffaldino: You should have come to dinner a little sooner.

Florindo: *(aside)* I need to know if Beatrice is here. I shall go to the Post; perhaps I shall find out something. *(to Truffaldino)* I have an errand to run.

Truffaldino: You told me to order dinner, and then you want to go out? The food will be ruined.

Florindo: I'm not hungry.

Truffaldino: You know, sir, in Venice you must eat; if you do not, you will fall sick.

Florindo: I must go; I have important business. If I come back to dinner, well and good; if not, I shall eat in the evening. You can get yourself some food, if you like.

Truffaldino: Very good, sir; just as you please, sir; you're the master, sir.

Florindo: This money is heavy; here, put it in my trunk. There is the key.

(Gives Truffaldino the purse and his key)

Truffaldino: Certainly, sir.

Florindo: If I don't come back for dinner, come to the Piazza; I can't rest till you've found Pasquale. *(Exit)*

Truffaldino: Well, at least he said I could get myself some food. I'll just put away this purse, and then—

(Enter Beatrice)

Beatrice: Oh, Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: *(aside)* The devil!

Beatrice: Did Signor Pantalone dei Bisognosi give you a purse full of coins?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir, he did indeed sir.

Beatrice: Then why did you not give it to me?

Truffaldino: Was it meant for your honor?

Beatrice: Was it meant for me? What did he say when he gave you the purse?

Truffaldino: He told me I was to give it to my master.

Beatrice: Well, and who is your master?

Truffaldino: Your honor.

Beatrice: Then why do you ask if the purse is mine?

Truffaldino: Then it will be yours.

Beatrice: Where is it?

Truffaldino: Here, sir. *(Gives Beatrice the purse. Aside)* I made a mistake over the purse; but that puts it straight. I wonder what the other gentleman will say? Oh well, if the money wasn't his, what can he do?

Beatrice: Is the landlord in?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir.

Beatrice: Tell him I shall have a friend to dinner with me, and he must get it ready as soon as ever he can.

Truffaldino: What do you want for dinner, sir? How many dishes?

Beatrice: Oh, something simple is fine. Tell him to give us three or four dishes.

Truffaldino: You leave it all to me, sir?

Beatrice: Yes. I am going to fetch the gentleman; see that it's ready by the time we get back.

Truffaldino: You shall see how we serve you here.

Beatrice: Look! Take this paper; put it in my trunk. Be careful with it; It's a bill of exchange for four thousand crowns.

Truffaldino: I'll put it away at once!

Beatrice: See that everything is ready. (*Exits*)

Truffaldino: Now's the time to do myself proud. I'll show him I am a man of good taste. I'll just put away this paper and then—no, I'll put it away afterwards, I must not waste time. (*Shouting offstage*) Master Brighella!

(*Enter Brighella*)

Brighella: What is it, Signor Truffaldino? What can I do for you?

Truffaldino: My master will have a gentleman to dine with him. They will need a good dinner, prepared quickly. Can you do that?

Brighella: For two people, we can do two courses. How many dishes do you want?

Truffaldino: He said three or four dishes—better make it six to eight. Don't want anyone to go hungry. What can you give us?

Brighella: For the first course I can give you soup, something fried, something boiled, and a ragout.

Truffaldino: Very well, that will do for the first course; now the second.

Brighella: For the second course, a roast, a salad, a meat pie and a pudding.

Truffaldino: What's a "pudding"?

Brighella: It's an English dish—very good indeed.

Truffaldino: Excellent, that will do; but how are we to arrange the table?

Brighella: Oh, that's easy enough. The waiters will see to that.

Truffaldino: No, my good friend, laying the table is a very important matter; it must be done properly.

Brighella: Well, you might put the soup here, the fried dish there, there the boiled dish and here the ragout. *(Makes an imaginary arrangement)*

Truffaldino: I don't like that. Don't you put something in the middle?

Brighella: Then we'd need five dishes.

Truffaldino: Good, then let's have five.

Brighella: We can put the gravy in the middle.

Truffaldino: No, no, friend, you know nothing about laying a table; soup always goes in the middle.

Brighella: Then the meat on one side, and the gravy on the other.

Truffaldino: No, that won't do at all. Let me show you. *(Kneels down and points to the floor)* Suppose this is the table. You arrange things like this: here in the middle the soup. *(He tears off a piece of the bill of exchange and puts it on the floor to represent a dish.)* Now the boiled meat. *(Same business)* Here we put the fried opposite *(same business)* here the gravy and here that—what-d'ye-call-it. There now! Won't that look fine?

(Enter Beatrice and Pantalone)

Beatrice: What are you doing on your knees?

Truffaldino: *(stands up)* I was showing him how to arrange the table.

Beatrice: What is that paper?

Truffaldino: *(aside)* The devil! The letter that he gave me!

Beatrice: That is my bill of exchange.

Truffaldino: I am very sorry, sir; I will stick it together again.

Beatrice: You rascal! Is that the way you look after my things? You deserve a good thrashing. What do you say, Signor Pantalone?

Pantalone: To tell the truth, I cannot help laughing. I will write you out another bill after dinner.

Truffaldino: This is all because Brighella did not know how to set a table.

Brighella: Your servant finds fault with everything.

Truffaldino: I am a man that knows his business.

Beatrice: *(To Truffaldino)* Go away.

Truffaldino: Things must be done properly.

Beatrice: Be off, I tell you.

(Exit Truffaldino)

Brighella: I don't understand that fellow; sometimes he's a knave and sometimes a fool.

Beatrice: This fooling is all put on. Well, is dinner ready?

Brighella: If you want five dishes per course, it will take a little time.

Pantalone: Five dishes a course? We'll just take a risotto, and a few side dishes. My tastes are simple.

Brighella: Very good, sir.

Pantalone: Oh, and I should like some rissoles if you have them; my teeth are not very good nowadays.

Brighella: Of course. Dinner will be ready shortly.

Beatrice: Tell Truffaldino to come and attend us.

Brighella: I'll let him know, sir. *(Exits)*

Pantalone: My dear sir, I am most grateful to you. Had it not been for you, that young scoundrel might have killed me.

Beatrice: I am glad that I was there to help.

(Truffaldino enters with the soup)

Truffaldino: Things are ready for you in the next room, sir.

Beatrice: Go and put the soup on the table.

Truffaldino: *(makes a bow)* After you, sir.

Pantalone: A queer fellow, that servant of yours.

(Pantalone and Beatrice exit)

Truffaldino: Call that a dinner! one dish at a time! They have money to spend, but they get nothing good for it. I wonder if this soup is worth eating; I'll try it. *(Takes a spoon out of his pocket and tastes the soup)* I always carry my weapons with me. Not bad! *(Exits with the soup)*

(Enter First Waiter with a dish)

First Waiter: When is that man coming to take the dishes?

Truffaldino: *(re-entering)* Here I am, friend. What have you got for me?

First Waiter: Here's the boiled meat. There's more to come. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Mutton? Or veal? Mutton, I think. Let's find out. *(Tastes)* No, it's lamb, and very good too. *(Goes towards Beatrice's room)*

(Enter Florindo.)

Florindo: Where are you going?

Truffaldino: *(Aside)* Uh oh.

Florindo: What are you doing with that dish?

Truffaldino: I was just putting it on the table, sir.

Florindo: For whom?

Truffaldino: For you, sir.

Florindo: Why would you serve dinner before I come in?

Truffaldino: I saw you from the window.

Florindo: And you begin with boiled meat instead of soup?

Truffaldino: You must know, sir, in Venice soup is always taken last.

Florindo: I want my soup. Take that back to the kitchen.

Truffaldino: Yes, sir, as you wish, sir.

Florindo: *(Aside)* Shall I never see Beatrice again?

(Florindo exits and Truffaldino quickly takes the dish in to Beatrice. Enter First Waiter with another dish. Florindo calls from his room)

Florindo: Truffaldino! Truffaldino! Am I to be kept waiting?

Truffaldino: *(coming out of Beatrice's room)* Coming, sir. *(To First Waiter)* Quick, go and set the table in that other room, the other gentleman has arrived; bring more soup at once.

First Waiter: Directly. *(Hands Truffaldino the dish and exits)*

Truffaldino: This must be the ragout *(Tastes it)* That's excellent! *(Takes it in to Beatrice)*

(Waiters carry plates, etc. into Florindo's room)

Truffaldino: *(to Waiters)* Good job, that's right. *(Aside)* If I can manage to wait on both masters at once, it'll be a great accomplishment indeed.

(The Waiters come back out of Florindo's room and go towards the kitchen)

Truffaldino: Hurry up with the soup!

(Re-enter First Waiter with Florindo's soup.)

Truffaldino: Give that to me. Go and get the stuff for the other room. *(Takes soup to Florindo's room)*

Beatrice: Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: Coming, sir. *(Goes into Beatrice's room.)*

(Waiter brings the boiled meat for Florindo. Truffaldino brings the dirty plates out of Beatrice's room.)

Florindo: *(calls)* Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: Hand me that.

First Waiter: I can take it –

Truffaldino: Don't you here him calling me? *(Truffaldino snatches the meat from the Waiter and goes to Florindo)*

First Waiter: Well, if he wants to do everything, it's not my problem!

(Second Waiter brings in a dish of rissoles, gives it to First Waiter and exits)

First Waiter: I would take this in myself, but I don't want to fight with that fellow.

(Re-enter Truffaldino from Florindo's room with dirty plates.)

First Waiter: Here, Mister Do-It-All; take these rissoles to your master.

Truffaldino: *(takes dish)* Rissoles?

First Waiter: Yes, the rissoles he ordered. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Now which the devil of my two masters ordered these? If I go to the kitchen and ask, they'll begin to suspect; if I take them to the wrong person, I'll be found out too. I know - I'll divide them on two plate and take half to each. *(Takes plates and divides the rissoles)* That's four and that's four. There's one left over. Who's to have that? We must keep things fair; I'll eat that one myself. *(Eats it)* Now, we'll take some rissoles to this gentleman.

(Truffaldino puts one plate of rissoles on the floor and takes the other in to Beatrice. First Waiter enters with an English Pudding.)

First Waiter: Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: *(comes out of Beatrice's room)* Coming!

First Waiter: Take this pudding—

Truffaldino: Wait a moment! *(Takes the other dish of rissoles and is going to Florindo's room.)*

First Waiter: That's not right, the rissoles belong there.

Truffaldino: I know they do, sir; I have carried them there; and my master sends these four as a gift to this gentleman. *(Goes into Florindo's room.)*

First Waiter: If they're friends, they could have just dined together.

Truffaldino: *(re-entering)* And what's this lovely dish?

First Waiter: That's an English Pudding.

Truffaldino: Who is it for?

First Waiter: For your master. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Ah, the "pudding"! It smells delicious. I'll taste it. *(Brings a fork out of his pocket and tries the pudding.)* Ooooh! It is delicious! *(Goes on eating.)*

Beatrice: *(calling)* Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: *(with mouth full)* Coming, sir.

Florindo: *(calling)* Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: *(with mouth full)* Coming, sir. *(To himself)* Oh what wonderful stuff! Just one more bite. *(Goes on eating)*

(Beatrice enters, sees Truffaldino eating and hits him)

Beatrice: What are you doing? Come and wait on me. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Coming!

(Truffaldino puts the pudding on the floor and goes to Beatrice. Florindo enters)

Florindo: Truffaldino! Where the devil is he?

(Truffaldino enters.)

Truffaldino: Here, sir!

Florindo: Where have you been?

Truffaldino: I just went to fetch the next course, sir.

Florindo: Make haste. I want to take a nap afterwards. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Very good, sir! *(Aside)* I'll save this pudding for me. *(Hides it)*

(Enter First Waiter with a dish)

First Waiter: Here's the roast.

Truffaldino: *(takes the roast)* Quick, the dessert!

First Waiter: In a minute! *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: I'll take the roast to this gentleman. *(Takes it to Florindo, First Waiter returns.)*

First Waiter: *(holding a dish)* Here's the dessert; where are you?

Truffaldino: *(re-entering)* Here.

First Waiter: *(hands him the dessert)* There. Anything more?

Truffaldino: Wait. *(Takes the dessert to Beatrice)*

First Waiter: He runs here and there like the devil himself.

Truffaldino: *(re-entering)* That will do. Nobody wants any more.

First Waiter: Thank god! *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Now for my pudding! Hurrah! I have waited on two masters at once, and neither knew of the other. But if I have waited on two, now I am going to eat for four.

ACT II – SCENE III

(The street in front of Brighella's Inn. Smeraldina enters.)

Smeraldina: A very proper sort of young lady my mistress is! To send me all alone with a letter to an inn, a young girl like me! Waiting on a woman in love is a crazy business – if she's willing to die for Signor Silvio, why does she send letters to another gentleman? One for summer and one for winter, I suppose! Anyways, I am not going inside this place. Hello! Anybody here?

(First Waiter comes out of the inn)

First Waiter: Hey there, pretty lady, what do you want?

Smeraldina: *(aside)* To get the hell out of here. *(To Waiter)* Tell me—a certain Signor Federigo Rasponi lodges here, does he not?

First Waiter: Yes, indeed. He has just finished dinner.

Smeraldina: I have something to say to him.

First Waiter: A message? Come on in!

Smeraldina: What sort of girl do you take me for? I am the waiting-maid of the lady he is to marry.

First Waiter: Do you expect me to bring him out here? He is entertaining Signor Pantalone dei Bisognosi at the moment.

Smeraldina: What, my master's here? Worse and worse! I can't go in.

First Waiter: I can send his servant out, if you like.

Smeraldina: The funny little man?

First Waiter: Yep, that's him.

Smeraldina: Yes, please do send him.

First Waiter: *(aside)* So the servant's the one she likes? She's ashamed to come inside but not ashamed to be seen with him in the middle of the street. *(Goes in)*

Smeraldina: If the master sees me, what should I say? I'll tell him I came to look for him; that will do nicely. I'm never short of an answer.

(Enter Truffaldino with a napkin.)

Truffaldino: Who sent for me?

Smeraldina: I did, sir. I beg your pardon – I didn't mean to interrupt your dinner.

Truffaldino: I was finishing up, but I can go back to it.

Smeraldina: I am truly sorry.

Truffaldino: I am delighted. In fact, I am now full, and your bright eyes are just the thing to help me digest it, my dear.

Smeraldina: *(aside)* He called me "my dear"! *(To Truffaldino)* My mistress sends this letter to Signor Federigo Rasponi; I don't want to go into the inn, so I wondered if you could give it to him.

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

Smeraldina: From whom?

Truffaldino: From a very honest man. Tell me, are you acquainted with one Truffaldino Battocchio?

Smeraldina: I think I've heard of him, but I'm not sure. *(Aside)* It must be himself.

Truffaldino: He's very good-looking; short, witty, knows how to set a table –

Smeraldina: Nope, don't know him.

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

Smeraldina: Oh! You're making fun of me.

Truffaldino: And if he thought his affections might be returned, he might reveal himself.

Smeraldina: Well, sir, if I were to see him, and he took my fancy, it might possibly be that I should return his affection.

Truffaldino: Shall I show him to you?

Smeraldina: I should like to see this good-looking, witty man who is in love with me.

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

Smeraldina: Then it's not him.

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

Smeraldina: What is this play-acting?

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

Smeraldina: See whom?

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

Smeraldina: I saw no one but you.

Truffaldino: (*sighs*) Well!

Smeraldina: Is it you, then, who claims to be in love with me?

Truffaldino: It is. (*sighs*)

Smeraldina: Why did you not say so before?

Truffaldino: Because I'm a little shy.

Smeraldina: (*aside*) He would make a rock fall in love with him.

Truffaldino: Well, what do you say?

Smeraldina: I say—

Truffaldino: Come, tell me.

Smeraldina: Oh—I am rather shy too.

Truffaldino: Then if we married, we'd be shy together!

Smeraldina: (*aside*) He's adorable!

Truffaldino: Do you think there is any hope for me?

Smeraldina: Well—to tell the truth—I must say—there's a—something about you—No, I won't say another word.

Truffaldino: If somebody wanted to marry you, what would he have to do?

Smeraldina: I have neither father nor mother. He would have to speak to my master, or to my mistress.

Truffaldino: And if I speak to them, what will they say?

Smeraldina: They will say, that if I am content—

Truffaldino: And what will you say?

Smeraldina: I shall say—that if they are content too—

Truffaldino: That will do. We shall all be content. Give me the letter and when I bring you back the answer, we can talk more.

Smeraldina: Here's the letter.

Truffaldino: Do you know what is in it?

Smeraldina: No—if you only knew how curious I am!

Truffaldino: I hope it's not an angry letter, or I'll be beaten for it.

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

Truffaldino: I don't want to get into trouble. If I don't know what's in the letter, I'm not going to take it.

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

Truffaldino: Leave it to me; I'm a pro at sealing letters. No one will ever know a thing!

Smeraldina: Then let's open it.

Truffaldino: Can you read?

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

Truffaldino: Yes! I too can read just a little.

Smeraldina: Then show me.

Truffaldino: We must open it cleanly. *(Tears off a piece)*

Smeraldina: Oh! what have you done?

Truffaldino: Nothing. I've a secret way to mend it. Here we go.

Smeraldina: Quick, read it.

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

Smeraldina: *(looking at the letter)* Really, I can't make out a word.

Truffaldino: Me neither.

Smeraldina: Then what was the good of opening it?

(They struggle to sound out the words as Beatrice comes out of the inn with Pantalone.)

Pantalone: *(to Smeraldina)* What are you doing here?

Smeraldina: Nothing, sir; I came to look for you.

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

Smeraldina: The mistress wants you, sir.

Beatrice: *(to Truffaldino)* What is this paper?

Truffaldino: *(frightened)* Nothing, just a bit of paper—

Beatrice: Let me see.

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

Beatrice: What? This is a letter addressed to me. Villain, will you open all my letters?

Truffaldino: I know nothing about it, sir—

Beatrice: Look, Signor Pantalone, here is a letter from Signora Clarice, in which she tells me of Silvio's insane jealousy—and this rascal has the impudence to open it!

Pantalone: *(to Smeraldina)* And you helped him to do so?

Smeraldina: I know nothing about it, sir.

Beatrice: Who opened this letter?

Truffaldino: Not I.

Smeraldina: Nor I.

Pantalone: Well, who brought it?

Smeraldina: Truffaldino brought it to his master.

Truffaldino: And Smeraldina brought it to Truffaldino.

Smeraldina: *(aside)* Snitch! I don't like you any more.

Pantalone: You meddlesome little hussy. I've a good mind to smack your face.

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

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

Truffaldino: *(aside)* If I only knew how to get out of this!

Beatrice: *(looking at the letter; aside)* Poor Clarice! It would be best for me to reveal myself and set her mind at rest.

(Truffaldino tries to steal away quietly)

Beatrice: Where are you off to?

Truffaldino: Nowhere. *(Stops)*

Beatrice: Why did you open this letter?

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

Beatrice: Smeraldina? You did it, you rascal. That's the second letter of mine you have opened today. Here's your payment for this!

(Beatrice hits Truffaldino repeatedly. Florindo enters and sees the beating.)

Florindo: What's this? Beating my servant?

Truffaldino: Stop, stop, sir, for pity's sake.

Beatrice: Take that, rascal, and learn not to open my letters. *(stops beating him and exits)*

Truffaldino: Is that the way you treat a man like me? If a servant is no good, you can send him away, but you don't hit him.

Florindo: What's that?

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

Florindo: Yes, you are correct. Who was it who beat you?

Truffaldino: I don't know, sir.

Florindo: Why did he hit you?

Truffaldino: Because I—I bumped into him.

Florindo: And you let yourself be beaten for that? Made no attempt to defend yourself? And you expose your master to insult, with perhaps serious consequences? Fool! I'll thrash you myself for that! *(Hits him as well, then exits).*

Truffaldino: Well, there's no mistake about me being the servant of two masters. They have both paid me my wages. *(Exits)*

ACT III - SCENE I

(Truffaldino is in a room at Brighella's Inn.)

Truffaldino: I don't care about the beating! I've eaten well, and I'll stay well fed and well paid as long as I can serve two masters. What to do now? Master number one is out, master number two is fast asleep; why, it's just the moment to unpack and air out their clothes. Here are the keys. I'll get the trunks out and make a proper job of it. *(Calls)* Waiters!

(Enter Waiters)

Truffaldino: If you bring the two trunks out of those rooms, I'll give you a good handful of what my masters gave me.

(The Waiters bring in the two trunks and Truffaldino slips them some coins)

First Waiter: Do you need any more help?

Truffaldino: No, thank you; I can do the rest myself.

First Waiter: I must say, you are a giant for work. *(aside)* Either he's a first-rate fellow or he's a real knave; I never saw anyone wait on two gentlemen at once like that. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Time to start. *(Takes keys out of his pocket)* Now which key is this, I wonder? Let's try one. *(Opens one trunk)* I guessed right at once. I'm the smartest guy around. And this one will open the other trunk. *(Opens second trunk)* Let's take everything out. *(He takes a coat out of each one as well as other items.)* I'll just see if there is anything in the pockets. You never know, sometimes they leave treats in them. *(Searches the pocket of Beatrice's coat and finds a portrait)* My word, that's a handsome man! He looks a bit like my other master.

Florindo: *(calling from off-stage)* Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: Oh no, he woke up. If he comes out and he sees this other trunk, he'll want to know—quick, quick—I'll lock it up and say I don't know whose it is. *(Begins repacking the trunks.)*

Florindo: *(calling)* Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: Coming, sir! *(Aside)* I can't remember which things came from which trunk!

Florindo: *(calling)* Where are you? Do you need another beating?

Truffaldino: In a minute, sir! *(Aside)* I'll just shove things in and sort it out later. *(Stuffs things randomly into the trunks and locks them. Florindo enters)*

Florindo: What the devil are you doing?

Truffaldino: Sir, didn't you tell me to unpack and air out your things? I was just about to do it.

Florindo: And this other trunk, whose is that?

Truffaldino: I couldn't say, sir.

Florindo: Give me my coat.

Truffaldino: Very good, sir. *(Opens Florindo's trunk and gives him a coat. Florindo puts it on, puts his hand into the pockets and finds the portrait.)*

Florindo: What is this?

Truffaldino: *(aside)* Oh no, I've mixed things up!

Florindo: *(aside)* Heavens! This is my own portrait; the one I gave to my beloved Beatrice. *(To Truffaldino)* Tell me, how did this portrait get into the pocket of my coat?

Truffaldino: Uhm . . . let me think—

Florindo: Come on, out with it, answer me.

Truffaldino: Sir, forgive me for taking a liberty. The portrait belongs to me, and I hid it there for safety, for fear I might lose it.

Florindo: How did you get this portrait?

Truffaldino: My master left it to me.

Florindo: Left it to you?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir; I had a master who died, and he left me this portrait, sir.

Florindo: Great heavens! And when did this master of yours die?

Truffaldino: About a week ago, sir.

Florindo: What was your master's name?

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

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

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

Florindo: *(aside)* Heavens! This could be Beatrice. She escaped dressed as a man; she concealed her name—Oh wretched me if it was!

Truffaldino: *(aside)* He seems to believe it!

Florindo: *(despairingly)* Tell me, was your master young?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir, quite a young gentleman.

Florindo: Clean shaven?

Truffaldino: Clean shaven, sir.

Florindo: Was he from Turin?

Truffaldino: Yes. Yes, I believe it was Turin.

Florindo: *(aside)* Every word is a dagger in my heart. *(To Truffaldino)* This young gentleman from Turin, how did he die?

Truffaldino: He met with an accident, and that was the end of him.

Florindo: Where was he buried?

Truffaldino: *(aside)* I wasn't ready for that one. *(To Florindo)* I don't know. Another servant from the same place got permission to take his coffin home, sir.

Florindo: And was it, by any chance, the same servant who got you to fetch his letters for him from the Post this morning?

Truffaldino: Exactly so, sir; it was Pasquale.

Florindo: *(aside)* Then all hope is lost. Beatrice is dead. The long journey and the tortures of her heart must have killed her. Oh! I can no longer endure the agony of my grief! *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: He seems upset - he must have known the gentleman well. Well, I had better get the trunks back to the rooms again, or I shall be in more trouble. Oh! dear! here comes my other master.

(Enter Beatrice and Pantalone with a document.)

Beatrice: Signor Pantalone, I believe there is an error on this inventory. We should check it against my account books. Truffaldino!

Truffaldino: Here, sir.

Beatrice: Open my trunk and give me—whose is that other trunk?

Truffaldino: It belongs to another gentleman who just arrived.

Beatrice: Bring me my account ledger.

Truffaldino: Yes, sir. *(Aside)* The Lord help me this time! *(Opens trunk and looks for the book.)*

Pantalone: If there is a mistake, you will not have to pay, of course.

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

Beatrice: (*Takes the book and opens it.*) No, this is not it— who does this belong to?

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

Beatrice: (*aside*) Here are letters which I wrote to Florindo. Alas! This book belongs to him. I tremble, I am in a cold sweat, I know not where I am.

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

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

Truffaldino: I hardly know, sir—

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

Truffaldino: I ask your pardon for the liberty I took, sir, putting the book into your trunk. It belongs to me, and I put it there for safety. (*Aside*) That was a good enough story for the other gentleman, I hope it will do for this one too.

Beatrice: And how did you get the book?

Truffaldino: I was in service with a gentleman in Venice, and he died and left it to me.

Beatrice: How long ago?

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

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

Truffaldino: I had just come there on account of my poor master's death.

Beatrice: (*aside*) Alas for me! (*To Truffaldino*) Your master—was his name—Florindo?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir; Florindo.

Beatrice: And you are sure he is dead?

Truffaldino: As sure as I stand here.

Beatrice: How did he die? Where is he buried?

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

Beatrice: How could this happen? Florindo is dead, my one and only hope is dead. Love's stratagems are useless! I leave my home, I dress as a man, I confront danger, all for Florindo—and Florindo is dead. Unhappy Beatrice! Was the loss of my brother so little to me, that Fate must make me lose my beloved as well? My adored one, I will follow you to the tomb. (*Exits*)

Pantalone: A woman!

Truffaldino: A woman?

Pantalone: Most extraordinary!

Truffaldino: Who'd have thought it?

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

Truffaldino: It seems I am not the servant of two masters but of a master and a mistress. *(Exits)*

ACT III - SCENE II

(Doctor and Pantalone meet on the street)

Doctor: *(aside)* The more I think about that doddering old villain Pantalone, the more I despise him.

Pantalone: *(cheerfully)* Good day, my dear Doctor.

Doctor: I am surprised you have the nerve to address me.

Pantalone: I have news for you. Do you know—

Doctor: You are going to tell me that the marriage has already been performed? I don't care a fig if it has.

Pantalone: There's been a misunderstanding. Let me speak, plague take you.

Doctor: Speak on then, pox on you.

Pantalone: *(aside)* I should like to give him a good doctoring with my fists. *(To Doctor)* My daughter shall marry your son whenever you please.

Doctor: I am vastly obliged to you. Pray do not put yourself to any inconvenience. My son is not prepared to stomach that, sir. You may give her to the Turin gentleman.

Pantalone: If you knew who the Turin gentleman is, you would say differently.

Doctor: He may be who he will. Your daughter has been seen with him, that is enough.

Pantalone: But it is not true that he is—

Doctor: I will not hear another word.

Pantalone: If you won't hear me, it will be worse for you.

Doctor: We shall see for whom it will be worse.

Pantalone: My daughter is a girl of unblemished reputation, and—

Doctor: The devil take you.

Pantalone: The devil take you, sir.

Doctor: You disreputable old villain! (*Exits*)

Pantalone: Damn you! Why, how could I ever tell him that the man was a woman? He wouldn't let me speak. And here comes that young lout of a son of his; now I shall be in for more impertinence.

(*Enter Silvio.*)

Silvio: (*aside*) There is Pantalone. I should like to run a sword through his paunch.

Pantalone: Signor Silvio, if you will give me leave, I should like to give you a piece of good news, if you will condescend to allow me to speak, and not behave like that father of yours.

Silvio: What have you to say to me? Speak, sir.

Pantalone: You must know, sir, that the marriage of my daughter to Signor Federigo has come to nothing.

Silvio: Indeed? Do not deceive me.

Pantalone: It's true indeed, and if you are still of your former mind, my daughter is ready to give you her hand.

Silvio: Oh heavens! You bring me back to life.

Pantalone: (*aside*) Well, well, he is not quite as bad as his father.

Silvio: But heavens! How can I clasp to my bosom one who has for so long been engaged to another?

Pantalone: To cut a long story short, Federigo Rasponi has turned into Beatrice his sister.

Silvio: What? I do not understand you.

Pantalone: Then you are very thick-headed. The person whom we thought to be Federigo has been discovered to be Beatrice.

Silvio: Dressed as a man?

Pantalone: Dressed as a man.

Silvio: At last I understand.

Pantalone: About time you did.

Silvio: How did it happen? Tell me.

Pantalone: Let us go to my house. I'll tell you and my daughter at the same time.

Silvio: I will come, sir; and I most humbly beg your forgiveness, for having allowed myself to be transported by passion—

Pantalone: It was nothing; I know what love can do. Now, my dear boy, come along with me.

Silvio: *(aside)* Who could be happier than I?

(Silvio and Pantalone exit)

ACT III - SCENE III

(Brighella's Inn. Beatrice and Florindo enter, each pointing a weapon at themselves. Brighella is restraining Beatrice and the First Waiter is restraining Florindo. Beatrice and Florindo do not see each other)

Brighella: *(holding Beatrice)* Stop, stop!

Beatrice: *(trying to break loose)* For pity's sake, let me go.

First Waiter: *(holding Florindo)* This is madness.

Florindo: *(breaks away from the Waiter)* Go to the devil.

Beatrice: *(breaking away from Brighella)* You shall not hinder me.

(They turn, ready to stab themselves and see each other)

Beatrice: Florindo?

Florindo: Beatrice?

Beatrice: Are you alive?

Florindo: Are you too living?

Beatrice: My darling!

Florindo: Oh my adored one!

(They drop their weapons and embrace)

Brighella: That was quite a show. Well, at least we won't have to clean up any blood now. *(exits)*

First Waiter: *(aside)* I will make these disappear, just to be safe. *(picks up weapons and exits)*

Florindo: What drove you to attempt such a desperate act?

Beatrice: The false news of your death.

Florindo: Who told you I was dead?

Beatrice: My servant.

Florindo: Mine also told me you had died.

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

Florindo: That book was in my trunk. How did you get it? Ah, now I know. Probably the same way this portrait got in my coat pocket. Here it is. The one I gave you in Turin.

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

Florindo: Where are they, I wonder?

Beatrice: Nowhere to be seen.

Florindo: Let us find them and confront them. *(Calling)* Brighella!

(Enter Brighella.)

Florindo: Find our servants at once and send them to us here.

Brighella: For myself I only know one of them, but I'll ask the waiters to look for them. I congratulate you, sir, and madam, on the happy resolution, but if you decide to end things again, you must try some other establishment; this is an inn, not a funeral parlor. Your servant. *(Exits)*

Florindo: Then you are lodged here too?

Beatrice: I arrived this morning.

Florindo: I too came here this morning. And yet we never saw each other. Tell me: your brother Federigo—is he dead?

Beatrice: Have you any doubt? He died on the spot.

Florindo: I was told he was alive and here in Venice.

Beatrice: It was I who travelled in his name and in these clothes to follow—

Florindo: To follow me—I know, my dearest; I read it in a letter from your servant in Turin.

Beatrice: How came it into your hands?

Florindo: My servant gave it me by mistake and seeing it was addressed to you, I could not help opening it.

Beatrice: I suppose a lover's curiosity is always legitimate.

Florindo: But where are these servants of ours? Ah! *(sees Truffaldino approaching)* Here is one.

Beatrice: He looks like the worse knave of the two.

Florindo: I think you're right.

(Enter Truffaldino brought in by force by Brighella and the First Waiter.)

Florindo: Come here, come here, don't be frightened.

Beatrice: We won't hurt you.

Truffaldino: *(aside)* I remember the last "payment" I received.

Brighella: We found this one; if we find the other, we will bring him.

Florindo: Yes, we must have them both here together.

Brighella: *(aside to Waiter)* Do you know the other?

First Waiter: *(to Brighella)* Never seen him. *(Exit First Waiter and Brighella)*

Florindo: *(to Truffaldino)* Come now, tell us what happened with the changing of the portrait and the book, and why you and that other rascal conspired against us.

Truffaldino: *(signs to both with his finger to keep silence)* Hush! *(To Florindo)* Pray, sir, a word with you in private. *(To Beatrice)* I will tell you everything directly. *(Pulls Florindo aside)* You must know, sir, I'm not to blame for what happened – it's all Pasquale's fault, the servant of that lady there *(cautiously pointing at Beatrice)*. It was he mixed up the things, and put into one trunk what belonged to the other, without my knowledge. The poor man begged and prayed me to take the blame, for fear his master should send him away, and as I am a kind-hearted fellow, I made up all these stories to see if I could help him. I never dreamt it was a portrait of you or that you would be so upset at hearing of the death of the owner. Now I have told you the whole truth, sir, as an honest man and a faithful servant.

Florindo: *(to Truffaldino)* Then the man who got you to fetch that letter from the Post was the servant of Signora Beatrice?

Truffaldino: *(to Florindo)* Yes, sir, that was Pasquale.

Florindo: Then why conceal from me a fact I so urgently desired to know?

Truffaldino: For the love of Pasquale.

Florindo: You and Pasquale deserve a sound thrashing together.

Truffaldino: (*aside to himself*) In that case I should get both.

Beatrice: Have you finished?

Florindo: This fellow has been telling me—

Truffaldino: (*aside to Florindo*) For the love of heaven, sir, do not say it was Pasquale. You can give me a beating if you like, but don't, don't let any trouble come to Pasquale.

Florindo: (*aside to Truffaldino*) Are you so devoted to Pasquale?

Truffaldino: I love him as much as myself. Now I am going to the lady, and I am going to tell her that it was all my fault; she may punish me, but I will protect Pasquale. (*Truffaldino goes to Beatrice*)

Florindo: He's certainly a very loyal and affectionate character.

Beatrice: (*aside to Truffaldino*) What were you telling Signor Florindo?

Truffaldino: (*aside to Beatrice*) You must know, madam, that that gentleman has a servant called Pasquale: he is the most arrant fool in the world; it was he made a mess of things; but because the poor man was afraid his master would send him away, I made up all those stories about the book and the dead master and everything. And just now I've been telling Signor Florindo that I was the cause of it all.

Beatrice: But why accuse yourself of faults which you have never committed?

Truffaldino: Madam, it is all for the love I bear Pasquale. Dear madam, I beg of you, don't get him into trouble.

Beatrice: Pasquale and you are a pretty pair of rascals.

Truffaldino: (*aside to himself*) I fear I'm the only one.

Florindo: Come. That's enough. Signora Beatrice, our servants certainly deserve to be punished; but in consideration of our own great happiness, we surely may forgive what is past.

Beatrice: True; but your servant—

Truffaldino: (*aside to Beatrice*) For the love of Heaven don't mention Pasquale!

Beatrice: (*to Florindo*) Well, I must go call upon Signor Pantalone; will you come with me?

Florindo: I would do so with pleasure, but I have to wait here to meet my banker. I will come later, if you are in haste.

Beatrice: I am, but I will wait for you there.

Florindo: I don't know where he lives.

Truffaldino: I know, sir, I'll show you the way.

Beatrice: Very well. Dear Florindo! What torments I've endured for love of you!

Florindo: Mine have been no less. But when will you change your clothes?

Beatrice: Do I not look good like this?

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

Beatrice: Well, I shall expect you at Signor Pantalone's; make Truffaldino show you the way. *(to Truffaldino)* Wait on him until his own servant returns. *(Aside to herself)* I love him more than my very self. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Please your honor, I hear your honor is going to Signor Pantalone's.

Florindo: Yes, what then?

Truffaldino: I have a favor to ask you.

Florindo: What do you want?

Truffaldino: You see, sir, I'm in love too.

Florindo: In love?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir, and she is the maidservant to Signor Pantalone; and it would be very kind if your honor—

Florindo: How do I come into it?

Truffaldino: I won't say, sir, that you come into it; but I being your servant, you might say a word for me to Signor Pantalone.

Florindo: I'm willing to speak for you, but how can you keep a wife?

Truffaldino: I shall do what I can. I shall ask for help from Pasquale.

Florindo: You had better get help from someone with more sense. *(Exits)*

Truffaldino: Well if I don't show any sense this time, I shall never show it again.

(Truffaldino follows Florindo and exits)

ACT III - SCENE IV

(Pantalone, Doctor, Clarice, Silvio and Smeraldina are at Pantalone's house)

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

Silvio: Measure my agony by your own, Signora Clarice, and rest assured that I acted as I did purely because I loved you so much that I could not bear to lose you!

Doctor: I join my prayers to those of my son; have pity on the poor young man.

Smeraldina: Come, dear madam. Men are all cruel to us, some more, some less. They demand the most absolute fidelity, and on the least shadow of suspicion they bully and ill-treat and are like to murder us. Well, you'll have to marry someone someday, so you might as well take your medicine sooner rather than later.

Pantalone: There, do you hear that? Smeraldina calls matrimony medicine. It's not like it's poison. *(Aside to Doctor)* We must try to cheer her up.

Doctor: Certainly it's not poison, nor even nasty medicine. Matrimony is a lollipop, a jujube, a lozenge!

Smeraldina: *(aside)* If you're a man!

Silvio: But dear Clarice, won't you speak? Punish me with hard words rather than with silence. I kneel at your feet; have pity upon me.

Clarice: *(to Silvio with a sigh)* Cruel!

Pantalone: *(aside to Doctor)* You heard that sigh? A good sign.

Doctor: *(aside to Silvio)* Strike while the iron is hot.

Silvio: If my blood would appease you, I would give it to you with all my heart. But, oh God, instead of the blood of my veins, accept, I beg you, the tears which gush from my eyes. *(Weeps)*

Pantalone: Bravo! Bravo! Well said!

Doctor: Capital! Capital!

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

Pantalone: Here, come, up with you (*he raises Silvio*) And you too, daughter. (*takes Clarice's hand*) Now, join your hands together again. Make peace and may Heaven bless you both.

Silvio: (*holding Clarice's hand*) Oh, Signora Clarice, for pity's sake—

Clarice: Ungrateful!

Silvio: Dearest!

Clarice: Inhuman!

Silvio: Beloved!

Clarice: Monster!

Silvio: Angel!

Clarice: (*sighs*) Ah!

Pantalone: (*aside*) Going, going—

Silvio: Forgive me for the love of Heaven.

Clarice: (*sighs*) I forgive you.

Pantalone: (*aside*) Gone!

Doctor: Come, Silvio, she has forgiven you.

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

(*Enter Beatrice.*)

Beatrice: Ladies and gentlemen, I come to ask your pardon and forgiveness, that you should on my account have been put to inconvenience—

Clarice: No, no, my dear; come to me. (*Embraces her*)

Silvio: (*annoyed at the embrace*) How now?

Beatrice: (*to Silvio*) What! may she not even embrace a woman?

Silvio: (*aside*) It's those clothes again.

Pantalone: Well, well, Signora Beatrice, I must say, for a young woman of your age you have wonderful courage.

Doctor: (*to Beatrice*) Too much spirit, madam.

Beatrice: Love makes one do great things.

Pantalone: And you have found your young gentleman at last?

Beatrice: Yes, Heaven has made us happy.

Doctor: A nice reputation you have made for yourself!

Beatrice: Sir, you have no business with my affairs.

Silvio: *(to Doctor)* Father, leave her alone. Now that I am happy, I want all the world to be happy too. Let everyone get married!

(Enter Truffaldino)

Truffaldino: My respects to the company. Signor Florindo is here and would like to come in, by your leave.

Beatrice: Signor Pantalone, will you give Signor Florindo leave to enter? He is going to marry me.

Pantalone: I shall be pleased to meet him. Show him in.

Truffaldino: *(aside to Smeraldina)* Young woman, my respects to you.

Smeraldina: *(aside to Truffaldino)* Pleased to see you again.

Truffaldino: We should talk.

Smeraldina: What about?

Truffaldino: *(pantomimes a proposal)* Are you willing?

Smeraldina: Why not?

Truffaldino: Be right back. *(Exits)*

Smeraldina: *(to Clarice)* Madam, I have a favor to ask.

Clarice: What is it?

Smeraldina: That's the servant of Signora Beatrice who wants to marry me. If you would say a kind word to his mistress, and get her to allow it, I should be the happiest girl in the world.

Clarice: Dear Smeraldina, I will gladly do so.

(Enter Florindo shown in by Truffaldino)

Florindo: Your most humble servant, ladies and gentleman. *(To Pantalone)* Are you the master of the house, sir?

Pantalone: Yours to command, sir.

Florindo: I present myself by command of the Signora Beatrice. She is to be my wife, and if you would do us the honor, I hope you will give away the bride.

Pantalone: Let it be done at once. Give her your hand.

Florindo: Signora Beatrice, if I may?

Beatrice: Here is my hand, Signor Florindo.

Smeraldina: *(aside)* They don't waste time.

Pantalone: Afterwards we will settle up our accounts. You will put yours in order; then we will settle ours.

Clarice: *(to Beatrice)* Dear friend, I congratulate you.

Beatrice: *(to Clarice)* And I you with all my heart.

Pantalone: Everything is in order, everything is settled.

Truffaldino: The best is yet to come, ladies and gentlemen.

Pantalone: What is yet to come?

Truffaldino: *(to Florindo)* You remember what you promised me, sir?

Florindo: What did I promise? I don't recall.

Truffaldino: To ask Signor Pantalone for Smeraldina as my wife.

Florindo: Ah, yes. *(to Pantalone)* Signor Pantalone, I make bold to ask one more favor of you.

Pantalone: I will serve you to the best of my powers.

Florindo: My servant desires to marry your maid; have you any objections?

Smeraldina: *(aside)* Wonderful! Here's another who wants to marry me! Who the devil can he be?

Pantalone: For my part I am agreed. *(To Smeraldina)* What say you, girl?

Smeraldina: If I thought he would make a good husband—

Clarice: Signor Florindo, I was to propose the marriage of my maid with the servant of Signora Beatrice, but since you have asked for her for your servant, I can say no more.

Florindo: No, no; since you so earnestly desire this, I withdraw the offer.

Clarice: Indeed, sir, I could never permit myself to have my wishes preferred to yours.

Florindo: You say so out of courtesy, madam. I will not say another word on behalf of my servant; on the contrary, I am absolutely opposed to his marrying her.

Clarice: If your man is not to marry her, neither will the other man. We must be fair on both sides.

Truffaldino: (*aside*) They're so busy complementing each other I'll have no wife at all.

Smeraldina: (*aside*) It looks as if I should have neither one nor the other.

Pantalone: Come, we must settle it somehow; this poor girl wants to get married, let us give her either to the one or the other.

Florindo: Not to my man. Nothing shall induce me to do Signora Clarice an injustice.

Clarice: Nor will I ever tolerate an injustice to Signor Florindo.

Truffaldino: Sir, madam, I can settle the matter myself. Signor Florindo, did you not ask the hand of Smeraldina for your servant?

Florindo: I did – did you not hear me?

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

Clarice: Most certainly I did.

Truffaldino: Good; then if that is so, give me your hand, Smeraldina.

Pantalone: And pray what right have you to ask for her hand?

Truffaldino: Because I am the servant of Signor Florindo and Signora Beatrice.

Florindo & Beatrice: What?

Truffaldino: Pray be calm. Signor Florindo, who asked you to ask Signor Pantalone for Smeraldina?

Florindo: You did.

Truffaldino: And you, Signora Clarice, who did you wish to marry Smeraldina?

Clarice: Yourself.

Truffaldino: You see! Smeraldina is mine.

Florindo: Signora Beatrice, where is your servant?

Beatrice: Why, here! Truffaldino, of course.

Florindo: Truffaldino? He is my servant!

Beatrice: Is not yours called Pasquale?

Florindo: Pasquale? I thought Pasquale was yours!

Beatrice: *(to Truffaldino)* How do you explain this?

(Truffaldino makes silent gestures asking for forgiveness)

Florindo: You rascal!

Beatrice: You knave!

Florindo: So you served two masters at once?

Truffaldino: Yes, sir, I did. I took on the job without thinking; just to see if I could do it. It did not last long, but I can boast that nobody would ever have found out, if I had not given myself away for the love of this young lady. I have done a hard day's work, and I had my short-comings, but I hope in exchange for the laughs, all the ladies and gentlemen will forgive me. Now let's give all the couples a hand and throw a giant wedding feast!