

# Carlo Goldoni - Venetian Twins

## ACT ONE SCENE ONE

[ROSAURA's room. ROSAURA and COLOMBINA are both at the dressing table fixing their hair.]

### ROSAURA

Princess Colombina, in my humble opinion, before you take care of yourself, you should do your duty and attend to your mistress!

### COLOMBINA

I have done my duty, Signora, I've been standing behind you for two hours, Signora – curling and frizzing and primping your hair, but you are never satisfied. You keep poking your fingers in and messing it all up.

### ROSAURA

Look how presumptuous she is! My hair is a mess and you waste time on your own?!

### COLOMBINA

Why not? I've got hair on my head, too, just like you have.

### ROSAURA

But I am the mistress and you are the maid!

### COLOMBINA

Watch out, don't make me say something –

### ROSAURA

Enough! My fiancée will be here at any minute, and he will find me like this!

### COLOMBINA

My fiancée is going to be here, too, and I must look my best for him!

### ROSAURA

You compare yourself to me?! You impudent wench!

### COLOMBINA

Watch it, miss, show some respect or you'll be sorry !

### ROSAURA

You impertinent hussy! You get up this second or I'll have you beaten.

### COLOMBINA

Beaten?! Me?! Ha!

**ROSAURA**

This is how you speak to your mistress?! You gutter-snipe! I'm going to tell my father right now.

**COLOMBINA**

What *mistress*? What *father*? Listen, Miss, I know what's what!

**ROSAURA**

And what is that supposed to mean, you little gutter-snipe?!

**COLOMBINA**

If you keep calling me names, I'm going to spill the beans, understand?!

**ROSAURA**

Go on, speak! What could you say, liar?!

**COLOMBINA**

I could say plenty! My lips have been sealed far too long!

**ACT ONE  
SCENE TWO**

[*Enter* DOCTOR]

**DOCTOR**

What's this noise? What's the matter? What happened?

**ROSAURA**

Oh, father, thrash her! She insults me, she mistreats me, she shows me no respect.

**DOCTOR**

[*To* COLOMBINA] What? So this is how you take care of my daughter?!

**COLOMBINA**

Careful, Signore -- I know more than you can imagine -- My mother told me *everything*, you know.

**DOCTOR**

[*Aside*] Damn and blast her! If she were alive, I'd kill her. [*To* COLOMBINA] Colombina! For heaven's sake, don't say anything! Keep quiet, and I promise to give you anything you want.

**COLOMBINA**

[To DOCTOR] OK, my lips will stay sealed, even though she mistreats me.

**ROSAURA**

Well... father...?

**DOCTOR**

Now, now, enough... Your future husband arrives today – Signor Zanetto Bisognosi, son of the famous Venetian merchant, Pantalone, but raised in Bergamo by his uncle Stefanello who is one of the richest merchants in Lombardy.

**COLOMBINA**

And remember, I'm marrying his servant. You promised --

**DOCTOR**

[To COLOMBINA] All right, all right, I'll take care of it. You will be satisfied, provided that you keep quiet!

**COLOMBINA**

To keep me quiet, stop up my mouth with marriage.

**DOCTOR**

Rosaura, did you see Signor Pancrazio?

**ROSAURA**

I see him all the time.

**DOCTOR**

He's a great and gracious gentleman.

**ROSAURA**

He certainly is. He never stops giving me good advice.

**DOCTOR**

As long as I live, my house is his.

**ROSAURA**

That's as it should be. He's such a great help.

**COLOMBINA**

Personally, I think he's up to no good.

**DOCTOR**

Quiet, gossip monger! What reason do you have to speak that way?

**COLOMBINA**

I know what I'm talking about – I don't have to explain.

**ACT ONE  
SCENE THREE**

[Enter BRIGHELLA]

**BRIGHELLA**

Signor Master, Signora Mistress – Signor Zanetto has arrived from Bergamo. He just got off his horse and he's at the door.

**DOCTOR**

Thank God! [To ROSAURA] My darling daughter, I'll go welcome him and escort him to you immediately.

[He goes]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE FOUR**

**ROSAURA**

Tell me something, Brighella – you've seen Signor Zanetto – what's he like? Handsome? Attractive?

**BRIGHELLA**

I will tell you this, Signora: as for looks, he's not bad. He's young, there is that. But from what I've seen of him, he's a stupid lump. He doesn't even know which side of the horse to get down from. His face looks just like his twin brother, Tonino, who lives in Venice (where I had occasion to know him), but, while the face is the same, the rest is not. Tonino is a clever and bold fellow; this one is a fool.

**ROSAURA**

This is not pleasing news.

**COLOMBINA**

[To BRIGHELLA] With Signor Zanetto, there must be a certain Arlecchino, his servant? Did *he* arrive?

**BRIGHELLA**

No. He's arriving later with his master's luggage.

**COLOMBINA**

Too bad. I'm curious to see what he looks like.

**BRIGHELLA**

I know -- I know why. Your favors will soon be his.

**COLOMBINA**

If you're jealous... too bad!

[*She goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE FIVE**

**ROSAURA**

Tell me, Brighella, how did you know his family in Venice? And why was Signor Zanetto was brought up in Bergamo.

**BRIGHELLA**

I was a servant in the house of a rich merchant, a very close friend of the late Pantalone Bisognosi, the father of these twins. Now, in addition to the twin sons, Signor Pantalone also had a daughter. He sent her off to live in Bergamo, with his brother, Stefanello, who was very rich but had no heirs. That's where Zanetto had also been sent, before her. While in the Bisognosi house, I heard that the girl was lost. She never reached Bergamo. Somehow she disappeared along the way and the family, to their dismay, never heard anything more about her. This is all I know about the family except that the Bisognosi family is among the wealthiest and most distinguished merchants in Venice.

**ROSAURA**

Well, that's good... But it's too bad Signor Zanetto is not clever like is brother.

**BRIGHELLA**

Here he comes with the master. Now, see for yourself if I'm not telling the truth.

**ACT ONE  
SCENE SIX**

[*Enter DOCTOR and ZANETTO* ]

**ROSAURA**

The face is nice. Perhaps he's not the fool Brighella made him out to be.

**DOCTOR**

Come in, come right in -- don't be shy. [*To ROSAURA*] Darling daughter, this is Signor Zanetto.

**ZANETTO**

How do you do?

**ROSAURA**

I am your humble servant, sir.

**ZANETTO**

Oh, this one's the servant. Too bad. [*To DOCTOR*] So, where's the girl

I'm supposed to wed?

**DOCTOR**

Here. This is my daughter. She is the bride-to-be.

**ZANETTO**

No, she just said she's the servant.

**DOCTOR**

No, signore, she said, "I am your humble servant." It's a form of courtesy... of ceremony.

**ZANETTO**

Oh... I get it. This is a bad beginning.

**DOCTOR**

Why?

**ZANETTO**

Because in a good marriage, you don't need lies and ceremony.

**ROSAURA**

[*Aside*] He *is* a bit of a fool, but he's very nice looking.

**DOCTOR**

Come now, let's not quibble over details.

**ROSAURA**

Signor Zanetto, you can be sure that I am honest, I cannot tell a lie. I will respect you and hold you in the highest esteem.

**ZANETTO**

That's all worthless.

**ROSAURA**

Is my approach too formal for you?

**ZANETTO**

Yes.

**ROSAURA**

Your eyes dislike my countenance?

**ZANETTO**

Look, let's just get to it. I came to Verona to get married. I'm just waiting for

my servant, Arlecchino, with my clothes, my jewelry and my cash.

**ROSAURA**

All right, and am I not the one destined to be your wife?

**ZANETTO**

Well, why do we need all this mincing about? (*Reaches for her*) Just grab hold of my hand and it's a done deal.

**ROSAURA**

[*ASIDE*] What a strange character!

**DOCTOR**

My dear sir, do you want her to wed so crudely? Say something nice to your bride-to-be, something more suitable... polite... affectionate.

**ZANETTO**

Yes, you're right. [*To ROSAURA*] I'm all yours. I like your pretty little face. I'd like to... [*To DOCTOR*] Look, do me a favor.

**DOCTOR**

Anything.

**ZANETTO**

Get out of here. You're making me nervous.

**DOCTOR**

Very well, I go. I am a most accommodating man. [*To ROSAURA*] Now, darling daughter, show some sense: he may be a fool but he's a rich fool! [*To ZANETTO*] Son-in-law... my respects. [*Aside*] Look to whom Fortune gives her favor!  
[*He goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE SEVEN**

**ZANETTO**

[*To DOCTOR*] So long! [*To ROSAURA*] There, now – we're man and wife.

**ROSAURA**

I hope so.

**ZANETTO**

Then why are we standing here like sticks?

**ROSAURA**

And what would you like to do?

**ZANETTO**

Oh... man and wife...!

**ROSAURA**

Man and wife, we're going to be –I repeat, I hope so. But we haven't had the wedding yet.

**ZANETTO**

No? What else do we need for the wedding?

**ROSAURA**

We need the ceremonial service.

**ZANNETTO**

Let's be frank. You want me for your husband?

**ROSAURA**

Oh, yes, I do!

**ZANETTO**

And I want you for my wife. What other ceremonies do we need?  
*This* is the best ceremony in the world.

**ROSAURA**

Yes, but we don't do things that way here.

**ZANETTO**

No? Then I'm going back to Bergamo, back to the mountains where I was raised. There, when you love someone, this is all you need. Marriage is made with two words, and all the "ceremonies" are between man and wife.

**ROSAURA**

I repeat: here, we do things with formality.

**ZANETTO**

But how long does this formality take?

**ROSAURA**

At least two days.

**ZANETTO**

That's too long!

**ROSAURA**

You're too impatient!

**ZANETTO**

It's now, or never.

**ROSAURA**

This is an insult to my person!

**ZANETTO**

What insult? To get married? I know lots of girls that would like to be insulted like this.

**ROSAURA**

What a fiend! Can't you wait one day?

**ZANETTO**

Tell me, dear, can't we do these ceremonies, these formalities, after the wedding?  
Let's just get to it – then we can go on having ceremonies forever after.

**ROSAURA**

Ah, Signor Zanetto, it seems you want to play with me.

**ZANETTO**

Sure, I'd like to play with you. I want to play man and wife.

**ROSAURA**

When the time comes.

**ZANETTO**

There is an old saying: "Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do today."  
Come on – don't make me suffer!

*[He moves to her, tries to take her hand]*

**ROSAURA**

Such impertinence!

**ZANETTO**

Come on!

**ROSAURA**

Be sensible, I tell you!

**ZANETTO**

I am.

*[He tries to embrace her]*

**ROSAURA**

Beast!

*[She slaps his face]*

[ZANETTO *looks up astonished. touches his cheek, looks at ROSAURA, bows, and leaves.*]

**ACT ONE**  
**SCENE EIGHT**

**ROSAURA**

God! What insolence! What an impudent young man! I would never have expected such boldness from a man, who at first sight, seemed such a dull-witted fool. But it's always the shy ones! We women should never be left alone with men, it's too dangerous. That's what the good Signor Pancrazio always says. Ah, here he comes... His face clearly shows the goodness of his heart.

**PANCRAZIO**

Heaven protect you, young lady. What is it? You seem troubled.

**ROSAURA**

Oh, Signor Pancrazio, if you only knew what happened to me.

**PANCRAZIO**

What? What is it? Confide in me -- open your heart, my dear. You can always rely on me.

**ROSAURA**

I'll tell you, sir. You know my father arranged for me to marry a Venetian.

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] If only he hadn't!

**ROSAURA**

And you know that he came Bergamo and that he's just arrived in town.

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] I wish he'd broken his neck on the way.

**ROSAURA**

Well, it turns out he's a fool, and also very forward.

**PANCRAZIO**

The two often go together.

**ROSAURA**

My father introduced us without delay.

**PANCRAZIO**

That's bad.

**ROSAURA**

And then he left me alone with him.

**PANCRAZIO**

That's worse.

**ROSAURA**

And then he...

**PANCRAZIO**

I can imagine.

**ROSAURA**

... he said *indecent* words.

**PANCRAZIO**

And *tender*, too, isn't that so?

**ROSAURA**

Yes, sir.

**PANCRAZIO**

And he *did* something... something immodest...?

**ROSAURA**

Precisely.

**PANCRAZIO**

And then?... What happened then?

**ROSAURA**

He provoked me, so I ... I gave his face a slap.

**PANCRAZIO**

Oh, wonderful, oh, wise, oh, exemplary girl! Worthy to be inscribed in the catalogue of the great heroines of our century! I don't have words enough to praise your judicious and resolute spirit. That's how to treat the insolent! That's how to mortify those who dare to disrespect the fair sex! Oh heroic hand, oh illustrious and glorious hand! Let me show my admiration and reverence by placing a kiss on that very hand that deserves the applause of the entire world.

*[He takes her hand and kisses it tenderly]*

**ROSAURA**

Then my behavior earns your approval?

**PANCRAZIO**

Yes! Definitely! Nowadays it's a miracle to find a young woman modest enough to slap a lover! Continue to follow that path. Make it a habit to despise young men: from them, you can expect only heartache, infidelity, and abuse. And, if you ever decide to give your heart, find one who is worthy of your love.

**ROSAURA**

But where will I find such a man?

**PANCRAZIO**

Oh, Rosaura-- for now, I can say no more. I think about you and your welfare more than you realize. But enough. Someday you will know.

**ROSAURA**

Signore Pancrazio, you are so good to us, so kind, I know how much you care for the welfare of our family, but, to be tell the truth... I kind of like Signor Zanetto. If only he weren't so impudent, perhaps... perhaps...

**PANCRAZIO**

Oh, no, please! Seal your careless lips! Don't spoil your heroic deed with such base sentiment! Come on... hate this abominable man! The man who cannot be modest, proves that he is not governed by reason! Your virtues deserve a nobler object. Don't ever let me hear you mention his name again!

**ROSAURA**

You're right, Signor Pancrazio. Excuse my weakness. I'll go tell my father that I don't want to marry him.

**PANCRAZIO**

Excellent! Now you have earned my praise! I will come and add my reasons to your own.

**ROSAURA**

Do me a favor: never forsake me. [*Aside*] What an honorable man, what a wise man he is! Happy my father to have him in the house. Happy me to learn from his advice.

[*She goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE NINE**

**PANCRAZIO**

Since I don't have youth, good looks, or money, I shall have to get Rosaura through false virtue or fake wisdom. Yes, that is the way that will perhaps -- perhaps will get me to my goal! Nowadays, he who *pretends* the best, wins. To *be* wise, you only

have to *look* wise.  
[ *He goes*]

**ACT ONE**  
**SCENE TEN**

[BEATRICE, *dressed in traveling clothes, enters with her servant and FLORINDO*]

**BEATRICE**

Signor Florindo, I want very much to go back to Venice.

**FLORINDO**

Oh, but why such a sudden decision?

**BEATRICE**

It is already six days that I have been waiting for Tonino. He is supposed to take me to Milano, but he is nowhere to be seen! I'm afraid he's either changed his mind, or some strange accident has detained him in Venice. I have no choice but to depart at once and find out for myself.

**FLORINDO**

Forgive me for saying so, but this is reckless! You want to go back to Venice?! You just ran *away* from Venice, thanks to Tonino! If your parents see you there, you're lost.

**BEATRICE**

Venice is big. If I enter at night, I will not be seen.

**FLORINDO**

No, Signora Beatrice, I cannot let you go! Tonino told me to keep you here; he placed you under my protection. I'm compelled to look after you by the laws of my friendship with him. [*Aside*] And by the force of my love for her.

**BEATRICE**

Don't get upset if, without your help and against your will, I secure for myself the means to depart. I will find a coach, and I will return to Venice with my servant, just as I came with him to Verona!

**FLORINDO**

That would be the worst mistake! Didn't you tell me yourself that you were harassed on your trip by a certain Lelio? And haven't I seen him myself right here in Verona, always hovering around you -- so much so that I have almost been obliged to jump in and fight him. If he finds out that you're traveling back, you cannot avoid his insults.

**BEATRICE**

An honorable woman does not fear insults.

**FLORINDO**

But a woman, however honorable, who travels alone, even with a servant, is always indecent and an easy target for insult.

**BEATRICE**

Nonetheless, I want to leave.

**FLORINDO**

Wait two more days.

**BEATRICE**

Oh, deep down, I know that I have lost my Tonino forever!

**FLORINDO**

Don't think such thoughts! But... if you *were* to have lost him, why would you want to return to Venice?

**BEATRICE**

What reason would I have for staying in Verona?

**FLORINDO**

Here, you might meet someone who appreciates your qualities and would take Tonino's place in your heart.

**BEATRICE**

Oh, that will never be! It will be Tonino or death!

**FLORINDO**

[*Aside*] If I can get her to stay, and Tonino doesn't materialize, I might be able to win her yet.

**BEATRICE**

[*Aside*] When he least expects it, I'll slip away.

**FLORINDO**

Oh, God! Here comes Lelio, that fop! He's always hanging around you! What would you do without me?!

**BEATRICE**

Let's leave --

**FLORINDO**

Oh, no. Show no fear. Stay calm. Don't worry.

**BEATRICE**

[*Aside*] This is all I need! I'll never get out of here!

**ACT ONE  
SCENE ELEVEN**

**LELIO**

Beautiful Venetiana, I have heard that you want to return to your native land. If so, take advantage of me: to you, I will give a carriage, horses, driver, money, and whatever you want – provided you grant me the pleasure of accompanying you.

**BEATRICE**

[*Aside*] How vulgar!

**FLORINDO**

Sir, pardon me, but by what right do you make these offers to Signora Beatrice, when you can plainly see that she is with me?

**LELIO**

Why do I care that she is with you? What are you to me? Who are you? Her brother? Her relative? Her bodyguard?

**FLORINDO**

I am amazed at you and at your rude behavior! I am a man of honor. I am the one assigned to protect this lady.

**LELIO**

Well, friend, you have a difficult assignment.

**FLORINDO**

Why?

**LELIO**

Because it would take a manlier man than you to defend such a woman.

**FLORINDO**

I'm man enough to take you on and a thousand like you!

**LELIO**

[*To FLORINDO*] Cut it short! [*To BEATRICE*] What would you like from me? Money? Clothes? Protection? Just ask...

**FLORINDO**

You make me lose my patience!

**LELIO**

Oh, come on, I know your kind: you're a gelding! Signora Beatrice, give me your hand and let me be of service.

**BEATRICE**

You are impertinent.

**LELIO**

Love demands audacity. What need have we of useless ceremonies? Come on, let's go.  
[*He reaches for her hand, she pulls it away.*]

**FLORINDO**

Now you've done it! Take that!  
[*Gives LELIO a shove*]

**LELIO**

This, to me? To me, you fool! To me, whom no man in the world has dared to cross without paying for such boldness with his blood? Do you know who I am? I am the Marquis Lelio, Lord of Fresh Mountain, Count of Clear Fountain, Magistrate of Shadow Forest. I have more estates than you have hairs on your badly-combed wig. And I have more millions of ducats than you have had beatings.

**FLORINDO**

And you have more crazy notions in your head than there grains of sand in the sea and stars in the sky. [*Aside*] Count and Marquis, indeed! He thinks I don't know him. He's Doctor Balanzoni's nephew.

**LELIO**

Either the lady comes with me, or you will feel the full wrath of my fury!

**FLORINDO**

This woman is in my custody. Lay claim to her and I will answer with this sword.

**LELIO**

Poor boy! I feel sorry for you! You want to die, is that it?

**BEATRICE**

[*To FLORINDO, quietly*] Signor Florindo, don't put yourself at risk.

**FLORINDO**

[*To BEATRICE*] Don't worry, I'll cut him down to size!

**LELIO**

Stay alive! You are young. Leave this woman with me. The world is full of women, but you have only one life.

**FLORINDO**

I value honor more than life. Leave, or draw your sword!  
*[Draws his sword]*

**LELIO**

You are not my equal. You are not noble. I will not fight with you.

**FLORINDO**

Noble or common – this is how I deal with cowards.  
*[Strikes him with the flat of his sword]*

**LELIO**

This, to me! Oh, protectors of my noble line, assist me in this battle.  
*[Lays his hand on his sword]*

**FLORINDO**

Now we'll see what you can do!  
*[They fight]*

**BEATRICE**

Oh, unhappy me! I don't want to witness a tragedy! I'll withdraw to this inn.  
*[As the two fight, BEATRICE leaves with her servant]*

**ACT ONE**  
**SCENE TWELVE**

*[FLORINDO and LELIO fight. FLORINDO slips and falls.  
TONINO enters and observes.]*

**FLORINDO**

Ah! I slipped.

**LELIO**

Reckless man! You are defeated!  
*[Holds the sword to FLORINDO's chest]*

**FLORINDO**

I slipped by accident.

**LELIO**

My courage defeated you! Die!!

**TONINO**

*[Enters with sword drawn to defend FLORINDO]*  
Hold!! Hold!! When a gentleman is on the ground, your sword should be bound!

**LELIO**

Why do you butt in?

**TONINO**

I butt in because I am a man of honor, and I cannot tolerate your behavior.

**FLORINDO**

What?! Signor Tonino! Dear friend...

*[Stands up]*

**TONINO**

*[Quietly, to FLORINDO]*

Not so loud. I am your friend. I came just in time to save your life. But don't call me by name. *[To LELIO]* Look alive, you good for nothing, come at me!

*[Challenges LELIO]*

**LELIO**

*[Aside]* This is all I need... *[To TONINO]* Who are you?

**TONINO**

I'm a Venetian. I'm not afraid of you. I could handle ten of your kind!

**LELIO**

I have nothing against you, and I don't want to fight you.

**TONINO**

But I have something against *you*, and I do want to fight.

**LELIO**

Are you crazy? What do you have against me?

**TONINO**

You have insulted my friend, so you have insulted me. In Venice, we value friendship more than life, itself. And I wouldn't be worthy of the name, Venetian, if I didn't live up to the example of my fellow citizens who are the epitome of honor!

**LELIO**

What insult? How did I insult this great friend of yours?

**TONINO**

You think it's nothing?! To kill a man when he's down?! You think it's nothing? To tell him, "die," when he is lying on his back! Come on, put your hand on that sword!

**FLORINDO**

*[To TONINO]* No, my friend, don't put yourself at risk for me.

**TONINO**

Step Aside! Fighting this flailing lummock is about as dangerous as drinking a glass of milk.

**LELIO**

I have suffered your insolence long enough, this is an affront to my honor and the honor of my forefathers.

**TONINO**

That's true.

**LELIO**

I swear by Heaven –

**TONINO**

I swear by Earth –

**LELIO**

[LELIO *stands on guard*]  
Here I am!

**TONINO**

Bravo, what courage.  
[*They fight. TONINO disarms LELIO*]

**LELIO**

Rotten luck! I am disarmed.

**TONINO**

I have disarmed you. And that's enough. You see how one *should* behave? Unlike you, I don't kill a man when he's down; I don't say "Die!" It's honor enough to have defeated you. It's enough to keep your sword as a memento of this triumph – just the blade – I'll send you the handle so you can sell it and pay for a doctor to bleed you and help you get over the shock --

**LELIO**

Enough! There will come a time when I will get my revenge!

**TONINO**

I'm ready whenever you want!

**LELIO**

We'll see, we'll see  
[LELIO *goes*]

**ACT I**  
**SCENE 13**

**TONINO**

[*Calling after him*]  
Your fame's secured! Go on, skedaddle!  
You can boast that you fell to *me*, in battle.

**FLORINDO**

My dear friend, I owe you so much --

**TONINO**

It's nothing. Now... Beatrice, where is she?

**FLORINDO**

Beatrice! [*Aside*] For my sake, I must pretend. [*To TONINO*] Who is Beatrice?

**TONINO**

The girl who escaped from Venice on my account. The girl I sent here to you, the one I begged you to look after until I arrived.

**FLORINDO**

My friend, I didn't see anyone.

**TONINO**

Is this some kind of joke?

**FLORINDO**

I'm serious. I'm afraid I haven't seen the lady of whom you speak. It would have been a pleasure to serve you....

**TONINO**

I understand. I see what's happened. It always seemed to me to be impossible to find a faithful woman, but we've been in love for two years. Her father doesn't want to give her to me. He has some crazy notion that I'm a little wild because I enjoy good company and revel in life's pleasures -- always with honor and in a respectful way, of course. Since he didn't want to give her to me, I suggested that we elope. Without a moment's hesitation, she gathered up her things to come here. I arranged for a faithful servant of mine to accompany her here to Verona. Meanwhile, I delayed my own departure, so as not to arouse suspicion. But some strange foreigner, claiming that she was his, discovered my plan and tried to pick a fight with me. One thing led to another, and I gave him a powerful slap! It was the talk of Venice. He wanted to kill me. So I grabbed a gondola, and without even going home to get money or luggage, with only what I had, I came here, believing that I would find my dear Beatrice. But the bitch has betrayed me. Ah, well -- I'll stay here for a few hours. But, please, don't call me Tonino, because I don't want to be recognized. Call me Zanetto!

**FLORINDO**

Why, Zanetto?

**TONINO**

Because I have a twin brother in Bergamo that has that name, and he and I look just alike. People will take me for him. That way I'll avoid any danger.

**FLORINDO**

This twin brother of yours, is he still in Bergamo?

**TONINO**

I think so, but I'm not sure, because we've been more relatives than friends. He's got more money than I do, but then I enjoy life more than he does. I heard that he wants to get married, but I don't know where or to whom. He's a bit of a fool. Happy the woman who marries him: women would rather have a fool for a husband than a good income.

**FLORINDO**

My friend, if you want to honor my house, it is yours.

**TONINO**

I don't want to cause you any inconvenience.

**FLORINDO**

It would be my pleasure. But, I have to tell you that I have a rather annoying father who doesn't like to see people in the house.

**TONINO**

No, no, don't worry about it. I'll stay at an Inn.

**FLORINDO**

I'm terribly sorry. If there's anything else that you need --

**TONINO**

Tonino Bisognosi doesn't scrounge off his friends. Honorable men, like me, they give, they do not take. Come to Venice and you will see. We Venetians give our heart to strangers. We like to treat strangers in such a way that they will all give better reports of Venice than of their own home towns. I know you mean well, but a good mother doesn't say, "would you like?" she says, "Take!"

**FLORINDO**

My dear friend, come!

**TONINO**

Pretend that I have accepted. If I can be of help, ask me. I am Tonino, and that's enough! My life, my life's blood – first for my country, and then for my friends. "Fight for your homeland and whoever turns his back, is a traitor!" Your servant, sir.

[*He goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE FOURTEEN**

**FLORINDO**

I am completely mortified! Tonino has justly reprimanded me, but it is the love I feel for Beatrice that makes me such an ingrate. If I take him to my house, my plan will be discovered. It would be better if he left Verona, and she stayed. Then I would reveal my feelings to her, and maybe, she will not reject them. I'll go and find her. For today, and tomorrow, I must keep her out of sight. I'll send her servant out of Verona. I'll do everything I can to get this rare beauty. I know I fail to do my duty and I betray my friendship, but love is the taskmaster of heart. I owe Tonino my life, and I'm ready to sacrifice my life for him. I'm willing to do anything for him – except give up Beatrice! I adore her.

[*He goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE FIFTEEN**

[*ZANETTO enters, depressed and deep in thought, holding his cheek.*]

**LELIO**

[*To ZANETTO, assuming he is TONINO*]

Now you are alone! This is the time for vengeance!

**ZANETTO**

Your most humble servant -

**LELIO**

Fewer words, more actions. Where is your hand?

**ZANETTO**

My hand? Here it is.

**LELIO**

What, don't play the fool. Put your hand on the sword.

**ZANETTO**

On the sword?

**LELIO**

Yes, on the sword.

**ZANETTO**

Why?

**LELIO**

Because my courageous heart will not abide a single defeat among its heroic deeds of valor!

**ZANETTO**

Where are you from?

**LELIO**

Rome. Why?

**ZANETTO**

Because I don't understand a word you say.

**LELIO**

You don't understand a word I say? Perhaps you will understand this glittering steel.  
[*Puts hand on sword*]

**ZANETTO**

[*Shouting*] Ah! People, help me! He's going to kill me!

**LELIO**

What?! Do you mock me?! I know you're not afraid! But Mars himself would yield to me, unless Jupiter disarmed me. On guard!

**ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] First a slap, now the sword. This is not my day.

**LELIO**

Come on! Take up your sword!  
[*Hits ZANETTO with the flat of his sword*]

**ZANETTO**

Help!

**LELIO**

Defend yourself, or I shall run you through.

**ACT ONE  
SCENE SIXTEEN**

[*FLORINDO enters, sword in hand*]

**FLORINDO**

Here I am to save my friend! [*To LELIO*] Turn your sword on me!

**LELIO**

[*To FLORINDO, pointing to the one he thinks is TONINO*]  
That man is a mouse –a coward!

**ZANETTO**

Right, it's true.

**FLORINDO**

[*To LELIO*] That's a lie! He is fearless!

**ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] A fat lot he knows.

**LELIO**

Then why does shirk this battle?

**ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] Because I'm scared.

**FLORINDO**

Because you're not worthy of a rematch.

**ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] He's completely mad.

**FLORINDO**

Anyway, your battle is with me.

**LELIO**

[*To FLORINDO*] Here I am – I don't fear the likes of you, or a hundred of you!  
[*They fight*]

**ZANETTO**

Very good... well done ... go on ... skewer him!

[*LELIO falls.*]

**FLORINDO**

Ah, the Great One is defeated!

**LELIO**

Cruel fate -- the enemy of the valiant !

**FLORINDO**

Your life is in my hands.

**ZANETTO**

Good, kill him. Skewer him.

**FLORINDO**

That would not be the action of a gentleman.

**ZANETTO**

Was it the action of a gentleman when he was about to skewer *me*?

**FLORINDO**

But, before – didn't you reprimand him because he was going to kill me when I was down?

**ZANETTO**

You're nuts! Go on, kill him!\_

**FLORINDO**

[*To LELIO*] No - Live, and thank me for your life.

**LELIO**

You are worthy of my respect, but that one is a contemptible coward.  
[*He goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE SEVENTEEN**

**ZANETTO**

[*Calling after him*] Whatever you say --

**FLORINDO**

My dear friend, why are you acting so different? Are you pretending? Is it a prank?

**ZANETTO**

No, sir, I'm not pretending. Never in my life have I been so afraid. You got here just in time -- He was going to skewer me!

**FLORINDO**

I am happy to have saved your life.

**ZANETTO**

Bless you. Let me kiss the hand that saved me.

**FLORINDO**

But I only did you what you did for me: you saved my life, now I saved yours.

**ZANETTO**

I've saved your life?

**FLORINDO**

Yes, you protected me against Lelio the first time.

**ZANETTO**

I don't remember it.

**FLORINDO**

That's just like you. You're being modest. Friend, I advise you to leave Verona as soon as you can. You have no doubt been recognized.

**ZANETTO**

Yeah, he knew me all right.

**FLORINDO**

And if you're known, that means trouble.

**ZANETTO**

Things are going from bad to worse.

**FLORINDO**

Well, you did slap someone, didn't you?

**ZANETTO**

The other way around, you mean --

**FLORINDO**

*You* have been slapped?

**ZANETTO**

Yes – could you believe it? That she could have done that to me?

**FLORINDO**

I could believe it.

**ZANETTO**

Ah, she gave me such a blow –

**FLORINDO**

Have you seen the lady?

**ZANETTO**

No, sir, I haven't seen her any more.

**FLORINDO**

[*Aside*] And I haven't been able to find Beatrice, either.

**ZANETTO**

...and I don't care if I ever see her again.

**FLORINDO**

Good, you'll do well to forget about her. Take my advice: go home.\_

**ZANETTO**

That's what I intended to do.

**FLORINDO**

If I can do anything else for you --

**ZANETTO**

I thank you.

**FLORINDO**

Arrivedercci.

**ZANETTO**

You're so kind.

**FLORINDO**

[*Aside*] Poor man, he seems to have turned into an imbecile. Love plays ugly jokes.  
[*He goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE EIGHTEEN**

**ZANETTO**

My goose was almost cooked. If that guy hadn't come, I'd have been a gonner. It seems that everybody knows about the slap that lady gave me. Anyway... that young man likes me. He tells me to go. But I think about Rosaura: I like Rosaura, and I'd like to have her for a wife. I'm sorry Arlecchino hasn't arrived with my cash and my stuff so I could give her a present and set things right.

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] Here is that moron, Zanetto. He hovers around the house and can't seem to pull himself away.

**ZANETTO**

She slapped me. That means she hates me. But... my mother also slapped me... and she loved me... In the end, she didn't kill me. Ah, what a silly man I am. I don't want to upset her. I'll go and ask her forgiveness.

[*He goes toward the DOCTOR's house*]

Young man! Where are you going?  
**PANCRAZIO**

To see my bride.  
**ZANETTO**

The one who gave you a slap?  
**PANCRAZIO**

Yes, the very one.  
**ZANETTO**

You are going to make amends and marry her?  
**PANCRAZIO**

You guessed it.  
**ZANETTO**

You like the young lady?  
**PANCRAZIO**

Very much!  
**ZANETTO**

You love her?  
**PANCRAZIO**

Oh, yes!  
**ZANETTO**

And you wish to marry her?  
**PANCRAZIO**

Oh, if I only could.  
**ZANETTO**

Oh, poor man, I feel sorry for you.  
**PANCRAZIO**

Why is that?  
**ZANETTO**

You're on the edge of a precipice.  
**PANCRAZIO**

But why?  
**ZANETTO**

Don't you want to get married?  
**PANCRAZIO**

Yes, sir.  
**ZANETTO**

Poor, unhappy man, you are ruined.  
**PANCRAZIO**

But why?  
**ZANETTO**

I, whose only desire is to serve my fellow man, must, in duty to brotherly love, warn you that what you are about to do totally insane.  
**PANCRAZIO**

How come?  
**ZANETTO**

Do you know what marriage is?  
**PANCRAZIO**

Marriage... yes... it's... how can I say? Uh... Right! Man and wife.  
**ZANETTO**

Oh, if you knew what marriage is, what woman is, you would not speak of it so lightly.  
**PANCRAZIO**

What do you mean?  
**ZANETTO**

Marriage is a chain that binds a man like a slave in the galley.  
**PANCRAZIO**

Marriage?  
**ZANETTO**

Marriage.  
**PANCRAZIO**

**ZANETTO**

You are kidding!

**PANCRAZIO**

Marriage is a burden that makes a man sweat by day and keeps him awake at night.  
It is a burden on the spirit, on the body, on the purse, and on the head.

**ZANETTO**

That's terrible.

**PANCRAZIO**

And the woman who seems so beautiful and gentle, what do you think she really is?

**ZANETTO**

Pray, what is she?

**PANCRAZIO**

An enchantress—a siren who will lure you to destruction, who will entice you,  
deceive you, and plunge you into penury.

**ZANETTO**

Woman?

**PANCRAZIO**

Woman.

**ZANETTO**

Oh, my!

**PANCRAZIO**

Her sparkling eyes are two flames of fire that, little by little, will reduce you to cinders.

**ZANETTO**

The eyes, two flames of fire --

**PANCRAZIO**

Her mouth is a pot of poison that slowly insinuates itself in through your ears and  
down to your heart and kills you!

**ZANETTO**

Her mouth ...a pot of poison.

**PANCRAZIO**

Her cheeks, so soft and rosy, are witch's snares!

**ZANETTO**

Cheeks... witch's snares....

**PANCRAZIO**

When a woman comes your way, remember: she's a fury come to rip you apart!

**ZANETTO**

Who would have guessed!

**PANCRAZIO**

And when a woman tries to embrace you, she's a devil come to drag you to hell!\_

**ZANETTO**

Heaven forbid!

**PANCRAZIO**

Think about it – think about it very carefully.

**ZANETTO**

I thought about it.

**PANCRAZIO**

No more women?

**ZANETTO**

No more women.

**PANCRAZIO**

No more marriage?

**ZANETTO**

No more marriage.

**PANCRAZIO**

You'll thank me for this advice.

**ZANETTO**

Heaven sent you.

**PANCRAZIO**

Be wise, be blessed.

**ZANETTO**

I love you like my father.

**PANCRAZIO**

You may kiss my hand.

**ZANETTO**

Oh, blessed one!  
[*Kisses his hand*]

**PANCRAZIO**

Women ?

**ZANETTO**

Blech!!

**PANCRAZIO**

Marriage?

**ZANETTO**

Phooey!!

**PANCRAZIO**

Never again?

**ZANETTO**

Never again!

**PANCRAZIO**

Certain?

**ZANETTO**

Sure!

**PANCRAZIO**

Bravo. Bravo. Bravo.  
[*He goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE NINETEEN**

**ZANETTO**

Whew! I would have been in a great mess if that gentleman hadn't turned up.  
Marriage: burden here, burden there -- burden to the purse, burden to the head.  
Women: sirens, witches, devils. Oh, what a mess!

**BEATRICE**

[*To ZANETTO, believing him to be TONINO*]  
Oh, happy me! Here is my love! Here is my fiancée... When did you arrive?

**ZANETTO**

Get away from me!

**BEATRICE**

What ? Am I not your bride? Didn't you come to Verona to fulfill our wedding contract?

**ZANETTO**

Ah, yes – the chain that binds a man like a slave in a galley. I know the game.

**BEATRICE**

What chain? Why are you talking about chains? Don't you remember your promise?

**ZANETTO**

Promise? What promise?

**BEATRICE**

Your promise of marriage.

**ZANETTO**

Oh yes, marriage... Burden to the purse, burden to the head

**BEATRICE**

Please, I beg of you, look at me. Don't play jokes, you're killing me.

**ZANETTO**

*[Aside]* There really is fire in her eyes!

**BEATRICE**

Do you have doubts about me? Listen to me, I'll explain...

**ZANETTO**

Close that mouth, that poisonous pot. I don't want the poison to seep down into my heart.

**BEATRICE**

Alas! Your speech confounds me. You make the innocent blush.

**ZANETTO**

Look at that! She's getting red. She is a witch.

**BEATRICE**

I am in despair -- Listen to me, for pity sake!

*[She moves close to ZANETTO]*

**ZANETTO**

Keep away from me, you fury come to rip me apart.  
[*Runs from her*]

**BEATRICE**

In Heavens name what have I done?  
[*Moves close to him*]

**ZANETTO**

Get away, you devil, come to drag me down to hell!  
[*ZANETTO goes*]

**ACT ONE  
SCENE TWENTY**

**BEATRICE**

Do I hear all this and not die?! What must I think about my Tonino? Has he gone mad? Or was he told some wicked lie about me? Oh, miserable woman. What will become of you? I will follow him to the ends of the earth to uncover the truth. Oh, Love – you that brought me bad luck, you that made me abandon country, parents, friends – help me now. If you want my blood, take it. I'll pour out the last drop of my blood before I lose my beloved bridegroom.

**ACT TWO  
SCENE ONE**

[*ARLECCHINO enters, wearing traveling dress. PORTER carries luggage.*]

**ARLECCHINO**

At last, the beautiful city of Verona, where Cupid has shot his arrow and hit my heart, and I didn't even see the bow. Verona, where I'm in love with a girl I've never met and I'm going to wed a girl I've never seen.

**PORTER**

I would like to get this over – I have other appointments. Some of us have to earn our daily bread!

**ARLECCHINO**

But I don't know where my master is staying. Tell me, do you know Signor Zanetto Bisognosi?

**PORTER**

I don't know him. Don't know who he is.

**ARLECCHINO**

He is my master. He's come down from Bergamo to Verona to get married. He will have the mistress and I will have the maid. It's a package deal. He arrived before me, and now I'm stuck with all his stuff. I don't know where he's lodging, and I don't know how to find him.

**PORTER**

If you don't know any more than that, you're going to have a hell of a time; Verona's a very big town.

**ARLECCHINO**

What luck! Here he comes now! Shh! let's hide: I want to play a joke on him.

**PORTER**

You take to many liberties, playing tricks on your master.

**ARLECCHINO**

We're friends, him and me. Come on, he'll love it!

**PORTER**

Do it yourself, I don't have time to waste.

**ARLECCHINO**

Come on, I'll pay you.  
[*They withdraw*]

**ACT TWO  
SCENE TWO**

**TONINO**

How can it be that Beatrice is not here?! Is it possible she played me for a fool? Is it possible that she betrayed me?

[*ARLECCHINO, wrapped in a cloak, struts up and down in front of Tonino, believing him to be Zanetto* ]

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] What is this business? What's going on here?

[*ARLECCHINO suddenly turns, passes by menacingly* ]

[*Aside*] Could he be an assassin, sent to Verona by the man I slapped?

[*ARLECCHINO crosses again, stomping his feet*]

**TONINO**

What is this? What do you want? Who are you?

**ARLECCHINO**

What a lunatic, he doesn't recognize me.

**TONINO**

Come on... tell me what you want from me.

[ARLECCHINO *displays bravura acts*]

Now we'll find out what this thug is made of --

[*Hand on his sword*]

**ARLECCHINO**

Stop! Stop! It's me. [*Drops the cloak*] Don't you recognize me?

**TONINO**

Who are you? I don't know you.

**ARLECCHINO**

What?! You don't recognize me?!

**TONINO**

No, sir, I don't.

**ARLECCHINO**

[*Aside*] It must be the air of this town. He's gone mad.

**TONINO**

Will you tell me who you are? What do you want?

**ARLECCHINO**

Have you been drinking?

**TONINO**

Don't take liberties! I'll cut you to pieces.

**ARLECCHINO**

You really don't recognize me?

**TONINO**

No, sir, I don't.

**ARLECCHINO**

Now, you will recognize me. Here, take this.

[*Gives him the box of jewels*]

Do you recognize me?

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] What beautiful jewels! What's going on?

**ARLECCHINO**

So? ... Do you recognize me?

**TONINO**

No, sir. I don't.

**ARLECCHINO**

No? *Now* you will recognize me. Take this cash.

*[Gives him the money bag]* Well?

**TONINO**

*[Aside]* A bag full of money? *[To ARLECCHINO]* No sir, I do not recognize you.

**ARLECCHINO**

Damnation! You don't recognize me? Take a look at this luggage and you'll recognize me.

**TONINO**

This luggage means nothing to me, and I don't know you.

**ARLECCHINO**

Are you crazy or drunk?

**TONINO**

*You* are crazy or drunk. These jewels and this money are not mine. I'm a gentleman. I want nothing to do with them. Take them back where they belong.

**ARLECCHINO**

I'm astonished at you! This stuff's yours: the jewels, the money, the bags. These are the things that you gave to me to bring here, and I have faithfully brought them! Now tell me, where are you lodging?!

**TONINO**

At that inn.

**ARLECCHINO**

Shall I take the bags inside?

**TONINO**

Take them whatever you like.

**ARLECCHINO**

And you still don't recognize me??

**TONINO**

No sir, I don't know you.

**ARLECCHINO**

You damn fool! [*Slowly, carefully, as if to child or idiot*] I go inside... I take bags to room... You come sleep... after you sleep it off, then you recognize me.  
[*He takes the bags and the cape, and goes into the inn*]

**ACT TWO**  
**SCENE THREE**

**TONINO**

What a stroke of luck! A box of jewels, a bag of money... someone could take advantage of this happenstance -- but I am a man of honor, a gentleman, and I don't want someone else's stuff. That man is crazy. Heaven only knows how he got hold of this treasure chest and this money. If I hadn't come along, he would have given them to some thief. I'll keep both, and if I should find out who has lost this stuff, I'll return it immediately.

[*COLOMBINA comes out from the DOCTOR's house*]

**COLOMBINA**

Signor Zanetto -

**TONINO**

Are you talking to me?

**COLOMBINA**

Yes, to you. Aren't you Signor Zanetto Bisognosi?

**TONINO**

Yes, I am. [*Aside*] It's working, she takes me for Zanetto.  
[*To COLOMBINA*] At your service.

**COLOMBINA**

If you'd be so kind, my mistress would like to speak with you.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Oh, I get it -- it's the old tourist scam. [*To COLOMBINA*] Gladly.  
As long as she doesn't want anything else, I will be happy to oblige.

**COLOMBINA**

What nice jewels you have, Signor Zanetto.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Ah-ha, now I see what's up. The mistress spotted the jewels from the balcony and sent an emissary.

**COLOMBINA**

They must be for Signora Rosaura.

**TONINO**

Is she your mistress?

**COLOMBINA**

Yes, sir, my mistress.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] If she thinks I'll just hand over the jewels, she's deluded! But I would like to have some fun... [*To COLOMBINA*] They could be hers, if she's to my liking.

**COLOMBINA**

I don't mean to boast, but she's a very pretty girl.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Brava. And *she's* a very pretty pimp. [*To COLOMBINA*] So, how do I take care of the bill?

**COLOMBINA**

What do you mean?

**TONINO**

I mean the money -

**COLOMBINA**

Oh, she doesn't need money.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Of course not, she wants the jewels. [*To COLOMBINA*] So your mistress is rich?

**COLOMBINA**

Certainly, she's a lawyer's daughter.

**TONINO**

A lawyer's daughter!

**COLOMBINA**

Yes, as if you didn't know that.

**TONINO**

But what about the father? What will *he* say if he sees me in the house?

**COLOMBINA**

He wants you to. He told me to invite you in.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Perfect! Father, daughter, and servant – all in the same red-light gang! This could be more trouble than I thought! [*To COLOMBINA*] Listen, my dear, tell your mistress that I would like to, but some other time -

**COLOMBINA**

No, sir, you must come right now. And if you are a gentleman, you will do what she asks.

**TONINO**

Let me just take these jewels to my room, and I'll be right back.

**COLOMBINA**

Oh, no. You have to bring the jewels if you want to make peace.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Just as I said! They want the jewels. But this time, they won't get them. They're not mine, and I'm a gentleman. I know the ways of the world.

[*He closes the jewel box*]

**ACT TWO  
SCENE FOUR**

[*DOCTOR enters from the house*]

**COLOMBINA**

Master, here is Signor Zanetto. I wore myself out trying to persuade him to come in the house, but he doesn't want to.

**DOCTOR**

Signor Zanetto, please, go in the house, my daughter is waiting for you.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Bravo, bravo, bravo...!

**DOCTOR**

Your reluctance is an insult to that wonderful girl.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Better, better, and better.

**DOCTOR**

Do you want her to come down into the street?!

**TONINO**

Oh, no, I'll go in.

**DOCTOR**

So, go on... Be good.

You give me permission? **TONINO**

You are welcome any time of the day or night. **DOCTOR**

Always. The door is always open. **TONINO**

For Signor Zanetto, it's open house. **DOCTOR**

Only for me? **TONINO**

Only for you, of course. **DOCTOR**

And not for others? **TONINO**

Well... for a few intimate friends. **DOCTOR**

Of course... I'm going. **TONINO**

Yes, go. **DOCTOR**

And I can come and go... **TONINO**

Whenever you want. **DOCTOR**

Take off my clothes and lie down? **TONINO**

Of course. **DOCTOR**

Grab a bite? **TONINO**

**DOCTOR**

Make yourself at home.

**TONINO**

All right, I get the picture. My regards... [*Starts to go into the house*]

**DOCTOR**

Signor Zanetto, just one word, please...

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Watch, he's going to ask for the tip... [*To DOCTOR*] At your command.

**DOCTOR**

Forgive me for getting personal... what do you have in that box?

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Aha! My friend has spotted the jewels. [*To DOCTOR*] Just some trifles. Some little jewels.

**DOCTOR**

Good, good—my daughter will be so pleased.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] This doctor has a lot of nerve! [*To DOCTOR*] If she plays her cards right, they will be hers. [*Aside*] In your dreams!

**DOCTOR**

Truly, with women, one has to be generous.

**TONINO**

Sir, I am a gentleman! Neither you or your daughter will find cause to complain about me.

**DOCTOR**

Of that, I am certain.

**COLOMBINA**

[*To TONINO*] Go, and be done with it! Go at once!

**TONINO**

Shall I go alone?

**DOCTOR**

You are at liberty -

**TONINO**

Good! That's the way I like it. [*Aside*] What a father! He may be after the jewels, but I hope to get out of this without spending a cent!

[*He goes into the DOCTOR's house*]

**ACT TWO  
SCENE FIVE**

**COLOMBINA**

It seems to me that this Signor Zanetto is hardly in love with Signora Rosaura.

**DOCTOR**

Why do you say that?

**COLOMBINA**

Didn't you see how hard it was to get him into the house? "Shall I go alone?... Yes, sir... My respects." He's a pain in the ass.

**DOCTOR**

I can't blame him. You know what Rosaura did to him?

**COLOMBINA**

What did she do?

**DOCTOR**

She slapped him.

**COLOMBINA**

Why?

**DOCTOR**

I suspect that he took liberties with his hands.

**COLOMBINA**

In that case, she was right. And you, forgive me for saying it, but you shouldn't have sent him back into the house while she was alone.

**DOCTOR**

She's not alone. Signor Pancrazio is there, standing guard.

**COLOMBINA**

Damn your Signor Pancrazio!

**DOCTOR**

What has he done that you should curse him so?

**COLOMBINA**

I can't stand the sight of him. He acts the zealot and then -

**DOCTOR**

And then, what?...

**COLOMBINA**

Enough. He said some things to me -

**DOCTOR**

What did he say to you? Tell me.

**COLOMBINA**

He also likes to take liberties with *his* hands.

**DOCTOR**

Bite your wicked tongue! Don't speak that way about a man who is the paragon of honor and honesty. You owe him the same respect and obedience that you owe to me. Signor Pancrazio is a highly respected gentleman, and you are an ignorant and malicious wench.

*[He goes]*

**ACT TWO  
SCENE SIX**

**COLOMBINA**

My master can say whatever he wants, but I maintain, and will always maintain, that Signor Pancrazio is a fraud and a wicked man.

*[Enter ARLECCHINO]*

**ARLECCHINO**

Where in the hell is that lunatic? I've been waiting for over an hour and he hasn't shown up!

**COLOMBINA**

What a good-looking fellow.

**ARLECCHINO**

I'll ask that good-looking girl if she's seen him. Tell me something, sweetheart, if you don't mind -- Do you know a certain Signor Zanetto Bisognosi?

**COLOMBINA**

Sure, I know him.

Did you see him here? **ARLECCHINO**

I did. **COLOMBINA**

Would you be so kind as to tell me which way he went? **ARLECCHINO**

He went into that house. **COLOMBINA**

Who lives in this house? **ARLECCHINO**

Signora Rosaura, his bride. **COLOMBINA**

Do you know her, this Signora Rosaura? **ARLECCHINO**

I know her very well. **COLOMBINA**

And the maid, do you know her? **ARLECCHINO**

Of course I know her. I am she. **COLOMBINA**

What?! You? Signora Colombina? **ARLECCHINO**

I am Colombina. **COLOMBINA**

And me -- do you know who I am? **ARLECCHINO**

Who? **COLOMBINA**

Arlecchino Battocchio. **ARLECCHINO**

**COLOMBINA**

You? Arlecchino?

**ARLECCHINO**

Me.

**COLOMBINA**

My bridegroom!

**ARLECCHINO**

My bride!

**COLOMBINA**

Oh, so cute!

**ARLECCHINO**

Oh, so sweet!

**COLOMBINA**

What a pleasure!

**ARLECCHINO**

[*Aside*] What a relief!

**COLOMBINA**

When did you arrive?

**ARLECCHINO**

Listen, let's go inside so we can talk.

**COLOMBINA**

Wait a minute, I have to ask my mistress if you can come in.  
I don't know if she'll agree.

**ARLECCHINO**

And I must talk with my master.

**COLOMBINA**

Wait here, I'll be right back.

**ARLECCHINO**

You're very beautiful. I couldn't be happier.

**COLOMBINA**

Go on, you're kidding me.

**ARLECCHINO**

No, I swear, scout's honor!

**COLOMBINA**

Will you love me?

**ARLECCHINO**

Yes! Go, now, don't make me suffer.

**COLOMBINA**

I go, I go. [*Aside*] He's really cute.

**ACT TWO  
SCENE SEVEN**

**ARLECCHINO**

What luck! Thank you, God! She's nice. She's very nice. Better than Lucretia, and Lucretia satisfied Sextus. This one could satisfy seven!

**COLOMBINA**

[*From inside*] Arlecchino, Come in, come in -- my mistress is pleased.

**ARLECCHINO**

I'm coming, I'm coming.

[*Starts to go in the house when ZANETTO sees him from the opposite side*]

**ZANETTO**

[*Calling him*] Hey, Arlecchino! Arlecchino!!

**ARLECCHINO**

[*Turning*] Signore...

**ZANETTO**

What...?

**ARLECCHINO**

How...?

**ZANETTO**

You here?

**ARLECCHINO**

You here?

Of course. **ZANETTO**

Weren't you just in the house? **ARLECCHINO**

Where? **ZANETTO**

[*Pointing to Rosaura's house*] There. With the girl. **ARLECCHINO**

Alas, no. **ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] So, she lied to me. **ARLECCHINO**

Where's my stuff? **ZANETTO**

Unbelievable!... At the inn. **ARLECCHINO**

Where? **ZANETTO**

What an idiot. There – at the Two Towers. **ARLECCHINO**

Everything? **ZANETTO**

Everything. **ARLECCHINO**

Cash and jewels? **ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] His memory is shot. [*To ZANETTO*] Cash and jewels. **ARLECCHINO**

Let's go and see. **ZANETTO**

Let's go. **ARLECCHINO**

You got the key? **ZANETTO**

For what? **ARLECCHINO**

My room. **ZANETTO**

No. **ARLECCHINO**

So you just left the cash and jewels?! **ZANETTO**

And where are the cash and jewels? **ARLECCHINO**

Where are they?? **ZANETTO**

Incredible! **ARLECCHINO**

Unbelievable! **ZANETTO**

I gave them to you, both cash and jewels. **ARLECCHINO**

You didn't give me anything. **ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] Truth be told, he's crazy! **ARLECCHINO**

Where are my uncle's jewels?! Did you bring them? **ZANETTO**

I brought them. **ARLECCHINO**

**ZANETTO**

Then where are they?

**ARLECCHINO**

Let's go inside. You're making me crazy!

**ZANETTO**

You're easily upset. They should be in the room.

**ARLECCHINO**

They should be in the room.

**ZANETTO**

Then let's go. What a incredible jerk!

*[Goes into the inn]*

**ARLECCHINO**

Let's go. What a incredible gentleman!

*[Goes into the inn]*

**ACT TWO  
SCENE EIGHT**

**COLOMBINA**

*[At the door]*

Arlecchino! Where are you?! Wonderful! He's gone! This is how much he loves me. Where could he have gone to? Well, if he wants to, he'll come back. And if he doesn't, a girl like me can find husbands aplenty.

*[Goes into the house]*

**ACT TWO  
SCENE NINE**

*[A room in the doctor's house with table and chairs. TONINO sitting alone.]*

**TONINO**

I have been kept waiting for over an hour an hour, and still no mistress! They may *think* that they can cheat me – that I'm a simpleton who pays more the longer he is kept waiting –but you can't cheat Tonino!! I'm a Venetian, I'm a gentleman, and that's enough! It's now or never. Hey!! Is there anyone in the house?!

**BRIGHELLA**

*[Enters]*

At your service. What can I do for you?

**TONINO**

Who are you, sir?

**BRIGHELLA**

I'm a servant in this house.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] What a posh get-up for a pimp. [*To BRIGHELLA*] Tell me, friend, is your mistress going to show up, or shall I just go away?

**BRIGHELLA**

I'll go get her at once. By the way...I am not only a servant of this house, I was also a servant to the Bisognosi family.

**TONINO**

Do you know me?

**BRIGHELLA**

I knew your brother – a wonderful specimen of a man.

**TONINO**

Where did you know him?

**BRIGHELLA**

In Venice.

**TONINO**

So you knew him when he was a boy?

**BRIGHELLA**

Not only as a boy, but also as a man. Ah, here comes the mistress.

**TONINO**

No, wait, tell me... How did you know him in Venice, as a man?

**BRIGHELLA**

My mistress is here, I have to go. We'll talk later. Your servant, sir...  
[*He goes.*]

**ACT TWO  
SCENE TEN**

**TONINO**

What the devil was he talking about? Either he's crazy, or there's something going on here...

**ROSAURA**

Signor Zanetto, I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.

**TONINO**

Oh, it's nothing, my lady, I'm... dumbfounded. [*Aside*] What a body! What a face!

**ROSAURA**

[*Aside*] He's looking at me funny. Perhaps he is still upset because I slapped him.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] I'm staying in Verona. I'll never leave.

**ROSAURA**

Forgive me if I've inconvenienced you.

**TONINO**

It's nothing, nothing, madam. On the contrary, I consider myself fortunate to be worthy of the honor of your distinguished company.

**ROSAURA**

[*Aside*] This unusual compliment makes me think that he is mocking me. I must placate and humor him.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] She looks so modest.

**ROSAURA**

It was my father who insisted that I let you come into the house.

**TONINO**

So if your father had not insisted you wouldn't have called me here?

**ROSAURA**

Certainly not, I would not have dared to be so bold.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] See how a father leads to his daughter's disgrace.  
[*To ROSAURA*] So, you don't have any interest in me?

**ROSAURA**

On the contrary, I hold you in the highest esteem.

**TONINO**

You are too kind. Dare I hope for a token of your esteem?

**ROSAURA**

You can hope for anything... if my father commands me.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Poor girl, I feel sorry for her. It seems the father gives the nudge, and the daughter falls. [*To ROSAURA*] I beg your pardon, but I don't know if you understand. What are we supposed to do?

**ROSAURA**

About what?

**TONINO**

About our relationship?

**ROSAURA**

Talk to my father.

**TONINO**

Ah, I have to deal with him? So, he takes care of everything?

**ROSAURA**

Of course.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] What a scoundrel! [*To ROSAURA*] While we're waiting, could we just ...

**ROSAURA**

What?

**TONINO**

Enjoy ourselves, a little?

**ROSAURA**

Remember the slap.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] How strange! Even she knows that I slapped that foreigner in Venice!  
[*To ROSAURA*] Oh, it's nothing! I hardly even remember it!

**ROSAURA**

But I remember it well.

**TONINO**

Anyway, what does it matter?

**ROSAURA**

It matters to me, because you are too forward.

**TONINO**

But, my dear, in such a situation, one must be bold.

**ROSAURA**

In such a situation, it's better to be prudent.

**TONINO**

I don't know what to say. You're right. I won't do it again.  
It's enough that you love me.

**ROSAURA**

Of this, you can be sure.

**TONINO**

[*Sighing*] Ah!

**ROSAURA**

Such a sigh! Why?

**TONINO**

Because I'm afraid you say that to everyone.

**ROSAURA**

To everyone? I'm amazed at you!

**TONINO**

It's nothing, nothing... Forgive me.

**ROSAURA**

What reason do you have to say such a thing?

**TONINO**

Well, I'll tell you: as I only just arrived in Verona, I cannot possibly believe that you have fallen in love with me so quickly.

**ROSAURA**

Nonetheless, as soon as I saw you, I felt the ice in my heart start to melt, and I almost fainted.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] To believe her, or not to believe her... ?  
After all, she is a woman, and therefore, not to be trusted.

**ROSAURA**

And you, Signor Zanetto – do you love me?

**TONINO**

You're so beautiful, so gentle, so attractive... One would have to be a rock *not* to love you.

**ROSAURA**

What sign can you give me of your love?

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Sign? What is she after, caresses or cash?

[*To ROSAURA*] Anything! Just ask.

**ROSAURA**

It's up to you to how you demonstrate your affection.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] I've got it! I'll give her a little test. [*To ROSAURA*] If I'm not being too bold, I have some little jewels -- you may take your pick.

[*Opens box and shows her the jewels*]

**ROSAURA**

Beautiful, just beautiful! Are they to be mine?

**TONINO**

If you wish, they will be yours.

**ROSAURA**

I accept this precious gift with jubilation, and will keep it as the first token of your kindness.

**TONINO**

Well, when the time comes we'll discuss the matter...

[*Aside*] Oh, she's a coy little minx! I didn't have to beg her to accept them!

**ROSAURA**

But tell me, what other sign can you offer to prove your love?

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] This is a shake-down!! [*To ROSAURA*] Well, I have some coins, if you like, I can also give you those –

**ROSAURA**

No, no, those have to go to my father! I don't take money.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Ah, the daughter jacks up the bill, the father minds the till !  
[*To ROSAURA*] I will do whatever you like.

**ROSAURA**

But you still haven't given me what I asked for...

**TONINO**

Damn! You want the shirt off my back?! I'll give it to you.

**ROSAURA**

No, I don't want your shirt or your coat, I want you.

**TONINO**

Me? I'm all yours.

**ROSAURA**

Then it could be settled today.

**TONINO**

Right now, if you like.

**ROSAURA**

I'm ready.

**TONINO**

I'm more than ready.

**ROSAURA**

Will you give me your hand?

**TONINO**

Hands. Feet. Anything you want.

**ROSAURA**

Let's call two witnesses.

**TONINO**

What do we need two witnesses for?

**ROSAURA**

For witnessing.

**TONINO**

Witnessing what?

**ROSAURA**

Our wedding.

**TONINO**

Our wedding? Wait - stop!

**ROSAURA**

But didn't you say that you're ready?\_

**TONINO**

I'm ready, it's true -- but a wedding! so soon?!

**ROSAURA**

Go on, go away – I see that you are mocking me.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] I do quite like her, and in time, maybe, just maybe, I might lead her down the aisle... But this habit of inviting strange men into her house, that I don't like.

**ROSUARA**

You are far too inconstant, Signor Zanetto.

**TONINO**

Inconstant? That's not true. I am the epitome of constancy and faithfulness! But in matters such as this, you know better than I that things must be done slowly... one must think about it... not rush head-long into a decision without weighing the matter carefully.

**ROSUARA**

And you say you are not inconstant?! Before you were more than ready and *now* you want time to think about it?!

**TONINO**

When I said I was ready, I meant... Enough – I don't want to upset you.

**ROSAURA**

No, no, please – tell me.

**TONINO**

I meant ...I wanted to have a little taste of your delicious...favors...

**ROSAURA**

Before marriage? I should hope not!

**TONINO**

Not at all?

**ROSAURA**

No way!

**TONINO**

But, the jewels...?

**ROSAURA**

If that's what you had in mind, keep them! I don't want them.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Refusing them, with such virtue, she deserves them even more! She is an honest girl. [*To ROSAURA*] It's a pity that you have such a pernicious father.

**ROSAURA**

What harm did my parent do?

**TONINO**

It seems like nothing to you?! To bring a man into the house, throw him together with his daughter, and leave her in peril of ruin!

**ROSAURA**

But he did that only because you're my husband-to-be.

**TONINO**

What? I'm astonished! This is not true. We have never talked about this business.

**ROSAURA**

But, didn't you arrange it with him by letter?

**TONINO**

No -- no definitely not. He's imagining things! He's pulled the wool over your eyes. He is not an honest man. He knows I have some money, he targeted me, and now he's using your beauty to get his hands on the cash.

**ROSAURA**

Signor Zanetto, you are saying horrible things!

**TONINO**

Unfortunately, I'm telling the truth. Listen to me... I see that you deserve the best of everything. There's no doubt about your beauty and your honesty... Be strong, love me, and, maybe one day, you will be my wife.

**ROSAURA**

I am completely mortified by this mishap. If I had known we were not to be married, I would not have had the courage to look you in the face. If my father is deceiving me, then Heaven forgive him. If you are mocking me, you are too cruel. Think carefully. And remember that I love you with the purest and most honorable love in the world.

*[She goes]*

**ACT TWO  
SCENE ELEVEN**

**TONINO**

Has anyone ever seen a daughter more modest or a father more villainous?! Marriage...? Tonino stand firm... When it's done, it's done... Yet, this girl has touched my heart... But, what about Beatrice?! I made a vow to her. She ran away to be with me. But where is she? Where did she go? Who knows, maybe she only pretended to run away for me, and she eloped with someone else? She didn't come here. No one knows anything about her. She could have betrayed me... I shouldn't be surprised that she double-crossed me: she's a woman, that's enough.

**BRIGHELLA**

Can I do anything for you?

**TONINO**

No, friend, I'm leaving.

**BRIGHELLA**

So soon?

**TONINO**

What else can I do?

**BRIGHELLA**

Aren't you staying for dinner with the Doctor?

**TONINO**

No, no, thank you. Tell the doctor that he is a son-of-a-bitch.

**BRIGHELLA**

What do you mean?

**TONINO**

*I know that you know what I'm talking about.*

**BRIGHELLA**

I'm dumbfounded. I know nothing. He ordered me to provide you with full service and make sure that you were satisfied in everything. Would you like to take off your coat?

**TONINO**

No, old man, I don't want anything else! But I wouldn't want to think that I had deprived you of your tip. Here's half a ducat.

**BRIGHELLA**

I am eternally grateful. Thank you. Truly, the Bisognosi family has always been generous. And your brother, in Venice, he was the most liberal of men.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Again, he mentions my brother in Venice.

[*To BRIGHELLA*] When did you know my brother in Venice?

**BRIGHELLA**

About two years ago.

**TONINO**

Two years ago?! How, two years?

**BRIGHELLA**

Well, sir, because I was in Venice -

**ACT TWO  
SCENE TWELVE**

[*Enter PANCRAZIO*]

**PANCRAZIO**

Brighella! Go to your mistress, she needs you.

**BRIGHELLA**

I'll go at once.

**TONINO**

[*To BRIGHELLA*] Old man, tell me more about Venice.

**PANCRAZIO**

I'm sorry, but he has to leave. Go! Hurry up!

**BRIGHELLA**

We'll meet again, illustrious Signor Zanetto!

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Damn this interruption! My curiosity is killing me.

**PANCRAZIO**

My respects, Signor Zanetto...

**TONINO**

Your excellency...

**PANCRAZIO**

Ah, I pity you. It seems to me, from the look of things, that Your Lordship does not value my advice.

**TONINO**

On the contrary, I am one who gladly listens to gentleman such as you.

**PANCRAZIO**

And then you go ahead and do whatever *you* want, is that so?

**TONINO**

Why do you say that?

**PANCRAZIO**

It seems, it seems, but then I may be wrong. But the fact that I see you in this house is beyond doubt.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Let's see what we can find out.

[*To PANCRAZIO*] There are some evil people in this house, isn't that true?

**PANCRAZIO**

Ah, too true.

**TONINO**

Ruthless people.

**PANCRAZIO**

And how!

**TONINO**

Especially that Doctor, he's the worst.

**PANCRAZIO**

You noticed that right away.

**TONINO**

The girl, what about the girl?

**PANCRAZIO**

Don't believe a thing she says. Watch out, don't trust her.  
She's completely deceitful.

**TONINO**

With such a delicate face?

**PANCRAZIO**

Ah, my friend, it is precisely the *seemingly* modest ones who are the most deceitful and the most dangerous.

**TONINO**

You're not wrong there!

**PANCRAZIO**

On the contrary, I'm right.

**TONINO**

But you sir? How come you are in the house of such evil people?

**PANCRAZIO**

I tirelessly try to enlighten them and change their ways. But to no avail.  
So far, my seed has been sown in the sand. It comes to nothing. Nothing.

**TONINO**

When the tree is rotten, there is no remedy.

**PANCRAZIO**

It goes from bad to worse.

**TONINO**

Still, I don't dislike the girl --

**PANCRAZIO**

She has wiles that could move the heart of a stone, but pity the stone so moved.

**TONINO**

She wanted to trap me into marriage -

**PANCRAZIO**

Marriage! What a horrible word!

**TONINO**

What? Marriage, a horrible word? On the contrary, it is the most beautiful word in the *Dictionary of the Seven Languages*.

### PANCRAZIO

But don't you remember that marriage makes for sweaty days and sleepless nights. A burden on the spirit, burden on the body, burden on the purse, and burden on the head.

### TONINO

Nonsense! Only a man who has no wisdom feels all these burdens. Burden to the spirit? It is not true. A wife's love, when it is not corrupted by desire or remorse, is delicate, sweet, and long-lasting. It comforts the heart, lifts the spirit, and soothes the soul. Happy is the husband who shares with the wife the joys and sorrows of fortune.

Burden on the body? This is not true. On the contrary, a wife frees the husband from toil. She attends to the domestic economy of the house; she manages the family and commands the servants. She takes care of whatever the husband doesn't, and with such feminine cunning, that some may call avarice, but in a year, it's a sizeable profit. Burden on the purse? This is not true! The man tends to spend – he will spend more out of the house than in the house. If he spends for the wife, at the end of the day, it is for his own honor, to embellish his house. If the wife is prudent, she will be happy with little. If she is vicious and never satisfied, it's the husband's duty to restrain her, and if the man is ruined by his wife, we shouldn't blame the woman's ambition, but the stupidity of the husband!

Burden on the head? This is not true! The woman is either honest or dishonest. If she is honest, there is no risk of horns. If she is dishonest, there is a certain medicine called "the stick" that has the power to bring her back to her senses. Even foolish women learn from that medicine. To conclude: marriage is good for the good people and bad for the bad. To quote the verses of a Venetian poet,

To the wise man, marriage is heaven-sent,  
(Though you have to manage it well )  
But the man who insists that marriage is hell,  
Is either old, foolish, or impotent.

### PANCRAZIO

[*Aside*] This man doesn't seem as foolish as before! [*To TONINO*] Don't you remember that a woman is an enchantress, a siren who will lure you to destruction.

### TONINO

You see, again, I am sorry to say, but you are talking nonsense. You can't measure all women with the same yardstick. There are many bad ones, but there are even more good ones. And you can say the same thing about men. Women, sirens? This is not true. Do you know how the frog snares the nightingale? A lady frog is sitting in a

ditch with her mouth wide open and she croaks. A male nightingale flies by. He sees her throat and falls in love with it. He circles and circles the frog, and then dives straight in. Whose fault is it, the frog's or the nightingale's? We do the same. We see a woman, we follow her, we are enchanted. Whose fault is it? Ours. Women would not have any power over us if we did not court them, and if they are superior to us, it is only because of our own weakness, because we compliment them and make them proud.

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] I understand... He too smart for me. [*To TONINO*] Signor Zanetto, I don't know what to say. If you want Signora Rosaura, take her, but think about it very carefully.

**TONINO**

I didn't say I wanted her. I spoke in favor of marriage, but I didn't say that I wanted to get married. I spoke in favor of women, but I didn't say anything about Rosaura. I don't know if she is fish or fowl. Could be, could be not. I have some doubts. And you have fanned my suspicions, so I'll just let it go.

**PANCRAZIO**

Excellent. I praise your decision. You are a true gentleman.

**TONINO**

You seem like an honest fellow, -- I will confide in you.

**PANCRAZIO**

You can speak freely, I know how to keep a secret.

**TONINO**

You see this box of jewels?

**PANCRAZIO**

Are they jewels?

**TONINO**

Yes, sir.

**PANCRAZIO**

Let me see them. Beautiful, very beautiful!

**TONINO**

These jewels were forced on me by some lunatic in patches. But I don't know whose they are; but the owner must be going out of his mind looking for them. I must leave tomorrow. So, I'm thinking that I might put them in your care, and if the owner turns up, you could give them back to him.

**PANCRAZIO**

I appreciate your concern. You are a truly honorable man!

**TONINO**

All true gentlemen must behave this way.

**PANCRAZIO**

And if, after a long time, and a diligent search, the owner cannot be found, what do you want me to do with them?

**TONINO**

Give them to young brides for their dowries.

**PANCRAZIO**

You Venetians are all so good-hearted.

**TONINO**

We gentlemen are nothing if not charitable. Poor, shy girls must depend on such generosity. It's true that there are some gentlemen who give only to get, but there are others who simply have good hearts. *I* am of the latter variety! I am ever ready: for friends, I gladly give the coat off my back; for women, I take off the shirt as well.

*[He goes]*

**PANCRAZIO**

*[Aside]* Though the charity is hairy, it will ease my pain. If Rosaura wants these jewels, she can pay with that currency that costs *her* so little, but means so much to *me*.

*[He goes]*

**ACT TWO**  
**SCENE THIRTEEN**

*[Enter ARLECCHINO from the inn, followed by ZANETTO.  
At the door, arguing with ZANETTO]*

**ARLECCHINO**

I am telling you that I am honest. I gave you the cash and the jewels!

**ZANETTO**

That's not true. You crook, I didn't get anything!

**ARLECCHINO**

You're lying through your teeth!

**ZANETTO**

*[Comes out of the inn]*  
You're a thief, you're a killer! I want my jewels back.

**ARLECCHINO**

I repeat—you got the jewels!

**ZANETTO**

You dog! Betrayer! My jewels, my money, my stuff!

**ARLECCHINO**

You're completely out of your mind!

**ZANETTO**

You have robbed me! You have killed me!

**ARLECCHINO**

Now, I am going to throw a stone at you!

**ACT TWO**  
**SCENE FOURTEEN**

*[Enter BARGELLO with GUARDS]*

**BARGELLO**

What is all this noise?! Who is the thief? Who robbed?

**ZANETTO**

That one there! He is my servant. He brought my cash and jewels from Bergamo, and now he has stolen everything. He has killed me.

**ARLECCHINO**

That's not true. I am a faithful servant.

**BARGELLO**

*[To the GUARDS]* Tie him up! Take him to jail.

**ARLECCHINO**

I am innocent.

**BARGELLO**

If you are innocent, you can get out without difficulty.

**ARLECCHINO**

In the meantime, I have to go to jail?

**BARGELLO**

In the meantime, you have to go, do not resist.

**ARLECCHINO**

[*To ZANETTO*] Damn you! This is all your fault, you ignoramus.  
When I get out, you'll pay for this!

[*Leaves with the GUARDS*]

**BARGELLO**

Sir, if you think that that man is really the thief, file a complaint, and justice will be done. In the meantime, I will write up my report, which will be attached to your complaint. If you have evidence, go to the clerk and turn it in.

[*He goes*]

**ACT TWO  
SCENE FIFTEEN**

**ZANETTO**

I don't understand a word he said! I just hope I can get my jewels back. The jewels that were left to me by my uncle. The jewels that he spoke of so many times, the jewels that he took from Venice when he went to live in the Bergamo valley.

**BEATRICE**

[*COMBINA enters*]

My darling, have pity on me!

**ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] Look, flashing eyes... poisonous pot...

**BEATRICE**

For charity's sake, don't go. Listen to me for just a minute. I ask only one thing: here I am at your feet, let my tears move you to compassion.

[*On her knees*]

**ZANETTO**

[*Reaching out his hand*]

[*Aside*] I don't feel any heat. There's no fire in them.

**BEATRICE**

If you just listen to me, you'll be satisfied.

**ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] That little mouth is so beautiful, I would let it poison me!

**BEATRICE**

For you, I have risked my life, my honor.

**ZANETTO**

For me?

**BEATRICE**

Yes, for you, whom I love more than my very soul. For you, the only object of my desire.

**ZANETTO**

You love me?

**BEATRICE**

Yes, I love you. I adore you. You are my very soul.

**ZANETTO**

She may be a devil, but she's a very beautiful devil.

**BEATRICE**

Come on! My love cannot wait any longer. Come give me your hand, my husband.

**ZANETTO**

*[Aside]* I like this one better than the other one, she doesn't demand any ceremonies.

**BEATRICE**

Please, don't make me suffer!

**ZANETTO**

Yes, madam, I'm here. What do you want me to do?

**BEATRICE**

Give me your hand.

**ZANETTO**

*[Touches her hand]*

Take both, if you want them. Oh, dear. Oh, what a hand, oh, how soft! How smooth!

**ACT TWO  
SCENE SIXTEEN**

*[Enter FLORINDO]*

**FLORINDO**

*[Aside]* Ah, what do I see? Tonino has found Beatrice! Oh, unlucky me! I must think of something...

**BEATRICE**

If only there were someone who could serve as a witness?

**ZANETTO**

What about that man over there?

**BEATRICE**

Oh, yes, Signor Florindo, at last I have reconciled with my husband-to-be. He wants to give me his hand. Please be our witness.

**ZANETTO**

Yes, witness.

**FLORINDO**

I make it a practice never to witness anything, but... since it's between friends...  
[*To ZANETTO*] But first, may I have a word in private, if you please?

**ZANETTO**

Yes, with pleasure. [*To BEATRICE*] Don't go away. I'll be right back

**FLORINDO**

[*Talking apart with ZANETTO, he points to DOCTOR's house*]  
Tell me, friend, weren't you in that house?

**ZANETTO**

Yes, sir.

**FLORINDO**

To do what, if I may I ask?

**ZANETTO**

To marry the Doctor's daughter.

**FLORINDO**

And now you want to marry Signora Beatrice?

**ZANETTO**

Yes, sir.

**FLORINDO**

But you are engaged to Signora Rosaura.

**ZANETTO**

Ah, I'll marry both of them. I don't care. [*To BEATRICE*] I'm coming!

**FLORINDO**

No, no, listen – You're kidding.

**ZANETTO**

I'm serious. I'm ready to marry six of them!

**FLORINDO**

Where do you think we are, in Turkey? I'm amazed at you. You know as well as I do that you can only marry one.

**ZANETTO**

Then I'll marry this one. [*To BEATRICE*] I'm coming.

**FLORINDO**

But you can't do that, either.

**ZANETTO**

Why not?

**FLORINDO**

Because you already promised to marry the Doctor's daughter. You have been in the house. If you break your promise, you'll be thrown in jail, and you'll have to pay.

**ZANETTO**

[*Aside*] Wonderful! [*To BEATRICE*] I'm not coming.

**BEATRICE**

What are you saying?!

**ZANETTO**

No, no, no -- I'm not going to give you my hand.

**BEATRICE**

I don't understand.

**ZANETTO**

Understand, or not. I'm leaving, good-bye.

**BEATRICE**

What?! Are you mocking me?

**ZANETTO**

I'm sorry. I never went to jail before, and I don't want to go now.

**BEATRICE**

Jail? Why jail?

**ZANETTO**

Two I cannot wed. That one is a Doctor's daughter. I promised her, so I could end up in jail. Goodbye.

*[He goes]*

**ACT TWO  
SCENE SEVENTEEN**

**BEATRICE**

Oh, unhappy me! My Tonino's gone mad. The way he talks... I don't recognize him anymore.

**FLORINDO**

Signora Beatrice, I will explain it to you. You have to know that he's in love with Rosaura, Doctor Balanzoni's daughter, and he has promised to marry her. Therefore, he is torn between love and remorse. He's confused, he staggers, he's almost out of his mind.

**BEATRICE**

Oh, my stars! Is it true what you say?

**FLORINDO**

Unfortunately, very true. If you weren't blind, you would have recognized it from his speech.

**BEATRICE**

I said I don't recognize him.

**FLORINDO**

Now what will you do?

**BEATRICE**

If Tonino abandons me... I'll die!

**ACT TWO  
SCENE EIGHTEEN**

*[Enter LELIO]*

**FLORINDO**

If Tonino abandons you, here is Florindo at your command.

**LELIO**

If Tonino abandons you, here is a hero to avenge you.

**FLORINDO**

In me you will find a faithful lover.

**LELIO**

I will fill your heart with the greatest happiness.

**FLORINDO**

I come from noble stock.

**LELIO**

I have illustrious blood flowing through my veins.

**FLORINDO**

I'm very rich.

**LELIO**

Among my possessions are gold mines!

**FLORINDO**

I trust that I am not displeasing to your eyes.

**LELIO**

In me you see Nature's finest handiwork!

**FLORINDO**

Signora Beatrice, do not pay any attention to this caricature of a Braggart Soldier.

**LELIO**

Don't be seduced by this boy who pines with love and hunger.

**FLORINDO**

I will be yours, if you want me.

**LELIO**

You will be mine, if you wish.

**ACT TWO**  
**SCENE NINETEEN**

[TONINO *enters and watches from the side*]

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] What?! Beatrice... here... between two -

**FLORINDO**

Speak, my dear!

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] My dear?!

**LELIO**

Unseal your lips, my beauty.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] My beauty?!

**FLORINDO**

If Tonino deserts you, he is a traitor.

**LELIO**

If Tonino abandons you, he is an ingrate.

[TONINO *approaches them*]

**TONINO**

Tonino is not a traitor! Tonino is not an ingrate! Tonino does not abandon Beatrice!  
[*To FLORINDO*] I am amazed at you! You two-faced dissembler! You false friend!  
You backstabbing scoundrel!

**FLORINDO**

But, Signora Rosaura -

**TONINO**

What Signora Rosaura?! Be quiet! You nauseating imitation of a man! Since you have told everyone my name, since you have followed me around and made all my business public, from now on, don't even dare to mention my name. Don't get in my way! Unless you want me to make Swiss cheese of your gut!

**LELIO**

I would --

**TONINO**

You shut up! You cartoon of a man! Last time I disarmed you, next time, I'll cut your heart out! [*Grabs BEATRICE by the hand*] She is mine! And that's that!

**BEATRICE**

So now you declare that I am yours -

**TONINO**

Shut up! Wait till we're alone! Come with me.

[*To LELIO and FLORINDO, calling back as he goes.*]

Asses. You lying, egotistical, hypocritical asses!!

**ACT TWO**

**SCENE TWENTY**

**FLORINDO**

I am not Florindo, if I do not get revenge!

**LELIO**

I am not who I am, if I do not slice up that insolent cockscomb!

**FLORINDO**

Friend, we are both made out to be fools.

**LELIO**

Let's join together in revenge.

**FLORINDO**

Let's go make a plan.

**LELIO**

My brilliant and razor-sharp mind will devise a masterful scheme.

**FLORINDO**

Let's go attack him with our swords.

**LELIO**

No, let's go shoot him in the back with a gun.

**FLORINDO**

That would be cowardly...

**LELIO**

Whether you triumph by virtue or guile,  
It's the winning that brings on a smile.

*[He goes]*

**FLORINDO**

Some hero, that Lelio. It's better if I get revenge on my own! Beatrice will be mine,  
or Tonino will feel the thrust of my sword.

*[He goes]*

**ACT THREE**

**SCENE ONE**

*[A street. PANCRAZIO meets TIBURZIO, a jeweller]*

**PANCRAZIO**

You are exactly the person I was looking for, esteemed Signor Tiburzio!  
If I hadn't found you here, I would have come to your shop.

**TIBURZIO**

Signor Pancrazio, I am at your command. How can I be of service?

**PANCRAZIO**

I'll tell you. I have some jewels to sell. They belonged to pious widow. She bequeathed them to me to provide dowries for young maidens. I would like you to tell me their value, in all honesty.

**TIBURZIO**

Gladly, I am always ready to be of service. Do you have them with you?

**PANCRAZIO**

Here they are. Examine them carefully.

*[Takes out the box and opens it ]*

**ACT THREE  
SCENE TWO**

*[BARGELLO enters with GUARDS. Observes from the side]*

**TIBURZIO**

Signor Pancrazio, these jewels are very valuable. I cannot appraise them standing out here. Come to my shop and I will take care of you.

**PANCRAZIO**

You're right, I will come to the shop. But they are rather dirty. Would you have any secret emulsion to clean them?

**TIBURZIO**

Actually, I do have something very special... but I don't give it to anyone, because it's a deadly poison.

**PANCRAZIO**

For me, you can make an exception. You can be sure I won't misuse it. You know me...

**TIBURZIO**

I know you are an honest and good man, therefore, I want to be of service. Luckily, I happen to have a little box of the powder with me. Here it is. Take it, use it, and you will see, they'll be clean and sparkling. And when you do sell them, perhaps I will have the opportunity to represent your interests? I shall do so to your utmost advantage.

**PANCRAZIO**

I'll keep that in mind. Meanwhile, I am much obliged. See you tomorrow.

**TIBURZIO**

Your humble servant...  
[*He goes*]

**ACT THREE  
SCENE THREE**

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] These really are beautiful jewels: but the setting is old, and the diamonds are so filthy they don't shine. But this powder will fix that.

**BARGELLO**

[*Looking from the side*]  
That jewel box! It's the one Arlecchino described!

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] With this beautiful gift, I hope to secure the favors of my dear Rosaura.

**BARGELLO**

Halt, Sir.

**PANCRAZIO**

What is it? What do you want?

**BARGELLO**

Hand over those jewels.

**PANCRAZIO**

Why?

**BARGELLO**

Because they're stolen.

**PANCRAZIO**

How dare you?! I am an honest man.

**BARGELLO**

From whom did you get them, your lordship?

**PANCRAZIO**

From Signor Zanetto Bisognosi.

**BARGELLO**

Signor Zanetto Bisognosi says that they were stolen. Since you have them,

you are under suspicion.

**PANCRAZIO**

A man like me?! A man of my station?!

**BARGELLO**

Enough! It's enough that I allow you to go free. I'll take those jewels to the courthouse, and if you are innocent, sir, go and prove it.

**PANCRAZIO**

Me? In court? But I have a spotless reputation! I am a man of honor!

**ACT THREE  
SCENE FOUR**

*[Enter ZANETTO]*

**PANCRAZIO**

Here is Signor Zanetto! He will tell you how I got these jewels.

**ZANETTO**

Jewels? My jewels?

**BARGELLO**

Signor Zanetto, do you recognize these jewels?

**ZANETTO**

Yes, sir, these are the jewels that were left to me by my uncle. I recognize them. They are mine.

**PANCRAZIO**

*[To BARGELLO]* Hear that? He recognizes them. They were his uncle's. Now they're his.

**BARGELLO**

*[To ZANETTO]* And you gave them to Signor Pancrazio?

**PANCRAZIO**

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. He gave them to me. Didn't you?

**ZANETTO**

I know nothing. I gave you nothing.

**PANCRAZIO**

You gave me nothing?! I am amazed at you.

**ZANETTO**

And I'm amazed at you! This stuff is mine.

**PANCRAZIO**

For Heaven's sake! Do you want me to lose my reputation?

**ZANETTO**

Lose what you will, I don't care. [*To BARGELLO*] Young man, give me my stuff.

**PANCRAZIO**

Good Heavens! It was in the Doctor's house! in Signora Rosaura's room!  
You gave them to me and you know why -

**ZANETTO**

You're a liar. You tell nothing but lies. You told me that women have fires  
in their eyes, and that's not true, at all.

**PANCRAZIO**

Signor Bargello, this man is crazy. Give the jewels to me.

**BARGELLO**

Crazy or not we're taking the jewels to the judge, and you will have to prove how you  
got them. [*To GUARDS*] Go! Get Arlecchino and take him to the judge to set him free.

[*GUARDS leave*]

**PANCRAZIO**

I'll find witnesses! Now, right now... the Doctor... Brighella... Signora Rosaura,  
Colombina, the Doctor's entire household... Now, right away. I go. Wait here!  
I'll be back. My reputation! My reputation! My reputation!  
[*He goes*]

**ACT THREE**  
**SCENE FIVE**

**ZANETTO**

Come on, give me my jewels. Don't make me despair.

**BARGELLO**

We're going to the judge, and if he says I can give them to you, then I will.

**ZANETTO**

What does the judge have to do with my stuff.

**BARGELLO**

Without his permission, I can't give them to you.

**ZANETTO**

And if he doesn't give permission?

**BARGELLO**

I can't give them to you.

**ZANETTO**

But what will you do with them?

**BARGELLO**

Whatever his honor commands.

**ZANETTO**

So, I could lose them?

**BARGELLO**

Of course, without a doubt.

**ZANETTO**

I should have left them with the old man, at least he put forth the effort to steal them.

**BARGELLO**

Do you think the judge would *steal* them?

**ZANETTO**

They're mine and I could lose them because of him. Between stealing and not returning to the rightful owner, there's not much difference.

**BARGELLO**

Do this: get yourself a lawyer.

**ZANETTO**

What do I need a lawyer for?

**BARGELLO**

To convince the judge that these jewels are yours.

**ZANETTO**

And for that I need a lawyer? Who knows better than me that the jewels are mine.

**BARGELLO**

Yes, but the judge won't believe you.

**ZANETTO**

Me he won't believe, but a lawyer, yes?! So he believes in lies more than truth?

**BARGELLO**

It's not like that, but lawyers have a way of presenting their client's case.

**ZANETTO**

But do I have to pay the lawyer?

**BARGELLO**

Certainly. You must pay him his fee.

**ZANETTO**

And the judge?

**BARGELLO**

He must also get a fee.

**ZANETTO**

And you? Do you get anything?

**BARGELLO**

Naturally! I have to be paid, and so do all of my men.

**ZANETTO**

So between the judge, the lawyer, the captain, and the , bye-bye jewels.

**BARGELLO**

It can't be otherwise. Everyone must be paid.

**ZANETTO**

So you all have to get your share, and I get nothing. Good! Beautiful! I like it! I'm going back to my mountains. Up there, there are no judges, no lawyers, no . What's mine, is mine. And we don't rob a man of all that he has under the pretense of providing a service. My dear friend, I don't know what to say... Divide the jewels among yourselves, and if anything is left, let me know, and I will be grateful for your charity. Come, thieves, come... steal my shirt, as well. I won't say anything. For the sheep who is eaten there's no difference if he's eaten by the wolf or killed by the butcher. To me, it's the same, whether I'm robbed by thieves or by you. My regards, sir.

*[He goes]*

**BARGELLO**

He is crazy! Yet, he almost hit a nerve... But never mind. We soldiers have strong stomachs. We can digest a reprimand like an ostrich digests stones.

**ACT THREE  
SCENE SIX**

[Enter TONINO ]

**TONINO**

So much for friendship! When Florindo was in Venice, I treated him like my own brother. I sent the woman I love to him, I trusted him, and he has betrayed me! I don't understand how he had the gall... how can a friend betray a friend?! If I had committed such an iniquity, I would be afraid that the earth would open up and swallow me. Friendship is the most sacred law in the world! A law that comes from Nature, itself. A law that rules the whole world! Without that law, everything is turned upside-down and thrown into chaos. Love for women is based on the passion of the lower sense; love for things is based on the vice of corrupted nature; love for friendship is founded on true virtue; and yet, the world values it so little. Orestes and Pylades are no longer an example of friends. The faithful Acaste is a ridiculous name nowadays. The world bows to the idol of self-interest. In lieu of friends, there are only flatterers hoping to profit. And once your fortune changes for the worse, they desert you. They leave you. They laugh at you. And pay with ingratitude all the gifts you have given. As Ovid so beautifully puts it,

*Tempore felici, multi numerantur amici:  
Si fortuna perit, nullus amicus erit*

When good times abound, countless friends gather round:  
But, when fortunes fall, one has no friends at all.

**ACT THREE  
SCENE SEVEN**

[LELIO enters ]

**LELIO**

[*Aside*] Here is my lucky rival! Let's see if the sweetness of my flattering can overcome the bitterness of his battering.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] But enough! That one will pay!

**LELIO**

I bow to the elevated, rather the most high and enviable worth of the most celebrated hero in the Adriatic firmament.

**TONINO**

Clamorous servant of your thundering over-largeness.

**LELIO**

Forgive me, if the annoying articulation of my ardent pronunciation offends the tympanum of your ears.

**TONINO**

Spew forth your clarion ranting, it touches not only the tympanum but also the drum.

**LELIO**

Know that I am delirious.

**TONINO**

I saw that right away.

**LELIO**

Cupid with his poison arrows has pierced my impenetrable heart!

**TONINO**

The problem is not that he pierced your heart, it's that he pierced your brain!

**LELIO**

Ah, Signor Zanetto you belong to the Bisognosi family, you must help those who need you.<sup>1</sup>

**TONINO**

You need me? For what?

**LELIO**

Because, I'm burning with love.

**TONINO**

And *I* am supposed to console you?

**LELIO**

You alone – only you can heal my festering wound.

**TONINO**

Me?! What country are you from, sir?!

**LELIO**

From the land of the unfortunate, born under the sky of the miserable, and brought up in the center of the desperate.

**TONINO**

---

<sup>1</sup> Bisognosi means those in need.

[*Aside*] And he'll die in the asylum of the insane.

**LELIO**

I will truncate the thread of my labyrinthine discourse with the scissors of brevity: I love Beatrice. I desire her. I long for her. I know it's up to you. I ask for her as a gift of your great – your most exemplary and unbounded compassion.

**TONINO**

And I will cut the knot of my answer with the knife of bluntness: Beatrice is mine. I will surrender all the treasures of the Ganges before I surrender the beautiful beauties of my beauty. [*Aside*] Damn him! He's got me doing it!

**LELIO**

You are killing me!

**TONINO**

That'll be one less lunatic!

**LELIO**

Ingrate!

**TONINO**

Brute!

**LELIO**

Tyrant!

**TONINO**

Damned lunatic!

**LELIO**

If my love converts itself to fury, you will tremble at my rage!

**TONINO**

I will be a solid rock, impenetrable to the flaming arrows of your bestial fury.

**LELIO**

I go -

**TONINO**

Go!

**LELIO**

I go -

**TONINO**

Go on!

**LELIO**

I go, you merciless -

**TONINO**

Go on, or I'll send you packing!

**LELIO**

I go. Yes. I go to plan my revenge! Before the sun hides his rays in the sea, vengeance will be mine!

*[He goes]*

**TONINO**

*[Aside]* He who is born crazy, never recovers. What a beast! Oh, what a beast! Have you ever heard anything like that?! If he had stayed any longer, he would have made me crazy, too. Actually, in this world, we all have a touch of madness, and whoever believes that he is sane, is crazier than the rest. But this one - he's a raving lunatic.

**ACT THREE  
SCENE EIGHT**

*[Enter PANCRAZIO and BRIGHELLA]*

**PANCRAZIO**

*[To BRIGHELLA]* Come on, let's go to the judge. You will be a witness as to my innocence.

**BRIGHELLA**

Here is Signor Zanetto.

**PANCRAZIO**

*[To TONINO]* How can you deny that you gave me those jewels with your own hands?

**TONINO**

Yes, sir, I gave them to you.

**PANCRAZIO**

*[To BRIGHELLA]* Hear that! He admits it! Tell it to the judge.

**TONINO**

What does the judge have to do with it?

**PANCRAZIO**

Fine thing you've done! Putting my reputation in jeopardy.

**TONINO**

*[Aside]* It looks like they found the owner of the jewels.

*[To PANCRAZIO]* Did they think you stole them?

**PANCRAZIO**

Unfortunately, that's what they thought. And it's all your fault.

**TONINO**

Dear Sir, I did it with the best of intentions.

**PANCRAZIO**

Best intentions, worst intentions -- you have ruined me!

**ACT THREE  
SCENE NINE**

*[Enter ARLECCHINO]*

**ARLECCHINO**

Thank Heaven, I'm out of that chicken coop!

**TONINO**

Here's the one who gave me the jewels.

**ARLECCHINO**

Who gave you the jewels?

**TONINO**

Yes, you gave them to me.

**ARLECCHINO**

And the cash, too?

**TONINO**

And the cash, too.

**ARLECCHINO**

But, before, you said that I didn't! What a bold-faced liar you can be!

**TONINO**

I'm amazed at you! I deny nothing to anyone. You forced the jewels and the money on me: I had no choice but to take them. I am a gentleman, and I don't need anything;

and if I did need anything, I would rather die than do an evil deed. I don't have the jewels anymore. I understand that they are in the hands of the judge. Get them and do whatever you want with them. This money is not mine, I don't want it. Just as you gave it to me, I give it back to you. A man values his reputation above all the money in the world. Money comes and goes, honor, once lost, is gone forever. Take this purse, I throw it on the ground, to demonstrate how I despise gold and silver that is not mine, to show you that I do not value nor care for it, and that I value – more than all treasure – the *honor* of the Bisognosi family, the good name of “gentleman,” and the reputation of my homeland.

*[He goes]*

**ACT THREE  
SCENE TEN**

**ARLECCHINO**

*[Singing]* He's mad.

**BRIGHELLA**

He must be mad, he throws money away. I will follow him, out of curiosity.

*[He goes]*

**PANCRAZIO**

I will pick up this purse and guard it until Zanetto regains his sanity. It is my duty! Friend, come with me to the judge and let's get the jewels back.

**ARLECCHINO**

You know what I have to say? That I'm going back to the valleys of Bergamo.

**PANCRAZIO**

Why?

**ARLECCHINO**

Because the air in this place makes people crazy!

*[He goes]*

**PANCRAZIO**

The air is the same all over the world. Madness is universal. One can be mad with vanity, another with ignorance, another with pride, another with avarice. I am mad with love, and I suspect that that is the greatest madness of all.

*[He goes]*

**ACT THREE  
SCENE ELEVEN**

*[ZANETTO enters]*

**ZANETTO**

Love... Love is a wonderful thing. The minute I saw Rosaura, I felt myself sizzling like a pork chop on hot coals. I can't live if don't see her, if I don't talk to her... I want to go find her and see if we can carry out the wedding.

*[He knocks at the door. Enter ROSAURA on balcony]*

**ROSUARA**

Signor Zanetto, my regards, sir.

**ZANETTO**

Oh, my lovely lady. Can I come up there to you?

**ROSAURA**

No, sir, my father doesn't want you to.

**ZANETTO**

But why?

**ROSAURA**

He doesn't want you to call him a pimp.

**ZANETTO**

Why would I say something like that? Aren't we to be man and wife?

**ROSAURA**

Ah yes, my father showed me the contract.

**ZANETTO**

Good! The contract I wrote...

**ROSAURA**

So, you did write it! And then you told me that you had never made any agreement of marriage?!

**ZANETTO**

I never said that. I just said it was nonsense to wait, and we should do it right away.

**ROSAURA**

I cannot understand you. At times you seem the fool, at other times much too clever.

**ZANETTO**

Oh, come on, let me come up there. What do you want? That I get a stiff neck?

**ROSAURA**

You cannot come up.

**ZANETTO**

Then you come down.

**ROSAURA**

Worse! It would be very improper to be seen in the street.

**ZANETTO**

Do you want me to die?

**ROSAURA**

Poor dear! You will die for love.

**ZANETTO**

You don't believe it? Separated from you, I am like a fish out of water. I'm crazed, I'm delirious, longing to rest my head on your breast. If you don't help me, if you don't give me your hand, I will die right here before your very eyes! I'll drop dead on your doorstep, and lie there to be cooked in the fire of your cruelty!

**ROSAURA**

How delightful! Let me hear some other delightful words.

**ZANETTO**

What delight can you feel when you are up there and I'm down here? If you want to feel delight, either you come down, or let me come up, and I promise to satisfy.

**ROSAURA**

Can't you satisfy from a distance?

**TONINO**

I'm sorry, not from this distance...

**ROSAURA**

What would you do if you were near?

**ZANETTO**

I would do... I would make... I... I'm ashamed to say it. If you like, I'll sing it in a song.

**ROSAURA**

I will listen with pleasure.

**ZANETTO**

*[Singing]*

If I were close to you  
My beautiful miss  
I would from that tiny mouth  
Steal a sweet ... kiss.  
If I were where you are  
I would.... well, you know  
But bad luck keeps us apart  
And won't let me go.

If I were near to you  
My dear one, my best,  
I would, at your lovely breast,  
Find such sweet rest.  
My meaning you know...  
Say 'yes,' let me go...  
To you I must fly,  
Or else I will die !

Don't be so severe,  
Don't leave me down here.  
With you, I would lie...  
Two hours, to sigh...  
Two hours, no rush,  
I would... But, I blush !  
To willing heart and eager ear,  
Few words are ever needed, dear,  
Few words are needed, dear !

**ROSAURA**

Bravo!

**ZANETTO**

Do you feel anything? If you like, here I am ...

**ROSAURA**

I would like you to explain something to me. You strike me as two totally different people. Sometimes you're a fool and sometimes you're clever. Sometimes forward, sometimes shy. What does it mean?

**ZANETTO**

I don't know, myself. It's according to whether I am hit in the heart by some ...  
I don't know what... For example, if those little eyes - possibly wanted to ...  
yes, lady, just like that -

**ROSAURA**

There, now you just spoke like a fool.

**ZANETTO**

Yet inside myself, I understand myself. But I don't know how to explain it. If you were down here, I could explain myself much better.

**ROSAURA**

Do you know what I think about the way you talk? You're putting on an act. You're pretending to care, and you don't really love me, at all.

**ACT THREE**  
**SCENE TWELVE**

*[Enter BEATRICE. Stands at a distance]*

**BEATRICE**

*[Aside]* Ah, Tonino talking to a young woman? Let's listen.

**ZANETTO**

I love you so much that without you, I'm like a bird without a branch, a gander without a goose, a ram without a ewe, a piglet without a pigletta. Yes, darling, I love you so much that I can't wait to drown myself in the sea of your beauty. I long to wallow in your graces like a donkey in the sand.

**ROSAURA**

*[Aside]* It seems to me he's becoming more vulgar than ever.

**BEATRICE**

Oh, betrayer! Oh ingrate! Oh, traitor! Is this the faithfulness you promised me?! Before, you promised your hand in marriage, and now you betray me?! For the third time you deceive and disappoint me?! Look at me, villain! Look me in the face, if you have the heart to do it. But, no, of course, you can't! Your shame prevents it. My rage, frightens you! Indignant soul! Lying heart! Perjured lips! Why did you seduce me in my father's house?! Why did you make me abandon my homeland?! Why did you promise to marry me, if to someone else, you gave your heart?! I was told that you were a perfidious wretch, but I didn't want to believe it! Now my own eyes witness the truth, now I see my errors, my injuries, my dishonor. Go away! I don't believe you anymore! Go! I don't want you any more! I release you from your vows, though I doubt if God will! I don't care anymore about your love! I don't want your hand anymore, I don't want your faithfulness anymore! Wait here! To set free your perfidious heart, I will give you back that paper with which you cheated and betrayed me! Yes, Brute! Yes, Monster! Go on, love my rival. Adore her face, that face, prettier than mine; but you will not find another woman who has my faithfulness, my tolerance, and my love!

*[She goes]*

[ZANETTO *has been attentively listening in silence while Beatrice was talking, then he turns to ROSAURA* ]

**ACT THREE  
SCENE THIRTEEN**

**ZANETTO**

[*To ROSAURA*] Now, to return to our chat -

**ROSAURA**

To which chat would you like to return, you perjurer! You promised fidelity to another woman and now you want to deceive me with lies?! No, perfidious wretch, no, wicked man, you cannot do it. Love the woman you are obliged to love. Fulfill the promise of your lying heart. Wait! Wait! To show you how little I care for you, how much I abhor you and despise you, I'm going to get the contract in which you pledged yourself to me, and then you will see – ungrateful lover – that Rosaura does not tolerate deception!

[*ROSAURA closes the window*]

**ACT THREE  
SCENE FOURTEEN**

**ZANETTO**

Now that I'm engaged, I'm just fine. This one calls me a 'perjurer,' that one calls me a 'brute' ... that one a "monster," this one a "wretch"... What else? Poor Zanetto, I am desperate. Everyone shouts at me. No one wants me. I can't marry anymore. Where's a rope to hang myself? Where's a knife to cut my throat? Where's a river to drown myself? Because of jealousy, women mistreat me, and I am caught in the middle: I'm left high and dry. Women ... is there no one who wants me? I'm not that ugly... No, no one wants me. Everyone mistreats me. Everyone shouts at me. Poor me.

[*He goes*]

**ACT THREE  
SCENE FIFTEEN**

[*ROSAURA appears at the window*]

**ROSAURA**

Here I am... Here is the contract... The wretch has gone! Ah, I flattered myself that he would wait for me here. Shame and confusion made him depart. But I will find him again, and he will see that I know how to get revenge!

[*TONINO enters*]

But look who returns! ... How brazen! You have a lot of nerve to appear before my eyes! Go! I don't care about you anymore! Here is your contract. Here—torn to pieces and thrown to the wind! Oh, that I could do that to your treacherous heart!

*[She tears up the contract and throws the pieces on the ground.  
She goes into the house. ]*

**ACT THREE  
SCENE SIXTEEN**

*[TONINO, silently stares at the window, then picks up the pieces of the contract from the ground. BEATRICE enters holding a letter]*

**BEATRICE**

At last I found your wicked letter. Here it is, you wretch!  
Here it is, you betrayer! Look! Look! See how little it means to me!

*[Tears up the letter and throws pieces to the ground]*

If I could only do that to your heart – that nest of infidelity!

*[She goes]*

**ACT THREE  
SCENE SEVENTEEN**

**TONINO**

What is this business? What is this mess? What new turn of events? Two women rip up letters at me. To Rosaura, I have not written; to Beatrice, I have not been unfaithful. Either they're both crazy or some misunderstanding has occurred. Let's see what is written in the letters:

*[TONINO picks up the pieces of the letter, puts the pieces together, reads them]*

“I promise to Signora Beatrice... etc. etc. I, Antonio Bisognosi. This is all right. What does the other one say?... “ This document is to confirm....” etc. etc. “marriage between young and honest girl...Signora Rosaura Balanzoni and Signor Zanetto Bisognosi. ” What?! This contract is a fake. I am not Zanetto. Let's read on, let's see when it was signed. “Valle Brambana in Bergamo. January 14, 1746.” In Bergamo? What's this business? Who signed it? “Zanetto Bisognosi” ... “By his own hand”?! It's true that everyone believes that I am Zanetto Bisognosi, but no one would have dared to sign this in my name! This is not my handwriting, so whose can it be? Is it my brother's? Zanetto Bisognosi who lives in a valley in Bergamo? Could be that he came to Verona without my knowing it! That servant, Brighella, who was talking about knowing my brother in Venice... I think he truly believes that I am Zanetto. So many strange things have happened today, that I suspect... Who knows? It could be wonderful... I'd like to know what's going on. If that servant is in the house, I want to know the truth. I'll sniff around, without revealing myself. ... Damn! I need to be careful. This time I have to behave like a *true* gentleman.

[Knocks at the DOCTOR 's door]  
Hey, is there anyone in the house?!

**ACT THREE**  
**SCENE EIGHTEEN**

[BRIGHELLA *from the house*]

**BRIGHELLA**

Your very humble servant... Are you the one who knocked?

**TONINO**

Yes, sir, it was me.

**BRIGHELLA**

I beg your pardon, sir, but no one can come into the house.

**TONINO**

No? Why not?

**BRIGHELLA**

The mistress is huffing and puffing in a rage, and the master is furious.  
In fact, I advise you to go, because if they see you here, they are liable to do something outrageous.

**TONINO**

But what did I do?

**BRIGHELLA**

I don't know. I just hear them ranting, but I don't know why.

**TONINO**

Tell me, friend... you knew my brother in Venice?

**BRIGHELLA**

Certainly, I knew him.

**TONINO**

He looks like me?

**BRIGHELLA**

Like one apple divided in two... Two absolute twins.

**TONINO**

And it's two years since you saw him?

**BRIGHELLA**

Almost two years.

**TONINO**

My brother...

**BRIGHELLA**

Yes, the Signor Tonino...

**TONINO**

And me -- who am I?

**BRIGHELLA**

Oh, please! Signor, Zanetto.

**TONINO**

Who comes from...?

**BRIGHELLA**

Bergamo... to marry Signora Rosaura.

**TONINO**

Bravo! You know everything, you are a good man.  
[*Aside*] Now I understand what's going on here.

**BRIGHELLA**

Tell me, dear sir... forgive my curiosity... Did you ever hear anything about your sister?

**TONINO**

Never. Then you know that she was lost?

**BRIGHELLA**

Of course. Your dearly departed father recounted the story many times.

**TONINO**

Alas! We know nothing further. When my father sent her to Bergamo, she was lost, and we don't know how.

**BRIGHELLA**

Well, what can you do? One dowry less. If you don't need me, I'll go in.  
If they see me talking with you, they will scold me. See you again –  
[*Goes into the house*]

**ACT THREE**

## SCENE NINETEEN

### TONINO

I am indebted to you, old friend. What a coincidence! Can it be? My brother is in Verona, and we haven't seen each other! One is taken for the other, and in one day a thousand mistakes are born. Now I understand all that has transpired with the jewels and the cash! That Arlecchino must be the servant of my brother! And that stuff is probably his! If I had known, that that stuff was my brother's, I wouldn't have given it away. Ah! What I would give to see my brother! But enough, I will search everywhere until I find him!

[COLOMBINA *enters from the house*]

### COLOMBINA

Listen to all that gossip from Rosaura. Oh, how she bad-mouths Signor Zanetto! It makes me furious. I can't stand her!

### TONINO

What is it girl? Why are you so upset? What happened?

### COLOMBINA

If you only knew, signor! I'm upset because of you.

### TONINO

Because of me? I'm much obliged, but why?

### COLOMBINA

Because that presumptuous Rosaura, believing that she is a Lady, mistreats everyone.

### TONINO

Does she say unkind things about me?

### COLOMBINA

And how! And because I took your side, she treated me like a dog! Impudent scold! If I didn't know who she really was, I might feel sorry for her.

### TONINO

Isn't she the doctor's daughter?

### COLOMBINA

Ha! Damn her! She's nobody! She's a foundling from hell, picked up off the street by a pilgrim.

### TONINO

What?! But the doctor says that she's his daughter?

### COLOMBINA

Because he's a devil, too! He says it to steal some inheritance.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Aha! I said that he was no good!

[*To COLOMBINA*] So, Rosaura... no one knows whose daughter she is?

**COLOMBINA**

No one knows, and no one ever will.

**TONINO**

How long has he been passing her off as his daughter?

**COLOMBINA**

Since she was a baby in diapers, the precious little Ladyship!

**TONINO**

How old is she?

**COLOMBINA**

She says she twenty-one, but I think she's not counting right.

**TONINO**

She can't be much more than that? Tell me girl, where did this pilgrim come from?

**COLOMBINA**

From Venice.

**TONINO**

And where did he find the child?

**COLOMBINA**

They say it was in the low lands by Caldiera, between Venice and Verona.

**TONINO**

Was she in swaddling clothes?

**COLOMBINA**

Of course.

**TONINO**

Did you see those clothes?

**COLOMBINA**

I think that the Doctor has kept them, but I've never seen them.

**TONINO**

How did the baby end up with this pilgrim? Was she his daughter?  
What was her name?

**COLOMBINA**

She wasn't his daughter, he found her in the street where some assassins had robbed and killed a group of travelers. By chance, the baby was still alive. But he didn't know her name; it was the Doctor who gave her the name Rosaura.

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Oh, this is beautiful! You will see that she is my sister, Flaminia, who was lost between Vicenza and Verona, when my poor mother was killed taking her to Bergamo.

**COLOMBINA**

[*Aside*] What the hell is he saying?

**TONINO**

Do you know if, among the swaddling clothes, there was a locket with two portraits?

**COLOMBINA**

It seems to me that I did hear something about that. But why are you asking me all these questions?

**TONINO**

You'll know soon enough. [*Aside*] She is no other than my sister! Thank Heaven! Oh, what luck! What a coincidence! Two brothers! One sister! All here! All together! It's like something out of a comedy!

**COLOMBINA**

[*Aside*] Wait and see... it will be revealed that she really is the daughter of a great gentleman! [*To TONINO*] Sir, if she turns out to be someone important, for God's sake, don't tell her that I was bad-mouthing her.

**TONINO**

No, girl, don't worry. I know it is the stock and trade of maids is to speak badly of their mistresses. And that you would sooner fast on bread and water, than to stop maligning and complaining.

[*He goes*]

**ACT THREE  
SCENE TWENTY**

**COLOMBINA**

[*Aside*] I said too much. I wouldn't want to say anything that might benefit Rosaura, or be bad for me! That Signor Zanetto, he asked too many questions!

I have a feeling that something extraordinary is about to happen.

[DOCTOR and PANCRAZIO enter from house.]

**DOCTOR**

Colombina! What are you doing in the street?

**COLOMBINA**

I came out to look for a grocer.

**DOCTOR**

Step lively! Get in the house!

**COLOMBINA**

Did you see Signor Zanetto?

**DOCTOR**

Go in the house, you gossip!

**COLOMBINA**

Oh, what an old ogre!

*[She goes into the house]*

**ACT THREE**  
**SCENE TWENTY-ONE**

**DOCTOR**

Signor Pancrazio, you are my dearest friend. I confide in you: I am resolved to proceed immediately with the marriage between my daughter Signor Zanetto Bisognosi, in spite of everything that's happened.

**PANCRAZIO**

But why? She tore up his letter right in his face, and she doesn't want him.

**DOCTOR**

She did that out of simple jealousy. Things have advanced to the point, that it is not possible to postpone the marriage without loss of dignity. All Verona is talking about it, and, to put it plainly: Signor Zanetto is very, very rich. With very little dowry, I assure my daughter's great fortune.

**PANCRAZIO**

Ah, that's it! It's avarice. Avarice tempts you to make a sacrifice of that poor, innocent dove.

**DOCTOR**

I am resolute. I have always esteemed and revered your advice, but this time it won't

sway me from the resolution that I find to be correct, honest, and proper for my house.

**PANCRAZIO**

Think about it some more. Take your time.

**DOOCTOR**

You have always taught me that, "Time waits for no man." I'm going to retrieve Signor Zanetto. And the marriage will be concluded tonight. Dear friend, wish me well. Arrivederci.

*[He goes]*

**ACT THREE  
SCENE TWENTY-TWO**

**PANCRAZIO**

All my hopes are shattered! The doctor insists on giving her to that Venetian. And me? Miserable me. What am I going to do? I don't dare show my passion, because I would lose my reputation as an honorable man, and I would lose both my entré and my income. But if she marries him, he'll take her to Bergamo, and I'll never see her again. Ah, this can never be! I must do something drastic: I will take off my mask, and reveal myself as I am, before I will lose my dear Rosaura, whom I love more than anything on earth.

*[ZANETTO enters]*

**ZANETTO**

Signor Pancrazio, I am desperate.

**PANCRAZIO**

Death is the only consolation of the desperate.

**ZANETTO**

I ache with the desire to wed, and no one wants me. All the women mistreat me; they push me away as if I were a dog, a beast, a donkey. Signor Pancrazio, I'm desperate. I can't stand it anymore.

**PANCRAZIO**

Well! If you had only followed my advice, you wouldn't find yourself in this miserable state.

**ZANETTO**

What can I do? You're right. I would like to avoid women, but I can't. I feel drawn by a force, like a tornado draws water into the air!

**PANCRAZIO**

You are not made for marriage.

**ZANETTO**

But why not?

**PANCRAZIO**

I know for certain, that if you get married, you will be the most miserable and unhappy creature on earth.

**ZANETTO**

So, what can I do?

**PANCRAZIO**

Leave women alone.

**ZANETTO**

But it's not possible!

**PANCRAZIO**

Take my advice, leave Verona at once. Return to your valley and be free of all this pain.

**ZANETTO**

But everywhere, it will be the same. Even the girls in Bergamo mock me and mistreat me.

**PANCRAZIO**

So, what do you want to do?

**ZANETTO**

I don't know. I'm so desperate...

**PANCRAZIO**

If I were you, you know what I would do?

**ZANETTO**

What would you do?

**PANCRAZIO**

I would kill myself.

**ZANETTO**

Kill myself?! Tell me, dear Sir, isn't there another remedy, other than death?

**PANCRAZIO**

What other remedy is there for your malady?

**ZANETTO**

You, who are such a wise and virtuous man ... don't you have some potion that will

free me from accursed desire to wed?!

**PANCRAZIO**

I understand. [*Aside*] He's leading himself into my trap. [*To ZANETTO*] You move me to such compassion that I almost would deprive myself of a portion of a rare and precious treasure that I alone possesses, and that I guard with utmost secrecy: I do have the medicine that you crave. I carry it with me all the time, to protect me. In my youth, I, too, felt tormented by this annoying itch. And poor me if I didn't have the powder in this little box ! With this, I was freed from the plague of concupiscence. By taking a dose once every five years, I have kept myself free from any stirrings of desire. One pinch of this powder can save your life and set you free from all your torment. If you drink it in wine, you will find all passion dead and gone. You will look on women with indifference, and you will be able to mock them and avenge yourself for their disdain. And that's not all: the women will chase after you, but, since you won't feel anything because of the powder, you will despise them and make them pay dearly for the injuries they have inflicted on you up to this point!

**ZANETTO**

Oh, if only it were true. What pleasure I would get! For the love of God, Signor Pancrazio, please, let me have a little bit of that powder.

**PANCRAZIO**

But... to give up this powder... it's so expensive.

**ZANETTO**

I'll pay whatever you want!

**PANCRAZIO**

All right! To show you that I am not a mercenary man, and that, when possible, I gladly help my fellow man, I will give you one pinch of this powder. Drink it in wine and you will immediately be cured! As soon as you take it, your stomach may feel upset, and you might think you're dying... But when the storm calms, you will be a different man. You will be satisfied, and you will bless Pancrazio.

**ZANETTO**

Yes, sir. You are blessed. Give it to me. Don't make me suffer any more.

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] What luck! The poison I got from Tiburzio is exactly the thing to free me of this foolish rival! This is the powder. [*Shows him the little box*]  
But we need the wine.

**ZANETTO**

I'll go in the house and drink it.

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] He could change his mind. [*To Zanetto*] No, no, wait. I'll bring it to you.  
[*Aside*] I do feel pity for him... but, to remove the obstacle to my love,  
I have to take his life.

[*He goes into the DOCTOR's house*]

**ZANETTO**

I can't go on living like this. Whenever I see a woman I burn from head to toe,  
and they just mock me and mistreat me. The fiends! Soon they will come crawling,  
they will chase after me, but I will be firm. Then they will pay! I can't wait to get  
my revenge on that bitch, Rosaura! Here he comes! Did you bring it?

[*PANCRAZIO returns with glass of wine*]

**PANCRAZIO**

Here is the wine. Put in the powder.

**ZANETTO**

[*Puts the powder in the glass of wine*]

Like this?

**PANCRAZIO**

Bravo. Drink. But don't tell anyone I gave it to you. It's our little secret.

**ZANETTO**

Don't worry.

**PANCRAZIO**

Have courage...

**ZANETTO**

Rock solid, like a fortress.

**PANCRAZIO**

And if you feel sick, just wait.

**ZANETTO**

I will grin and bear it!

**PANCRAZIO**

I must take my leave, so no one finds out... or everyone will be begging me  
to give them some.

**ZANETTO**

You're right.

**PANCRAZIO**

Oh, how we will laugh at these women!

**ZANETTO**

All of them after me. And me – nothing!

**PANCRAZIO**

Nothing. Unfeeling as a lion.

**ZANETTO**

Will they cry?

**PANCRAZIO**

Of course!

**ZANETTO**

And me, nothing...

**PANCRAZIO**

Nothing.

**ZANETTO**

I drink.

**PANCRAZIO**

Go on...

**ZANETTO**

To your health!

*[Drinks half of the glass of wine]*

**PANCRAZIO**

*[Aside]* The deed is done!

*[He goes]*

**ACT THREE  
SCENE TWENTY-THREE**

**ZANETTO**

*[Taking a sip]*

Oh, what stuff! Oh, what noxious stuff! Oh, what poison! My stomach's on fire!  
What's going on here? I can't drink anymore.

*[Sets the glass down]*

Oh, poor me! I'm going to die... I'm going to die. But, no... The powder is working.

If I want the women to suffer agonies for me, I have to grin and bear it. That's what Signor Pancrazio said ... But, oh, it hurts too much... I can't breathe... I can't stand it. I can't drink anymore. Poor me... A little water... water...water... I can't see ... the ground is shaking under my feet, My legs can't hold me... Oh, my heart... oh, my heart ... Be strong, Zanetto, be strong, so the women will run after you, and you... you will laugh at them. Oh, what a pleasure... I can't stand up... I'm falling... I'm going to die...

*[He falls]*

*[COLOMBINA comes out of the house, sees Zanetto on the ground]*

**COLOMBINA**

What do I see?! Signor Zanetto lying on the ground? What is it?  
What happened? What's wrong with you?

**ZANETTO**

Look! It works... women run after me!

**COLOMBINA**

Oh, my God! He's foaming at the mouth! He must be sick! Poor boy!  
I'll go call for help -- alone, I can do nothing.

*[She goes into the house]*

**ACT THREE**

**SCENE TWENTY-FOUR**

**ZANETTO**

You see? She's in love with me. She's in despair -- and me: solid.  
Oh! My heart! I perish ... I perish ... Help! Help!

*[Enter FLORINDO]*

**FLORINDO**

What is this? Tonino on the ground? Now is the time for revenge!

**ZANETTO**

Another woman after me!  
*[He twists in pain]*

**FLORINDO**

*[Aside]* What do I see? These are the contortions of dying man ...

**ZANETTO**

I'm dead. I'm dead.

**FLORINDO**

*[Aside]* He's really dying! *[To Zanetto]* What's the matter?

**ZANETTO**

I'm dead.

**FLORINDO**

How? What happened? [*Aside*] I pity him, although he is my rival.

**ZANETTO**

I drank... Yes... Women ... Signor Pancrazio ... Oh, me!... Oh, me!... I'm poisoned!... I'm dead... But, no ... Go away, women. ... Be strong!... Rock solid, you'll see! ... Oh, me...

[*Dies*]

**FLORINDO**

Ah, he breathes his last paltry breath! Who could have killed him? How did he die? What do I see? A glass nearby ...

[*Holds up the glass*]

Why is this wine so cloudy? ... The miserable man was poisoned!!

[*Puts the glass back on the ground*]

**ACT THREE**  
**SCENE TWENTY-FIVE**

[*Enter COLOMBINA, DOCTOR, BRIGHELLA*]

**COLOMBINA**

[*To DOCTOR*] Come quick, Signor! Help this poor young man.

**DOCTOR**

Quick, Brighella, go get a doctor!

**FLORINDO**

It's no use -- Signor Zanetto is dead.

**DOCTOR**

He's dead?

**BRIGHELLA**

Oh, poor fellow, he's dead?

**COLOMBINA**

Dead? Poor Signor Zanetto?

[*ROSAURA comes out of the house*]

**ROSAURA**

Forgive me, dear father, if I come out into the street. Do I understand that Signor Zanetto is dead, can it be true?

**DOCTOR**

Unfortunately, it's true. There he is, poor fellow.

[*BEATRICE and ARLECCHINO passing by the street*]

**BEATRICE**

Alas! What do I see? Dead, my love? Dead, my soul?

**ARLECCHINO**

What's going on? Is the master asleep?

**BRIGHELLA**

He's not asleep. He's dead, poor unfortunate fellow!

**ARLECCHINO**

In that case, I'm going back to Bergamo.

**DOCTOR**

Take him into the inn – it's not right to leave him in the middle of the road.

**ROSAURA**

Ah, what heartache I feel!

**COLOMBINA**

Poor girl, you're a widow before you're a bride! [*ASIDE*] Oh, this delights me no end – to see her humbled so!

**DOCTOR**

[*Pointing to Zanetto*]

Brighella! Take him into the inn.

**BRIGHELLA**

Step lively, Arlecchino! carry him inside.

[*To Beatrice's servant*] And you, young man... give him a hand!

**BEATRICE**

Poor, poor Beatrice, what will become of me?

**FLORINDO**

[*Quietly, to BEATRICE*]

Now that your Tonino is dead, will there be any hope for me?

**BEATRICE**

I will hate you forever.

**ARLECCHINO**

Be careful, friend! It's bad enough he's dead, no need to knock his brains out.

[ARLECCHINO *and* SERVANT *carry ZANETTO's body into the inn*]

**ROSAURA**

My very soul is torn out of my breast!

**BEATRICE**

What double-crossing traitor did this?!

**DOCTOR**

How did he die?

**FLORINDO**

I suspect that he was poisoned.

**DOCTOR**

By whom?

**FLORINDO**

I don't know, but I have good reason to believe it.

**ROSAURA**

Look for any clues that that will help to avenge the death of this poor, unfortunate man.

**ACT THREE  
SCENE TWENTY-SIX**

[TONINO *enters*]

**TONINO**

What's up, Signora Beatrice?

**DOCTOR**

[*Frightened*] What...?!

**BRIGHELLA**

[*Frightened*] The spirit of Signor Zanetto!

**ROSAURA**

He's not dead!

**BEATRICE**

He's alive!

*[Bewildered, they stare at each other terrified.]*

*[ARLECCHINO enters from inn with the SERVANT. Sees TONINO, thinking it's ZANETTO. Shocked.]*

**ARLECCHINO**

Oh, poor me! What do I see?

**TONINO**

What is it? What happened? Why this amazement?

**DOCTOR**

Signor Zanetto, are you alive?!

**TONINO**

Thank Heaven!

**DOCTOR**

But a just a moment ago you were lying there on the ground, dead.

**TONINO**

That's not so, I just got here.

**BRIGHELLA**

What's going on here?

**ARLECCHINO**

Wait. Wait here.

*[He goes into the inn, returns immediately]*

Incredible! He's half dead and half alive! Help! Save me!

*[He goes]*

**BRIGHELLA**

I'm coming! I'm coming!

*[Looks into the inn, returns]*

Amazing! Amazing! Inside... inside, he's dead, outside, he's alive!

**DOCTOR**

I want to see for myself.

*[Looks in the inn, returns. Looking at TONINO]*

Signor Zanetto!... inside, there is another Signor Zanetto!

**TONINO**

Quiet, Sir! Quiet! I will get to the bottom of this. Let me go inside, and I'll be right back.

*[Goes into the inn]*

**ROSAURA**

Please, God, let Zanetto be alive.

**BEATRICE**

Although he betrayed me, I want him to live.

**TONINO**

*[Returns from the inn, sad and downcast]*

Ah, me! I realized too late. I found him too late. That man lying in there, the one who is dead – he is Zanetto, my brother!

**DOCTOR**

Then who are you?

**TONINO**

I am Tonino Bisognosi, brother of the poor Zanetto.

**ROSAURA**

What do I hear?!

**DOCTOR**

What crazy business is this?!

**BEATRICE**

*[To TONINO]* So then, you're my husband...

**TONINO**

Yes, indeed, I am. But why did you rip up my letter? Why did you curse at me and mistreat me like that?

**BEATRICE**

Why did you abandon me for another? Why did you, before my very eyes, speak words of love to Signora Rosaura?

**TONINO**

It was nothing, my dear, nothing. It was the resemblance between me and my brother that caused this confusion. I am yours, and you are mine, and that's enough.

**ROSAURA**

But, Signor Zanetto, you gave your promise of marriage to me.

**TONINO**

I can't marry two of you. Besides, I'm not Zanetto.

**DOCTOR**

Zanetto or Tonino – if you consider it a worthy alliance, you can still marry my daughter. [*Aside*] He will be twice as rich with his brother's inheritance!

**TONINO**

All right, I'm happy marry your daughter.

**DOCTOR**

Then give her your hand.

**TONINO**

But where is your daughter?

**DOCTOR**

Here she is.

**TONINO**

Come on, I'm amazed at you. This is not your daughter.

**DOCTOR**

What? What are you saying?

**TONINO**

I know the whole story. I know about the pilgrim. I know everything.

**DOCTOR**

[*To Colombina*] You ungrateful gossip!

**COLOMBINA**

I don't know anything about it -

**TONINO**

Tell me, Doctor, do you still have the locket that you found in the baby clothes?

**DOCTOR**

[*Aside*] He even knows about the locket! [*To TONINO*] The locket with two portraits?

**TONINO**

Right! With two portraits.

**DOCTOR**

Here, take a look. Is this it?

**TONINO**

Yes, that's it... [*Aside*] My father had this made when his twins sons were born!

**DOCTOR**

All right, I confess that Rosaura is not my daughter, but an unknown child found by a pilgrim in the lowlands of Caldiera, between Venice and Verona. This pilgrim said she was lying on the ground in swaddling clothes, alone and abandoned by the bandits who had robbed and killed the travellers in the coach. I begged the pilgrim to leave the child with me. He agreed, and ever since then, I have brought her up as my own daughter.

**TONINO**

This is Flaminia, my sister. My poor mother was going from Venice to Val Brambana near Bergamo, to see her son, Zanetto, and to leave this girl with my uncle, Stephanello. They were attacked in the lowland of Caldiera and my mother and her companions were killed, but she, being an infant, was spared.

**ROSAURA**

[*To* TONINO] Now I understand the love I felt for you: we share the same blood.

**TONINO**

That's the very reason that I loved you.

**BEATRICE**

Thank Heaven, Tonino can't marry Rosaura.

**FLORINDO**

[*Aside*] Now all my hopes are dashed! I'll never get Beatrice.

**TONINO**

[*To* ROSAURA] Now I understand all the confusion about the contract and why you were so kind to me. And why I had the wrong impression of the good Doctor. I misjudged you, Sir.

**DOCTOR**

You have ruined me!

**TONINO**

How so?

**DOCTOR**

My brother left me a large inheritance of 30,000 ducats, as the guardian of a girl child named Rosaura, the only fruit of my marriage. The child died, and I was going to lose the inheritance, since the will stipulated that, in the case of her death, the money would go to a nephew of mine. I had lost my daughter; in order not to lose such a sizeable inheritance, I thought I would replace the dead Rosaura with another child. Fortunately, this one fell into my hands. With the help of a nanny, Colombina's mother, I was able to make the exchange. But now that my plan is discovered, my nephew will soon claim his estate, plus all the interest that I have unjustly accrued.

**TONINO**

Who is this nephew of yours?

**DOCTOR**

A certain Lelio -- my sister's son.

**TONINO**

Is he that ridiculous man who pretends to be a Count and Marquis?

**DOCTOR**

Precisely, that's the one.

**TONINO**

Look, here he comes. Let me handle this. Don't worry about anything!

**ACT THREE  
SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN**

[LELIO *enters*]

**LELIO**

Stop, all of you! Beware a desperate man!

**TONINO**

Calm down, Signor Lelio, what's done is done. Beatrice is my wife.

**LELIO**

I'll make the earth tremble! I will turn the world upside down!

**TONINO**

But why do you want to do that?

**LELIO**

Because I'm desperate.

**TONINO**

There may be a remedy.

**LELIO**

What remedy?

**TONINO**

Marry Signora Rosaura. Her dowry is fifteen thousand ducats and that much again on the doctor's death.

**LELIO**

Thirty thousand ducats! That's a very pleasing proposition.

**TONINO**

But do you find the lady pleasing?

**LELIO**

Who wouldn't be pleased? A dowry of thirty thousand ducats makes her a rare beauty.

**TONINO**

Then there no more to be said. It's not fitting to discuss this matter in the street. Let's go inside and conclude this business: Beatrice is mine and Rosaura will be Signor Lelio's. [*To ROSAURA*] You are content?

**ROSAURA**

I always do what my father wishes.

**DOCTOR**

Brava, my darling daughter! You've saved my life. Signor Tonino, I'm indebted to you. Let's go in and sign the documents before things cool off!

**TONINO**

Now everyone is happy.

**FLORINDO**

I am not happy: my heart aches with remorse because I've betrayed our friendship.

**TONINO**

Yes, shame on you for betraying me. You have done the worst thing that one could possibly do. But I pity you, you were in love. And if you are truly repentant, I shall accept you once again as my friend.

**FLORINDO**

I accept your generous offer, and I swear that in the future, I will be the most faithful of friends.

**ACT THREE**

**SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT**

[Enter PANCRAZIO]

**PANCRAZIO**

[*Aside*] What do I see? Zanetto's not dead? He didn't take the poison?  
What a fool I was to think he would do it.

**DOCTOR**

Signor Pancrazio, we're delighted to see you! We have some great news!

**PANCRAZIO**

Many thanks to you, gentlemen. [*Calls TONINO to the side*] Did you drink?

**TONINO**

Did I drink? Are you saying that I 'm drunk?

**PANCRAZIO**

No, I said, "Did you drink what I gave you?"

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] Aha! There's something suspicious here.  
[*To PANCRAZIO*] No, I didn't drink, yet.

**PANCRAZIO**

But, what about the women who torment you, how are you going to make them suffer?

**TONINO**

What should I do?

**PANCRAZIO**

As soon as you drink, you will be free.

**TONINO**

And what should I drink?

**PANCRAZIO**

Incredible! The powder I gave you! What did you do with the glass of wine and the powder?

**TONINO**

[*Aside*] A glass of wine and powder. Now I understand.

[*To PANCRAZIO aloud so that all can hear*]

Aha, you fraud! You damned hypocrite! You're the one who murdered my brother! Unfortunately he drank. Unfortunately, he passed over to the other side, because of you! I am not Zanetto, I am Tonino. We were twins, and the resemblance has fooled you. Tell me, you dog, you assassin, you traitor, why did you murder him? Why?

**PANCRAZIO**

I'm amazed at you! I don't know anything. I don't know what you're talking about! I am who I am, and I am incapable of such wickedness!

**TONINO**

Then why did you ask if I drank? If I wanted to be free of women?

**PANCRAZIO**

I was just making conversation... if you were drinking... I was talking about the wedding... for the wedding.

**TONINO**

See how he stammers! You villain, you fiend, you murdered my brother!

**PANCRAZIO**

Oh, Heavens! Oh, Heavens! To hear this, and not die?!

**DOCTOR**

Signor Pancrazio is an honorable man. I can vouch for him.

**FLORINDO**

Next to the dying Zanetto, I found a glass that had some very cloudy wine in it.

**COLOMBINA**

And I saw signor Pancrazio come into the house and furtively pour a glass of wine.

**FLORINDO**

Now let's check out this glass...

*[Picks up the glass]*

**TONINO**

*[To PANCRAZIO]* Listen, if you killed him, you'll be sorry! And my jewels, what have you done with them?

**PANCRAZIO**

The judge has them.

**TONINO**

Good, I think I'll go recover them.

**FLORINDO**

*[Holding up the glass]* Here is the wine that poisoned Zanetto.

**COLOMBINA**

That's the glass of wine that Signor Pancrazio got from the house.

**TONINO**

Is that true?

**PANCRAZIO**

It's true.

**TONINO**

So, it was you! You poisoned him!

**PANCRAZIO**

That's not true. I am a gentleman. And, to prove my innocence, give me that glass.

**FLORINDO**

Take it.

**PANCRAZIO**

Look, I drink.

**DOCTOR**

What did I say? Signor Pancrazio is incapable of committing such iniquity.

**TONINO**

*[Aside]* If he drinks it must not be poison.

**COLOMBINA**

Let's hope he's poisoned himself.

**TONINO**

Look... look... his eyes are crossed! He's getting sick --

**PANCRAZIO**

*[Feeling the effects of the poison]*

Friends, I'm dead and there is no remedy.... Now I can tell you everything, now that I'm close to death: I loved Rosaura, and I couldn't stand for her to become another man's wife., so I poisoned the poor wretch to get rid of a rival. Ah! no more... I die. I die as wickedly as I lived. My goodness was a sham, a pretense. Learn from my example: don't trust the man who displays excessive virtue. There is no more wicked man than the one who pretends to be good and is not. Farewell, friends, I go to a desperate death.

[*Staggering, he goes*]

**COLOMBINA**

I always said he was a scoundrel.

**TONINO**

Now he's stolen the executioner's job! Oh, my poor brother! What sorrow I feel!  
[*To ROSAURA*] Dear sister, I am consoled to have found you, but I am sorry for the death of poor Zanetto.

**ROSAURA**

I, too, regret his loss, but we must be patient.

**DOCTOR**

Hurry up, let's go inside.

**TONINO**

[*To BEATRICE*] If it please her, I'll escort my bride.

**LELIO**

[*To ROSAURA*] And I'll come with my goddess.

**DOCTOR**

Everybody come! You will all be witnesses to the marriage contract.  
[*Aside*] That's all I care about.

**TONINO**

With the inheritance from my brother, I shall clear my name in Venice and get back on my feet. If I could only revive him, I would gladly do it, but, as he's dead, I'll go to Bergamo and collect the crumbs. I thank the good fortune that let me find a sister, and a bride. And with the death of poor, unfortunate Zanetto, we have cleared up all the confusions and misunderstandings that occurred in one day because of two Venetian Twins!