

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.¹

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

¹ 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]

ROSAURA

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' 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!