

# **The Captain's Treasure** *a commedia*

by  
T. James Belich

T. James Belich  
[James@Playwrighting.org](mailto:James@Playwrighting.org)  
<http://www.playwrighting.org/>

# The Captain's Treasure

by T. James Belich

## CHARACTERS

CAPITANO SPAVENTO (M), *a Spanish captain less brave than he boasts*

ARLECCHINO (M), *the CAPITANO's servant*

COLUMBINA (F), *maid to LUCINDA*

LUCINDA (F), *PANTALONE's daughter*

LELIO (M), *in love with LUCINDA*

PANTALONE (M), *a rich but miserly merchant*

RUFFIANA (F), *aunt to LUCINDA and sister-in-law to PANTALONE*

TOTAL ROLES: 7 (3 female, 4 male)

## SET REQUIREMENTS

Minimal

## PROPS

Traveling bag

Pouch filled with coins (3)

Swords (3)

Wedding veil

Paper and pen (2)

Bouquet of flowers

Character Masks (Optional)

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

The Pauper's Theater, Saint Paul, MN – February 2012

## AWARDS

Honorable Mention in the Ohio State Newark New Play Contest (2011)

## SYNOPSIS

When Arlecchino arrives in Pisa with nothing to his name except two sore feet and an empty stomach, he decides he has had his fill of the servant's life. But as he schemes as to how to escape the foolish Capitano he serves, his sorry state quickly invites the relentless mockery of the maid Columbina. To avoid further humiliation in her (admittedly beautiful) eyes, Arlecchino takes the only possible course: he lies. But while the tale of his master's fictitious treasure might impress Columbina, it wreaks all manner of mischief upon the inhabitants of Pisa. Soon a wealthy merchant throws over his daughter's suitor in favor of the "rich" Capitano and Arlecchino then finds himself disguised as the young gentleman in an effort to fix matters (and perhaps elevate his own station in the process).

What's more, the merchant's daughter convinces Columbina to trade identities in order to escape the Capitano's advances, and Arlecchino is caught between playing the part of the young lady's suitor while fighting off the rumors of his unfaithfulness! As Arlecchino continues to tangle up the town's affairs, it will take the quick wit of Columbina to unravel the mess he has created and reunite the young lovers... perhaps finding her own love in the process. Love, greed, and mistaken identity abound in this new tale inspired by the original Italian commedia dell'arte.

SCENE 1

(A street in Pisa during the 1600s. In the spirit of the original commedia dell'arte the set is very minimal and able to serve as a variety of locations. The choice of whether or not to use character masks is left up to the director. The CAPITANO enters followed by his servant ARLECCHINO who slowly drags a heavy traveling bag with him.)

CAPITANO

Here we are, Arlecchino, Pisa at last!

ARLECCHINO

Very good, master.

(Aside)

Seven miles without a break since breakfast.

(He finally drags the bag to where the CAPITANO is standing. To the CAPITANO)

You'll want to be finding an inn?

CAPITANO

(Laughing)

Don't be a fool, it's hardly noon! We've all the day still before us.

(ARLECCHINO collapses on top of the bag.)

You shall find us an inn while I take in the sights of Pisa.

ARLECCHINO

(Looking up)

Really?

CAPITANO

But of course!

(He hands ARLECCHINO a bag of money.)

Here's my purse. Find us someplace nearby with a good meal and strong drink. I expect everything ready for me come sundown.

ARLECCHINO

(Counting the money)

At once, master!

CAPITANO

That's all we have, Arlecchino, so use it well. Tomorrow we head north to join the wars.

ARLECCHINO

To watch the wars, you mean, while others fight in them.

CAPITANO

Nonsense! The Milanese have need of my valor.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

What valor he has is only to be found at the bottom of a glass.

CAPITANO

(Continuing)

I, Capitano Spavento, am the greatest soldier this side of the Pyrenees. In Florence I served the royal court with such distinction they showered me with gold.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

He drank half the royal cellars in a week and they paid him a hundred ducats just to leave.

CAPITANO

In Prussia I single-handedly sent a hundred men fleeing for their lives!

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

He ran. From one.

CAPITANO

And in my native Spain they still sing songs of my valiant exploits.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

In jest.

CAPITANO

So on your feet, man, there's work to be done!

ARLECCHINO

Because I've had nothing to do today.

CAPITANO

Exactly! You cannot expect to always live such a life of leisure.

ARLECCHINO

Of course, master.

CAPITANO

I shall see you at sundown.

(The CAPITANO exits and ARLECCHINO sits on top of the bag.)

ARLECCHINO

(To the audience)

Two weeks we've been on the road with hardly a good meal or a roof over our heads. The Capitano is less for fighting than spending what little money he has on drink and women. And even when there is a meal to be had you can be sure there's hardly a dry crust left for Arlecchino.

(Fingering a few coins)

But tonight at least we shall have a warm bed.

(He pockets the coins.)

And perhaps a little more besides.

(ARLECCHINO starts to drag the bag off when COLUMBINA, a maid, enters.)

COLUMBINA

And what motley heap of rags do we have here cluttering up the streets of Pisa?

(ARLECCHINO stops, exhausted.)

You will not find the rubbish collected until tomorrow, good signor.

ARLECCHINO

They are my master's things, if you must know, and no rubbish, however heavy.

COLUMBINA

I did not refer to the sack.

ARLECCHINO

If you do not mind, good signorina, I must be about my master's business.

(ARLECCHINO continues to pull the bag across the stage while COLUMBINA skips ahead and blocks his path.)

COLUMBINA

Who is your master, signor?

ARLECCHINO

Capitano Spavento, a gallant soldier from Spain.

COLUMBINA

Clearly he is not as rich as my master. A mere glance at our clothes may tell who serves the better man.

ARLECCHINO

My master is more prosperous than it might appear.

COLUMBINA

And that, I suppose, is why he has but one poor servant, dressed in rags, to carry his odds and ends through the dusty streets of Pisa? Or does your "rich" master always travel with nothing but a dirty sack?

ARLECCHINO

This is but my master's laundry, wench! A score of men have gone ahead with his traveling things already. Did you think the hero of the Prussian War went 'round with nothing more than such rags?

COLUMBINA

Yes.

ARLECCHINO

If I were not already occupied...

COLUMBINA

What? You would dazzle me with your radiant wit?

ARLECCHINO

Have you no better occupation than to abuse me so?

COLUMBINA

One has little in the way of occupation when you serve a master as rich as mine.

ARLECCHINO

His wealth is nothing compared to my master's, I promise you. My master has a legion of servants to do his bidding and nightly do we dine on fine wine and *foie gras*.

COLUMBINA

You are a lying knave, and such lies do not become a handsome face.

ARLECCHINO

Handsome, you say?

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

And not without vanity!

ARLECCHINO

And what would you say, signorina, to a servant both handsome and rich?

COLUMBINA

Tell me where to find such a man and I shall run to him at once.

ARLECCHINO

I am he, you fiend of flattery!

(He shows her the bag of money.)

This is but the smallest of my master's favors, which he casts among us at the slightest whim. I could spend it all in an evening and think nothing of it.

COLUMBINA

Indeed? I am glad to see your master is so kind as to toss you your daily bag of feed.

ARLECCHINO

Fie on you, you wretched she-wolf! See for yourself!

(ARLECCHINO tosses COLUMBINA the bag of money.)

What do you say now?

COLUMBINA

That you bolster your lies with some grain of truth. A hundred ducats! But in what manner did a lowly soldier come by such wealth?

ARLECCHINO

In what manner? What does it matter what manner? If you will not take me at my word...

COLUMBINA

If I were to believe every rogue who passed through Pisa then all the world is made of gold.

ARLECCHINO

I am not of such a common stock as they. I was born a noble birth in far away lands, and yet my state now is higher than it has ever been.

(Aside)

That much is true, at least, for the son of a fishmonger.

COLUMBINA

How pretty these falsehoods sound upon your tongue. You are a born poet. Good day to you.

ARLECCHINO

Fair signorina, wait!

(Aside)

If her master is as rich as she says then she might see me to a fuller stomach than I've known in weeks.

(To COLUMBINA)

I confess you may have caught me in one or two... inventions, but only in truth because my master would beat me senseless if I told you his secret.

COLUMBINA

I am discreet, you may rely on that.

ARLECCHINO

My master, the Capitano, while fighting in the Spanish Wars –

COLUMBINA

I am not familiar with them. Which wars would those be?

ARLECCHINO

It matters not! What matters is that during these wars the Capitano learned of a secret treasure.

COLUMBINA

Did he now?

ARLECCHINO

From the lips of a dying comrade, so like a brother to the Capitano that he still will not speak of him for the pain of this great loss.

(Aside)

And may this spare me the pain of such further questions!

COLUMBINA

Go on, signor.

ARLECCHINO

When the war ended the Capitano and I dug up this great treasure and carried it away. From that day forth we have lived like kings.

COLUMBINA

And a shabbier piece of nobility I have never seen.

ARLECCHINO

Do not be fooled by my rustic appearance, you enchanting harpy. My master and I dress only as we do to put off thieves and ruffians.

COLUMBINA

Then give me proof.

(Holding out the bag of money)

Give me this as a token of your honesty, Signor...

ARLECCHINO

Arlecchino.

COLUMBINA

If it is but the trifle you say...

ARLECCHINO

It is, but I am not so certain I like your temper.

COLUMBINA

Then give it to me for my face. Or is that not worth the price?

ARLECCHINO

Perhaps...

COLUMBINA

Certainly yours would be if I had such a gift to give, but my master is not quite so free with such nothings.

ARLECCHINO

Then I give it to you, signorina. For your face, and your name?

COLUMBINA

Columbina, servant to the merchant Pantalone and maid to his daughter Lucinda.

ARLECCHINO

Well met, Columbina.

(He bows.)

COLUMBINA

And you, Signor Arlecchino. Good day.

(She exits.)

ARLECCHINO

Now there's a comely maid, if curst in manner.

(Realizing)

Who has cheated me of all my master's money! No money means no food and no bed. And no bed for my master means... Thankfully my master is in truth a coward or else it would be a stick for me. For my back.

(He pulls out the few coins he pocketed earlier.)

Nothing to it, Arlecchino, but to see how far these few crumbs can be stretched.

(ARLECCHINO finally drags the bag offstage when LELIO and LUCINDA, in love with one another, enter. ARLECCHINO hides and listens in.)

LUCINDA

Oh Lelio!

LELIO

Lucinda!

(They hold hands, gaze at one another longingly, and sigh.)

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Now here's a tender pair of doves. But where there are lovers there are often coins to be had!

LUCINDA

How wonderful that Father has finally agreed to our marriage.

LELIO

Indeed, my dearest! I only regret it took me so long to save the hundred ducats your father requested.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

A hundred ducats! Just the amount I lost to that harlot. That beautiful, captivating harlot.

LUCINDA

Oh my love, it is hard that you must supply my dowry yourself, but then Father is always saying how very poor he is. Why he has told me a hundred times how he must do without in order to save for my wedding.

LELIO

'Tis true, my buttercup, and to think that all consider Pantalone the richest man in Pisa.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Pantalone... Columbina's master? This then must be his daughter.

LUCINDA

But let us not think of money, for we do not need riches to be happy.

LELIO

Indeed not, sweet flower.

LUCINDA

Though it would be a shame to hide my beauty behind rags.

LELIO

I cannot disagree, my chickadee.

LUCINDA

And the finest food and drink is needed if you wish for me to maintain my looks.

LELIO

But of course, my ruby. And I, to stand by your side, must be the equal of your splendor in every way.

LUCINDA

Certainly, my pumpkin!

LELIO

With clothes to match, and food from the very same table.

LUCINDA

I would not have your handsome features lose an ounce of their beauty, you who are all the gold I need.

LELIO

Then it is settled. We shall live as poor as church mice on whatever your father's money can afford.

LUCINDA

Of that there is no question.

(They sigh and continue to gaze lovingly at one another.)

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Here's a couple of proud peacocks to be sure! It is hard indeed to feel sorry for what the loss of a hundred ducats would do to those of such "simple" needs.

LUCINDA

And just think, the wedding day is finally set for the Monday after next.

LELIO

My heart will scarcely beat until that day arrives.

LUCINDA

(Seriously)

But it must, you know, else you shall not live to see it.

LELIO

A figure of speech, my cherub.

LUCINDA

Oh Lelio, how poetic! There is not a woman in Pisa as fortunate as I.

LELIO

I am beyond comparison, am I not? My love for you...

LUCINDA

Yes?

LELIO

...is as deep as the ocean!

LUCINDA

And?

LELIO

As tall as the mountains!

LUCINDA

And?

LELIO

As wide as the earth!

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

And the sky blue, water wet, and sugar sweet. This one's wit is as dull as a stone.

LELIO

My love for you, Lucinda, is eternal...

LUCINDA

...and mine undying!

LELIO

Mine is boundless...

LUCINDA

...mine immeasurable!

LELIO

Undeniable!

LUCINDA

Irrefutable!

LELIO

Delirious!

LUCINDA

Rapturous!

LELIO

Illuminating!

LUCINDA

Illuminating?

LELIO

For you illuminate my soul.

LUCINDA

Oh Lelio...

(They look once more into each other's eyes and, locked in this gaze, they exit, followed by ARLECCHINO.)

SCENE 2

(PANTALONE's house. PANTALONE is counting a large bag of money while his sister-in-law RUFFIANA is working on a veil or other wedding preparations.)

RUFFIANA

To think my little niece shall finally have a husband!

PANTALONE

Yes, yes, married off at last, but not before she's eaten me out of house and home. Not to mention the clothes!

RUFFIANA

A girl must look her best, particularly when there's a young gentleman to think of.

PANTALONE

Young gentlemen are all that girl thinks of. But now she shall be his responsibility.

RUFFIANA

Now Pantalone, they will need a helping hand to get their household started.

PANTALONE

And I suppose, Ruffiana, you think that hand should be mine, handing out gold?

RUFFIANA

Well, what is a father for? My father gave my husband, God rest his soul, a tidy sum to start with. And I seem to remember that he did the same for you and my poor sister.

PANTALONE

The difference, Ruffiana, is that your father was rich while I have hardly a ducat to spare. If Lucinda has her way I shall be bankrupt before the wedding feast is cold!

RUFFIANA

You exaggerate. She is having but a simple ceremony.

PANTALONE

So simple all of Pisa seems to be invited. I do not see why you cannot help out more with the expenses. You are far richer than I.

RUFFIANA

Because I have no children of my own to dote on.

PANTALONE

Dote! Just another word for excess.

(Aside)

Though what I would not give for just a taste of Ruffiana's fortune.

(To RUFFIANA)

You know, my dear, my daughter may not be the only one to hear the wedding bells.

RUFFIANA

Nonsense. I am certain I would have heard of any other engagements.

PANTALONE

Unless it had not yet been announced.

(He slides next to her.)

The preparations will all be made, you and I shall both be there, what is to stop the priest from joining two pairs at once?

RUFFIANA

Pantalone!

PANTALONE

We live already under the same roof. There would be certain conveniences to formally joining our households.

RUFFIANA

I had no idea...

PANTALONE

This is difficult for me to say, my dear...

(Aside)

But speaking to her banker has made the idea easier to stomach.

RUFFIANA

(Coyly)

I shall have to think it over, signor.

PANTALONE

Do not take too long, my pearl of fortune.

(Aside)

I would not want to pay for a second wedding!

(COLUMBINA enters counting the money given to her by ARLECCHINO. PANTALONE hides his.)

COLUMBINA

(To herself)

...fifty, fifty-one, fifty-two...

PANTALONE

You, what have you there?

(COLUMBINA hides the money behind her back.)

COLUMBINA

Nothing, master.

PANTALONE

Nothing? Smells like gold to me. Let me see it.

(COLUMBINA reluctantly hands over the money.)

Where did you get this?

COLUMBINA

It was a gift.

PANTALONE

From who?

COLUMBINA

Whom.

(PANTALONE throws her a sharp look.)

A rich stranger.

PANTALONE

What stranger?

(COLUMBINA looks at the bag of money and PANTALONE reluctantly gives it back.)

COLUMBINA

A servant who can toss around coins such as these and think nothing of it.

PANTALONE

A servant to who?

COLUMBINA

Whom.

PANTALONE

Whom indeed!

COLUMBINA

A foreign capitano who throws such favors upon the least of his servants.

PANTALONE

And what is this soldier's name? His story?

COLUMBINA

Capitano Spavento, a hero of many wars.

PANTALONE

Not only rich then, but brave. Well, well, we must not prove poor hosts in Pisa. This Capitano must dine with us, and stay with us tonight if he pleases.

RUFFIANA

Dine here? Be he handsome as well as rich, Columbina?

PANTALONE

What do his looks matter?

RUFFIANA

I am sure they matter not to you.

PANTALONE

I shall seek him out. He must be our guest tonight.

(Aside)

And I pray his purse opens as liberally as his servant's!

(To COLUMBINA)

I will have the Capitano comfortable, wanting nothing. See to it!

COLUMBINA

Of course, master.

(Aside)

Always the best for our guests, until Pantalone sees the bill!

(She exits.)

PANTALONE

(Aside)

Now, now, let me think... This Capitano would surely make for a better son-in-law than that fool Lelio. I need someone able to look after me in my old age, after all.

(He takes out his money again and fingers it greedily.)

But my daughter is fond of her young man and it will not be easy to convince her to substitute a different groom at this late date. But perhaps a handsome face does matter. It may make the switch easier for Lucinda to swallow. Now, let me see...

(He paces back and forth and every now and then appears to have an idea, but dismisses it. Finally, a worthy thought strikes him.)

Ah, I have it!

(To RUFFIANA)

Ruffiana, my dear?

RUFFIANA

Yes, Pantalone?

PANTALONE

The wedding preparations are very far along, are they not?

RUFFIANA

Silly man, you know full well they are.

PANTALONE

Yes, yes, it's just that... Never mind, I probably had best not bring it up.

RUFFIANA

Oh?

PANTALONE

It's nothing, just a few chance words I heard about my soon-to-be son-in-law.

RUFFIANA

Is that all? Folk are simply jealous. He is a fine catch, after all, and handsome.

PANTALONE

Yes, yes, if you say so. I am glad to hear you say that, for it had made me most uneasy in my mind.

RUFFIANA

Lelio is the most exquisite of gentlemen and I cannot imagine a word against him.

PANTALONE

Nor could I, which is why I could not believe he should be accused of such a thing.

RUFFIANA

(Stopping what she is doing, concerned)

What thing?

PANTALONE

Nothing, you said so yourself.

RUFFIANA

Yes, but still... Perhaps I had best know what it is. Just in case Lucinda should hear of it, you understand.

PANTALONE

An excellent thought! You are both wise and beautiful.

RUFFIANA

(Giggling)

Oh Pantalone...

PANTALONE

Here it is: As I passed through the marketplace yesterday I heard two young women speaking of the young gentlemen they had just met. I paid no attention until I heard one of them give the most anguished cry.

RUFFIANA

The poor dear! What was the matter? Not that it does matter, of course.

PANTALONE

No, no, of course not. But it seemed, you see, that these two poor creatures had discovered that their young men, who came to them in the dark of night, if you take my meaning, were one and the same!

RUFFIANA

How dreadful!

PANTALONE

Indeed! And I would not have given it a second thought, except one woman swore then and there that never again would she lay eyes upon that cur, that scoundrel, that...

RUFFIANA

Yes?

PANTALONE

...Lelio.

RUFFIANA

Lucinda's Lelio?

PANTALONE

He soon will be. For of course there is nothing to it, just as you said.

RUFFIANA

Poor Lucinda, if she hears of it...

PANTALONE

Certainly she mustn't, not if there is no truth to it.

RUFFIANA

No, I quite agree. All the same, if there is...

PANTALONE

(Eagerly)

Do you think that there could be?

RUFFIANA

(Unconvinced)

No, it's impossible, not Lelio. But how devastated Lucinda would be. If it were true, that is.

PANTALONE

Well, once they are married it shall not matter. She couldn't get out of it then, could she?

RUFFIANA

No, she couldn't, that is something to consider. If you'll excuse me a moment...

(She exits in a hurry.)

PANTALONE

(To the audience)

How quickly she took the bait. This tale shall be all over Pisa within the hour! At which point I may introduce my daughter to what I hope shall be a willing substitution.

(PANTALONE exits with his money as he continues to scheme.)

SCENE 3

(The streets of Pisa. ARLECCHINO enters.)

ARLECCHINO

It is hopeless! I have tried every means I can devise to scrape together food and lodging for my master from what few crumbs I have. Or had, for I have gambled those few coins away. But they be a miserly lot here in Pisa. When I plead with an innkeeper for mercy and a warm bed, what do you think I receive? No bed, I can tell you that, but a firm beating and I am quickly shown the door! I have so many bruises now I am more black and blue than anything else. One kick gave me such a bruise that I...

(ARLECCHINO points to his rear end and seems about to show the audience the bruise in question, but he thinks better of it.)

That is not important. What is it that I shall surely receive more than a few harsh words from my master when he return to find no dinner, no drink, no bed, and no money.

(He suddenly has a wonderful idea.)

Perhaps it would be best if he also found no Arlecchino!

(ARLECCHINO tries to run away but he runs into the CAPITANO who has just entered.)

CAPITANO

There you are, Arlecchino! I have looked for you in every inn and tavern in Pisa. I am ready for my supper. Where do we lodge tonight?

ARLECCHINO

About that, master. I thought it would be more interesting if it should be... a surprise!

CAPITANO

How would that make it more interesting?

ARLECCHINO

Well... you wouldn't know where we were going until we arrived, would you?

CAPITANO

No...

ARLECCHINO

And you would not know what you would have for dinner until it was served.

CAPITANO

Also true...

ARLECCHINO

And the drink, the wine and the beer, that too, a mystery!

CAPITANO

Yes, but why should I want to –

ARLECCHINO

Trust me, master, it's better this way.

(He tries to push the CAPITANO offstage.)

Now if you just head down that street there I need to see a, uh, man about... something.

CAPITANO

I am in no mood for games, Arlecchino. I must regain my strength, if I am to be ready for all the battles ahead.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

There is not enough ale in all of Italy for such a feat.

CAPITANO

What's that?

ARLECCHINO

Nothing!

(The CAPITANO forces them to a stop.)

CAPITANO

I insist on knowing where we are going.

ARLECCHINO

You do?

CAPITANO

I do! You shall have dinner yourself, Arlecchino, does that thought not suit you?

ARLECCHINO

You would think so, wouldn't you?

CAPITANO

Where are we staying tonight?

ARLECCHINO

Well, you see, we are... not staying at an inn!

CAPITANO

We aren't?

ARLECCHINO

No, for tonight we shall be staying... at the house of a gentleman.

CAPITANO

Is that so? This is well done indeed, Arlecchino. What gentleman?

ARLECCHINO

What gentleman? Why a gentleman of Pisa, of course.

CAPITANO

I suppose that does follow, but what is the gentleman's name?

ARLECCHINO

He introduced himself to me as Signor.

(He bows with a flourish.)

CAPITANO

Signor?

ARLECCHINO

Signor.

(He repeats the bow.)

CAPITANO

I see. Well, never mind the name then. Where does this esteemed Signor live?

ARLECCHINO

Pisa, master. How far did you think I would take you?

CAPITANO

But whereabouts in Pisa?

ARLECCHINO

Is his house, you mean?

CAPITANO

Yes!

ARLECCHINO

Why that is easy. It is...

(He looks around and tries to think of a plausible lie.)

That way.

(He points and the CAPITANO turns to look.)

CAPITANO

That way?

ARLECCHINO

No master, that way.

(The CAPITANO turns back to look at ARLECCHINO who is now pointing in a different direction.)

CAPITANO

I see, down that street there.

(He turns to look again.)

ARLECCHINO

No, no, master, that direction.

(The CAPITANO turns back to ARLECCHINO who is pointing in yet a different direction.)

CAPITANO

(Turning to look)

But I thought you said that –

ARLECCHINO

Over there, master, yes.

(The CAPITANO turns back to ARLECCHINO who once more points in yet another direction.)

CAPITANO

Blast it all! Never mind where the house is, for you shall take me there yourself.

ARLECCHINO

Of course, master.

CAPITANO

Good!

ARLECCHINO

It's just that...

CAPITANO

What?

ARLECCHINO

Don't you want to know what we'll be having for dinner?

CAPITANO

I shall find out once we get there. Now come.

ARLECCHINO

But you yourself just said how much you did not want to be surprised.

CAPITANO

It does not matter.

ARLECCHINO

Now master, after your long and tiring journey, with all of the great battles still before you, I would be remiss in my duties as your servant if I allowed you to go on without –

CAPITANO

Very well! What is for dinner?

ARLECCHINO

You mean tonight?

CAPITANO

Yes!

ARLECCHINO

Ah, tonight for your pleasure, master, you shall dine upon the finest delicacies that the Signor, and indeed all of Italy, has to offer. You shall feast upon... well, a feast, the likes of which you have never known. Such smells, such flavors, such colors, a veritable... well, feast for the senses!

CAPITANO

But what is it we are to eat?

ARLECCHINO

You know, I don't think he said.

CAPITANO

That is it! You shall take me at once to the house of this good Signor or else I fear I shall lose my temper!

ARLECCHINO

Of course, master, I am at your service. Always ready to please, that is my motto. If you want to go, then by all means, we shall go. At once! Immediately! Post haste! Without delay!

CAPITANO

Now!!!

ARLECCHINO

Certainly.

(He starts to go and then stops.)

There's just one tiny matter I should inform you of first...

(PANTALONE enters.)

PANTALONE

There you are!

ARLECCHINO

Yes! Here we are!

(He bows.)

Arlecchino, at your service, and my master Capitano Spavento.

PANTALONE

Just the man I have been looking for.

(To the CAPITANO)

Signor, you are to dine this evening at my humble abode. And stay the night, of course, I insist.

ARLECCHINO

As I was saying, master, we were just waiting for the gentleman himself.

CAPITANO

Oh, yes, I see.

PANTALONE

Signor Pantalone.

(He bows to the CAPITANO.)

If you would but follow me. It shall be my pleasure to be your host.

CAPITANO

But of course!

(He bows to PANTALONE in return.)

The honor, signor, is all yours.

PANTALONE

Yes, well. This way.

(He exits.)

CAPITANO

Well done, Arlecchino, well done indeed!

ARLECCHINO

I live to serve, master.

CAPITANO

You know, I was starting to have my doubts that there even was such a gentleman. I hope you will overlook my ingratitude. You have truly outdone yourself this time.

ARLECCHINO

Think nothing of it. Shall we be going?

CAPITANO

Oh no! Such service deserves a reward. Keep my purse and find yourself a comfortable inn for the night. And treat yourself to whatever you like for dinner.

ARLECCHINO

Actually, master, I would rather join you...

CAPITANO

And have a drink on me as well. Two even!

ARLECCHINO

Very thoughtful of you, but –

CAPITANO

I shall see you in the morning. Call for me at Signor Pantalone's after breakfast.  
(He exits.)

ARLECCHINO

But master...!

(To the audience)

Some reward! I am to lodge and dine on whatever my master can afford... which is nothing. Curse that harpy! Were it not for that fiendishly divine creature I would be drinking myself under the table this very moment. Well, if honest means will not serve to feed me tonight, I shall have to bring all my cunning to bear on this situation.

(He paces the stage as he tries to think of a plan. Finally)

O Heavens above, give to me a sign!

(From offstage we hear the sound of an angry mob.)

Now this is a sign I am surely not in Heaven's favor!

(ARLECCHINO runs around and looks for a hiding place, but as he cannot find one he freezes at center stage and covers himself as best he can with his arms. LELIO enters, fleeing the mob.)

LELIO

Hide me!

(ARLECCHINO peeks out and realizes that he isn't the mob's target. The sound of the mob grows louder as LELIO hides behind ARLECCHINO. Both react to the unseen mob and ARLECCHINO waves innocently as the sound of it passes by. When the sound dies away LELIO emerges.)

LELIO

Signor, I cannot thank you enough for your help.

ARLECCHINO

That was a narrow escape. You are nearly as well loved in Pisa as I. What have you done?

LELIO

I am pursued, signor, for love!

ARLECCHINO

Theirs?

LELIO

No! My darling Lucinda's.

ARLECCHINO

(Remembering)

Right, Pantalone's daughter. And how is she a party to that unruly ruckus?

(He receives a blank look)

Why are they chasing you?

LELIO

Because of a most foul rumor, which it pains me to think may have already reached my beloved's ears. They say I am false!

ARLECCHINO

(Having expected more than this)

You are a man. We are not known as masters of fidelity. They will kill you for this in Pisa?

LELIO

Well, I did give blows to one or two of them, the last being the local magistrate.

ARLECCHINO

Ah, trouble with the law. I've been there more than once myself, signor. It takes a fast leg and a quick wit to...

(He looks LELIO over.)

Well, good luck to you.

LELIO

If you have any thoughts on how I might escape these ruffians, I would be most grateful. I cannot come with a hundred paces of my little dumpling's house without them setting upon me.

ARLECCHINO

Dumpling?

(LELIO gives him a stern look.)

That's not important. How grateful?

LELIO

My soul shall forever thank you, signor. You will have served the greatest master of all: Love!

ARLECCHINO

How much is that in ducats?

LELIO

Well, once my love and I are reunited I am sure I can find some way of repaying you.

ARLECCHINO

Do you think that will be by dinnertime?

LELIO

Well, I'm not really certain...

ARLECCHINO

It shall have to do. Give me your coat.

LELIO

Signor?

ARLECCHINO

And your pants.

LELIO

Signor!

ARLECCHINO

We shall switch clothes.

(He starts removing parts of his costume.)

Then they will think you're me and I'm you and you can see your... dumpling.

LELIO

Very cunning!

(LELIO begins removing parts of his costume and he and ARLECCHINO switch clothes. This may be limited to a few pieces such as hats and vests to simplify the change.)

ARLECCHINO

Arlecchino, at your service, signor.

LELIO

(Shaking his hand)

Signor Lelio, at yours. Now Arlecchino, if I am to play your part I suppose I must know something about you.

ARLECCHINO

I am servant to Capitano Spavento, a brave warrior.

LELIO

Splendid!

ARLECCHINO

I should warn you, he is not a forgiving master and will stand little nonsense.

LELIO

Much is to be endured in the name of love, Arlecchino. Where shall I find this Capitano?

ARLECCHINO

He went even now to the house of Signor Pantalone.

LELIO

Lucinda's own father! This is a most excellent plan of yours. I shall be able to see her without raising the least suspicion.

(As they complete their costume switch ARLECCHINO makes sure that LELIO's bag of money ends up with him. Some parts of ARLECCHINO's costume fit LELIO so poorly that he looks truly ridiculous.)

LELIO

There! How do I look?

ARLECCHINO

Like a servant. Is that really what I look like?

(ARLECCHINO and LELIO look at each other and mirror each other's movements.)

LELIO

It is most uncanny. Why you would fool my own father!

ARLECCHINO

Does your father like you?

LELIO

Certainly!

ARLECCHINO

Good! What time is dinner?

LELIO

Oh no, you mustn't go there!

ARLECCHINO

Why not?

LELIO

The mob shall surely look for me there.

ARLECCHINO

Right.

(Aside, gesturing to the bag of money)

But at least now I have some other means at my disposal.

LELIO

But you must have somewhere to go while you hide from them.

(He digs in his pockets looking for his money.)

Allow me to offer you something in advance for your service.

ARLECCHINO

No, no, that's quite all right, signor. When all is done you can repay me.

LELIO

If you are sure. I am most grateful for your help, Arlecchino. You must do your master great credit. Now I must be off to see my little sweet pea!

ARLECCHINO

Good luck!

(LELIO exits in high spirits while ARLECCHINO struts around in his new gentlemen's clothes.)

Now this is a fine turn of fortune! Money in my purse, fine clothes upon my back, and best of all another to do all my work for me.

(He continues to strut and practice his bows.)

Signor Arlecchino, at your service. Sir Arlecchino to you, signor. Make way for Lord Arlecchino! Yes, a fine turn indeed. If only Columbina could see me now.

(RUFFIANA enters.)

RUFFIANA

You!

ARLECCHINO

(Bowing)

Good day, signora. Signor Arl... signor Lelio, at your service.

(RUFFIANA crosses to ARLECCHINO and slaps him.)

RUFFIANA

You cur, you dog, you villain!

ARLECCHINO

Signora?

RUFFIANA

I marvel that you still have the nerve to show your face here in Pisa. My niece has known nothing but tears since she learned the news.

ARLECCHINO

What news? Signora, I do not think we have been introduced.

RUFFIANA

Do you pretend not to know me?

(She slaps him again.)

After you nearly made a fool of my niece at the altar?

ARLECCHINO

(Trying to figure out who she's talking about, then)

Lucinda!

RUFFIANA

I see how it is. So many women you cannot even remember them all!

ARLECCHINO

No, no!

RUFFIANA

When I think of how you have abused the trust of that poor, innocent girl...

ARLECCHINO

Upon my oath, signora, not I.

RUFFIANA

And now you do not even have the decency to admit it. Signor Lelio, I... I...

(Enraged, she chases ARLECCHINO around the stage.)

ARLECCHINO

Take hold of yourself, signora! I am innocent, I tell you, innocent!

RUFFIANA

You liar, you cheat! When I get my hands on you...

ARLECCHINO

Signora, please!

(Finally RUFFIANA tires and ARLECCHINO retreats to a safe distance.)

RUFFIANA

Have you nothing to say for yourself? After all the times I hid your rendezvous, delivered your letters, spoke kind words in Pantalone's ear on your behalf. And all the while behind Lucinda's back...

ARLECCHINO

In truth, not I. Is there nothing I can do to prove my faithfulness to darling, sweet, beautiful... uh...

RUFFIANA

Lucinda!

ARLECCHINO

Yes, Lucinda!

RUFFIANA

Do you think I shall be taken in again by your honeyed tongue?

ARLECCHINO

Again and again, dear signora, for it is truth that drips eternally from my lips. Believe me, if not for my own sake, then for the sake of your niece's happiness.

RUFFIANA

Very well, I shall give you one last chance.

ARLECCHINO

Dear signora, I knew you would forgive me.

RUFFIANA

Do you have the money for Lucinda's dowry?

ARLECCHINO

Yes...

RUFFIANA

Then give it to me for safekeeping, until the wedding.

ARLECCHINO

I really don't think that –

RUFFIANA

You have no reason to refuse... unless the rumors are true.

(She holds out a hand. ARLECCHINO hesitates.)

Well?

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Curse these Pisan women! They are all in league to deprive me of my means!

(To RUFFIANA)

Very well, I would not have you think this Lelio false.

(He hands her the bag of money.)

I am as devoted to your niece as I have ever been. You will tell her this from Lelio?

RUFFIANA

What, and take the part of a ne'er-do-well like yourself?

ARLECCHINO

But you just said that –

RUFFIANA

I shall give this to my niece in exchange for the shame you have brought her. And do not dare to ever show your face to her again!

(ARLECCHINO tries to take the money back from RUFFIANA but she keeps it away.)

ARLECCHINO

But I love Lucinda passionately, ardently...

(Aside)

I hope the lady is worth the trouble.

(To RUFFIANA)

...joyfully, ravishingly...

RUFFIANA

Signor, please!

ARLECCHINO

You must tell her so.

RUFFIANA

My niece has a new suitor now.

ARLECCHINO

She does?

(Aside)

Perhaps she is not worth the trouble.

RUFFIANA

Her father, seeing her grief, seeks Capitano Spavento for her hand.

ARLECCHINO

The Capitano? Why they cannot have met for more than five minutes!

RUFFIANA

In fact they have not yet met, but I am certain Lucinda shall find him a worthy suitor. He is rich, I am told, and brave.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

How do you like this? My own lies come back to haunt me!

(To RUFFIANA)

Signora, I know the gentleman of which you speak, and I know him furthermore to be a coward and a fool.

RUFFIANA

Is it not enough that you shame my niece, that now you must slander the gentleman who comes to rescue her good name?

ARLECCHINO

What I tell you is true, and I shall prove it. Bring me this Capitano and we shall duel for the honor of good Lucinda.

RUFFIANA

Such a valiant man shall make short work of a scamp like you.

ARLECCHINO

So you think. I shall have you know, signora, that I, Lelio, am the greatest of swordsmen.

RUFFIANA

The greatest of swordsmen? I think not!

(She steals his sword and begins to chase ARLECCHINO again,  
hitting him with the flat of the sword.)

Take that, you reprobate! And that! And that!

(RUFFIANA chases ARLECCHINO offstage and they exit.)

SCENE 4

(PANTALONE's house, LUCINDA's chambers. LUCINDA sits crying while COLUMBINA attempts to console her.)

COLUMBINA

Do not weep, mistress, not over so false a man.

LUCINDA

How can you think such a thing of my Lelio? Never was there a truer man than he.

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

However unfaithful he has been, that may well be true.

LUCINDA

He has always shown me the utmost devotion. Until I have proof he has broken faith...

COLUMBINA

He has made a fool of you either way, mistress. If these are lies, why does he run away?

LUCINDA

The shame must have been too much for his tender soul to bear.

COLUMBINA

So it would be if it weighed heavily on his conscience.

LUCINDA

And he did strike a magistrate. He must now flee the law if nothing else.

COLUMBINA

And this you see as a point in his favor?

LUCINDA

If he is false, Columbina, then Heaven itself shall punish him and I shall know of it.

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

How blind these lovers are! Heaven strike me dead before I fall for such a lout as a man.

LUCINDA

(Weeping all over again)

But it may already be too late! My father would have me accept this Capitano in Lelio's stead.

COLUMBINA

I hear he is rich, and handsome.

LUCINDA

What do I care for his looks?

COLUMBINA

If your father will have his way, better handsome than not.

LUCINDA

How can you say such things, Columbina? Do you take my father's side or my own?

COLUMBINA

Rich and handsome is nothing to be scoffed at, mistress. Many find they must settle for less.

LUCINDA

I shall have none of him, handsome or not. Rich or not, I care not! I am in love, Columbina, and true love is forever true.

COLUMBINA

Many have said that before you, mistress, until their pain in love was soothed by another handsome face.

LUCINDA

You are no comfort for a broken heart.

COLUMBINA

I mean no harm, mistress. But just because your wedding day is fixed does not mean your groom must be.

LUCINDA

Fie on you! You know nothing of love. When Lelio returns –

COLUMBINA

If he returns.

LUCINDA

You doubt him?

COLUMBINA

He is a man.

LUCINDA

Oh!

(She chases after COLUMBINA who nimbly evades her.)

I shall teach you the meaning of true love!

COLUMBINA

If this is love, I shall have none of it indeed! Take my advice, mistress, and take the man who has money in his purse and no stain upon his honor.

LUCINDA

Never! I shall not abandon my Lelio just when he needs me most.

(LUCINDA continues to chase COLUMBINA as PANTALONE enters.)

PANTALONE

Daughter, what is the meaning of this? Show some decorum, child. I know you weep for your sullied Lelio, but think no more of him, for I have brought you a new husband.

LUCINDA

But Father!

PANTALONE

Not a word! It is my place to see you taken care of. Now, shall I bring the Capitano in straightaway?

(COLUMBINA claps a hand over LUCINDA's mouth.)

COLUMBINA

Certainly, master. My mistress is most eager to be acquainted with the gentleman.

PANTALONE

Excellent!

(He exits.)

LUCINDA

How dare you!

COLUMBINA

It can do no harm to at least meet the man.

LUCINDA

I cannot!

COLUMBINA

Your father shall insist.

LUCINDA

Oh, but this is a most cruel trick of fate!

(Slight pause and she has an idea.)

You shall meet him!

COLUMBINA

Mistress?

LUCINDA

Exchange places with me, Columbina. Let us each disguise ourselves as the other so that I may not have to suffer this indignity.

COLUMBINA

If your father finds out...

LUCINDA

He shall not. Please, Columbina, I beg of you.

COLUMBINA

Very well, I'll play this part for you.

(She and LUCINDA begin switching costume pieces.)

But unless I play it to your father's liking it shall not help you.

LUCINDA

Do what you must. As long as Lelio and I may be reunited it does not matter.

COLUMBINA

It seems hard on the Capitano to be so deceived.

LUCINDA

No more so than for my father to force me to marry him.

COLUMBINA

And what of his feelings?

LUCINDA

My father's?

COLUMBINA

No, the Capitano's!

LUCINDA

If they concern you so much, then marry him yourself. Just see that he marries not me.

PANTALONE

(Offstage)

Right this way, signor.

LUCINDA

Hurry! He shall be here in a moment!

(COLUMBINA and LUCINDA finish disguising themselves as the other just in time for PANTALONE and the CAPITANO to enter. COLUMBINA and LUCINDA both give the men an innocent curtsy. PANTALONE looks suspicious for a moment but shrugs it off.)

PANTALONE

Capitano, allow me to introduce my daughter, Lucinda.

(LUCINDA curtsies again, realizes her mistake, and pushes the disguised COLUMBINA forward who then curtsies to the CAPITANO.)

CAPITANO

Most beautiful lady. It is indeed a great honor.

(The CAPITANO bows to COLUMBINA. She curtsies to him in return which prompts the CAPITANO to bow again. They repeat this several times until PANTALONE intervenes.)

PANTALONE

Yes, yes, that will do. And this is my daughter's maid, Columbina.  
(LUCINDA forgets that this is supposed to be her.)

Columbina!

(LUCINDA still does not respond and PANTALONE pushes her towards the CAPITANO and she finally remembers to curtsy to him.)

LUCINDA

Charmed.

CAPITANO

(Not bowing)

Yes. Likewise.

PANTALONE

(Aside, to LUCINDA)

None of your tricks, or I shall deal with you later, wench!

(To COLUMBINA)

Daughter, allow me to introduce you to Capitano Spavento.

COLUMBINA

A pleasure, signor.

CAPITANO

Dear Lucinda, your father has told me of the rogue you were but recently engaged to. May I say how glad I am that his fiendish ways were revealed before you found yourself forever in his grasp.

COLUMBINA

You are most kind, signor. It is indeed a heavy blow for a maiden as innocent as I. Father tells me you are a most distinguished soldier.

CAPITANO

Your father does not exaggerate. My hometown in Spain considers me their greatest hero.

COLUMBINA

Indeed? And are there many others vying for the position?

CAPITANO

(Confused)

Signorina?

COLUMBINA

Or do you stand alone as the sole competitor?

CAPITANO

(Slight pause)

Signorina Lucinda, may I compliment you on your most exquisite beauty.

COLUMBINA

You may, but it is a poor compliment merely to ask if you may compliment me. Better to actually do so.

CAPITANO

I thought that I just had...

(He attempts to puzzle this one out.)

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

Handsome he may be, but this one's wit could use some sharpening. And yet...

PANTALONE

(Aside, to COLUMBINA)

I warn you, Daughter, speak kindly to the man. I will not have you stay a spinster and a leech unto my house.

COLUMBINA

(Aside, to PANTALONE)

That is just as well, for even a leech would be charged rent under your roof. But fear not, Father, I shall snare the man.

(To the CAPITANO)

Have you your compliment ready yet?

CAPITANO

Most beautiful Lucinda...

COLUMBINA

That is a fine start, though perhaps overdone.

CAPITANO

...most beautiful of women...

COLUMBINA

Beautiful again? Is this the only weapon in your arsenal?

CAPITANO

Dear Lucinda...

COLUMBINA

Ah! A new beginning!

CAPITANO

Your charm and grace strike me dumb.

COLUMBINA

I see, that explains much.

CAPITANO

I am a man of poor words and your radiant wit captivates me.

COLUMBINA

Now here is a compliment much more to my liking. You may continue.

CAPITANO

Your words dazzle me even more than your beauty and I know not where I am.

COLUMBINA

Then allow me to offer guidance. You stand before your betrothed. Or so is my father's wish. The lady would first see of what stuff you are made.

CAPITANO

And the man would most gladly show you his true mettle.

PANTALONE

(Eagerly)

Then it is agreed! The wedding date is already set for Monday next. We simply await the groom.

CAPITANO

My heart is ready even this instant to be joined with such a treasure. Perhaps we might take a walk together?

COLUMBINA

If we do, I fear the words may all come from my side.

CAPITANO

If that is so, I shall be content to gaze upon you in astonished silence.

(The CAPITANO offers an arm to COLUMBINA, which she accepts, and the pair exits.)

PANTALONE

Well, well! It seems my daughter has learned some obedience at last. How quickly she took to the man! Perhaps we need not even wait for Monday next to complete this transaction.

LUCINDA

No!

PANTALONE

Do not forget your place, Columbina. I will not have you scuttling this match. It is far better than any other Lucinda might have made.

LUCINDA

There is no word you can say against my... against Lelio. He is a true gentleman.

PANTALONE

Unstop your ears and you will hear otherwise. Now see to your work or else see yourself out of my house.

(He exits.)

LUCINDA

Oh that a father should speak to his daughter thus! I do not think he is in the least sorry to see my sweet Lelio so abused. What is to be done? The Capitano is already in love with me, though not me, and I, though not I, can say nothing to prevent it. What an indignity it is to be a servant!

(LUCINDA sighs. LELIO, still disguised, enters and sighs. They both sigh, then finally notice each other, although they do not recognize each other.)

LELIO

Signorina Columbina!

LUCINDA

Signor...?

LELIO

Oh yes, I am Signor... Signor Arlecchino, servant to the Capitano.

LUCINDA

The Capitano? I do not wish to hear the name!

LELIO

Nor I! When I saw him last he asked why I had not found myself an inn for the night. I told him I had no money and he scolded me for losing his, which I do not remember him giving. This servanthood is a hard life.

LUCINDA

It is indeed.

LELIO

Now I must sleep in the cold for want of better prospects.

LUCINDA

(Searching her new clothes)

Perhaps I might be able to...

(She pulls out the bag of money, surprised.)

Well!

(LELIO thinks LUCINDA is giving him the money and takes it gladly.)

LELIO

Signorina, you are an angel!

(He starts counting the bag of money.)

LUCINDA

(Aside)

What do you think of that? Greedy oaf.

(To LELIO)

You are not the only servant with troubles, Arlecchino. I for my part must watch as my mistress is forced to marry a man she does not love.

LELIO

Lucinda is to marry another? But who?

LUCINDA

Whom. Your master, fool, the Capitano. Did you not know?

LELIO

My master and I are not so well-acquainted as you might think.

LUCINDA

Well I think him a thief and a villain, to keep Lucinda from the one she loves.

LELIO

For that, Columbina, he must be forgiven.

LUCINDA

I think not!

LELIO

For what man could not find her most worthy of his love?

LUCINDA

Well...

LELIO

But I could not expect you to understand such refined feelings.

LUCINDA

I beg your pardon? Do you think that you, Arlecchino, know more of love than I?

LELIO

There can be no doubt of that.

LUCINDA

I do not think you can have had much experience.

LELIO

More, I am sure, than you.

LUCINDA

Indeed? I would have proof of this.

LELIO

I shall have you know that I am in love, with a lady not so unlike Lucinda.

LUCINDA

That is much above your station.

LELIO

Not so high, you shrew.

LUCINDA

I do not care for your tone, Arlecchino. Tell me of the lady base enough to have you.

LELIO

My lady is beautiful beyond description.

LUCINDA

More beautiful than Lucinda?

LELIO

Well, much the same, in fact. And Lucinda is without parallel.

LUCINDA

Fie on you, you worm! How faithless you are to your own lady to say so!

LELIO

If you were to see her you would know it is the mark of the highest favor.

LUCINDA

Arlecchino, you know nothing of love.

LELIO

And you, you vixen, think to teach me?

LUCINDA

Yes, for I too am in love.

LELIO

That I cannot believe.

LUCINDA

But from the one I love I am forbidden. Love, Arlecchino, is a cruel, cruel tyrant!

LELIO

A servant must not expect too much from love, Columbina. It is not your place.

LUCINDA

My place? And what of yours? Who is this lady you speak of? And why are you not at her side, as true love ought to be?

LELIO

Alas! She has been given to another.

LUCINDA

I see. It is a day for star-crossed love. I am sorry if I was harsh, Arlecchino.

LELIO

Oh my lady!

LUCINDA

And what, pray, is her name?

LELIO

Her name? Well...

LUCINDA

You cheat! There is no such lady!

LELIO

There is a lady, you hellcat, and I shall tell you her name if you tell me his.

(LELIO and LUCINDA stare at each other, both at a loss, for neither has the imagination to make up a name.)

LUCINDA

It is of no importance. But you cannot be too deeply in love, Arlecchino, or else you would even now pursue her.

LELIO

How can I, when another now claims her?

LUCINDA

True love can weather even the greatest of adversities. Nothing can prevent the union of those destined to be united.

LELIO

If that is true, then why do we both stand here while our true loves are given to others?

LUCINDA

Yes, that is unsettling.

(They pause to think.)

We shall write letters! To those who...

LELIO

Whom.

LUCINDA

...whom we have devoted ourselves. When the ink burns on the page with the passion of our love, they shall return to us. At least mine shall.

LELIO

Yes, this shall be the proof of love, and it shall prove the absence of yours.

LUCINDA

We shall see.

(They each find pen and paper and begin to write.)

LELIO

"Dear beloved..."

LUCINDA

A trite beginning.

(LELIO glares at her but she does not pay attention to him.)

"To the brightest star in my sky..."

LELIO

An overused comparison.

(He receives a glare from LUCINDA but continues writing.)

"...you are the center of my world, my life, my all..."

LUCINDA

Hackneyed! Were you my true love I would demand better.

LELIO

My lady has been known to swoon at but the anticipation of my verse.

LUCINDA

That is prose.

(She continues writing.)

"...what can compare with thee, my sweet? You are more radiant than the sun, your smile sparkles more than glittering jewels..."

LELIO

And this you call original? The most tepid lover could scrawl out better.

(He continues writing.)

"My love for you cannot be quenched, can never be undone..."

LUCINDA

What woman would swoon for this? Were I your lady such words would never move me.

LELIO

How fortunate then that you are not!

LUCINDA

And to think your love left you for another. I cannot imagine why.

(She and LELIO continue writing their letters, each silently fuming at the other.)

There! Such a missive as shall kindle even the faintest embers of love.

LELIO

Hardly enough for any man you look to snare.

LUCINDA

And what of your own letter?

LELIO

It is finished. See it delivered, you nag.

LUCINDA

Am I a servant of yours?

LELIO

Deliver it to your mistress.

(He tosses the letter at her.)

And gladly do I take my leave!

(He exits.)

LUCINDA

Good riddance! I hope to never lay eyes on the like of him again. But what can he mean by my mistress? Not I, for I Lucinda do not love him. It can only be Aunt Ruffiana who he means. I had best write that down.

(LUCINDA writes the name on the outside of the letter as PANTALONE enters.)

PANTALONE

Are you still here, you saucy maid? What are you doing?

LUCINDA

Delivering letters... master.

PANTALONE

What letters?

LUCINDA

One here to my mistress Ruffiana.

PANTALONE

(Taking the letter)

I shall give it to her. And the other?

LUCINDA

I shall deliver it.

PANTALONE

You have other work to do. I shall take care of it.

LUCINDA

Really, master, I am pleased to –

PANTALONE

Am I the master of my house or not? Give it here!

(He snatches it.)

Now off with you! You are needed in the kitchens.

LUCINDA

Yes, master.

(She curtsies to PANTALONE. Aside)

How I hate the kitchens!

(LUCINDA exits as PANTALONE peruses the letters.)

PANTALONE

Now, what have we here...

(He opens the second letter.)

This one is from my daughter, and meant for the Capitano, no doubt. How poetically she writes! Well, well, perhaps we might even move the wedding day to tomorrow, lest she change her mind again. And this one...

(He opens the first letter.)

What devilry is this? A love letter for Ruffiana? Who dares pursue her even as I do?

(He reads the signature.)

Signor Lelio! The scoundrel! Deprived of my daughter he goes for the first sack of gold he can find. In this moment I would readily believe the rumors told of him, had I not started them myself.

(He crumples LELIO's letter and tosses it to the ground.)

Does he think that just because I am old he can snatch Ruffiana's fortune from under my nose? Well I have life in me yet! That young whelp shall regret this, I shall make sure of it!

(PANTALONE exits in a rage. A moment later RUFFIANA enters opposite. She notices the letter, picks it up, sees that it appears to be addressed to her, and begins to read it. She is flattered by its contents, but when she reaches the signature she is shocked.)

RUFFIANA

Why Signor Lelio! After all his dalliances, does he think that I...? That he should even dare...

(She tosses the letter to the ground and starts to exit, but then stops.)

Still... I am getting no younger. And if I were to marry again... Well, he is a touch more handsome than Pantalone. But no, what do I say? He is a dog that sniffs for whatever crumbs can be found. To even think of...

(She picks the letter up again.)

Though he does write prettily enough, he always did when he wrote my niece. Not that I ever read her letters, mind you. This one is well-phrased, and flattering coming even from the least of men. And he is handsome...

(Contemplating the letter RUFFIANA exits.)

SCENE 5

(A street in Pisa. COLUMBINA enters, still disguised.)

COLUMBINA

What a pretty pickle I have been thrust into! My mistress would have me entertain the Capitano's fancies on her behalf and in her name I do so. So well, in fact, she may well have to marry him when all is done. It is not a plan with a fine ending, but then that has never been my mistress' strength. As for the Capitano... he is enchanted. And I... I am not so certain I would give up my mistress' face in this matter. He is handsome, if not the wisest of men. But I can see that he is kind. What a poor fool am I! To woo a man using another's face? And if he should fall, who should it be for? The face or she who is underneath? A pretty pickle indeed!

(ARLECCHINO enters, still disguised.)

And to add to it... I must play this part with Lelio on behalf of my mistress.

(To ARLECCHINO)

Lelio! My love!

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Lucinda! And she thinks me Lelio!

(To COLUMBINA)

My darling Lucinda...

COLUMBINA

Where have you been, Lelio? All of Pisa speaks of your infidelity. It is more than my virgin ears can bear.

ARLECCHINO

Believe not what you hear. The streets of Pisa are filled with wicked liars. I have never seen a town to match.

COLUMBINA

But Lelio, you have never set foot outside Pisa.

ARLECCHINO

Then what I say is true.

COLUMBINA

Do you play true to me?

ARLECCHINO

Upon my life, Lucinda, the rumors you hear are false. At least they are not true of me.

COLUMBINA

If that be the case, then I myself give them no importance.

ARLECCHINO

Certainly that shall relieve... me.

COLUMBINA

You behave most unlike yourself, Lelio.

ARLECCHINO

That is not to be wondered at, for I am not myself.

COLUMBINA

How's that?

ARLECCHINO

I have had to hide my face from this vicious mob.

COLUMBINA

And yet I knew you at once.

ARLECCHINO

Not as well as you think.

(Pause)

COLUMBINA

Should we not speak of love?

ARLECCHINO

Yes, love!

COLUMBINA

For we are in love, are we not?

ARLECCHINO

Most certainly. Inexorably. Tremendously.

COLUMBINA

Then will you not hold my hand?

ARLECCHINO

Of course, unparalleled Lucinda. For we are in love and that is what lovers do.

(They hold hands uncomfortably.)

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

I cannot think how my mistress endures this. Like a cold fish! And why does the fool not speak? Unless the rumors are true. If he should seek my maiden virtue... Well, then he shall rue the day he crossed this Lucinda.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Why does she say nothing? Ought not these lovers to babble without end about the stars and the flowers and the taste of each other's hair?

(ARLECCHINO and COLUMBINA look at each other, smile adoringly, and then look away, disgusted. Pause.)

COLUMBINA

Lelio?

ARLECCHINO

Yes, Lucinda?

COLUMBINA

I love you.

ARLECCHINO

And I love you.

COLUMBINA

I love you... very much.

ARLECCHINO

As do I.

COLUMBINA

Love yourself? I am not surprised.

ARLECCHINO

No, I love you very much.

COLUMBINA

Oh. Good. I love you too.

ARLECCHINO

You said that.

COLUMBINA

And it is no less true now than then.

(Slight pause)

Have you nothing else to say?

ARLECCHINO

Me?

COLUMBINA

You.

Yes! I adore you. You are...	ARLECCHINO
Yes?	COLUMBINA
Magnificent.	ARLECCHINO
And?	COLUMBINA
Incomparable.	ARLECCHINO
And?	COLUMBINA
Musical.	ARLECCHINO
Musical?	COLUMBINA
In how you speak.	ARLECCHINO
Oh.	COLUMBINA
And I?	ARLECCHINO
You?	COLUMBINA
Me.	ARLECCHINO
Yes. Handsome.	COLUMBINA
Certainly!	ARLECCHINO
Courageous.	COLUMBINA

Undeniable.	ARLECCHINO
Valiant.	COLUMBINA
Indisputable!	ARLECCHINO
Modest.	COLUMBINA
Penitent.	ARLECCHINO
Obedient.	COLUMBINA
Devoted.	ARLECCHINO
Secretive?	COLUMBINA
Never!	ARLECCHINO
Suspicious.	COLUMBINA
Of?	ARLECCHINO
Rumors.	COLUMBINA
Maligned.	ARLECCHINO
Unsure.	COLUMBINA
Innocent!	ARLECCHINO
Doubtful.	COLUMBINA

Truly.	ARLECCHINO
Unconvinced.	COLUMBINA
Offended.	ARLECCHINO
Unsympathetic.	COLUMBINA
Heartless.	ARLECCHINO
Waiting.	COLUMBINA
For?	ARLECCHINO
Explanation.	COLUMBINA
Of?	ARLECCHINO
Secrecy.	COLUMBINA
Difficult.	ARLECCHINO
Why?	COLUMBINA
Complicated.	ARLECCHINO
Impatient.	COLUMBINA
Cannot.	ARLECCHINO
Can.	COLUMBINA

Subterfuge.	ARLECCHINO
Faithless!	COLUMBINA
Misunderstood!	ARLECCHINO
Deceitful!	COLUMBINA
Sincere!	ARLECCHINO
Incorrigible!	COLUMBINA
Abused!	ARLECCHINO
Angry!	COLUMBINA
Running!	ARLECCHINO
Chasing!	COLUMBINA
	(COLUMBINA chases ARLECCHINO.)
Evading!	ARLECCHINO
	(COLUMBINA catches hold of ARLECCHINO.)
Caught.	COLUMBINA
Mercy!	ARLECCHINO
Truth.	COLUMBINA
Disguise.	ARLECCHINO

(Slight pause)

Arlecchino? COLUMBINA

Columbina? ARLECCHINO

What are you doing? COLUMBINA

What are you doing? ARLECCHINO

Taking the place of my mistress. You? COLUMBINA

Taking Lelio's, so he might escape the mob. ARLECCHINO

And you thought I was Lucinda? COLUMBINA

Yes. And you think me handsome? ARLECCHINO

Don't be a fool! I took you for Lelio and behaved as my mistress would have me. COLUMBINA

But of course, fair Columbina. ARLECCHINO

Enough. We must think, Arlecchino: how are we to bring these lovers back together? Pantalone insists that Lucinda must marry the Capitano, and he for his part grows evermore fond of the idea.

Marry the Capitano? What woman would have such a lout? ARLECCHINO

Speak you so of your own master? COLUMBINA

I am looking to better my situation. ARLECCHINO

Then what stops you? COLUMBINA

ARLECCHINO

I am somewhat lacking in resources.

COLUMBINA

Your purse is empty.

ARLECCHINO

For which I have you to thank.

COLUMBINA

Then why not lick up a few more crumbs from your master's table? Or does such a shower of gold no longer take your fancy?

ARLECCHINO

I may have somewhat overstated the nature of the Capitano's situation.

COLUMBINA

How's that?

ARLECCHINO

The bag of gold I gave to you... that is all.

COLUMBINA

All what?

ARLECCHINO

All he has.

COLUMBINA

You fool!

(She chases him around again and hits him repeatedly.)

You dissembling, ignorant fool! My master hopes to take for himself a wealthy son-in-law, that is why he wants Lucinda to marry the Capitano.

ARLECCHINO

That is unfortunate.

COLUMBINA

Everything you told me about the Capitano's treasure I told Pantalone.

ARLECCHINO

All lies.

COLUMBINA

Do you have any idea what you've done?

ARLECCHINO

Think no more of it for soon it shall be undone.

COLUMBINA

How so?

ARLECCHINO

I have challenged the Capitano to a duel in Lelio's name. When Lelio defeats the Capitano he shall win back both his honor and Lucinda.

COLUMBINA

Lelio is no swordsman.

ARLECCHINO

If it comes to that, neither is the Capitano.

COLUMBINA

And what if he... if either of them should be injured? Even unto death?

ARLECCHINO

That cannot be, unless one should trip and fall upon his blade.

COLUMBINA

This is but a poor plan, Arlecchino. How can we be certain who shall fall first upon the other's mercy?

ARLECCHINO

I have never met a coward to match my master.

COLUMBINA

Fie on you, for he is your master.

ARLECCHINO

If I had back my purse I might be my own master.

COLUMBINA

I do not have it.

ARLECCHINO

Where is it?

COLUMBINA

That is, I am sure, what your master will ask of you. I hope your feet are quicker than your wit.

ARLECCHINO

You shall be the ruin of me!

COLUMBINA

You have managed that well enough on your own. And brought a few others in on the bargain.

ARLECCHINO

The plan shall hold, you shall see.

(Looking offstage)

And here comes the quarry! You must convince him to accept. Let him think that Lelio is unparalleled in swordplay.

COLUMBINA

Do not hurt him.

ARLECCHINO

It shall be all we can do to get him to raise arms against me. I mean Lelio. You shall see!

(He exits and the CAPITANO enters with a bouquet of flowers.)

COLUMBINA

My darling, you have returned.

CAPITANO

Dearest Lucinda, may I offer you these as a token of my affection?

COLUMBINA

(Flattered)

You may.

CAPITANO

I hope you have not felt my absence too acutely.

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

More than I would have thought.

CAPITANO

Your father delivered to me your letter.

COLUMBINA

My letter?

(Aside)

Could Lucinda...?

(To the CAPITANO)

But of course, my love, I hope it pleased you. Have you any reply?

CAPITANO

I have no words to do justice to your beauty or wit.

COLUMBINA

And of the two, which do you prefer?

CAPITANO

With any other woman...

COLUMBINA

Have there been many?

CAPITANO

Not one that could compare.

COLUMBINA

Then I cannot question your taste.

CAPITANO

Your beauty, dear lady, is exceeded only by your other qualities. I know my words are but ragged things before you, for I am but a humble soldier.

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

Of no wealth, which would shatter my master's hopes. He is not for the true Lucinda. As for the false...

(To the CAPITANO)

I have heard stories of your valor, my Capitano, of how you have carried entire battles.

CAPITANO

(Pleased)

Is that so?

COLUMBINA

And how you cause men to flee with a look.

CAPITANO

I cannot deny it.

COLUMBINA

Then if you are to win this Lucinda's heart you must prove to me your courage.

CAPITANO

(Nervous)

I must? Well... Tomorrow I make for the northern wars...

COLUMBINA

You need not go so far. The man to whom I had but recently been engaged...

CAPITANO

Signor Lelio. If I had him here...

COLUMBINA

Then you take my meaning.

CAPITANO

I do?

COLUMBINA

Lelio's honor must be satisfied if he is to relinquish his claim on me. He would duel with you.

CAPITANO

Ah yes, your aunt mentioned that...

COLUMBINA

Defeat him and I am yours.

CAPITANO

Signorina, I would not wish to offend your maiden disposition with the sight of such carnage.

COLUMBINA

It will take more than that to offend this maiden. But I do not ask for his death, indeed I would not have it so.

CAPITANO

I warn you, when I am roused, it is a terrible thing!

COLUMBINA

(Aside)

Like the roar of a kitten, I am sure.

CAPITANO

I could not vouch for this man's safety.

COLUMBINA

Then fight with but one arm behind your back so as not to injure him. Would you deny your Lucinda?

CAPITANO

I do not think I could deny you anything.

COLUMBINA

That is good, for word has already been sent to Lelio.

CAPITANO

It has?

COLUMBINA

By your faithful servant, at my request.

CAPITANO

Then on my honor I cannot refuse.

COLUMBINA

As I had hoped. Come, I shall see you prepared.

(She exits.)

CAPITANO

It seems I must finally match my courage to the tall tales I have told of it. For any other woman I would flee this moment, but for such a rare wit... Heaven defend me!

(The CAPITANO exits after COLUMBINA. ARLECCHINO, still disguised, then enters.)

ARLECCHINO

Everywhere I look for Lelio I find he has been already on my master's business. He shall prove a better servant than I! Certainly he is a better servant than I am a gentleman. Still, I must find him, for I have no wish to fight for his lady in his stead.

(PANTALONE and RUFFIANA enter.)

PANTALONE

There is the miscreant!

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Heavens! It is her father! Curse this disguise!

RUFFIANA

Now be kind, he is just a youth.

PANTALONE

You churlish boy...

ARLECCHINO

(Trying to hide his face and escape)

Signor, I think you have me confused.

PANTALONE

What, do you pretend not to know me? Lucinda's own father?

ARLECCHINO

Why Signor Pantalone! How good to see you! You know, I did not recognize you.

PANTALONE

How's that?

ARLECCHINO

Not with your features turned into a scowl, so unlike your usual countenance. Father.

PANTALONE

Do not seek to ingratiate yourself with me! What business have you with Ruffiana?

ARLECCHINO

With this woman?

RUFFIANA

(Slyly)

Yes, signor, what business have you with me?

ARLECCHINO

None at all, why should I?

PANTALONE

Then what do you mean by this letter?

(He brandishes LELIO's letter.)

ARLECCHINO

What do you mean by showing it to me?

PANTALONE

Do you deny writing it?

ARLECCHINO

Certainly, for I did nothing of the kind.

RUFFIANA

You need not deny it, Signor Lelio. I was not entirely displeased by its contents.

PANTALONE

What are you saying?

RUFFIANA

What, jealous, Pantalone?

PANTALONE

You have promised yourself to me.

RUFFIANA

Perhaps I have not made up my mind as of yet.

PANTALONE

Think of his reputation!

(Aside)

Think of her gold!

RUFFIANA

Perhaps I might better teach him the meaning of faithfulness.

ARLECCHINO

Signora, I think perhaps there has been a mistake...

PANTALONE

Is it not enough that you chase after every woman in Pisa...

ARLECCHINO

Of which there is no proof.

PANTALONE

...that upon losing your grip on my daughter you scuttle after the next fortune you can find?

ARLECCHINO

I never –

PANTALONE

You cannot weasel your way out of this, you rascal. Your dubious protestations of love towards this woman are written here in ink. And if you shall not even have the courtesy to admit to your indiscretions, I shall defend her honor.

(He draws his sword.)

Draw your sword.

RUFFIANA

(Pleased)

Pantalone...

PANTALONE

Will you defend yourself or run like the dog you are?

ARLECCHINO

Signor, please...

RUFFIANA

Do not hurt the youth.

PANTALONE

I know your kind. You think by this to make your fortune.

ARLECCHINO

Believe me, no.

(To RUFFIANA)

Signora, you must not believe a word of this. I love your niece, at least as much as I ever have.

RUFFIANA

What are you saying?

ARLECCHINO

That letter contains not a jot of truth.

RUFFIANA

But you wrote so movingly. Signor, you need not feign ignorance for Pantalone's sake.

PANTALONE

Do I stand here or not?

RUFFIANA

Do not be afraid to give voice to your feelings.

PANTALONE

My dear, think of what you say!

ARLECCHINO

I give them voice, but you do not listen.

RUFFIANA

But your letter –

ARLECCHINO

Was a jest!

(RUFFIANA takes PANTALONE's sword.)

RUFFIANA

I should have known. You seek only to add me to your list of conquests. I shall teach you to toy with a woman's feelings thus!

(She chases after ARLECCHINO and hits at him with the flat of the sword.)

ARLECCHINO

Ow! Signora, please!

RUFFIANA

At least make a showing of a man!

(She hits at him again.)

PANTALONE

I would have done it myself, but this is a far better sight!

(He cackles with glee as RUFFIANA continues to chase ARLECCHINO.)

RUFFIANA

Let this be a warning to all women. And may you never show your face in Pisa again!

PANTALONE

And may you rue the day you sought to set your claws upon my household.

(Aside)

Ruffiana's fortune is as good as mine!

(RUFFIANA finally corners ARLECCHINO and holds the point of the sword to his chest.)

ARLECCHINO

Good signora, I yield.

RUFFIANA

Upon your knees.

ARLECCHINO

Need you bring me lower than I already am?

(RUFFIANA presses the point into ARLECCHINO's chest and he kneels.)

RUFFIANA

If I could without danger of the law strike off your head...

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

What they say of a woman scorned, 'tis true! But why should I suffer for another's scorn?

RUFFIANA

What have you to say for yourself, signor?

ARLECCHINO

Only that I wish I was not who I am.

RUFFIANA

My niece is better off without a cur like you. I shall let the Capitano deal with you.

ARLECCHINO

Ah! Then you delivered my challenge?

RUFFIANA  
I did.

PANTALONE  
What challenge?

ARLECCHINO  
I am to duel the Capitano for your daughter's hand.

PANTALONE  
And she agreed to this?

ARLECCHINO  
I gave her no choice. I will not give her up until this matter is resolved honorably.

PANTALONE  
And why should I agree, knowing your reputation?

ARLECCHINO  
If I defeat the Capitano, why that is proof before Heaven that I am innocent of these lies.

PANTALONE  
And if you lose, that you are guilty. Yes, I see...

RUFFIANA  
Allow it, Pantalone. I would gladly see this rogue humiliated further.

PANTALONE  
Very well, provided you prove your good faith.

ARLECCHINO  
Name the means.

PANTALONE  
The money for Lucinda's dowry. Whoever wins, it shall be hers.

ARLECCHINO  
As for that, you shall have to ask Ruffiana. She has beat you to it.

RUFFIANA  
Here, Pantalone.  
(She takes out the money.)  
His churlish behavior deserved recompense.

PANTALONE  
Give it to me!  
(He snatches the money and starts to count it. To ARLECCHINO)  
Very well. You may duel for my daughter's hand.

ARLECCHINO

Then it is agreed.

(He and PANTALONE shake hands.)

PANTALONE

You fool! If you but knew the measure of the Capitano's valor...

ARLECCHINO

Oh I know of the Capitano's valor.

PANTALONE

One hour. Prepare yourself.

(PANTALONE exits. RUFFIANA starts to follow, turns back, slaps ARLECCHINO, and then exits after PANTALONE.)

ARLECCHINO

Ah! Foul woman! Is there any woman in Pisa who has not treated me ill?

(LUCINDA, still disguised, enters and slaps ARLECCHINO.)

LUCINDA

Oh you cruel, wicked man! Why have you not come to see me?

ARLECCHINO

Signorina Lucinda?

LUCINDA

Who else? Wait, my disguise, how did you know it was I?

(Before ARLECCHINO can reply.)

But of course, the eyes of love see through all disguises. Oh Lelio, how I have missed you!

(She embraces ARLECCHINO and tries to kiss him, but he pulls away.)

ARLECCHINO

That I think should wait.

LUCINDA

But why?

ARLECCHINO

I am not myself today.

LUCINDA

I do not understand.

ARLECCHINO

I have made a deal with your father to duel the Capitano for your hand.

LUCINDA

You would do this for me?

ARLECCHINO

For you, my love, anything.

LUCINDA

And after all the reports of his bravery, his skill. Oh Lelio!

(She embraces him again.)

If you die, I shall love you all the more.

ARLECCHINO

Even as you are married to the Capitano?

LUCINDA.

Especially then.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Now here is a true romantic.

(To LUCINDA)

I do not think this will end with my death, or the Capitano's.

LUCINDA

How disappointing.

ARLECCHINO

Signorina?

LUCINDA

How noble it would be if one of you were to die for my love!

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

A true romantic indeed!

(To LUCINDA)

And doubly so if we both died.

LUCINDA

Could you manage that?

ARLECCHINO

No!

LUCINDA

Pity.

ARLECCHINO

You must leave me now, Lucinda. Return in one hour and your Lelio shall defeat the Capitano.

LUCINDA

Until then, my sweet. Die well and you shall live forever in my memory.

(She exits.)

ARLECCHINO

Better to die than live as her husband. I think she cares more for love's nobility than its practice.

(LELIO, still disguised, enters.)

LELIO

Arlecchino?

ARLECCHINO

There you are, I have looked everywhere.

LELIO

Who was that?

ARLECCHINO

Your Lucinda, in disguise.

LELIO

Lucinda!

(He tries to go after her, but ARLECCHINO stops him.)

ARLECCHINO

Signor!

LELIO

But I have not seen her in an age.

ARLECCHINO

It has been but since this morning.

LELIO

I must go to her, love demands it.

ARLECCHINO

Love should sometimes give in to sense. It would prevent a great many problems. But listen, I have a plan to reunite you and your lady.

LELIO

You do? Arlecchino, you are a man of infinite wisdom.

ARLECCHINO

Hear the plan first. I have, in your name, challenged to the Capitano to a duel. Pantalone has agreed that the victor shall marry Lucinda.

LELIO

A duel?

ARLECCHINO

It is the only way.

LELIO

It is a plan, but...

ARLECCHINO

But what? Do you love Lucinda or not?

LELIO

I do, but the Capitano... Such a valiant man! Oh Arlecchino, if you but knew him.

ARLECCHINO

If I knew him?

LELIO

No, Arlecchino, I am sorry, I cannot take up arms against my master.

ARLECCHINO

Your master? He is mine! And he is a braggart and a coward.

LELIO

Do not speak ill of him, I will not have it. He is a tough master, yes, and works me hard, but he is fair. I could serve a far lesser man than he.

ARLECCHINO

Is this how you speak of the man who would steal your Lucinda? He will marry her!

LELIO

If he does, then I shall serve her also as mistress of the house and admire her forever from afar. That is a purity of love, Arlecchino, that many strive for but few achieve.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

He is more in love with love than with his Lucinda! Are all lovers such fools?

LELIO

If I may not have Lucinda for my own, then may I stand instead as a beacon of love to shine for generations.

ARLECCHINO

But you *may* have her. You love her, she loves you, all you must do is defeat the Capitano. Take back your clothes!

LELIO

Keep them, Arlecchino, as a token of my thanks. My name is yours, make your way in the world as a gentleman. Be Lelio and I shall forever be Arlecchino.

ARLECCHINO

No, you must be Lelio, you must duel, you must marry Lucinda. Would you remain a servant?

LELIO

Well...

ARLECCHINO

Would you?

LELIO

Arlecchino, yours is the most carefree life I have ever known. I do as I am told and need not worry about anything else. Who does not wish for such a life?

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

Certainly his head is well-suited for the servant's life, for there is nothing in it.

(To LELIO)

Very well, signor. I will fight this duel in your name *if* you will then take back your life and marry Lucinda yourself.

(Aside)

Heaven knows I would not have her!

LELIO

Agreed. I will even throw a hundred ducats into the bargain.

(LELIO gives the bag of money to ARLECCHINO.)

ARLECCHINO

But you must not reveal that you did not fight the duel until after you and Lucinda are wed.

LELIO

Most certainly not. Thank you, Arlecchino. How long until the duel takes place?

ARLECCHINO

Pantalone and I agreed it should take place in –

(PANTALONE, RUFFIANA, COLUMBINA, the CAPITANO, and LUCINDA all enter. COLUMBINA and LUCINDA are still disguised as the other.)

PANTALONE

One hour! I hope, Signor Lelio, that you are prepared.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside)

That is the shortest hour I ever passed!

(To PANTALONE)

I am ready.

CAPITANO

Signor Pantalone, we must settle this matter some other way. I would not do the youth any harm, nor expose these sweet ladies to the sight of such gore.

PANTALONE

I would not concern yourself with that.

COLUMBINA

Father, my dearest Spavento is right. I shake off this shallow youth and will have none of him.

PANTALONE

Is this true, my dear?

(COLUMBINA nods emphatically to ARLECCHINO.)

LELIO

(Aside, to ARLECCHINO)

You see? I have lost her.

ARLECCHINO

(Aside, to LELIO)

But that isn't... Never mind.

PANTALONE

I see no reason then to bother with this duel. Lucinda and the Capitano must be married at once. We must fetch a priest.

COLUMBINA

(Staring at ARLECCHINO and emphasizing each word)

Yes, a priest.

(ARLECCHINO gives COLUMBINA a "What are you doing?" look and then draws his sword.)

ARLECCHINO

Signor Pantalone, my honor shall not be denied. I must have satisfaction from this craven Capitano.

COLUMBINA

No, Lelio, you must not. Give me up forever and find a priest.

LELIO

(Aside)

Ah! How she spurns me! How I love her!

ARLECCHINO

The honor of Signor Lelio cannot be assuaged with words.

CAPITANO

Signor, you must not tempt me. My temper is a fierce thing.

ARLECCHINO

I do not fear it.

CAPITANO

Really? Well, that is unexpected...

COLUMBINA

Signor Lelio, I understand you have paid my father for my dowry. If you relinquish your claim on *me*, then he shall return the money to you.

PANTALONE

Now daughter...

COLUMBINA

Would you have me married to the Capitano? Or this worm?

(Grumbling, PANTALONE gives COLUMBINA the money and she offers it to ARLECCHINO.)

Take it, leave Pisa, and make your way in the world.

(Aside, to ARLECCHINO)

Arlecchino, do as I say!

ARLECCHINO

(Aside, to COLUMBINA)

But the Capitano cannot marry Lucinda.

COLUMBINA

(Aside, to ARLECCHINO)

He may marry *this* Lucinda.

(ARLECCHINO still does not get it.)

If you do not accept, I shall duel you myself.

ARLECCHINO

(Accepting the money)

I am swayed. But it is a hard heart indeed that would keep Lelio from his Lucinda.

COLUMBINA

If you are such a fool that you cannot see that which is as plain as the nose on your face, then go. And send along the priest.

ARLECCHINO

What?

COLUMBINA

The Capitano and I would be married at once.

PANTALONE

Yes, yes! Be gone, Lelio, and let the priest come instead.

COLUMBINA

(To ARLECCHINO)

Yes, in your stead.

ARLECCHINO

Oh, I see! Yes, I shall be gone and I shall be revenged upon the whole pack of you!

EVERYONE ELSE

What?

ARLECCHINO

I mean, farewell!

LUCINDA

But Lelio, shall you not fight for your Lucinda?

ARLECCHINO

(Pointing at COLUMBINA)

For this woman? Never!

(He starts to exit.)

LUCINDA

(Aside)

Oh unhappy me!

LELIO

Stop! As much as I fear death and injury, I cannot let this go on.

ARLECCHINO

I really think you should.

LELIO

(Pointing at ARLECCHINO)

This man is not Signor Lelio.

(LUCINDA, RUFFIANA, PANTALONE and the CAPITANO all gasp.)

COLUMBINA

Oh Heavens...

RUFFIANA

If not Lelio, then who?

ARLECCHINO

Pay no heed to his vain babble. I am Signor Lelio and I am gone.

(LELIO holds ARLECCHINO back.)

LELIO

No, this masquerade must end.

(He reveals himself to be LELIO.)

I am Lelio!

LUCINDA

(Aside)

My darling!

RUFFIANA

My goodness!

LELIO

This man is Arlecchino who took my part to aid me and for that I thank him.

ARLECCHINO

(Removing his own disguise)

With pleasure, signor.

LELIO

But if he shall not defend my honor before the Capitano... I shall.

(He takes the sword from ARLECCHINO and, shaking, faces the CAPITANO. To the CAPITANO)

Signor, the challenge has been issued. Will you accept?

CAPITANO

No, no, my temper, I could not answer for your fate.

LELIO

Then will you give up your claim to Lucinda?

PANTALONE

He will not.

(To the CAPITANO)

Duel the man!

COLUMBINA

(Aside, to ARLECCHINO)

The priest, quickly!

(ARLECCHINO exits. To LELIO)

Dear Lelio, neither words nor blows shall avail your cause. You must give me up.

LELIO

I cannot, Lucinda, for as long as life and breath be yet in my body, I love you.

LUCINDA

(Aside)

Oh Lelio!

LELIO

Unless, of course, there is another way?

(He looks to the CAPITANO)

CAPITANO

Yes, another way?

(He looks to COLUMBINA.)

COLUMBINA

(Seeing ARLECCHINO has not returned)

There is no other way. You must duel, my love. But with restraint.

(She kisses the CAPITANO on the cheek.)

CAPITANO

For you then.

(He draws his sword and he and LELIO face each other, each terrified of the other. Pause)

COLUMBINA

Begin!

(Nervously the CAPITANO and LELIO advance towards each other, timidly cross blades, and then retreat. Aside)

What men are these who can scarce look each other in the eye? At least I may rest assured that neither shall be harmed.

(The CAPITANO and LELIO continue their timid circling, barely even allowing their swords to make contact. Finally COLUMBINA and LUCINDA become so fed up that they shove their respective man towards the other. LELIO and the CAPITANO cross blades, come close to one another, realize it, and retreat again. As they do LELIO

steps back towards COLUMBINA and she trips him, causing him to fall backwards. She then grabs the CAPITANO's sword arm and places the point of his sword against LELIO's chest.)

COLUMBINA

A touch! Do you yield, Signor Lelio?

LELIO

Yes, yes! A thousand times yes!

(By this time ARLECCHINO has re-entered, disguised as a priest.)

PANTALONE

Excellent!

RUFFIANA

You deserve no less, you wretch.

COLUMBINA

And here is the priest. With your permission, Father.

PANTALONE

Yes, yes, of course!

(PANTALONE quickly escorts ARLECCHINO to COLUMBINA and the CAPITANO.)

LUCINDA

(Aside, to COLUMBINA)

Columbina?

COLUMBINA

(Aside, to LUCINDA)

Have faith!

RUFFIANA

My niece, married at last. I am so happy!

ARLECCHINO

Dearly beloved –

COLUMBINA

Wait! Lelio, you too shall know love. You shall marry my maid, Columbina.

LUCINDA

Yes!

(She grabs LELIO's arm and drags him over to ARLECCHINO.)

LELIO

If it must be, it must be.

(To COLUMBINA)

Farewell, my dove, I shall love you always.

LUCINDA

(Aside)

How sweet! Even as he marries another. I mean me.

PANTALONE

Yes, yes, why not?

(To RUFFIANA)

My dear Ruffiana, if you would have but a poor old man...

RUFFIANA

I thought you would never ask.

(RUFFIANA takes PANTALONE by the arm and all three couples stand before ARLECCHINO.)

COLUMBINA

Go on, Father.

ARLECCHINO

Dearly beloved, how good it is that we may all be gathered here together to celebrate these joyous unions. Capitano Spavento and Lucinda. Lelio and Columbina. Pantalone and Ruffiana.

(Because of all the disguises he is not always certain who to refer to as he says each name.)

Love is a many-splendored thing, though not without its trials as you have all learned today. Not that I know anything about that. As I said, love is a many-splendored...

(COLUMBINA motions for him to move on.)

But never mind that. Capitano Spavento, Lelio, Pantalone, will you each take these women... That is, whichever woman stands before you. ...to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, so long as you both shall live?

LELIO, the CAPITANO, and PANTALONE

I will.

ARLECCHINO

And will you, Lucinda, Columbina, and Ruffiana, each take the man who now stands before you as your lawfully wedded husband, to love and to cherish, for as long as you both shall live?

LUCINDA, COLUMBINA, and RUFFIANA

I will.

ARLECCHINO

Whom God has joined let no man separate, etc, etc. I now pronounce each pair of you man and wife. *Nel nome del Padre, del Figlio, e dello Spirito Santo.* (Translation: In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.) Amen. You may now kiss your bride. Whoever she is.

PANTALONE

(To COLUMBINA)

Well done, daughter! You have secured a far better, and richer, husband than Signor Lelio.

LUCINDA

(Removing her disguise)

But Father, I *have* married Signor Lelio.

LELIO

You have? You have!

PANTALONE

(Looking between LUCINDA and COLUMBINA)

What devilry is this?

COLUMBINA

(Removing her disguise)

I am afraid, master, that you have been deceived. It has been I all along who has wooed the Capitano.

PANTALONE

(To ARLECCHINO)

An annulment! I demand an annulment! These marriages are not valid.

ARLECCHINO

I said the names. Each man married the woman in front of him. These marriages are as good before Heaven as any I have done.

(ARLECCHINO holds out a hand to PANTALONE, hoping for some coins, but he is ignored. ARLECCHINO shrugs and exits.)

COLUMBINA

(To the CAPITANO)

Good signor, I hope you will not take our ruse too ill. Lucinda could not bear to marry any but her Lelio. If you will but love me for my wit, and not the beauty I have borrowed, I am yours.

CAPITANO

I stand amazed. Have I never spoken to the true Lucinda?

COLUMBINA

Never.

CAPITANO

Then I can love no one but you, whatever your name.

PANTALONE

Cheated! I have been cheated!

RUFFIANA

Of what?

PANTALONE

Of the son-in-law of my choosing, and of his treasure.

CAPITANO

But I have no treasure.

PANTALONE

What's that?

CAPITANO

I have but a hundred ducats to my name. I cannot imagine where you would have heard anything else.

PANTALONE

(To COLUMBINA)

But you told me that –

COLUMBINA

I was misinformed.

PANTALONE

Well. Perhaps these marriages shall work out after all.

(Aside)

My wife, at least, still has her fortune.

RUFFIANA

My dear niece Lucinda, my good Columbina, now that I am married to Pantalone what need have I of money? All I have I shall divide between you, which should be dowry enough for each of you.

LUCINDA

Oh Aunt...

COLUMBINA

Dear Ruffiana.

(RUFFIANA embraces them each in turn.)

PANTALONE

My dear, how generous you are, but should we not keep a little something for ourselves?

RUFFIANA

Nonsense. We have no need for gold when we have each other.

PANTALONE

Yes, a great comfort, I am sure.

LUCINDA

(To LELIO)

But my love, what of your reputation? Who began these rumors?

RUFFIANA

I beg your pardon, niece. I may have mentioned what I heard to a few close friends, who may have repeated it to a few of theirs.

COLUMBUNA

But where did you hear it, signora?

RUFFIANA

Why from Pantalone, who heard it in the marketplace.

PANTALONE

Yes, the marketplace...

COLUMBINA

Signor Pantalone, you would not set foot in a place so common as the market even to save your own skin.

PANTALONE

Well... that is...

RUFFIANA

Pantalone, did you start these rumors?

LUCINDA

Father?

COLUMBINA

Well, signor?

(The women surround PANTALONE.)

PANTALONE

I may have exaggerated a little...

COLUMBINA  
Exaggerated?

PANTALONE  
Very well, fabricated a tale or two...

LUCINDA  
How could you!

LELIO  
Signor, if you were not my father-in-law I would have half a mind to duel you here and now. Perhaps the Capitano would do the honor?

CAPITANO  
No, no, for the ladies' sake.

RUFFIANA  
You may leave him to me. I shall teach my husband the meaning of repentance.

PANTALONE  
(Aside)  
I repent already... this rash marriage!

(RUFFIANA drags PANTALONE to the side and scolds him in the background. ARLECCHINO has by this point re-entered, ready for a journey.)

CAPITANO  
Arlecchino, where are you off to?

ARLECCHINO  
I go to make my own way in the world.

COLUMBINA  
That I should very much like to see.

CAPITANO  
Arlecchino, be sensible, you shall never find another master as generous as I.

ARLECCHINO  
What, a master that feeds me on crumbs? A master from whom I quickly earn harsh words, but rarely my hard-earned pay? I quit your service, signor. I am gone. Farewell!  
(He tries to exit but COLUMBINA stops him.)

COLUMBINA  
Arlecchino, wait. This tale of the Capitano's treasure has caused no small amount of mischief. Where did it begin?

ARLECCHINO

I cannot imagine. When you learn the truth, write to me in Paris.

(He tries again to leave, but is still prevented by COLUMBINA.)

COLUMBINA

It is strange, for who in Pisa even knew my husband when he arrived?

CAPITANO

None, in fact, save Arlecchino.

(The truth dawns on him.)

Arlecchino, you would not know how all this began, would you?

ARLECCHINO

It is beyond my imagination.

COLUMBINA

Born of it, rather. It was Arlecchino who first boasted of his master's great wealth, enticing Pantalone to seek the Capitano as a son-in-law.

ARLECCHINO

(To the CAPITANO)

You should have heard how this harpy taunted me. I had no choice but to defend your honor with a few well-contrived tales.

COLUMBINA

Speaking of the Capitano's wealth, what little he had he gave to you.

(She holds out a hand and ARLECCHINO reluctantly hands her one of the bags of money.)

ARLECCHINO

You will find every ducat accounted for, I spent not a coin on myself.

(Aside)

More's the pity, for I still have had no dinner.

(To everyone)

If that is all...

(ARLECCHINO tries to leave and is stopped this time by PANTALONE.)

PANTALONE

Not so fast. I spent a great deal of money entertaining the Capitano on the basis of your tall tales.

ARLECCHINO

I cannot be held accountable for that.

PANTALONE

You shall! I demand recompense or else I shall set the law on you.

ARLECCHINO

(Taking out the second bag of money)

How much?

(PANTALONE snatches the entire bag.)

PANTALONE

That shall do.

(ARLECCHINO starts to exit and then stops.)

ARLECCHINO

Shall no one stop me this time?

COLUMBINA

No, go where you will.

ARLECCHINO

I go to find a new position.

(COLUMBINA whispers in the CAPITANO's ear.)

CAPITANO

Oh Arlecchino?

ARLECCHINO

Yes?

CAPITANO

Now that I have taken a wife I shall need a dependable servant.

ARLECCHINO

Most certainly you will. Good luck in finding one.

COLUMBINA

Arlecchino, do not be angry. You shall take charge of our household.

ARLECCHINO

It is no great honor to take charge of the Capitano's tent. He is off to the wars, remember?

CAPITANO

Yes, about that. My wife has convinced me that I have reached an age where it is best to retire from such active service. We shall remain here in Pisa.

ARLECCHINO

Very well, seeing as I have no other prospects. What shall you have me do, master?

RUFFIANA

I think that these marriages deserve some celebration. Let us all retire to my husband's house for a wedding feast.

PANTALONE

(Aside)

It begins already. I shall be ruined by nightfall. Curse the man who invented wives!

(RUFFIANA and PANTALONE exit.)

LELIO

Come, my little mouse.

LUCINDA

My darling!

(LELIO and LUCINDA exit.)

CAPITANO

Coming, my dear?

COLUMBINA

In but a moment.

(The CAPITANO exits.)

ARLECCHINO

I would not have boasted so about the Capitano if you had not goaded me into it.

COLUMBINA

Think no more of it. I do not think my husband one to hold a grudge.

ARLECCHINO

Your husband. Did you not lead me to believe that...?

COLUMBINA

What? That you and I...?

ARLECCHINO

Yes! It is cruel to toy with a man's feelings thus.

COLUMBINA

For you are such delicate creatures?

(ARLECCHINO does not reply.)

Come, Arlecchino, it has all ended well. I shall not forget that it was because of you that the Capitano found his treasure.

(COLUMBINA and ARLECCHINO exit.)