

# THE CAPTAIN'S TREASURE, A COMMEDIA

By T. James Belich

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# THE CAPTAIN'S TREASURE, A COMMEDIA

By T. James Belich

**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. As he plans an exit strategy from the foolish Capitano, 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 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.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(3 females, 4 males)*

CAPITANO SPAVENTO (m).....A Spanish captain less brave than he boasts. *(102 lines)*  
 ARLECCHINO (m).....The Capitano's servant. *(296 lines)*  
 COLUMBINA (f).....Maid to Lucinda. *(204 lines)*  
 LUCINDA (f).....Pantalone's daughter. *(116 lines)*  
 LELIO (m).....In love with Lucinda. *(113 lines)*  
 PANTALONE (m).....A rich but miserly merchant. *(117 lines)*  
 RUFFIANA (f).....Aunt to Lucinda and sister-in-law to Pantalone. *(89 lines)*

### SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- SCENE 1: A street in Pisa  
SCENE 2: Pantalone's house  
SCENE 3: A street in Pisa  
SCENE 4: Pantalone's house  
SCENE 5: A street in Pisa

### SET REQUIREMENTS

In the spirit of the original commedia dell-arte, the set is very minimal and able to serve as a variety of locations.

### PROPS

- Traveling bag
- Pouch filled with coins (3)
- Swords (3)
- Wedding veil (or other wedding preparations)
- Paper and pen (2)
- Bouquet of flowers
- Character masks (Optional)

### AUTHOR NOTES

The choice of whether or not to use character masks is the director's decision.

### PREMIER PRODUCTION

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

### AWARDS

Honorable Mention in the Ohio State Newark New Play Contest (2011)  
Winner of Washington Stage Theatre's Midwest Play Writers Contest (2014)

**SCENE 1**

**SETTING:** *A street in Pisa during the 1600s.*

**AT RISE:** *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 CAPITANO is standing. To 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.*

**CAPITANO:** 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.

*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 boasting of deeds he's never done over a strong drink. 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.*

**COLUMBINA:** 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 but *COLUMBINA* 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 us 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. 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.*

**ARLECCHINO:** 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 faraway 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 any 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. *(Exits.)*

**ARLECCHINO:** Now there's a comely maid, if cursed 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 as LELIO and LUCINDA, in love with one another, enter. ARLECCHINO hides and listens in.*

**LUCINDA:** Oh Lelio!

**LELIO:** Lucinda!

*LUCINDA and LELIO 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.

*LELIO and LUCINDA 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**

**AT START:** *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 RUFFIANA.*) 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 money.*

**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.*

**PANTALONE:** Where did you get this?

**COLUMBINA:** It was a gift.

**PANTALONE:** From who?

**COLUMBINA:** Whom.

*PANTALONE throws her a sharp look.*

**COLUMBINA:** 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. *(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. (*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

**AT START:** *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 before they throw me out 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... (*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 important is that I shall surely receive more than a few harsh words from my master when he returns to find no dinner, no drink, no bed, and no money. (*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 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. (*Tries to push 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!

*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. (*Bows with a flourish.*)

**CAPITANO:** Signor?

**ARLECCHINO:** Signor. (*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... (*Looks around and tries to think of a plausible lie.*) That way. (*Points.*)

**CAPITANO:** (*Turns to look.*) That way?

**ARLECCHINO:** No master, that way.

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

**CAPITANO:** I see, down that street there. (*Turns to look again.*)

**ARLECCHINO:** No, no, master, that direction.

*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.

*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. *(Starts to go and then stops.)* There's just one tiny matter I should inform you of first...

**PANTALONE:** *(Enters.)* There you are.

**ARLECCHINO:** Yes, here we are. *(Bows.)* Arlecchino, at your service, and my master, Capitano Spavento.

**PANTALONE:** Just the man I have been looking for. *(To 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. (*Bows to CAPITANO.*) If you would but follow me. It shall be my pleasure to be your host.

**CAPITANO:** But of course. (*Bows to PANTALONE in return.*) The honor, signor, is all yours.

**PANTALONE:** Yes, well. This way. (*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. (*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. (*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.*

**ARLECCHINO:** 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 to earn such enmity?

*ARLECCHINO receives a blank look from LELIO.*

**ARLECCHINO:** What did you do to make them so angry?

**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?

*ARLECCHINO receives another blank look from LELIO.*

**ARLECCHINO:** 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... *(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 ARLECCHINO a stern look.*

**ARLECCHINO:** 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. *(Starts removing parts of his costume.)* Then they'll 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. 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 at home.

**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. *(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 gentleman's clothes.*

**ARLECCHINO:** 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. *(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.*) 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? (*Slaps ARLECCHINO 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, not!

**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, RUFFIANA 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.

*RUFFIANA holds out a hand. ARLECCHINO hesitates.*

**RUFFIANA:** 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. (*Hands RUFFIANA 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.

*RUFFIANA steals ARLECCHINO'S sword and begins to chase him again, hitting him with the flat of the sword.*

**RUFFIANA:** Take that, you reprobate. And that! And that!

*RUFFIANA chases ARLECCHINO offstage and they exit.*

**SCENE 4**

**AT START:** 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 broken heart was soothed by another handsome face.

**LUCINDA:** You are no comfort.

**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!

*LUCINDA chases after COLUMBINA who evades her.*

**LUCINDA:** 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. *(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:** Please, Columbina, I beg of you.

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

*COLUMBINA and LUCINDA begin switching costume pieces.*

**COLUMBINA:** 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 are 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 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 CAPITANO.*

**CAPITANO:** Most beautiful lady, this is indeed a great honor.

*CAPITANO bows to COLUMBINA. She curtsies to him in return which prompts 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.*

**PANTALONE:** Columbina!

*LUCINDA still does not respond and PANTALONE pushes her towards 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... (*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 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. 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 and talk?

**COLUMBINA:** I fear I may have to find all the words for that exchange.

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

*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. *(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:** Yes, 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 now 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. (*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 Lucinda 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?

**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:** 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 barred. 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 your lady's 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 claims her?

**LUCINDA:** True love can weather even the greatest of adversities. Nothing can prevent the union of those destined to be one.

**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.

*LELIO and LUCINDA pause to think.*

**LUCINDA:** 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.

*LELIO and LUCINDA 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.*

**LUCINDA:** "To the brightest star in my sky..."

**LELIO:** An overused comparison.

*LELIO receives a glare from LUCINDA but continues writing.*

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

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

**LELIO:** I shall have you know my lady has been known to swoon at but the anticipation of my verse.

**LUCINDA:** That is prose. *(Continues writing.)* "...what can compare with thee, my sweet? You are more radiant than the sun, your smile sparkles more than glittering jewels..."

**LELIO:** The most tepid lover could scrawl out a better line. *(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.

*LUCINDA and LELIO continue writing their letters, each silently fuming at the other.*

**LUCINDA:** There. Such a missive as shall kindle even the faintest embers of love.

**LELIO:** Hardly enough for any man you seek 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. (*Tosses the letter at her.*) And gladly do I take my leave. (*Exits.*)

**LUCINDA:** Good riddance! I hope never to lay eyes on 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. (*Snatches it.*) Now off with you. You are needed in the kitchens.

**LUCINDA:** Yes, master. (*Curtsies to PANTALONE. Aside.*) How I hate the kitchens.

*LUCINDA exits as PANTALONE peruses the letters.*

**PANTALONE:** Now, what have we here... (*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... (*Opens the first letter.*) What devilry is this? A love letter for Ruffiana? Who dares pursue her even as I do? (*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. (*Crumple 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, and sees that it appears to be addressed to her. She begins to read. 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... (*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, he is a dog that sniffs for whatever crumbs can be found. To even think of... (*Picks the letter up again.*) Though he does write prettily enough. He always did when he wrote to 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**

**AT START:** *A street in Pisa. COLUMBINA enters, still disguised.*

**COLUMBINA:** What a pretty pickle this is. 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 my mistress has never been one for plans. 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. Columbina, what a poor, poor fool you are. To woo a man using another's face? And if he should fall, who should it be for? The face he sees or she who is underneath? A pretty pickle indeed.

*ARLECCHINO enters, still disguised.*

**COLUMBINA:** 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, 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 so 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.

*ARLECCHINO and COLUMBINA 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.*

**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.

**ARLECCHINO:** Yes, I adore you. You are...

**COLUMBINA:** Yes?

**ARLECCHINO:** Magnificent.

**COLUMBINA:** And?

**ARLECCHINO:** Incomparable.

**COLUMBINA:** And?

**ARLECCHINO:** Musical.

**COLUMBINA:** Musical?

**ARLECCHINO:** In the way you speak.

**COLUMBINA:** Oh.

**ARLECCHINO:** And I?

**COLUMBINA:** You?

**ARLECCHINO:** Me.

**COLUMBINA:** Yes. Handsome.

**ARLECCHINO:** Certainly.

**COLUMBINA:** Courageous.

**ARLECCHINO:** Undeniable.

**COLUMBINA:** Valiant.

**ARLECCHINO:** Indisputable.

**COLUMBINA:** Modest.

**ARLECCHINO:** Penitent.

**COLUMBINA:** Obedient.

**ARLECCHINO:** Devoted.

**COLUMBINA:** Secretive?

**ARLECCHINO:** Mysterious.

**COLUMBINA:** Suspicious.

**ARLECCHINO:** Of?

**COLUMBINA:** Rumors.

**ARLECCHINO:** Maligned.

**COLUMBINA:** Unsure.

**ARLECCHINO:** Innocent.

**COLUMBINA:** Doubtful.

**ARLECCHINO:** Truly.

**COLUMBINA:** Unconvinced.

**ARLECCHINO:** Offended.

**COLUMBINA:** Unsympathetic.

**ARLECCHINO:** Heartless.

**COLUMBINA:** Waiting.

**ARLECCHINO:** For?

**COLUMBINA:** Explanation.

**ARLECCHINO:** Of?

**COLUMBINA:** Secrecy.

**ARLECCHINO:** Difficult.

**COLUMBINA:** Why?

**ARLECCHINO:** Complicated.

**COLUMBINA:** Impatient.

**ARLECCHINO:** Cannot.

**COLUMBINA:** Can.

**ARLECCHINO:** Subterfuge.

**COLUMBINA:** Faithless.

**ARLECCHINO:** Misunderstood.

**COLUMBINA:** Deceitful.

**ARLECCHINO:** Sincere.

**COLUMBINA:** Incurable!

**ARLECCHINO:** Abused!

**COLUMBINA:** Angry!

**ARLECCHINO:** Running!

**COLUMBINA:** Chasing!

*COLUMBINA chases ARLECCHINO.*

**ARLECCHINO:** Evading!

*COLUMBINA catches hold of ARLECCHINO.*

**COLUMBINA:** Caught.

**ARLECCHINO:** Mercy!

**COLUMBINA:** Truth.

**ARLECCHINO:** Disguise. (*Slight pause.*)

**COLUMBINA:** Arlecchino?

**ARLECCHINO:** Columbina?

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