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The Servant of Two Masters

Carlo Goldoni

Adapted by David Turner
and Paul Lapworth

Samuel French — London
New York — Sydney — Toronto — Hollywood



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THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

This play was first presented at the Queen's Theatre in London by Michael Codron on 18th December 1968. The cast was as follows:

DOCTOR LOMBARDI, a lawyer
BRIGHELLA, an innkeeper
SILVIO, son of LOMBARDI
PANTALONE, a rich merchant
SMERALDINA, CLARICE's maid
CLARICE, daughter of PANTALONE
TRUFFALDINO, a servant
BEATRICE RASPONI, of Turin
FLORINDO ARETUSI, of Turin
FIRST PORTER
SECOND PORTER
OLD WAITER
YOUNG WAITER
SERVANTS

MUSICIANS

Directed by
Scenery and costumes by
Music by
Lighting by

Ken Wynne
Ronald Radd
Clive Francis
Graham Crowden
Michele Dotrice
Morag Hood
Tommy Steele
Julia Lockwood
Edward de Souza
John Rapley
Bunny May
John Crocker
Kenneth Shanley
Hazel McKay
Amanda Duckett
Peter Honri
Tony Reiss
Adrian Harman

Toby Robertson
Alan Barrett
Ben Pearce Higgins
Tony Corbett

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INTRODUCTION

There is no one way of performing The Servant of Two Masters, and the production described in this version underlines the point. The play provides a theatrical vehicle adaptable to the skills and abilities of varied companies of actors. It has a knockabout style, uninhibited in its high spirits, but necessitating a carefully controlled production from both actors and stage staff. The play also offers a rich range of characterisation and a subtle analysis of social attitudes both between men and women and between different classes. These elements in the play and the opportunities open to a producer are best understood against the background of the commedia dell'arte tradition.

Mid-eighteenth century Italy had seen a decline in its improvised drama, the commedia dell'arte, primarily owing to a dearth of actors skilled in the genre. The players were abandoning their masks, and learning their dialogue by heart. Two important dramatists reacted very differently to this state of affairs. The aristocratic Carlo Gozzi (1720-1806) sought to defend and preserve the traditional commedia dell'arte; the bourgeois Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) accepted the decline of the commedia and tried to develop a new drama out of the old form.

The essence of commedia dell'arte is that the play before production consists of a scenario and on this framework the actors generate the dialogue themselves. In its use of a stock collection of plots and masks it clearly has an ancestry in a very much more ancient comedy. The atmosphere of improvisation does not bring out a rough-and-ready attitude to performance in the actors; it demands definition and polish. Commedia dell'arte was the Comedy of the Accomplished Artist, the arte part of the label indicating both professional skill and the existence of professional companies, the essence of the style being found in the group-playing of troupes who worked together over a long period. These companies of players graduated from the squares of great Italian cities such as Venice, Bologna and Florence to the sophisticated courts of European kings and princes.

The plot-line of the comedy within which the actors improvised their dialogue had foundations in a collection of stock-types, and these characters have become as famous as any theatrical convention in existence: Harlequin, Columbine, Pantalone and Pierrot. The art of this comedy is seen in the work of famous dramatists like Molière, and its traditions created a vigorous progeny seen in pantomime, Punch and Judy shows, the mimes of Marcel Marceau, the 'pierrots' of park

and pier, and the comedy of Charlie Chaplin. The term 'slapstick' goes back to the commedia dell'arte, the 'slapstick' being the bat used by Punch, Harlequin and Scapin to beat other characters, perhaps to gain a laugh when the jokes of the improvised dialogue were failing. Several painters down the centuries have been fascinated by the characters of the commedia dell'arte, notably Watteau, Tiepolo and Picasso.

The modern pantomime still shares with the old commedia dell'arte the possibility of endless variations within the old established story. Much of the continuity and humour depended upon the lazzi or bits of comic business such as acrobatics, water-tricks or other horse-play.

The standard collection of characters gained variety by drawing on regional Italy for its types and dialects, such as Tuscan, Paduan and Venetian. The dramas were thereby firmly rooted in the affections and interests of Italian audiences and the travelling companies would make a feature of the regional type appropriate to the setting of the performance. The place of origin could have a temperamental significance or an occupational reference. Pantalone, the miser, traditionally comes from Venice, city of merchants and bankers; the Doctor, filled with pedantry, naturally comes from the ancient university city of Bologna; while Bergamo, home of Harlequin, was supposed to be the home of slow-witted people.

Although the general pattern of characterisation was fixed, these types nevertheless developed and changed and sometimes a puzzling detail proves to be a surviving trait from an earlier tradition of the character.

Pantalone was normally an ancient, greedy, talkative, avaricious, eminent and, usually, retired citizen of Venice. He dressed in red shirt, breeches, full stockings, Turkish slippers, black coat with flowing sleeves and soft fez-like cap. He would have a hooked nose and a long grey beard and he spoke in Venetian dialect, full of aphorisms. Violent in temper but peace-loving when violence threatens, it was Pantalone's fate to be duped. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the character underwent a fundamental change, becoming a respectable head of family, anxious for his children, keen to keep his word of honour and with a respect for discipline. Mean and duped he might still be, but he became in essence a redoubtable bourgeois citizen. In Molière's plays we meet Pantalone in the characters of Orgon and Harpagon.

The Doctor, traditionally surnamed Lombardi, always hailed from Bologna, spicing his language with learned phrases and homilies. He was often consoled in friendship by Pantalone of Venice, and it became usual for him to be father of one of the lovers. His traditional costume was sober black dress and doctor's cap, white collar and cuffs. His dignity of manner, though heightened by speech interspersed with Latin phrases, often concealed his hypocrisy.

The most interesting commedia dell'arte character was Harlequin, usually the most adept at performing the lazzi. Dressed in a suit with patches sewn on, small hat, heel-less shoes and a black mask, he was traditionally full of acrobatics, falls, somersaults and dancing. One of several examples of Harlequin's theatrical progeny was the crafty, boastful valet who became in the eighteenth century a Bergamask comedian called Truffaldino, and was acted by one of the great performers of his day, Sacchi, who interpreted the role for both Gozzi and Goldoni between the years 1740-1770. Gozzi, of course, maintained that Truffaldino must remain an improvisation and that a script would be the death of the character.

Paired with Harlequin as a second Bergamask valet-buffoon, Brighella represented the cleverness of those people born high up on the hill in Bergamo, in contrast to the dim-wits of those born on the lower reaches, typified by Harlequin in some versions. Brighella is usually seen as the Intriguer, and early examples of the type were cynical, sharp and menacing, even murderous. The Brighellas of the eighteenth century commedia dell'arte are all pallid versions of the earlier villains, having developed into something much more in the nature of lackeys, their traditional yellow and black stripes still being part of many contemporary hotel servants' dress in the colouring of the waistcoats.

The prime element in the various pairs and quartets of lovers in the commedia dell'arte is their complete fatuity. Their intrigues of love are fated to become complex by virtue of the interventions of cranky old fathers and comic servants and their names are Flavio, Ottavio, Silvio, Orazio, Federico, Lavinia, Lucinda, Clarice and Columbine. There are usually four lovers, either courtly or pastoral in background.

Gozzi and Goldoni

The use of masks gave permanency and a grand scale to all these established characters, but it also demanded a subtle expressiveness in the body-acting of the players. The group style and interdependence

of the actors ensured the right emphasis and prominence of a role at any one moment and traditional styles of language and gesture added force to the playing. But it was the mask which constituted the main bone of contention between Gozzi and Goldoni, the former supporting its retention as being in the nature of the drama, while the latter rejected it as an obstruction to the actor's proper portrayal of subtle emotion. Their conflict focused on a second element – the dialogue. The masks limited the actor's scope in the development of a realistic characterization; improvised dialogue worked in the opposite direction, encouraging the actor to develop an individual interpretation in his performance. Goldoni's view looks towards the commonly accepted modern division of theatrical responsibility; the dramatist controls the content, the actor controls the performance.

The years 1740–60 saw the best of Goldoni in Venice. After that, subjected to the successful counter-attack of Gozzi, he left for Paris. Eighteenth century Italy gave the victory to Gozzi; the history of drama honours Goldoni.

The Servant of Two Masters as Commedia dell'Arte

Goldoni's play may be a piece of written dialogue without masks, but it also presents a recognisable exercise in commedia dell'arte. Goldoni's Pantalone, for example, presents us with the typical Venetian father, harassed by coping with a wayward daughter, mildly miserly, readily moved one way or another. But he also shows specific elements of other Pantalones. Scene 22 admirably demonstrates the avarice and snobbery of the character. Pantalone prefers to marry his daughter to the 'quality' represented by the Rasponis, and his determination to honour the contract with Rasponi similarly reflects the businessman's code of honour seen in the original commedia dell'arte merchant of Venice. An even more ancient version of the character, an old, toothless Pantalone is suggested by Brighella's jibe in Act II Scene 17, 'Pick a bone, sir? With your teeth?' and the meanness seen in the opening of the play, 'We don't want lavishment, do we?' and his hope that the visitor will not prove to be a relative who will drink him out of house and home.

Goldoni's Brighella is an eighteenth century version in his subdued devilry, but his ready agreement to keep Beatrice's secret at their first meeting in the play reflects his commedia dell'arte character combining roguishness and intrigue. This role developed quite naturally into that of the calm, observing psychologist.

Finally, Truffaldino embodies the tradition in so many ways. The duality of the character is stressed, as in Pantalone's description of him, either 'A rogue or an idiot'. Other characters express puzzlement in contemplating the possible truth of the character, saying he is one thing or the other, but avoiding acceptance of one interpretation to the exclusion of the other. This mixed nature, shrewdness or idiocy, is demonstrated in Scene 31. Other traditional elements in the role were the cockiness, the stupidity, and his incipient but frustrated gluttony. Truffaldino loves style in life, nevertheless, as may be seen in his concern for the manner of the food's presentation in the great scene of serving two masters at table. There is a kind of rebellion in him, too: the servant on whom they depend, but a servant who will let them down by taking them literally.

In the original Italian play by Goldoni, we find Smeraldina saying she likes 'the swarthy or dark-faced little fellow'. The sentiment was retained for the London production featuring Tommy Steele, but not the description, for obvious reasons. The original line indicates a reference to the black-faced or black-masked Harlequin ancestry of Truffaldino.

Goldoni's Innovations

Goldoni's innovations are more interesting than his debts to the commedia dell'arte. As Goldoni was Venetian, bourgeois, and trained in the law, people displaying one or more of these characteristics are treated in kindly fashion. Indeed, Goldoni shows a gentler manner than his master, Molière, and created a bourgeois comedy of ordinary people bewildered by the pressures of convention and class. Much depends upon the portrayal of the finer shades of relationships between classes - Pantalone higher than Brighella but lower than Beatrice, richer but less cultured than the Lombardis. Venice was a republic, but its elected doge and hereditary nobles gave it an aristocracy Goldoni considered worthy of satire, and he turned a mocking gaze upon many aspects of aristocratic pretensions. Florindo, typically named, has to be an elegant gentleman of the period, slightly dandy and 'silly ass', possessing a Tuscan ascent, the equivalent of a twentieth century Oxford voice. Goldoni clearly enjoyed the mildly ridiculous and substituted jollity and good humour for the original coarseness of much of the commedia dell'arte. Coarse indecencies seem to have been part and parcel of the commedia improvisation, and in the process of converting the scenario into a written script it lost most of its theatrical vulgarity

and became more realistic.

Goldoni's most famous innovation was his creation of spirited heroines to replace the more modest and demure young ladies called Adriana, Isabella and Laura. He looked upon women as individuals and not merely as the subordinates of men. In Beatrice we see a Goldoni woman, replacing the anonymous heroines of the earlier tradition, even more assertive and self-aware than Shakespeare's Rosalind and Viola. Beatrice seeks liberation, a hand in her own destiny, and obviously delights in the disguises and machinations that arise from her self-determined ambition. Brighella appreciates her boldness and proclaims her 'rare spirit'. In Act I Scene 5 she says, 'I'll not be bothered with any of them. I want freedom.' Clarice refuses to accept her father's choice of husband and, in the second act, Smeraldina, the servant girl, speaks out for women's rights too. In Act II Scene 8 she attacks the old difference of double standards: 'Women have the reputation of being unfaithful, while you men commit infidelities.' She says more on the subject in Act II Scene 16, admitting that despite the unfairness of the position between the sexes, the biological pressure wins in the end: 'man wants woman, woman wants man. You're bound to get married some time or other.' Despite her lower social rank, Smeraldina proves to be as bright, witty and self-possessed as her 'betters'. Beatrice may be the prime example of the liberated woman, and Clarice may follow her a close second in choosing her mate against her father's wishes, but it is Smeraldina who sounds the clarion call to modern woman in Scene 27 when she defends Clarice: 'If woman made the laws, things'd be different.'

Thus, Goldoni took the orthodox commedia dell'arte and turned it into a written comedy despite the objections of his more successful rival, Count Carlo Gozzi. The abandonment of improvisation and masks made the comedy more realistic and in content and theme Goldoni was notably sympathetic towards the bourgeoisie and to women.

Goldoni's Achievement

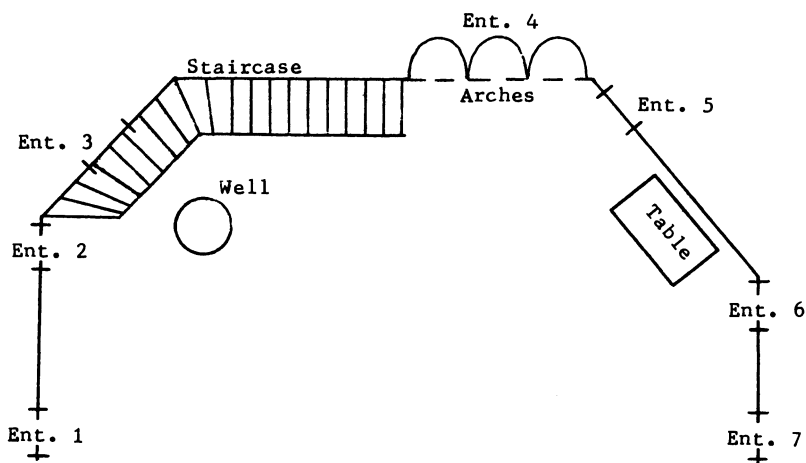
Many critics of European drama underrate Goldoni's achievement. He lacks irony, sharpness of satire and profundity, but as a theatrical craftsman in the comic genre he is brilliant. The Servant of Two Masters has all the Goldoni virtues of comic set-pieces, hilarious scenes of farce and a rapidly moving plot. In addition, it has Truffaldino.

Goldoni's greatest art consists in exploiting the potential of the comic complication only to the point that it avoided repetition. Having made the best of a comic situation, Goldoni does not repeat his effect; he moves on to the next inevitable complexity. He has an instinctive feeling for the correct length of each scene as it exploits and then advances the action. The length and patterns of the scene are extremely variable. Some scenes are ritualised, measured and formal; others through duologues provoke confrontations and conflict; then he will create solo declarations, revelations prevented, and all the tricks of theatrical fun of which Truffaldino's tour de force in waiting on two tables is the best example. A large number of scenes encompass this splendid variety, although in effect there are only three locations. The scenes vary in length and tone, and there is need for variation in pace. Goldoni successfully exploits the changes in mood and these are further brought out in the language varieties created by Goldoni: The cool dignity of Beatrice, the rough, bluff assurance of Pantalone, the foolish extravagance of Silvio and Clarice, the foppishness of Florindo and the pompous learning of Doctor Lombardi.

THE LONDON PRODUCTION

Setting

A single multi-purpose set was used in the London production, with plenty of entrances R. and L. and a sweeping staircase and archway up-stage. A well R. and a table L. completed the basic set, and the use of curtains helped to convert an exterior into an interior set. A basic location was suggested R. as Pantalone's house while the L. roughly represented Brighella's Inn. A simplified version of the set might have three entrances on both R. and L. sides with the addition of the archway entrance U. S.



Production Points

The 1968 London production was performed with one interval. In the Italian version Act Two began at this translation's Scene 22 when the humiliated Silvio seeks satisfaction from Pantalone.

In the London production Tommy Steele maintained commedia dell'arte traditions by incorporating set-pieces of business. At the end of Act One Scene 6 when Truffaldino bemoans his humdrum servant's life, a mimed sequence over a tango rhythm was inserted, displaying a 'lion-tamer joke' in which Tommy Steele put a row of imaginary lions through their circus paces. Similarly, Truffaldino's operatic duet with himself, his exit with the pudding, and the general street scene in Act One, all present the equivalents of commedia dell'arte lazzi. These non-essential pieces are indicated in the text as 'inserts'. The play does demand, however, a great deal of essential comic business as may be observed in the great serving scene and in the mixing of the clothes from the trunks. It is in the nature of the play for both obligatory business and the 'inserts' to be a matter of the producer's taste and imagination. Producers and companies may contrive business and set-pieces to suit their own talents. The 'inserts' and many of the invented effects may be omitted.

Character of Truffaldino

The character is carefully established and used for different comic effects as the action develops. Truffaldino has a joy in the attempted tour de force, the exceptional, the playful, the unexpected challenge. He is always hungry, seeking food despite the obstacles of service. Yet he is no respecter of persons; he serves without servility. When he cringes before a beating, he realistically seeks to assuage his punishment. Truth is relative to him. His service partly consists of trying to tell people what they want to hear.

There are five linked elements in Truffaldino's contribution to the action, and these are concerned with character, motif and situation:

- (1) Hunger motif: Truffaldino's obsession with his belly, with food and his know-how in matters of table.
- (2) Twin aspects of the character: throughout the play, other characters are puzzled by Truffaldino's character, and offer contrary interpretations. It adds up to an acceptable ambiguity in our view of him.
- (3) The Great Fixer image: this is Truffaldino's own view of himself. He delights in the challenge of circumstances, even intensifying the difficulties Fate throws up to him and he boasts quite openly to the audience.
- (4) Endearing Idiot image: in his courtship of Smeraldina he is ridiculous but attractive and in his illiteracy and inspired folly similarly he makes us laugh on his side. Only his and Smeraldina's mutual betrayal run counter to this view, but this exemplifies the natural sense of self-preservation found in their class at the time.
- (5) Comic Discomfort: this is the prime theatrical purpose of the role. The mixture of Great Fixer and Endearing Idiot contribute to place Truffaldino in a sequence of demanding situations.

Music

Goldoni's play does not require music. A musical element, however, was a feature of the London production and indications of its use have been retained in the text. Music was used to suggest the sunny, Italian atmosphere, to indicate changes of mood and to support pieces of business. A specially produced tape of original music was augmented on-stage by live musicians; the latter are not essential to the achievement of the musical effects noted above. It would be difficult to find eighteenth century music capable of providing the excitement expected by a modern audience. Consequently, if music is used to

heighten the dramatic effect it is better to think of such well-known styles or pieces as may reflect the appropriate moods. Opera, Neapolitan love-songs, and twentieth century café music could all be used, such material being readily available on LP records. The use of music may be much more restricted than this version of the play suggests, or it may be omitted completely.

DAVID TURNER and PAUL LAPWORTH

THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

ACT ONE

Scene One

Music. A room in PANTALONE's house. PANTALONE, DOCTOR LOMBARDI, SILVIO, BRIGHELLA, SMERALDINA standing in frozen positions on stage. Lights come up and, as music fades, they move.

DOCTOR (turning to PANTALONE) Signor Pantalone, we are met here for the happy occasion of the betrothal of my dear son, Silvio.

PANTALONE We are, Doctor.

DOCTOR Then bid your daughter come forth, sir, et ergo accidat.

PANTALONE Smeraldina. Fetch your mistress.

MUSIC

SMERALDINA (bobs) Sir.

(SMERALDINA exits. MUSIC continues as CLARICE enters followed by SMERALDINA.)

ALL Ah.

(While CLARICE comes gracefully in, the DOCTOR speaks to his son.)

DOCTOR To her, my son. Give her your hand.

SILVIO (moves to CLARICE) Clarice, here is my hand - and with it, take my heart.

PANTALONE Well, go on, daughter. Don't be shy. Simple ceremony and you're engaged.

CLARICE Silvio, here is my hand. I promise to be your wife.

SILVIO And I to be your ever loving husband.

ALL Ah.

DOCTOR & OTHERS Bravo! Excellent!

DOCTOR Brighella, you will swear you have borne witness to this.

(SERVANT enters with a tray - jug of wine and two glasses. PANTALONE takes them and gives the smaller glass to the DOCTOR, keeping the bigger one for himself. CLARICE and SILVIO kiss.)

BRIGHELLA I will indeed, sir. I hereby witness the betrothal between your dear son Silvio and the lovely lady Clarice, and if I may say so, sir, I don't think there had better be a very long engagement.

PANTALONE Clarice!
DOCTOR (together) Silvio!

(The lovers break apart.)

PANTALONE I respect your sentiments, my dear Brighella. I've no desire for there to be a long engagement this time.

DOCTOR This time? What is that you say? This time?

PANTALONE Ah, well, there's something a little delicate, something that we never quite got round to speaking about. I think this is the proper time to tell him, Clarice, don't you?

CLARICE Silvio knows already.

PANTALONE And you're quite happy about it?

SILVIO Why, of course, sir.

DOCTOR What is it then? What is it?

PANTALONE Sorry, well, it's simply this. My daughter Clarice has been engaged before.

DOCTOR What?

PANTALONE Don't worry. She never saw the feller. It was all done by proxy, you understand?

DOCTOR I see. But then, hasn't this fellow a claim to her?

PANTALONE No. You see the poor chap's gone to a better place. Passed over.

DOCTOR Dead?

PANTALONE Yes, he had the call - and he went.

DOCTOR I see. And who was this gentleman?

PANTALONE A certain Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin.

DOCTOR And what did he die of?

PANTALONE Killed in a duel. They say it was because of his sister - to save her honour or something. Anyway he was struck down - fatal blow.

BRIGHELLA It came as a very nasty shock to me, I can tell you, sir.

PANTALONE You knew him?

BRIGHELLA Oh yes. I was three years in Turin afore I settled here.

PANTALONE Then you have the advantage of me, sir. I never clapped eyes on the fellow. Everything was done by letter.

BRIGHELLA Yes, I knew him very well, and what's more, I knew his sister, too. A proper tomboy, she was - rode a horse like this. (Miming riding astride.) Not like this. (Miming side saddle. Laughs.) Ha, ha! A right lass. And

the brother was proud of her - too proud to my mind. Would never let her marry. And now he's dead. Ah, well, we never know what fate has in store for us, do we, sir?

DOCTOR

No - no - no. The ways of the Lord are many and devious.

PANTALONE

So, Doctor, seeing that my dear daughter has never been within one hundred miles of her late fiancé, there can be no possible harm done, can there?

DOCTOR

I agree. A clear case of corpore absente, virgo intacto.

(Both raise their glasses to CLARICE, who curtsies.)

PANTALONE

Quite, eh? But let us not talk of madness. (He collects DOCTOR's glass and gives both to SERVANT, who goes out.) My dear Brighella, the gentle doctor here is of my disposition. We decided against any guests or relations. We don't want lavishness, do we? (To BRIGHELLA.) So how about preparing us some tasty dish or other?

BRIGHELLA

My privilege and pleasure, sir. And you could do no better than to eat at my inn in the square over there, sir.

(They hear three loud knocks.)

PANTALONE

Someone knocks, Smeraldina, see who it is.

SMERALDINA

At once, sir. (She goes out.)

PANTALONE

I only hope it's not a relative. They'll stay all day and drink every bottle in the cellar.

CLARICE

Father, with your permission -

PANTALONE

Yes, my dear?

CLARICE

If you have a visitor, Silvio and I would like -
(SMERALDINA returns.)

Scene 1

THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

5

PANTALONE (to CLARICE) A moment, a moment. (To SMERALDINA.) Yes, what is it?

SMERALDINA Sir, it's the servant of some stranger or other. He says nothing to me. He says he wants to give you a message.

PANTALONE Let him come in. Let's hear what he wants.
(SMERALDINA leaves.)
Yes, my dear. You were saying?

CLARICE If you have a visitor, Silvio and I would like to withdraw.

PANTALONE What? Withdraw? Go off by yourselves? You'll stay here.

Scene Two

The same. TRUFFALDINO enters, followed later by SMERALDINA.

TRUFFALDINO Greetings, respects and heartiest salutations to one and all. (To audience.) And I must say a very nice quality of person we've got here - very nice indeed. (Looking at CLARICE.) Who's the lovely lady then? What are you doing tonight, sweetheart?

PANTALONE How dare you, sir. That is my daughter.

TRUFFALDINO Congratulations, sir. Well done.

PANTALONE I beg your pardon.

SMERALDINA Signora Clarice is engaged to be married.

TRUFFALDINO Oh well, it's not my day, is it? And what might

your role be in this menage, may I ask?

SMERALDINA

I'm Smeraldina, her maidservant.

TRUFFALDINO

Maidservant, eh? What are you doing tonight?

PANTALONE

Enough of that, sir. Leave her alone. Just tell me, who are you? What do you want and where do you come from?

TRUFFALDINO

Who? What? Where? Three questions all at once. (He touches his head.) It's too much for me.

PANTALONE

(aside to DOCTOR) The man's a numbskull - a blockhead.

DOCTOR

(aside to PANTALONE) A comical fellow to be sure.

PANTALONE

Now look here, sir. Who are you?

TRUFFALDINO

My name, sir, is Truffaldino. By trade, a servant - a humble servant to my master. (To SMERALDINA.) What time do they let you out?

PANTALONE

Your master, sir? Your master? Who is he?

TRUFFALDINO

Why, he's the gentleman who is waiting outside to come in and pay you his respects.

PANTALONE

This gentleman, sir? What's his name?

TRUFFALDINO

His name? That's fair - straightforward. One question at a time. I'll answer that. He is none other than the right worthy Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin.

ALL

What!

TRUFFALDINO

That went well!

PANTALONE

Come here, sirrah. That name. Say it again. I couldn't have heard you correctly.

TRUFFALDINO

(aside) The poor old fellow's hard of hearing. (He yells into PANTALONE's ear.) Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin!

PANTALONE (pushing his finger into his ear) Get away!
What the - (To DOCTOR.) He's mad,
absolutely mad. (To TRUFFALDINO.)
I'll have you know, sir, Federigo Rasponi of
Turin is dead.

TRUFFALDINO Dead!

PANTALONE Dead as a doornail.

TRUFFALDINO My master - dead?

PANTALONE Quite, quite dead.

DOCTOR No shadow of doubt.

TRUFFALDINO But I've only just left him outside. He was very
much alive then. Accident, was it? (Suddenly
dawns on him.) Just a moment! Dead, sir?
You've killed him.

PANTALONE What?

TRUFFALDINO While I had my back turned, talking to the lady
here, one of you slipped out and done him in.
Who was it?

DOCTOR (approaching TRUFFALDINO) Now look here -

TRUFFALDINO Don't you come near me. I've heard all about
you city folks. You Medicis, you Borgias.
Vendetta, was it? Knifed him in the back while
I was being affable, did you? I must see it for
myself. (He goes out.)

PANTALONE Well, what do you make of that? What is he?
A rogue or an idiot?

DOCTOR He's a bit of both, if you ask me.

BRIGHELLA Rogue, no: idiot, yes.

SMERALDINA No, simple and good, that's how I put it.
(To audience.) I liked him.

PANTALONE And what's all this about Signor Federigo?

CLARICE Heaven help me, if it is true.

PANTALONE We've letters, girl, telling us he's dead.

SILVIO (to CLARICE) Even if he is alive, he'll have
 come far too late. (Taking her hand.)
 You are mine.

 (TRUFFALDINO returns.)

ALL (startled) Aha!

TRUFFALDINO Aha! Oh, gentlemen. You naughty pair.
 (Wagging his finger.) You naughty, naughty
 pair.

PANTALONE (aside) He's raving - absolutely raving.

DOCTOR (aside) Agreed.

TRUFFALDINO Allow me to learn you your manners. Gentlemen
 what are proper gentlemen have respect for
 servants. They don't go playing around with
 them.

PANTALONE We must be careful - he might be dangerous.
 What's the matter, sir, the world's been
 treating you badly, has it?

TRUFFALDINO Did you or did you not tell me that Signor
 Federigo was dead?

PANTALONE What of it?

TRUFFALDINO He's still very much alive, thank you very much.
 Still waiting outside in the street to come in and
 pay you his respects.

PANTALONE Signor Federigo?

TRUFFALDINO Signor Federigo.

PANTALONE Rasponi?

TRUFFALDINO Rasponi.

PANTALONE Of Turin?

TRUFFALDINO Of Turin.

PANTALONE Ha. Those who are mad ought to go into hospital.

TRUFFALDINO Now look, sir, before I resort to bad language

I'll put it to you again: if you go outside in the street you'll see him - Signor Federigo Rasponi waiting on the corner. And if you tell me once more he's dead, I shall be forced to use a certain word.

PANTALONE (lifting his hand) You are asking for a beating, sirrah!

DOCTOR Calm, Signor Pantalone, calm. Tell him to ask this so-called Signor Rasponi to come in.

TRUFFALDINO At last! In future, gentlemen, I trust you'll know how to handle men of quality, honourable fellows from Bergamo like myself. (To **SMERALDINA**.) Young lady, we'll talk again! I go! (He goes out upstairs.)

CLARICE (quietly) Silvio, I tremble with fear.

SILVIO (quietly) Whatever happens, you're mine.

DOCTOR Now let the truth be revealed.

PANTALONE 'Tis some cock and bull story to swindle me.

BRIGHELLA Rely on me, sir. I'm the only one here who's ever seen Signor Federigo. I'll soon tell you if it's him.

SMERALDINA (to audience) He's not a liar, that servant; he's as good as gold. I can sum up men, don't you worry, and I know when they're nice. (To **PANTALONE**.) Sir, by your leave. (She goes.)

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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