

ARLECCHINO'S SURPRISE

by Goldwyn of Britain

characters (in order of appearance)

Pantalone

Columbina

Isabella

Capitano

Leandro

Zinadia

scene 1

(A room in Pantalone's house. The front door is at L, the rest of the house is R. The Ubiquitous Bench, a chair, and a table on which are a quill pen, some paper, and a pitcher. Pantalone enters L, a document in his hand.)

PANTALONE:

Oh, woe! Oh, sorrow! Oh, lamentations! Oh, misery! Oh, distress! *(sees the audience)* Oh, hello. You'll have to pardon me. My sorrows are so great that I simply must share them with you, my oldest and dearest friends. Well, my oldest, anyway. My beloved sister, Hortensia, has - oh, how shall I say it for such refined company? - she has finally achieved the blessed state of rigor mortis. Hortensia! The best - and richest! - sister a man ever had. How I shall miss her. Still, every cloud has a silver lining, or, in this case, a golden one. Look. Here is her will.

(Columbina enters R and listens.)

She has left all her money to my daughter, Isabella. *(reads further)* Uh-oh. The money is only to be paid if she is married by sundown on Saturday. By St. Midas, that's today! What shall I do? Ah! She can marry that young Leandro she's so fond of. *(thinks)* No, she can't! He's poor, and would keep all that lovely money as Isabella's dowry! No, I've got to provide my darling daughter with a rich husband, so I can keep all her darling money for myself!

(Columbina comes forward.)

COLUMBINA:

Shame on you, signor Pantalone! Shame on you for thinking of marrying your daughter off to a rich suitor so that you can keep all her money for yourself!

PANTALONE:

Well, I --

COLUMBINA:

Without offering any of it to me!

PANTALONE:

What?

COLUMBINA:

After all, if you want me to keep my lips shut . . .

PANTALONE:

I don't think that's possible.

COLUMBINA:

Well, I never! Not for about half an hour, anyway.

PANTALONE: Now, now, my dear. You needn't worry your pretty little . . . er . . . head about Isabella. I'll take care of my daughter. I know just the man for her, and I'm going to fetch him now. I'm sure she'll be very happy.

COLUMBINA: Ha!

PANTALONE: See here, young lady. What do you take me for?

COLUMBINA: Everything I can.

(Pantalone exits L.)

(calling after him) You old miser! Skinflint! *(to the audience)* Imagine! Marrying his daughter for money, when she's so in love with signor Leandro that she can hardly walk straight. Ah, young love. So sweet and innocent. Now, don't get me wrong. I like love. It's just that there are other relationships I like better. But . . . my poor, dear mistress! I know just what she's going through. I was in love once. Well, maybe more than once. I remember you, and you, and you. I don't remember you, but then I sometimes have trouble remembering . . . faces. Of course, my social life has gone from terrific to nothing, now that Zinadia has moved into the house next door. Every week a new lover. Every week a new dress and more jewelry. And if she's a virtuous woman, then I'm Santa Rowena!

(Isabella enters R.)

ISABELLA: Columbina, what's all this shouting about?

COLUMBINA: Oh, mistress, it's just awful! He's gone to fetch him because she's dead, see, and if it isn't today then you'll never be happy, and it's all because of the money! Understand?

ISABELLA: No.

COLUMBINA: It's very simple. You are to be married today, and --

ISABELLA: Oh, how wonderful!

COLUMBINA: But --

ISABELLA: Father has finally given his consent!

COLUMBINA: Not exactly . . .

ISABELLA: I must tell Leandro immediately!

COLUMBINA: But, he's not --

ISABELLA: Oh, hush, Columbina! There's so much to do. The wedding - my gown! - I just don't know what to do first! Oh! I know. I'll ask Mistress Zinadia. She's so beautiful, so refined . . .

COLUMBINA: So expensive . . .

ISABELLA: Now, is there anything I've forgotten?

COLUMBINA: Well, there is the slight matter of the groom . . .

ISABELLA: Leandro! Oh, how could I have forgotten him?

COLUMBINA: But, your father --

ISABELLA: Quickly, Columbina! Bring me pen and paper!

(Columbina fetches them from the table.)

Now, I'll write the letter, since I write, and you take it to him, since you deliver.

(She sits on the bench and writes. Columbina reacts to her double entendres.)

(writing) My dearest and most beloved Leandro. At this moment I am so possessed with ecstasy that I can scarcely hold pen to paper. At last, the fruition of our desire draws near! Father has finally consented, and our ultimate union will be made today, forever! It is such a little while, and yet the waiting fans the flames within my bosom and burns me up. The mere thought of you sets my blood afire. I dream only of yielding to the infinite pleasure of your caresses. I long --

COLUMBINA: Long?!

ISABELLA: *(thinking)* Oh, it is so hard --

COLUMBINA: Hard?!

ISABELLA: -- to tell him how I feel. *(writing)* I long for the moment when every part of us finds release in this sublime passion. Come as soon as you are able. Your adoring and devoted Isabella.

(Columbina relaxes. It's over.)

(writing) P.S. I shall not sleep a wink until I hear from you. *(to Columbina)* Well, what do you think?

COLUMBINA: Oh, no doubt he'll be up all night, as well.

ISABELLA: No, no. Do you think he'll still want to marry -- *(jabs herself with the quill)* Oh! I've pricked myself!

(Columbina faints.)

Columbina!

(Columbina revives.)

Take this to him. And hurry!

(She stands and hands the letter to Columbina, who exits L. There is a scream and a slap offstage. Pantalone enters L, rubbing his cheek. He has a piece of paper.)

PANTALONE: Ah, daughter. I'm glad you are here. I have good news for you.

ISABELLA: Oh, father, I know! Thank you! Thank you!

PANTALONE: You know?

ISABELLA: Columbina told me, and I can hardly wait!

PANTALONE: Then, my child, I won't disappoint you. Let me see. *(reads)* My dear, I want you to meet someone. Someone special. He's a soldier, full of - I can't quite make it out. Well, anyway, he's wealthy, too. He has four galleons in the city and twelve on the open seaway.

ISABELLA: *(aside)* Sounds like he's full of ships.

PANTALONE: He's the Ruler of the High Seas, Ruler of the Low Seas, and Defender of the Feces . . .

ISABELLA: *(aside)* I was right.

PANTALONE: And famous, too. Why, he has a . . . a reputation . . . as long as my arm!

ISABELLA: Yes, but what good is a reputation if it won't stand up?

PANTALONE: Now, enough of that, daughter! I want you to be nice to him. He's come a long way to see you. Now, here he is! The Great! The Magnificent! The One! The Only! Without further ado, I present a man who needs no introduction! Here he is! The answer to every maiden's sighs! Bold! Dashing! Handsome! Rich! *(aside)* That's my favorite part. *(announcing)* Capitano Regurgimento de Coagulato!

(Capitano enters L with a flourish.)

CAPITANO: *(to Isabella)* Fair maiden -- *(to Pantalone)* She is a maiden, is she not?

PANTALONE: Untouched by human hands!

CAPITANO: *(to Isabella)*

Fair maiden, do not fear love's labour lost. About mere nothing, you make much ado. I've come through town and hamlet, tempest-tossed, This merchant's maid of Venice for to woo. A measure for a measure, you'll agree, Twelve knights are but a boudoir comedy Of errors when they think that they can be The King of Leers, a fellow such as me. So, all is well that endeth well, you see. True love is as you like it 'twixt we two. My merry wife and winsome you shall be, And passion prove the shaming of the true! Midsummer's Knight am I, your dream-like male, And you, my dear, shall be my winter's tail!

I wrote it, myself.

PANTALONE: I like it.

(Isabella screams.)

CAPITANO: Signor, your child has no taste! You summoned me here in vain. Me! Thousands - yea, dozens! - of women throughout Venice have begged me to spend but a few moments with them, but did I care? Ha! They would throw themselves at my feet, but did I respond? Ha! They yearned for my beauty, for am I not godlike in aspect?

PANTALONE: *(getting into the spirit of it)* Ha!

CAPITANO: I might as well just take my money and go.

(Pantalone reacts to the mention of "money.")

PANTALONE: Oh, no! I'll just leave you two lovebirds alone!

(He exits R.)

ISABELLA: *(to Pantalone)* Don't leave me!

CAPITANO: I won't.

(He kisses her hand, slobbering all over it. She shudders, looks around, sees the pitcher of water, and dunks her hand in it. Throughout the following, the Capitano pursues her, and she evades.)

We'll be very happy together. We'll travel all over the world.

ISABELLA: I get homesick.

CAPITANO: We'll stay near Venice.

ISABELLA: Venice is so dull.

CAPITANO: We'll lead a very exciting life.

ISABELLA: I'm delicate. I need my peace and quiet.

CAPITANO: A relaxing sea voyage?

ISABELLA: (*eager*) Sailors?

CAPITANO: We'll go by coach.

ISABELLA: I'm claustrophobic.

CAPITANO: Horseback.

ISABELLA: I can't stand all that up-and-down pounding.

(*The Capitano snaps his fingers in disappointment.*)

CAPITANO: It matters not. You and I were made for each other. I love tall women.

ISABELLA: I'm really very short.

CAPITANO: Such lovely, golden hair.

ISABELLA: Bleached.

CAPITANO: Such intelligence, depth, and wisdom!

ISABELLA: Deep down, I'm really very shallow.

CAPITANO: I'll give you everything! A castle . . .

ISABELLA: I'm a terrible housekeeper.

CAPITANO: . . . servants . . .

ISABELLA: I can't give orders.

CAPITANO: . . . musicians . . .

ISABELLA: Tone deaf.

CAPITANO: We'll dance in the moonlight!

ISABELLA: I have no sense of rhythm.

CAPITANO: Then we'll have lots of children.

(Isabella slaps him and he falls to the floor. Columbina enters L.)

ISABELLA: Columbina! Thank God!

CAPITANO: *(recovering)* When next I speak with Him.

COLUMBINA: *(indicating the Capitano)* Who --

ISABELLA: Don't ask.

COLUMBINA: *(understanding)* Oh.

CAPITANO: Ah, you must be my bride's chambermaid.

**ISABELLA and
COLUMBINA:** Bride?!

CAPITANO: Do not despair, lackey. E'en though my bride shall have maids by the dozen, I shall find some position for you. Perhaps as a scullery maid, or a pot wench. Or . . . you might do for an opening to be filled in the master's bedroom.

COLUMBINA: Don't hold your breath. *(thinks for a moment)* On second thought . . . do.

ISABELLA: Columbina . . .

CAPITANO: "Columbina?" What an awful name for my lady's maid. We'll change it, of course.

ISABELLA: The letter - did you deliver it?

COLUMBINA: Of course. Don't I always come through for a pinch - in a pinch?

CAPITANO: Ah, so you have poured your love out to me in a letter. How typical! *(to Columbina)* Let me have it.

COLUMBINA: Don't tempt me. Why don't you go over there and . . . think of names?

(The Capitano goes to the other side of the stage and mutters to himself, trying to think of names.)

ISABELLA: Oh, Columbina, he's so . . . so . . .

COLUMBINA: No, he's worse than that. But, fear not, mistress, for your Leandro is even now reading your letter!

- ISABELLA:** How did you find him so quickly?
- COLUMBINA:** It was easy. I walked outside, and there he was, going into Zinadia's house.
- ISABELLA:** What! My Leandro? With Zinadia? (*cries*)
- COLUMBINA:** (*trying to cover her error*) No! No! I was mistaken. It was the Dottore's house! I always get them confused. You walk in, you take your clothes off . . .
- ISABELLA:** (*wailing*) Oh, Columbina! He's seeing another lady!
- COLUMBINA:** No, he's not - he's seeing Zinadia. Now, now. Don't get upset. He's just like all other men. He's only after one thing.
- ISABELLA:** Why? What has Zinadia got that I haven't got?
- COLUMBINA:** Plenty of practice.
- ISABELLA:** Hmph! Well, I'll show him!
- CAPITANO:** Now, by the greatest warrior who ever lived, and the greatest lover who ever will, the handsomest of men, the finest sword, the keenest wit, and the noblest of demeanor; by the paragon of all paragons, peerless among peers, the very epitome of the human race, and more! - which means by myself! - I grow weary of this discourse. One more word, and I shall begin to grow angry. And, if I do, you'd best beware! I cannot control my body. My strength is multiplied a thousand-fold, my teeth become knives, my hair daggers, and my eyes shoot thunderbolts! Oh, woe to all, if I lose my temper but for an instant! If I draw my sword, whole cities are laid waste, and should I but stamp my foot, half the Kingdom would plunge into the sea!
- (*He stamps about, huffing and puffing.*)
- ISABELLA:** Yoo-hoo! Captain!
- COLUMBINA:** No, mistress! Don't do it! You'll hate yourself in the morning!
- ISABELLA:** (*curtseying to the Capitano*) My most noble and gracious lord. Pray forgive my faltering tongue when first we met. I was overwhelmed by the . . . magnificence . . . of you.
- CAPITANO:** Everyone is.
- ISABELLA:** My eye was dazzled by your brilliance, my ear enthralled by the honeyed sounds of your voice. Oh, sweep me into your powerful embrace! Let your arms, as two mighty bands of steel, crush me to your Herculean chest!
- (*She grabs him.*)

Take me!

COLUMBINA: *(covering her eyes)* I can't watch!

ISABELLA: And, all the while, recount to me, if you will, o good my lord, your many victories on the battlefield.

CAPITANO: No, no. I can't.

ISABELLA: Why not?

CAPITANO: Modesty forbids. But I did command the cavalry at the Battle of Lepanto . . .

ISABELLA: I love you!

(She bends him over backwards and kisses him passionately. She then drops him and backs away, horror in her eyes.)

Columbina . . .

COLUMBINA: *(uncovering her eyes)* Yes?

ISABELLA: What have I done?

(She runs to Columbina, who comforts her. Pantalone enters R.)

PANTALONE: Now, how are you two --

(He sees the Capitano on the floor.)

You've killed him!

COLUMBINA: *(hopeful)* Really?

(Pantalone starts to help the Capitano up.)

CAPITANO: No, no, signor. Your daughter was just showing me the extent of her passion for me.

(Pantalone drops him.)

PANTALONE: Her what!

CAPITANO: Signor Pantalone, I am fully satisfied.

PANTALONE: You're what!

(Pantalone steps on the Capitano's codpiece. The Capitano sits up - much like the lid of a trash can - and his head hits Pantalone's codpiece. They stagger about, moaning.)

ISABELLA: No, father, it isn't what you think.

COLUMBINA: *(to Isabella)* Sh-h-h-h!

(Columbina whispers in Isabella's ear. Isabella's eyes light up.)

PANTALONE: *(to the Capitano)* How dare you assault my daughter before your wedding?

ISABELLA: The world's greatest lover would dare anything!

CAPITANO: *(to Isabella)* Sh-h-h-h!

PANTALONE: What! I'll have him arrested! Thrown to the dogs! Boiled in oil! Sent to Darkwood¹!

ISABELLA: He never even mentioned my dowry.

PANTALONE: *(to Isabella)* Sh-h-h-h-h-h-h!!!

CAPITANO: Ah, yes. The dowry.

PANTALONE: You said you weren't interested in any dowry.

CAPITANO: Ah, but that was before I met your daughter.

ISABELLA: Success!

CAPITANO: Come, come, signor. Name a price . . .

COLUMBINA: Victory!

CAPITANO: . . . and I'll gladly pay it ten times over!

PANTALONE: Son!

(He embraces the Capitano. Isabella screams and exits R, followed by Columbina.)

You know, of course, that the wedding must be today.

CAPITANO: Naturally. Please, signor, allow me to retire and change my garb. I've . . . worn these, already . . .

PANTALONE: Certainly, my good sir. *(aside)* Ah, there's nothing like having a rich son-in-law.

(He bows - painfully - to the Capitano.)

CAPITANO: Signor. *(aside)* Ah, there's nothing like having a rich father-in-law.

(He bows - painfully - to Pantalone, and exits L.)

PANTALONE: To think, all those scuddis and ducats and gold - all mine. Scuddis and ducats and gold - all mine! Scuddis and ducats and gold - all mine! Scuddis and ducats and gold -

(There is a knock offstage.)

- come in!

(Leandro enters L with Isabella's letter and a flower in his hand.)

Scuddis and ducats and gold - all mine! Scuddis and ducats and gold -

(He sees Leandro.)

- get out.

LEANDRO: *(bowing)* Signor Pantalone, I --

PANTALONE: I know what you want. You want my daughter, Isabella. Well, you can't have her, you good-for-nothing ne'er-do-well! She's going to be married in a little while, and there's nothing you can do about it! She's betrothed to a man who has everything: looks, brains, talent . . . muscles . . .

LEANDRO: Money.

PANTALONE: That's right.

LEANDRO: Signor Pantalone, I love Isabella, and I'll marry her, if I have to go to the ends of the earth!

PANTALONE: Fine. Go.

(Leandro starts to exit L.)

Oh, Leandro.

LEANDRO: What?

PANTALONE: I hope you'll take this in the spirit it's meant . . .

LEANDRO: *(impatient)* What?

PANTALONE: She calls him "the world's greatest lover."

LEANDRO: I . . . I'm crushed. I'm devastated.

PANTALONE: You're trespassing. Get out.

(Leandro, too hurt to respond, drags himself out L.)

Scuddis and ducats and gold - all mine!

(Pantalone exits R, skipping. Columbina and Isabella enter R.)

ISABELLA: Please, Columbina. You've got to help me!

COLUMBINA: No more letters!

ISABELLA: You've got to find Leandro and tell him I need him!

COLUMBINA: Where should I look for him?

ISABELLA: Anywhere. Everywhere!

COLUMBINA: Everywhere?

ISABELLA: Wait! At this time of day, he's usually at the Ends of the Earth Tavern. Try there!

COLUMBINA: Yes, mistress.

ISABELLA: And hurry!

(Isabella exits R. Columbina exits L.)

scene 2

(The Ends of the Earth Tavern. The entrance at R. The Ubiquitous Bench with mugs and a pitcher. Leandro sits, plucking the petals off of the flower.)

LEANDRO: She hates me. She loves me not. She hates me. She loves me not.

(The Capitano enters R.)

CAPITANO: Buenos dias. *(He waits for a reaction. There is none.)* Bonjorno. *(Still no reaction.)* Pax vobiscum.

(Leandro sighs.)

Why, art thou weary? Art thou languid? Art thou sore distressed?

(Leandro sobs.)

There's only one thing that can make a man so upset. Money.

LEANDRO: Love.

CAPITANO: Exactly.

LEANDRO: It's a woman. You wouldn't understand.

CAPITANO: Not understand? I? Not understand? I laugh - Ha! And again - Ha! Why, I --

LEANDRO: Who?

CAPITANO: Me!

LEANDRO: He?

CAPITANO: I!

LEANDRO: Hi!

CAPITANO: You're very pleased to meet me.

LEANDRO: I am?

CAPITANO: Of course, because I know all there is to know about women. And I'd be happy to share the knowledge with you, but my throat . . . ahem . . . is so dry . . .

LEANDRO: Oh, is that goblet empty?

CAPITANO: Yes.

(Leandro pours from the pitcher into the goblet. The sound of the liquid causes him to squirm uncomfortably.)

LEANDRO: I'm in love with this woman, and we would get married, but for her father, who is marrying her to someone whom he says has everything I lack.

CAPITANO: What is that? - other than a good tailor.

LEANDRO: Money.

CAPITANO: Well, I would tell you what to do, but my goblet is empty again. Here.

(He hands his goblet to Leandro, whose discomfort is reaching the crisis point.)

Fill it.

LEANDRO: Oh, thank you.

(He goes upstage, turns away from the audience, and holds the goblet in front of him. After a few moments, he returns to the bench, greatly relaxed. He sets the goblet down. The Capitano picks it up and drains it, then leaps to his feet.)

CAPITANO: I come all the way from Spain to woo a rich heiress, and all you have for me is Westermarck Light²?!

LEANDRO: You said you would tell me what to do . . .

CAPITANO: Well, as I see it, you have five possibilities. You could join a monastery.

LEANDRO: I can't sing.

CAPITANO: You could go to sea.

(Leandro mimes seasickness.)

No, I guess not. You could run away with the gypsies.

(Leandro indicates his blond hair.)

No, that wouldn't do. You could become a sheep farmer.

LEANDRO: Do I look like an Alyshian³?

CAPITANO: Well, that leaves only one thing --

LEANDRO: What?

CAPITANO: Deceive the father!

LEANDRO: *(leaping up)* Deceive the father! *(sits down)* Oh, but that won't do. What about my rival?

CAPITANO: Slander him! Vilify him! Say he's married. Say he's broke. Say he's got Cupid's measles! God knows there's enough of it going around.

(He drains his tankard, stands, and starts to exit R.)

(talking to himself) Deceive the father. Ah, Capitano, you bold rogue, you're so clever. No wonder she calls you "the world's greatest lover."

(He exits R. Too late, Leandro realizes who the Capitano really is.)

LEANDRO: And I had him right here!

(Zinadia enters R, comes up behind Leandro, and puts her hands over his eyes.)

ZINADIA: Guess who.

LEANDRO: Uh . . .

(Zinadia presses herself against his back.)

Zinadia!

ZINADIA: You've got it.

(She releases him and sits beside him.)

LEANDRO: And it looks like I'm going to keep it, too.

ZINADIA: What's the matter? Come on. Tell Zinadia all about it.

(He lies down on the bench, his head in her lap.)

LEANDRO: *(settling in)* Mmmmm. That feels nice.

ZINADIA: It's supposed to.

- LEANDRO:** Zinadia, I'm so upset!
- ZINADIA:** *(stroking his hair)* There, there. Calm down and tell me all about it.
- LEANDRO:** It's about Isabella. She's getting married today, and --
- ZINADIA:** Married! Poor child. I was married, once.
- LEANDRO:** You were married?
- ZINADIA:** For a day. The groom ran out on me the next morning, and I haven't seen him since. But . . . a wedding is a wedding. I still have the ring.
- (She shows him her ring.)*
- LEANDRO:** It looks phony.
- ZINADIA:** It is. But that gives you some idea of what he was like. A swaggering braggart and a coward with no more manners than a pig. I remember that one night . . .
- LEANDRO:** He's a crook, and they're only getting married because Pantalone thinks he's rich . . .
- ZINADIA:** . . . promises a cannon . . .
- LEANDRO:** *(sitting up)* He's a liar, a fraud . . .
- ZINADIA:** . . . turns out to be a small bore . . .
- LEANDRO:** . . . with delusions of grandeur . . .
- ZINADIA:** . . . delusions of adequacy . . .
- LEANDRO and ZINADIA:** . . . and that stupid elephant codpiece!
- ZINADIA:** My husband --
- LEANDRO:** -- wants to marry the woman I love! Ooooooh!
- (Leandro begins miming what he will do to the Capitano.)*
- ZINADIA:** *(to get his attention)* Yoo-hoo. Remember me? Chopped liver?

LEANDRO: (*calming down*) I . . . I'm sorry, Zinadia. I didn't mean to ignore you. It's just that Isabella is so special to me, I forget about other women.

ZINADIA: Thanks a lot.

LEANDRO: Oh, you know what I mean. You've always been my friend, but she's the one I want to marry.

ZINADIA: (*aside*) Why is it all the cute ones just want to be friends?

LEANDRO: I'm just so upset . . .

ZINADIA: There, there, now, Leandro. Calm down.

(*They return to the bench, where he again lies down, his head in her lap.*)

You poor dear. There. Isn't that better?

LEANDRO: Mmmmm. Uh-huh.

ZINADIA: Just relax. Relax. Go to sleep, if you want.

LEANDRO: I can't.

ZINADIA: Why not?

LEANDRO: I always sleep on my stomach.

(*Columbina bursts in R.*)

COLUMBINA: (*looking for him*) Leandro?

(*Zinadia leaps up, dumping Leandro onto the floor.*)

LEANDRO: Was it good for you, too?

(*Columbina sees them.*)

COLUMBINA: Leandro! And you! Really, Leandro, I thought you had better taste than to waste your time with a cheap floozie.

ZINADIA: Columbina, I've been called many things in my time, but never "cheap!"

COLUMBINA: Be careful, Zinadia. I hear the Duke is going to start taxing the public utilities.

ZINADIA: Amateur.

COLUMBINA: Leandro, what are you doing down there?

LEANDRO: Hurting.

COLUMBINA: Oh, be a man, Leandro. Get up.

LEANDRO: I am a man - and I don't think I can.

COLUMBINA: Huh! And this from the man she says she loves.

LEANDRO: Who says?

COLUMBINA: Isabella.

(Leandro leaps to his feet.)

ZINADIA: That got him up.

COLUMBINA: You should know.

LEANDRO: She loves me?

COLUMBINA: I'll bet you could give lessons.

ZINADIA: I'll bet you could use some!

LEANDRO: She really said that?

ZINADIA: Men come to me, and I spoil them for other women.

COLUMBINA: That explains why Venice has such a large navy. Listen, Zinadia . . .

ZINADIA: That's Mistress Zinadia.

COLUMBINA: Oh, so they give Peerages for that, now?

(Thunder and lightning. The lights flash and the actors cower.)

LEANDRO: She cares about me?

COLUMBINA: Oh, who cares about you?

LEANDRO: *(a joyous yell)* Isabella does!

COLUMBINA: (*remembering*) Oh. Oh! Leandro! You've got to help her. She's been trapped into going through with a loveless wedding.

LEANDRO: We've got to stop that wedding!

COLUMBINA: Yes, but how? I mean, if we can't, she'll have to marry that filthy, disgusting . . .

ZINADIA: Careful. That's my estranged husband you're talking about.

COLUMBINA: Your husband?

ZINADIA: Estranged.

COLUMBINA: That's the word for him, all right.

LEANDRO: We've got to stop that wedding!

COLUMBINA: We know. We've just got to think of a way.

ZINADIA: Perhaps if I tell signor Pantalone the truth . . .

COLUMBINA: No. He'd never believe the truth.

LEANDRO: We've got to stop that wedding!

ZINADIA: Leandro, dear, we know you're excited . . . but will you please stop saying that?

LEANDRO: (*weakly*) But, we've got to --

COLUMBINA: Shut up and sit down!

(*She pushes him down onto the bench.*)

ZINADIA: So, I can't tell Pantalone the truth.

COLUMBINA: No, the truth is out.

ZINADIA: Then, what's left?

LEANDRO: (*leaping up*) "Deceive the father!"

COLUMBINA: Of course!

ZINADIA: Exactly!

COLUMBINA: It can't miss!

ZINADIA: It can't fail!

COLUMBINA: Pantalone's house . . .

ZINADIA: . . . in ten minutes.

all: Avanti!

LEANDRO: For truth! For beauty! For love! For honor!

COLUMBINA: For pity's sake.

LEANDRO: For Isabella!

(He exits R.)

COLUMBINA: Men.

ZINADIA: Men.

COLUMBINA: Men.

ZINADIA: Men.

COLUMBINA: Men.

ZINADIA: Men.

(They continue, back and forth, expressing different feelings about the subject, until they stop and look at each other.)

**COLUMBINA and
ZINADIA:** Sisters.

(They embrace, then exit R, arm in arm.)

scene 3

(The same room in Pantalone's house. The Ubiquitous Bench is now wearing pillows and a blanket. The table has a vase with flowers. Isabella and Columbina enter R.)

ISABELLA: No, Columbina. I'd rather die than deceive my father.

COLUMBINA: "Isabella de Coagulato."

ISABELLA: Since you put it that way . . . Do I look all right?

COLUMBINA: I don't know. Something's missing.

ISABELLA: Hair!

COLUMBINA: Hair!

(She musses Isabella's hair.)

ISABELLA: Dress!

COLUMBINA: Dress!

(She disarrays Isabella's dress.)

ISABELLA: Makeup!

(Columbina hits her with a powder puff. Powder all over the place. Isabella coughs.)

COLUMBINA: Great! Keep doing that!

ISABELLA: *(gasping for air)* I don't know if I can.

PANTALONE: *(offstage)* Right this way, signor.

COLUMBINA: It's your father! Hurry!

(Columbina hides the powder puff. Isabella dives into the bench and covers herself with the blanket. Columbina kneels beside her and weeps. Pantalone and the Capitano enter L.)

PANTALONE: You see, signor, I have spared no expense for the wedding, and -- What is this? Isabella! Daughter! Are you all right?

COLUMBINA: Oh, signor Pantalone! Thank goodness you've come! She's ill. Oh, she's deathly ill!

PANTALONE: She does look a bit pale . . .

CAPITANO: Ah, she pines for the love of me.

PANTALONE: When did this malady come upon her?

COLUMBINA: This afternoon, right after he left.

CAPITANO: Me? B-b-b-but I-I-I-I . . .

COLUMBINA: The Don is gone, but the malady lingers on.

CAPITANO: But, signor Pantalone, I give you my word! I never laid a finger on her!

ISABELLA: (*weakly*) Papa . . .

(*Pantalone kneels beside her.*)

PANTALONE: Yes, my child?

ISABELLA: The Capitano speaks the truth.

CAPITANO: Listen to her!

ISABELLA: It wasn't his finger . . .

(*Pantalone jumps up.*)

PANTALONE: What! Now, by St. Shylock, you'll pay for this!

(*He chases the Capitano.*)

COLUMBINA: Pantalone! Signor Pantalone! Never mind about him. What about Isabella?

PANTALONE: Yes, yes, of course. We need a doctor. My daughter must be cured at once, so she can be married. Quickly, Columbina, fetch a doctor!

COLUMBINA: But, the cost . . .

PANTALONE: Oh, hang the cost! (*He claps his hand over his mouth.*) What am I saying? Oh, what to do! What to do!

COLUMBINA: Signor, I just happen to know of a doctor who never charges any fee for his services.

PANTALONE: A miracle!

CAPITANO: (*modestly*) It was nothing.

COLUMBINA: He treats people for the sheer joy of practicing his art.

CAPITANO: A madman!

PANTALONE: A genius!

COLUMBINA: And he lives not far from here.

PANTALONE: Tell me, Columbina. How do you happen to know all this?

COLUMBINA: I get around.

**PANTALONE and
CAPITANO:** Censored.

PANTALONE: Well, don't just stand there. Run and fetch him!

(Columbina runs out R. She re-enters immediately, followed by Leandro, disguised as the Dottore, and Zinadia, disguised as the Nurse.)

COLUMBINA: Here we are, signor Dottore. The house of signor Pantalone.

PANTALONE: Ah, signor Dottore. So good of you to come. My daughter is ill, you see . . .

DOTTORE: No, no.

PANTALONE: But, she is.

DOTTORE: No.

PANTALONE: She's gasping for breath!

DOTTORE: Idiot! Never argue with a Doctor! I, who have studied for years at the University of Paris, the University of Vienna, the University of Pisa and the University of Bologna - I should listen to a diagnosis from a man with no more medical background than a halibut? And a smelly one, at that?

PANTALONE: But --

DOTTORE: Nonsense! The girl is not sick until I say she is! *(glances at Isabella)* That girl is sick.

COLUMBINA: Please, signor Dottore. Can you make her well?

DOTTORE: I shall see to it that she gets everything she needs. Now, be quiet. I must first make the examination.

(He kisses Isabella deeply.)

PANTALONE: Er . . . excuse me, Dottore.

DOTTORE: *(looking up for a moment)* Don't bother me.

(He resumes kissing Isabella.)

PANTALONE: It seems to be a strange kind of examination.

(Dottore leaves Isabella.)

DOTTORE: Tell me, signor. Have you ever studied medicine?

PANTALONE: No.

DOTTORE: Would you like to?

(He reaches for Pantalone. Pantalone jumps into the Capitano's arms. The Capitano drops him, and the Nurse jumps into the Capitano's arms. The Capitano drops her and reaches for Columbina, who pushes him away. Meanwhile, the Dottore goes back to kissing Isabella.)

CAPITANO: *(advancing)* Now, see here, Dottore. That is my bride you are . . . examining.

(Dottore leaves Isabella.)

DOTTORE: And I have finished my examination!

PANTALONE: So quickly?

COLUMBINA: He's a great doctor. He really knows what he's doing.

(Isabella makes a mezza-mezza gesture.)

DOTTORE: I have discovered what is wrong with the young lady, here.

COLUMBINA: Oh, tell us, Dottore.

PANTALONE: Yes, and quickly, so they can be married.

- CAPITANO:** Si. I grow impatient . . . *(aside)* . . . for the honeymoon.
- DOTTORE:** Tell me, gentlemen. Have you ever heard of the Spanish disease?
- PANTALONE:** The what?
- DOTTORE:** The Spanish disease. You know. The *(claps his hands)*.
- PANTALONE,
COLUMBINA,
CAPITANO, and
NURSE:** The *(clap)*!
- PANTALONE:** Sh-h-h! Not so loud. You want everybody to know Isabella's got the *(clap)*?
- COLUMBINA:** Tell me, signor Dottore. How does one catch the *(clap)*?
- PANTALONE:** *(to her)* I thought you knew.
- DOTTORE:** *(interrupting quickly)* The only way to catch the . . . Spanish disease . . . is to be close to something Spanish. *(to Pantalone)* Tell me, signor, has your daughter been spending time with anything Spanish?
- (All heads turn to look at the Capitano.)*
- CAPITANO:** Don't look at me. My name is Sven Patrick Francois Abdul Dimitri McDougall O'Shaunessy Ivanovich Nakamura Finkelstein!
- DOTTORE:** Of where?
- CAPITANO:** Barcelona. *(He claps his hands over his mouth, but it's too late.)*
- PANTALONE:** I knew it! He contaminated my daughter!
- (Pantalone leaps toward the Capitano, but is restrained by the Dottore.)*
- CAPITANO:** Honest, signor! I never laid a finger on her!
- ISABELLA:** It wasn't his finger!
- (Dottore leaps toward the Capitano, but is restrained by Pantalone.)*
- PANTALONE:** Please, signor Dottore! Please! Calm down!

CAPITANO: Si. Please.

PANTALONE: You've got to cure my daughter.

DOTTORE: Nurse! Prepare the injection!

(The Nurse reaches into the Dottore's bag and removes a huge hypodermic.)

ISABELLA: *(suddenly frightened)* Injection?

PANTALONE: Dottore, what is this injection?

DOTTORE: It is a wonder drug which I, myself, invented. It will cure whatever is wrong with your daughter, or double your money back.

PANTALONE: But, I'm not paying you anything.

DOTTORE: All right. Triple.

PANTALONE: What is this wonder drug called?

DOTTORE: It is called Matrimonium Leandum.

ISABELLA: But, I don't want an injection!

NURSE: Believe me, honey. This one, you want.

DOTTORE: Prepare her.

(The Nurse helps Isabella up and they exit R.)

And now, signor Capitano, to you.

CAPITANO: Me? Why me?

PANTALONE: Yes. My daughter is the one who's sick.

DOTTORE: I'll be the judge of that. This man could be a carrier.

PANTALONE: A carrier? Ooh! Get him away from me!

(He attempts to wrap himself around Columbina, who pushes him away.)

COLUMBINA: Signor Pantalone, watch yourself!

(She slaps him.)

Especially your hands!

CAPITANO: But, I feel fine!

DOTTORE: A sure sign!

CAPITANO: Oh, no! You're not giving me an injection!

DOTTORE: *(aside)* Damn straight.

COLUMBINA: Signor Capitano, would you rather be known as El *(clap)*-itano?

CAPITANO: No!

(He starts to run out, but is grabbed by the others and wrestled onto the bench.)

DOTTORE: First, I must make the examination.

CAPITANO: You wouldn't dare!

(Dottore gets his bag and begins removing tools.)

DOTTORE: Have no fear, signor. I am a man of learning. Why, not only do I have over 98 degrees in medicine, but I am also a lawyer, philosopher, tax consultant, theologian, and I can even perform weddings . . .

PANTALONE: You can perform weddings?

DOTTORE: *(nonchalantly)* Oh, si. I do weddings, coronations, bar mitzvahs, funerals . . . and the occasional bris.

(He pulls an axe from his bag and slams it into the bench between the Capitano's legs, barely missing his codpiece.)

(to the Capitano) You said your name was Finkelstein?

(The Capitano swoons. The Dottore takes a large thermometer from his bag and places it in the Capitano's mouth. He then removes a large mallet.)

The reflexes test.

(He swings at the Capitano's codpiece. The Capitano shrieks and covers himself with his hands.)

Reflexes good.

(Columbina takes another large thermometer from the Dottore's bag.)

COLUMBINA: Dottore, here's the oral thermometer.

(The Capitano spits the thermometer into the air. Dottore catches it and reads it.)

DOTTORE: Hmmm. Not good. In fact, there is only one cure for you.

CAPITANO: What?

DOTTORE: We must suck the infection out of you.

CAPITANO: That doesn't sound so bad.

DOTTORE: *(calling offstage)* Send in the leech!

(A rope - anchored high offstage - is tossed in from off L. From the angle, we can assume that the leech in question is at least twelve feet tall. The Dottore grabs the rope and pulls.)

Come, Ugolino! Come!

(Pantalone and Columbina also grab the rope and pull. The Capitano cowers on the bench. Finally, Pantalone and the Dottore let go for a moment, to get a better grip, and Columbina is yanked offstage L. Loud slurping noises are heard. After a few moments, she staggers back in L, disarrayed. Recovering her composure, she coyly flirts with something big offstage.)

COLUMBINA: Saturday night? After the revel?

CAPITANO: But, signor Dottore, what about me?

DOTTORE: What about you?

CAPITANO: Am I cured?

DOTTORE: Do you want an injection?

CAPITANO: No!

DOTTORE: Then, you're cured.

(Isabella and Zinadia enter R. Isabella is now disguised as the Nurse, and Zinadia wears a bridal veil.)

PANTALONE: Isabella! Daughter!

DOTTORE: Ah, here is the blushing bride.

PANTALONE: Daughter, are you all right?

(The woman in the bridal veil does not respond.)

What's the matter? Dottore, what's wrong with her?

DOTTORE: I'm sorry, signor. It's a side effect of the drug. The young lady has lost the use of her mouth.

(The Capitano snaps his fingers in disappointment.)

COLUMBINA: He means she cannot speak!

(The Capitano shakes the Dottore's hand.)

CAPITANO: As I live and suck air! You have invented the perfect woman! Now, if only she were three feet tall . . .

DOTTORE: The effect is only temporary.

CAPITANO: *(releasing his hand)* Quack.

PANTALONE: The wedding! The wedding!

DOTTORE: Yes, of course. Now. You stand here, and you, you charming creature . . .

CAPITANO: Thank you.

DOTTORE: You stand here. *(to the bride)* Who will be your maid of honor?

(She indicates the Nurse.)

COLUMBINA: Hey! Why can't I be the maid of honor?

PANTALONE: Because you're not a maid, and because you're not --

COLUMBINA: All right. I understand. So, I'll be a flower girl.

(She takes the flowers out of the vase on the table. Pantalone grabs them from her.)

PANTALONE: *(leering)* Do you know what I've just done?

COLUMBINA: Way too late.

(As she takes the flowers back, Pantalone sneezes. The Dottore picks up a fold of the Capitano's cloak and offers it to Pantalone, who uses it to wipe his nose. The Capitano snatches it back.)

DOTTORE: And you, signor. Who is the best man?

(The Capitano grins hugely.)

Forget I asked.

PANTALONE: But, signor Dottore, are you sure you can marry them?

DOTTORE: Believe me, signor Pantalone, when I am finished with them, they'll think they've been married for years! Ready? Here we go.

**PANTALONE and
CAPITANO:**

(aside) Ah, Hortensia! Your money will soon be mine!

**ISABELLA and
LEANDRO:**

(aside) Money?

DOTTORE: Signorina, will you take this man as your husband, for richer, for better, and in health, forsaking some others?

(The bride nods.)

COLUMBINA: *(quickly)* She said "yes." I heard her.

CAPITANO: I didn't hear her.

PANTALONE: Neither did I.

DOTTORE: Hmm. Perhaps you do need that injection, after all.

CAPITANO: No, no! I heard it! I just remembered. I heard it very clearly!

PANTALONE: Me, too!

DOTTORE: Very well. And, signor Capitano, will you take this woman -

CAPITANO: Repeatedly.

DOTTORE: - as your wife, for poorer, for worse, in sickness, and 'til death do you part?

CAPITANO: *(aside)* Let me see . . . my tavern bills, my clothing bills, my hotel bills, and my gambling debts . . . *(shudders; aloud)* Yes. I do. *(shudders again)*

DOTTORE: May I have the ring, please?

CAPITANO: Ring? Ring?

(The bride hands a ring to the Nurse, who hands it to Columbina, who hands it to Pantalone, who hands it to the Capitano, who hands it to the Dottore.)

Here.

DOTTORE: I don't want it!

(He hands it back to the Capitano.)

CAPITANO: You asked me for it.

DOTTORE: You're supposed to put it on her finger.

(The Capitano does so mechanically, without looking at the ring. He continues to hold her hand.)

I now pronounce you wife and - I'm sorry - husband.

(The Nurse visibly relaxes. Pantalone is elated.)

You may now kiss your bride.

CAPITANO: I've waited a long time for this.

BRIDE: So have I.

CAPITANO: *(startled)* That voice! *(looks down at her hand)* That ring! *(looks at her bodice)* That cleavage!

(He throws back her veil.)

Zinadia!

PANTALONE: Zinadia? Then where's Isabella?

(Isabella removes the Nurse disguise.)

Daughter, what is the meaning of this?

ISABELLA: Oh, father, I couldn't marry him. I just couldn't.

PANTALONE: Why not? Give me one good reason.

ZINADIA: Because he's already married - to me!

PANTALONE: But -

ZINADIA: And has been for years!

PANTALONE: So! A bigamist, eh? Trying to marry my daughter for my money, I suppose. You ought to be put through unspeakable tortures for this.

ZINADIA: Don't worry, signor Pantalone, he will be. *(to Capitano)* Ready for our honeymoon, darling?

CAPITANO: Oh, no!

ZINADIA: Remember all those promises you made to me, last time?

CAPITANO: I'm ruined!!

ZINADIA: You're going to keep them - tonight.

CAPITANO: I'm dead!!!

(Zinadia grabs him by the codpiece and drags him out L.)

PANTALONE: That'll teach him to try to marry Isabella. Marry Isabella! Oh, no! Who's going to marry Isabella?

ISABELLA: Father, there's always Leandro.

PANTALONE: Leandro! He's not good enough for you. He's poor! He's lazy! He's short! And he's ... he's ...

ISABELLA: It's almost sundown.

PANTALONE: *(resigned)* . . . better than nothing. All right, daughter.

(Isabella hugs him. Leandro, behind Pantalone, removes his Dottore disguise.)

ISABELLA: Thank you, father! Oh, thank you!

(She releases Pantalone. Leandro turns Pantalone around and shakes his hand.)

LEANDRO: Thank you, signor Pantalone. You won't regret this.

PANTALONE: Leandro! Where did you come from? *(sees the Dottore disguise)* You! The Dottore! Why, I ought to . . .

(He swings at Leandro, who dodges, grabs Isabella, and they head for the door L.)

LEANDRO: Thank you again . . . father.

(They exit L.)

PANTALONE: Leandro! Isabella! Wait! *(thinks)* Well, at least I'll still have Hortensia's money . . .

(Leandro sticks his head back in L.)

LEANDRO: Oh, and I can assure you we'll put Isabella's dowry to good use.

(He ducks out L. Pantalone moans, then staggers to the window and looks out.)

PANTALONE: There they go. *(waves)* Good-bye, daughter. Hello, son-in-law. Yecch. And there go the Capitano and Zinadia. Why, they're getting into a carriage! They're leaving town! By the Buns of St. Riga! If Zinadia is leaving town, who's going to take over her house?

(Columbina takes a ring of keys out of her pocket, and begins toying with them.)

COLUMBINA: *(to the audience)* And so, the story ends happily. Isabella and Leandro get each other. The Capitano gets his just desserts. Zinadia gets our sympathy. Pantalone loses a bundle. And I get a new hobby.

(Pantalone notices her playing with the keys, and starts toward her.)

I wonder who my first customer will be.

(She notices Pantalone approaching.)

Oh, no. The management reserves the right to refuse service to anyone!

(She exits, fleeing, pursued by Pantalone.)

finis ARLECCHINO'S SURPRISE

End Notes -- Changes to Script

There are various changes made in the original script for the Golden Stag production of this play, all of them Caidan or other Kingdom references, which have been changed to Western (or other Kingdom references).

- 1 . 'Starkhafn' was changed to 'Darkwood'.
- 2 . 'Lyondemere Light' was changed to 'Westermark Light'.
- 3 . 'Califian' was changed to 'Alyshian'.