

Okay. ARLECCHINO
goes again for the nap

Arlecchino! PEDROLINO

Yes? ARLECCHINO

Are you sure you don't want to know right now? PEDROLINO

It can wait. ARLECCHINO

But this is the best news of your life! PEDROLINO

The best? ARLECCHINO

And I will tell you, soon as you do me one small favor. PEDROLINO

Is it work? ARLECCHINO

Not at all. PEDROLINO

Then anything you want. ARLECCHINO

Let me in to speak to Isabella. PEDROLINO

Why? ARLECCHINO

I can't tell you. Will you do that? Then I'll let you in on the news. PEDROLINO

Right now? ARLECCHINO

Yes. PEDROLINO

Why do you want to talk to her? ARLECCHINO

About Oratio. PEDROLINO

What about him? ARLECCHINO

PEDROLINO
He loves her. He wants her. She mustn't throw his love away.

ARLECCHINO
Love.

PEDROLINO
Is a wonderful thing, Arlecchino.

ARLECCHINO
Yes.

PEDROLINO
Then you'll get her for me?

ARLECCHINO
Maybe later.

PEDROLINO
Now!

ARLECCHINO
Now?

PEDROLINO
Or I won't let you in on the super secret news.

ARLECCHINO
Oh, alright.

PEDROLINO
Open the door.

ARLECCHINO

He takes a very long time getting out his keys and walking to the door – which he opens with a push.

It's open. Now what's the news?

PEDROLINO
Gratiano, your master, is going to marry Flaminia, my master's ward.

ARLECCHINO
That's it?

PEDROLINO
Yep.

ARLECCHINO
For that you made me walk all the way over here?!

PEDROLINO
It's great news!

ARLECCHINO
And get out my keys?!

PEDROLINO
Especially for you.

ARLECCHINO
What's it mean to me?

PEDROLINO
It means that you... and Olivetta...

ARLECCHINO
Ohhhh! Ohhhh! That is good! Ohhhh!

PEDROLINO
Now get her for me.

ARLECCHINO
Olivetta!

PEDROLINO
No! Isabella! Now!

ARLECCHINO
Calm down!

He goes in to fetch Isabella.

ARLECCHINO TAKES A VERY LONG TIME TO GO INTO THE HOUSE. WHILE HE IS DOING THAT, **PEDROLINO** TELLS US OF HOW HE PLANS TO MAKE EVERYTHING RIGHT BETWEEN ALL THE LOVERS, BUT THAT IN THE MEANTIME HE'LL MAKE EVERYTHING WRONG — JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT. JUST AS **ARLECCHINO** REACHES THE DOOR, IT OPENS FROM WITHIN AND **ISABELLA** ENTERS.

Scene Twenty-Four

Isabella, Pedrolino, Arlecchino

Isabella enters at her door.

ISABELLA
Pedrolino? If you're here to speak to me further about... “the Capitano” forget about it.

ARLECCHINO
Capitano?

ISABELLA
I can put up with Cornelio, so I can put up with anything, but a man who breaks his vows is beyond the pale.

PEDROLINO
Have you seen the view from this terrace?

ISABELLA
What?

PEDROLINO
The view. From this terrace. Have you seen it?

ISABELLA

I've lived here all my life, of course I've seen the view.

PEDROLINO

Just lately?

ISABELLA

This morning.

PEDROLINO

Come with me, let us look at it now.

*Pedrolino takes Isabella by the hand
and leads her downstage.*

What do you see?

ISABELLA

The same old thing I see every day.

PEDROLINO

Do you see the bridge on Via del Sole?

ISABELLA

Same old bridge.

PEDROLINO

Do you see anything underneath the bridge?

ISABELLA

No.

PEDROLINO

Look more carefully.

ISABELLA

There's some guy in filthy clothes.

PEDROLINO

Pining away for his lost love.

ISABELLA

He's being ridiculous.

PEDROLINO

His heart cannot judge his actions. He is enthralled by a lady. A lady whose very name means "my oath is God". When the heart is thus captured, all reason flees.

ISABELLA

Telling me. He ought to find a good hotel.

PEDROLINO

That vagabond of the heart, that prisoner of love, is none other than Oratio, and you are his jailer and his lost horizon.

ISABELLA

That's Oratio?

PEDROLINO

Sleeping under a bridge. As his bed cannot be shared with the woman he loves, he altogether forsakes a bed.

ISABELLA

You're putting me on.

PEDROLINO

Arlecchino, you've seen Oratio's grief...

ARLECCHINO

I sure have! He's completely out of control. Like a maniac.

ISABELLA

Three years without a word, then he shows up out of the blue after I'm married? That's not love, that's manipulation.

PEDROLINO

One second. Keep your eye right there. Notice the drooping shoulders, the lifeless expression on his face, his derelict appearance.

ISABELLA

He's disgusting.

PEDROLINO

Keep looking.

he takes Arlecchino aside

She's tough as a nut.

ARLECCHINO

I'll say.

PEDROLINO

So, here's what we're going to do. I'll say something romantic, you say something erotic. Romantic, erotic, romantic, erotic. Can you do that?

ARLECCHINO

About who?

PEDROLINO

Oratio.

ARLECCHINO

But I'm in love with Olivetta.

PEDROLINO

Just to re-kindle Isabella's interest in Oratio.

ARLECCHINO

How will I do that?

PEDROLINO

By talking about how sexy he is.

ISABELLA

My eyes are getting tired!

PEDROLINO
Focus! Keep your focus!

ARLECCHINO
I'd feel like I was cheating on Olivetta.

PEDROLINO
All you're doing is talking about Oratio...

ARLECCHINO
...and how sexy he is?

PEDROLINO
So Isabella becomes engulfed with passion.

ARLECCHINO
I don't know...

PEDROLINO
For love?

ARLECCHINO
Love?

PEDROLINO
Is a wonderful thing.

ARLECCHINO
It is. Okay, I'll try.

PEDROLINO
Me first. *(to Isabella)* Stand back from the edge. Oratio mustn't see you looking. It would only rouse hope in his heart, and knowing as we do how cold your feelings are towards him, that would be too, too cruel.

ARLECCHINO
Picture him coming at you swinging a bat about two feet long.
Pedrolino grabs Arlecchino and pulls him aside, again.

PEDROLINO
What are you doing?

ARLECCHINO
What you said!

PEDROLINO
I said to describe him erotically, not... you need to be more subtle, more poetic.

ARLECCHINO
It was a metaphor.

PEDROLINO
What was?

ARLECCHINO
What I said. You see, when I said swinging a bat, I meant...

PEDROLINO

*clamps his hand over Arlecchino's
mouth*

Tempt her with something hotly romantic, passionate, lovely, and full of desire.

ARLECCHINO

Okay.

PEDROLINO

Got it?

ARLECCHINO

Okay.

PEDROLINO

(to Isabella) Poor man. His dreams of perfect love will never be satisfied. How could he have known that when he departed from Lyon, leaving behind fortune, reputation, admiration, and a life of luxurious ease, that in Naples he would be spurned, neglected, relegated to sleeping under a bridge!

ARLECCHINO

Picture this: the lights are low, the air is filled with perfume, Oratio comes to you dressed only in a linen cloak, lowers himself besides you stroking your hair with his long, curving fingers. Breathing gently into your ear he teases your neck with his other hand as he covers your throat with moist kisses that gradually descend to your shoulders then... *(he gasps for air)* then... then... *(overcome)* Oratio! Don't move! I'll be right there!

Pedrolino pulls him aside again.

PEDROLINO

What are you doing?

ARLECCHINO

What you told me.

PEDROLINO

You're supposed to be getting Isabella all excited, not yourself!

ARLECCHINO

I went all sploochy inside.

PEDROLINO

Well, get ahold of yourself. Isabella is starting to soften, I can feel it. *(to Isabella)* His every thought, his every breath, his every heart beat is no more than a secret longing for you.

ARLECCHINO

She can't have him!

PEDROLINO

A sweet, irrepressible longing for the love of his soul.

ARLECCHINO

Hands off! He's mine, you hear?

Pedrolino grabs him again and pulls him roughly aside.

PEDROLINO

What are you doing?

ARLECCHINO

Okay, not what you told me, but it's out of my control. I can't get the picture of Oratio in a linen cloak out of my mind! Will you break it to Olivetta for me?

Pedrolino grabs him by the shoulders and shakes him hard. Arlecchino reels around the stage for a bit then falls back into Pedrolino's arms.

Thanks. I'm better now.

PEDROLINO

(to Isabella) When he sighs it is to give you air. When he moans, his moans have the melodies of the sweetest love song. When he grows pale it is so that there will be more color in this world for you.

ARLECCHINO

That's ridiculous.

PEDROLINO

pulling him aside

What now?

ARLECCHINO

Love's not like that! Love's like, "I wanna, wanna, wanna, wanna, wanna!" Like that. Not...

He dances about making stupid looking poetic moves. He shows the "wanna" moves, then the stupid poetic moves in rapid and alternating succession.

See my point?

PEDROLINO

Take a nap.

ARLECCHINO

Why?

PEDROLINO

Why not?

ARLECCHINO

(pause) Good question.

he goes over to a bench to lie down

ISABELLA

I begin to regret my cruelty toward him, Pedrolino. Perhaps I should be more forgiving.

PEDROLINO

As Pedrolino says this next, Arlecchino, lying down on a bench, involuntarily acts it out.

Go to him with love and yielding in your heart, he will welcome you with kisses as numerous as the stars, as vast as the sea, as profound as time itself. Let him take you into his arms, enclose you in his warmth and infinite caress; gently, sliding gracefully into the abyss of perfect splendor.

ARLECCHINO

Ah, ah, ah!

ISABELLA & ARLECCHINO

Oratio, my love!

Pedrolino leaves Isabella who is oblivious to his going, picks up Arlecchino, bounces him around the stage, twirls him around, and pushes him over.

PEDROLINO

Better?

ARLECCHINO

Yeah, thanks.

ISABELLA

Pedrolino! Take me to him, now!

PEDROLINO

No! Not by the glaring light of day! Tonight! When the moon washes this worldly pallor with her silvery mantle, then come to me here. I will lead you to the bliss of union with your beloved. Trust me, wait for my call.

he demonstrates the sound he will make

ISABELLA

Could you do that again?

Pedrolino does

My ear will be tuned to that sound, waiting to unbind my flightless heart.

Pedrolino, hoping to heighten the overall effect, hums and dances around her, continuing the draw her attention back to Oratio who waits, unknowing, under his bridge. Then Pedrolino leaves with a flourish. Arlecchino gets quite wrapped up in Pedrolino's antics. Arlecchino sighs. Isabella sighs.

ARLECCHINO

Isn't love wonderful?

Isabella sighs, and remains so fixed on Oratio's distant figure that she hears nothing of what Arlecchino tells her. Cornelio, however, comes quietly on and hears everything.

Oratio is a lucky man to have a someone like you. You have a romantic personality. You understand the finer aspects of love. Olivetta's alright that way, but she'd have never gotten all worked up just because some guy with an Irish accent was talking about her boyfriend. But you! Right to it. Maybe it's because you're so generous. You are! You don't keep love to yourself. I mean, you married that greasy little squirt Cornelio without a second thought. Why, I'd guess you wouldn't think twice about marrying someone else right now, without even getting rid of Cornelio, just stacking 'em on. And eventually, what's the point of getting married anyhow? Who needs it? Okay, marriage has its advantages, mainly financial, but you can make a good living by being generous and not have to get tied down to some guy who's only gonna get old and saggy before you do anyway. Yep, when all is said and done, the courtesan has the right idea. Go girl! I'll give you a call when I got the scudi.

Scene Twenty-Five

Cornelio, Isabella, Arlecchino

CORNELIO MAKES HIS PRESENCE KNOWN. **ARLECCHINO** IMMEDIATELY PERCEIVES A THREAT TO HIS PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND DOES HIS BEST TO COVER TRACKS. **CORNELIO**, SENSING AN AFFRONT TO HIS HONOR, THREATENS MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE. THEN, WHILE NEVER LETTING **ARLECCHINO** BELIEVE FOR A MOMENT THAT HE'S NOT IN FOR A WALLOPING, RESTRAINS HIMSELF UNTIL HE HAS A CHANCE TO THROW **ARLECCHINO** OFFSTAGE; BIG NOISE FOLLOWED BY "OW". **CORNELIO** CELEBRATES BY CUEING THE **ZANNI** WHO GIVE HIM LOUNGE MUSIC, AND USING HIS UMBRELLA AS A MICROPHONE, HE ENTERTAINS US IN COOL **ROMAN** STYLE, DANCES UP HE STAIRS AND INTO HIS HOUSE.

Scene Twenty-Six

Pantelone

PANTELONE COMES IN, BESIDES HIMSELF WITH EXCITEMENT, AND PICKING UP ON THE SWEET MUSIC OF THE **ZANNI**. HE PRACTICES HOW HE WILL SEDUCE HIS WARD ONCE SHE IS MARRIED TO **GRATIANO**. HE HAS FINALLY COME TO BELIEVE THAT THIS MARRIAGE IS AN EXCELLENT THING BECAUSE SOMEONE AS OUT OF IT AS IS **GRATIANO** WOULD NEVER NOTICE THAT HE IS BEING CUCKOLDED, SO **PANTELONE** IS LOOKING FORWARD TO SOME REAL FUN.

Scene Twenty-Seven

Olivetta, Pantelone

OLIVETTA COMES OUT. SHE INTO **FLAMINIA** IN THE GARDEN (THOUGH SHE DIDN'T SEE **ARLECCHINO** ANYWHERE) AND SPOKE TO HER ABOUT MARRYING **GRATIANO** AND SAYS — NOT HIDING HER OWN DISAPPROVAL OF THE DECISION — THAT **FLAMINIA** HAS DECIDED TO BEND TO HER GUARDIAN'S WILL. **PANTELONE** IS OVERJOYED BY HIS GOOD NEWS.

Scene Twenty-Eight

Arlecchino, Pantelone, Olivetta

Arlecchino enters.

OLIVETTA

There you are my little Harley!

ARLECCHINO

Why weren't you waiting like Pedrolino said?

Pantelone is singing and spinning and leaping his way around the piazza. He dances with an imaginary Flaminia. He glides and struts and stomps, every now and then stopping for breath. He tangos his way into his house. Olivetta and Arlecchino are puzzled as they watch him exit.

OLIVETTA

Do you think he's coming down with something?

ARLECCHINO

How could we tell?

OLIVETTA

Maybe that's just the way you act when you're old.

ARLECCHINO

The Dottore is old. And feeble, almost blind, loopy, and he doesn't do that. And he's basically broke. I should know. So am I. Basically broke.

OLIVETTA

Well, it seems that on the loopy side my old man is catching up to your old man. Panty has always leaned towards a free-form interpretation of logic, but this has me thinking that he might have just flown right out of the Cartesian universe. Panty – that's what I call old Pantelone. But not to his face. Uh-uh.

ARLECCHINO

Cartesian universe?

OLIVETTA

Descartes?

ARLECCHINO

I dunno, I never tried. Do you?

OLIVETTA

Maybe! Maybe it has something to do with that greasy little squirt of a Roman with the skinny mustache. I call him Corny. And I'd say that to his face any old time.

ARLECCHINO

Too much thinking. I'm taking a nap.

OLIVETTA

Panty thinks Corny has money, so he'll marry Flame to Dottore for Corny's scudi. But Bell should get the scudi, not Panty, cause she's put up with Corny since Ratty left. Ratty, I'm considering that for Oratio. What do you think?

ARLECCHINO

Hmmm?

OLIVETTA

Harley, wake up! I'm making everything clear and you're missing it!