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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **Bamboozled!**

**A commedia by**

**Michael Brill**

# Bamboozled!

**Comedy.** By Michael Elliott Brill. Cast: 9 minimum (7m., 1w., 1 either gender) with doubling, or up to 12 (9m., 2w., 1 either gender). This excellently crafted play features many of the traditional commedia dell'arte characters in a lightning-speed plot with more twists than a corkscrew. It is a faithful commedia farce with knockabout physical and verbal delights, accompanied by as many and varied sound effects devices as can be dreamed up. Brighella, a young opportunist, spies old, miserly Pantalone chasing Harlequin, a dolt. Brighella threatens to throttle him, quickly distracting Pantalone as he thinks up a plot to earn a bit of bribery income in a very short amount of time. First, he convinces Pantalone that he's killed Harlequin and collects a handsome sum to do away with the body. Meanwhile, sweet, beautiful Columbine is heartsick at the prospect of being married off to Pantalone. Brighella convinces Harlequin to stand in for young Columbine in a fake wedding with Pantalone. This promises to produce a large dowry from Columbine's ward, presumably to be split between Brighella and Harlequin, while freeing Columbine to run off with her love, Leandro. But Pantalone is privy to this plan and concocts one to out-bamboozle the two of them. The wedding occurs, and identities are well concealed. Not even the audience knows the true bamboozler until the bamboozling ends. *Simple set. Suitable for touring. Traditional commedia costumes or pieces. Approximate running time: 65 minutes. Code: BE8.*

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A commedia by  
**MICHAEL BRILL**



**Dramatic Publishing Company**  
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(BAMBOOZLED!)

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**BAMBOOZLED!** was first presented August 24th, 1981 at Snoqualmie Falls Forest Theatre, Fall City, Washington. It was produced by Greg Thompson, and directed by Michael Brill, and the cast was as follows:

Prologue..... Scott Johnson  
Brighella..... Keith Dahlgren  
Harlequin..... Wynn Rogers  
Pantalone..... Elliot Arkham  
Dr. Graziano..... Roger Westberg  
Columbine..... Melinda Lawson  
Leandro..... Lynn Kopelke  
Trufaldino..... David McRae  
Don Pocolino Pizzicacci..... Nelsen Spickard

Costumes by Stehanie Poire, assisted by Jimmy Wauford; Masks by Roger Tompkins; Set by Michael Brill; Graphics by Charles Emerson; Calligraphy by Nelsen Spickard; Logo Construction by Clarke Schumacher.

The set is simplicity itself.

A platform to contain the action. Upstage, a drop depicting an Italian street showing two majestic houses adjacent to, or across the street from, each other. This drop is split up the center to facilitate entrances and exits. Additional entrances are from left and right of this drop. Downstage and to one side is an area for The Prologue to sit with his sound effects and props.

### THE CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

The Prologue

Brighella (pronounced Brig—ella)

Harlequin (called Harlequino—pronounced Har la-kéeno)

Pantalone (rhymes with baloney)

Doctor Graziano (pronounced Gratsi-ahno)

Columbine (called Columbina—pronounced Colum-bean-a)

Leandro (pronounced Lee-ándro)

Trufaldino (pronounced Truful-déeno)

Don Pocolino Pizzi-cacci (Pitsy-Cahky)

Father Time (doubled)

An ancient crone (doubled)

A priest (doubled)

The doubling will be clear when the text is read but would spoil many of the surprises of the play if revealed now.



**For James Edward Parsons**

# Bamboozled!

PROLOGUE. Welcome!

Anyone that now can hear my voice  
Will shortly have much reason to rejoice.  
I herald mirth and merriment today  
And introduce our most outrageous play.  
Be certain that our actors will deliver  
An hour to set all funnybones aquiver.  
For all that they will tell and you will see  
Is fashioned for delight and levity.

What little introduction you may need  
I now advance with true, poetic speed!

Two households, both alike in dignity (*ahem!*)  
Repose, adjacent, as you all can see.  
In one there dwells that infamous buffoon  
The snivelling, drivelling, miser Pantaloon.  
He's rich. He's old. His brains have started rusting.  
He's lustful, gluttonous and quite disgusting!  
He's ripe, in short, to be the butt of fun.  
You'll see much of this ass before we're done.  
Across the way lives Columbine, the fair,  
Whose beauty is a thing beyond compare,  
Whose grace and charm and youth are all renowned  
To every sighing lover in this town.  
And Pantaloon of these, of course, is one  
Whose sighs are loudset by comparison.  
Our play is filled with rogues of every kind  
And twists enough to boggle every mind.  
(*Brighella enters*)  
Ah! Here's a rogue. Brighella is his name.  
A shrewd, rapacious knave of modest fame.  
He's just the fellow to begin our play.  
Let's start the action without more delay!

*("PROLOGUE" retires to the sidelines from which he will orchestrate the action with various sound effects. Brighella watches him leave. He smiles and comes to the edge of the stage to address the audience.)*

BRIGHELLA. Perhaps you're wondering about the wicked gleam in my eye, or why I'm loitering about on such a lovely day as this? I'll tell you. I'm waiting for . . . opportunity! I've an eye for adventure and a NOSE for opportunity, and I can smell something coming.

*(Suddenly: a great commotion backstage. We hear the voices of Pantalone and Harlequin raised in argument. A slapstick punctuates the dialogue.)*

PANTALONE. *(offstage)* YES YOU DID!

HARLEQUIN. *(offstage)* NO I DIDN'T!

PANTALONE. *(offstage)* YES YOU DID!!

HARLEQUIN. *(offstage)* NO I DIDN'T!!

BRIGHELLA. What a nose! *(He retires upstage to observe as Harlequin races on in a frenzy.)*

HARLEQUIN. Help me! Save me! *(Seeing Brighella and leaping into his arms)*

I'm saved! I'm saved!

BRIGHELLA. *(disengaging himself)*

You're crazy!

HARLEQUIN. *(refusing to let go of him)* HELP ME!  
SAVE ME!

BRIGHELLA. What is it? What's the matter?  
*(Pantalone enters with rage in his eyes and a large, padded club in his hands.)*

PANTALONE. *(seeing Harlequin)* Ah ha!

BRIGHELLA. Uh oh!

PANTALONE. *(coming for Harlequin)* Son of a toad!!

HARLEQUIN. *(using Brighella as a shield)* Save me!  
SAVE ME!!

BRIGHELLA. *(to Pantalone)* Excuse me. . .

PANTALONE. Of course! (*With this he clubs Brighella, soundly, on the head. Brighella does a fast take to the audience and drops like a stone to the stage floor.*)

HARLEQUIN. (*to audience*) Uh oh!

PANTALONE. (*beating Harlequin with the club*) Miserable slug! Beating is too good for you!

HARLEQUIN. Stop being so good to me!

PANTALONE. (*still at him*) When I finish with you you'll know what a beating is!

HARLEQUIN. I know what a beating is! I KNOW!

PANTALONE. (*unrelentingly*) Eat me out of house and home, will you?

HARLEQUIN. That's a lie!

PANTALONE. Steal me blind, will you?

HARLEQUIN. That's a lie!

PANTALONE. Call me "fool" and "pinchpocket" behind my back, will you?

HARLEQUIN. That's . . . the truth!

PANTALONE. You slaving ingrate!  
(*still beating him with the club*) You, whom I trusted!

HARLEQUIN. That's a lie!

PANTALONE. You, upon whom I lavished my generosity!

HARLEQUIN. That's a lie!

PANTALONE. You, whom I nurtured like a son!

HARLEQUIN. That's . . . You're going straight to . . .

BRIGHELLA. (*having recovered & observed the above*)  
HELLLLP!!!! FIRE! FIRE!! HELP! FIRE!! HELP!!

PANTALONE. (*startled*) What's happening? What's going on?

BRIGHELLA. (*pretending not to see him*) Signior Pantalone! SIGNIOR PANTALONE!!

PANTALONE. Yes!! YES!! WHAT?!

BRIGHELLA. (*frantically*) Signior Pantalone the house is on fire!

PANTALONE. What did you say?

BRIGHELLA. (*calmly*) I said, "Signior Pantalone, the house is on fire!"

PANTALONE. (*suddenly frantic*) The house is on fire!? THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!!!

BRIGHELLA. (*as if he just heard*) What? What are you saying?

PANTALONE. (*now hysterical*) The house is on fire! Don't you understand you stupid boy? THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!!!

BRIGHELLA. (*feigning stupidity*) The house?

PANTALONE. IS ON FIRE!

BRIGHELLA. Is on fire? FIRE?!

PANTALONE, HARLEQUIN and BRIGHELLA! FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!

PANTALONE. (*flying from the stage*) Help! Fire! HELP ME? THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!! THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!!

BRIGHELLA. (*calmly, to the audience*) That gets rid of him.

HARLEQUIN. (*leaping into Brighella's arms*) My savior!

BRIGHELLA. (*disengaging himself*) Enough! What was it this time?

HARLEQUIN. The same.

BRIGHELLA. Same stealing? Same lying? Same insulting?

HARLEQUIN. Same nothing.

BRIGHELLA. For "nothing" you certainly get *something*!

HARLEQUIN. He thinks if he beats me once a day I'll be properly compensated for all the crimes I commit against him that he isn't aware of.

BRIGHELLA. That's compensation!?

HARLEQUIN. He doesn't trust me.

BRIGHELLA. (*to the audience*) He's no fool!

HARLEQUIN. (*annoyed to the audience*) Say! Whose side are you on, anyway?

BRIGHELLA. Me? I'm the impartial ear of reason and the nasty mouth of justice.

HARLEQUIN. Today I was a saint.

BRIGHELLA. (*dubious*) A saint?

HARLEQUIN. Today I didn't steal anything.

BRIGHELLA. Not anything?

HARLEQUIN. Not anything much.

BRIGHELLA. (*amused*) I see.

HARLEQUIN. Today I didn't insult him.

BRIGHELLA. Not at all?

HARLEQUIN. Hardly at all.

BRIGHELLA. I see.

HARLEQUIN. And I *never* lie!

BRIGHELLA. You liar!

HARLEQUIN. I mean great big lies. You know—  
GREAT BIIIG LIES!

BRIGHELLA. Oh! GREAT BIIIG LIES!

HARLEQUIN. And there's no harm in a teeny, insignificant snippet of a lie.

BRIGHELLA. You're *such* a liar!

HARLEQUIN. Nobody's perfect! (*He tries to move and is racked with pain.*) OH! My battered body cries out for vengeance!

BRIGHELLA. (*amused*) It does, eh?

HARLEQUIN. Listen. (*He puts Brighella's ear to his chest and calls out in a tiny voice.*) "Vengeance! Give me vengeance!"

BRIGHELLA. You're right. Your body's crying for revenge. I have a plan.

HARLEQUIN. (*brightening*) A plan for revenge?

BRIGHELLA. Yes.

HARLEQUIN. Is it cunning?

BRIGHELLA. Extremely.

HARLEQUIN. Is it . . . hateful?

BRIGHELLA. Supremely.

HARLEQUIN. What are the odds we'll be found out?

BRIGHELLA. Fifty/fifty.

HARLEQUIN. Are you sure it's HAAAATEFUL?

BRIGHELLA. HAAAATEUL! You'll love it.

HARLEQUIN. Tell me. (*Brighella looks about for "spies". He then takes Harlequin downstage.*)

BRIGHELLA. After the old fool combs every inch of his palazzo and finds no fire, he'll come after you again. . . (*Harlequin tries to make a break for it but Brighella catches him and brings him downstage again.*) . . . and he'll find you. Right here.

HARLEQUIN. I'm a dead-man!

BRIGHELLA. Exactly!

HARLEQUIN. This plan is *too* hateful for my taste.

BRIGHELLA. You *pretend* you're dead.

HARLEQUIN. Oh!

BRIGHELLA. When he sees your body he'll fall, prostrate, in sobs of remorse.

HARLEQUIN. Ooh! I like that part!

BRIGHELLA. I'll tell him I saw *everything*, and when he ran off you died in my arms.

HARLEQUIN. That's touching.

BRIGHELLA. I'll tell him your dying words to me were. . . "Brighella, my beloved and devoted friend . . . my sole companion in. . .

HARLEQUIN. (*impatiently*) Get on with it.

BRIGHELLA. ". . . You have seen *everything*. You must tell *everything*! Even in death I will have vengeance! Justice will be done." He'll beg for the mercy of my silence. Ha!-Ha!-Ha!

HARLEQUIN. Ha!-Ha!-Ha! Then what?

BRIGHELLA. I'll tell him that my silence in the matter

will cost him dear. Only a purse of . . . five hundred ducats will seal my lips!

HARLEQUIN. Five hundred!? He'll drop dead. Right on the spot. He'll drop dead!

BRIGHELLA. Ha!-Ha!-Ha!

HARLEQUIN. Ha!-Ha!-Ha! Then what?

BRIGHELLA. Then he'll pay, of course.

HARLEQUIN. (*dubious*) And we'll split the money?

BRIGHELLA. Of course.

HARLEQUIN. Then what?

BRIGHELLA. "Then what?" what?

HARLEQUIN. Then what happens to me?

BRIGHELLA. To you?

HARLEQUIN. To me. Remember? I'm dead!

BRIGHELLA. Oh! Yes. I'll tell the old fool that I have certain sordid companions who will remove and secretly bury the evidence so no one will ever be the wiser. Then, with your two hundred ducats, ha,-ha,-ha. . . .

HARLEQUIN. Two hundred and *fifty* ducats, ha,-ha,-ha. . .

BRIGHELLA. Of course. With your two hundred and fifty ducats . . . you can start a new life in Bergamo. A free and wealthy man.

HARLEQUIN. No more beatings!

BRIGHELLA. No more beatings.

HARLEQUIN. I love this plan.

BRIGHELLA. I knew you would. Quick now! Run to the stable and fetch a large blanket. We'll use it for a shroud to cover the body.

HARLEQUIN. BODY!!? What body?

BRIGHELLA. Your body, you booby! The fake, dead, Harlequino body.

HARLEQUIN. Oh! *That* "body".

BRIGHELLA. Hurry! He'll be back any moment!

HARLEQUIN. Revenge!



BRIGHELLA. Revenge!

HARLEQUIN. I love this plan.

BRIGHELLA. Hurry!! (*Harlequin exits in a flash. Brighella addresses the audience.*) Which is the greater fool? The old fool or the young fool? (*He catches some of the audience giving him dirty looks.*)

BRIGHELLA. Don't give me those looks! You knew right away that I was no saint. Besides, I need that money. All of it. To do a good deed. Did I hear a snicker out there? Don't be so quick to judge a book by . . . (*Harlequin reenters with a large, worn horse blanket.*)

HARLEQUIN. (*panting*) Here's the blanket. It stinks!

BRIGHELLA. You're not exactly a spring bouquet, you know!

HARLEQUIN. I . . .

BRIGHELLA. Quick!! Get under! He's coming back! (*Harlequin lies down and Brighella covers him completely with the blanket. Harlequin pops up.*)

HARLEQUIN. Are you sure this will work?

BRIGHELLA. Of course!

HARLEQUIN. Of course. (*Brighella covers him again and again he pops up.*) What should I do?

BRIGHELLA. (*covering him again*) Nothing. Don't even breathe!

PANTALONE. (*entering, enraged, seeing Brighella*). AH HA!

BRIGHELLA. (*feigning surprise*) "Ah ha?", what?

PANTALONE. (*advancing with club in hand*) You liar!

BRIGHELLA. What are you talking about?

PANTALONE. You said my house was on fire! You liar!

BRIGHELLA. I said no such thing.

PANTALONE. Another lie!?

BRIGHELLA. I said. "*The house is on fire. . .*" I didn't say *your* house is on fire. I didn't say, "*Pantalone's* house is on fire!"

PANTALONE. Well, . . . I thought. . .

BRIGHELLA. *Assumed!*

PANTALONE. Yes! I assumed it was my house and. . .

BRIGHELLA. YOU WERE WRONG!

PANTALONE. Why didn't you tell me it wasn't my house before I ran off?

BRIGHELLA. Because you ran off before I could tell you it wasn't your house.

PANTALONE. Well, never mind. Where's Harlequino?

BRIGHELLA. He's dead.

PANTALONE. (not hearing that) When I get my hands on that pea-brained son of a . . . Where is he?

BRIGHELLA. Dead! You killed him!

PANTALONE. (*incredulous*) You're joking.

BRIGHELLA. I'm not a man to joke about the savage murder of my dearest friend. (*He falls on Harlequin's body and sobs.*) Oh, Harlequino. Harlequino! So young! So very young! All of life was stretched out before you. And now . . . now . . . nothing but a pauper's grave. Oh, my dear, *dead* friend. . .

PANTALONE. He's really dead?

BRIGHELLA. Dead! Dead! Dead!

PANTALONE. I really killed him?

BRIGHELLA. Did! Did! Did

PANTALONE. It can't be true.

BRIGHELLA. (*lifting the blanket*) See for yourself.

PANTALONE. (*seeing the body, gasps*) Harlequino! Stop this wicked joking you foolish boy. You're not really dead. Are you? You are! My God, he's really dead! He's not breathing. He even has the stink of death about him . . . (*He clutches the body in his arms.*) Speak to me! Speak to your beloathed Pantalone. Why don't you speak to me!?

BRIGHELLA. Because he's dead!!! You killed him!

PANTALONE. No!

BRIGHELLA. I saw *everything!*

PANTALONE. Uh, oh!

BRIGHELLA. His dying words to me were. . . “Brighella, my devoted and beloved friend . . . my sole companion in. . .

PANTALONE. (*impatiently*) Get on with it!

BRIGHELLA. “. . . You have seen everything. You must tell everything. Justice must prevail.”

PANTALONE. What have I done?

BRIGHELLA. Murder!

PANTALONE. What must I pay?

BRIGHELLA. Plenty!

PANTALONE. Are we talking damnation or ducats?

BRIGHELLA. Ducats! Five hundred of them to seal my lips!

PANTALONE. Seal you lips!? For five hundred ducats I could have your mouth surgically removed!

BRIGHELLA. Five hundred ducats or I tell the world!

PANTALONE. (*to himself*) Five hundred . . .

BRIGHELLA. (*shrieking*) MURDERER! KILLER!! BUTCHER OF INNOCENTS!!!

PANTALONE (*trying to shut him up*) STOP!!! I’ll pay! I’ll pay!

BRIGHELLA. Good. I’ll get rid of the body.

PANTALONE. How?

BRIGHELLA. If I tell you it will cost you.

PANTALONE. Then don’t! I’d have to mortgage my house. Five hundred ducats!

BRIGHELLA. Stop wasting time.

PANTALONE. You have no heart.

BRIGHELLA. I have an empty purse. Go get the money!

PANTALONE. Right now? Where am I going to get five hundred ducats on the spur of the moment?

BRIGHELLA. (*shrieking again*) MURDERER!!! KILLER!!! BUTCHER!!!

PANTALONE. ALL RIGHT!!! All right. Wait here.

BRIGHELLA. Hurry! My lips are just getting warmed up! (*Pantalone exits into his house. Harlequin sits up. He startles Brighella, who screams.*)

HARLEQUIN. You were wonderful!

BRIGHELLA. So were you. Now, here's the rest of the plan. After he gives me the money I'll have him watch the body. . .

HARLEQUIN. BODY!!! What . . . oh, yes. I remember.

BRIGHELLA. I'll have him watch the body while I go off in search of sordid companions to help remove your remains. (*They both cross themselves.*)

BRIGHELLA. While I'm gone stay covered. Don't move a muscle. Don't twitch or make a sound. Get it?

HARLEQUIN. Got it! I'll be quiet as a corpse! (*They both laugh.*)

BRIGHELLA. Shussh! I'll be back with my friends in no time at all. We'll take you right to the harbour. You can sail for Bergamo tonight.

HARLEQUIN. Free!

BRIGHELLA. Free and wealthy!

HARLEQUIN. I love this plan.

BRIGHELLA. I knew you would. Back under. Here he comes. (*Pantalone reenters with a purse.*)

PANTALONE. I brought the money.

BRIGHELLA. (*snatching the purse from him*) You're no fool. Stay here. Watch the body. I'm going for help. We'll carry it to the harbor, weight it with stones and. . .

PANTALONE. Spare me the expensive details. Just do it!

BRIGHELLA. I'm off. (*Brighella exits. Pantalone stares at the shrouded body of Harlequin.*)

PANTALONE. What have I done? Poor Harlequino. Remorse! Remorse! *Five hundred ducats!* Misery!!