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Dramatic Publishing

ALL IN DISGUISE

A "TOUR DE FARCE" PLAY IN ONE ACT



ALL IN DISGUISE

Comedy. By Gene Traylor and James Michael Elrod.

Cast: 4m., 2w. A tour de farce in commedia style. This rollicking, fast-paced escapade follows the adventures and misadventures of Piporello and Marco, two wiley vagabonds, as they breeze along in search of riches, romance and—their next meal. Their travels soon lead them to Pantalone, a respectable merchant with a very pressing problem. His daughter, Florinda, has gone completely mad on the day before her wedding to “very old, but very rich Signor Coviello.” Her father’s desperate search for a doctor to cure her gives our heroes just the opportunity they have been waiting for. As the plot thickens, we stir in Colombia, a pert and eager maid with an instant infatuation for Marco, and Flavio, a handsome but penniless student bent on saving his true love, Florinda, from this terrible fate. The whole concoction soon boils over into a frantic and free-wheeling chase with everyone masquerading as everyone else. Predictably, rewards and romance win out in the end, with all the loose ends neatly and snugly tied. *Bare stage with props. Approximate running time: 35 minutes. Code: A25.*

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A Play in One Act
A “Tour de Farce” in Commedia Style

By

GENE TRAYLOR and
JAMES MICHAEL ELROD



DRAMATIC PUBLISHING

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(ALL IN DISGUISE)

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ALL IN DISGUISE
A Play In One Act
For Four Men and Two Women

C H A R A C T E R S

PIPORELLO a vagabond who lives by his wits

MARCO his companion

FLAVIO a handsome but penniless student

COLOMBINA. a housemaid

PANTALONE. a respectable merchant

FLORINDA. his daughter

TIME: A long time ago

PLACE: A small Italian town

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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

Although the play was suggested by an actual commedia scenario, recorded by Flaminio Scala, it is not an attempt to re-create the commedia dell'arte. Instead, it translates, we hope, the boisterous, colloquial humor of that style into modern terms, much as do the animated cartoons of today. Certainly, as much slapstick and physical humor should be incorporated into the script as the situation permits. Musical instruments, bells, and noisemakers can be used throughout to punctuate the action.

The setting of the play is equally flexible; the only necessity being a curtain, stretched across the stage on a wire, or between two poles, and a few furniture props. The actors must wear some basic brightly-colored under garment, such as leotards and tights, but the remaining costume elements may be of any period or style, as long as they are brightly colored and as fanciful as can be found.

Hopefully, this simplicity in all elements of the production will give the freedom to both director and actors to make it an enjoyable and creative experience for all.

ALL IN DISGUISE

SCENE: In the street.

AS LIGHTS COME UP: PIPORELLO and MARCO are in the middle of an elaborate acrobatic routine aimed at gleaning a few coins from the apathetic PASSERS-BY. MARCO is doing most of the work and PIPORELLO is taking most of the credit. Finally the street is deserted for the moment and PIPORELLO moves down to the hat which they have placed on the street, looks into it, picks it up and shakes it, then dejectedly moves back to MARCO, who is still standing on his head. PIPORELLO leans wearily on Marco's feet as he speaks.

PIPORELLO. Not one coin! Not even a measly copper!

MARCO. Does that mean we can stop? Please, Piporello, I'm tired . . .

PIPORELLO. And what about *me*?

MARCO. . . . and hungry. We haven't eaten in days. I hate travel.

PIPORELLO. Well, Marco, we could have stayed on in that last town. I'm sure they would have fed us in jail. In fact, I've heard they feed you very well before they take you to the gallows.

MARCO. That sounds good. I'm soooo hungry.

PIPORELLO. You're hopeless.

MARCO. No – just hungry.

PIPORELLO. Once more and I'll break your neck.

MARCO. But we've been here for hours and no one has so much as thrown us a crumb.

PIPORELLO. Patience, Marco, patience. Even in this drab and uninspiring little town there lurks somewhere an opportunity.

MARCO. How can you tell?

PIPORELLO. Instinct, my friend, instinct. (Eloquently.)

"Where there is no opportunity, the people also perish."

MARCO. I'll bet they starve to death!

PIPORELLO (cuffing him). Silence, oaf! You don't make it any easier by complaining all the time. Look! See what I told you. Here comes someone now . . . a dupe if ever I saw one. Quick, into the act! (MARCO tries a handstand but falls down.)

MARCO. I can't. I'm weak from hunger.

PIPORELLO. Well, do something! He's almost here.

MARCO. It's no use.

PIPORELLO. This is no time to fall down on the job. Get . . . up . . . there. (He lifts Marco's feet with a great flourish, forcing him into a handstand.)

(FLAVIO rushes on. As he hurries past, PIPORELLO stops him.)

FLAVIO. Huh?

PIPORELLO. Ah, my dear fellow, could you help me?

FLAVIO. I'm in a terrible hurry to . . .

PIPORELLO. I knew you were a gentleman the moment I set eyes on you. (While holding FLAVIO with a hand against his chest, he hands him Marco's feet with the other.) Carefully, now, mustn't drop him.

FLAVIO. What's the matter with him?

PIPORELLO. Nothing. He's thinking.

FLAVIO. Does he do this often?

PIPORELLO. Not often enough. Allow me to introduce

us. I am Piporello and this is my partner Marco, lately of the renowned Circo Magnifico . . . You've heard of us, of course.

FLAVIO. Not really. (He releases Marco's feet. MARCO flips up into a bow.)

PIPORELLO. No matter. And you are . . . ?

FLAVIO. My name is Flavio and I'm in a terrible hurry.

PIPORELLO (releasing FLAVIO). Then of course you must be off. (Stopping him.) But *where* are you going?

FLAVIO. To the house of Signor Pantalone, the wealthy merchant.

PIPORELLO and MARCO (in unison). Ooooh, to the house of Signor Pantalone, the wealthy merchant!

FLAVIO. Do you know him?

PIPORELLO. No . . . but we'd like to, I'm sure.

FLAVIO. And I must hurry . . . before it's too late.

PIPORELLO (pushing FLAVIO on his way). Then we won't detain you a moment longer. (Stepping in front of him and stopping him.) Before *what's* too late?

FLAVIO. Before my darling Florinda suffers a fate worse than death.

PIPORELLO. Your darling Florinda?

FLAVIO. Yes, the daughter of Signor Pantalone.

PIPORELLO. Oh, *that* Florinda. Then hurry . . . hurry! (Again he pushes FLAVIO and then stops him.) Suffers what fate worse than death?

FLAVIO. Before she's forced to marry a man she doesn't love.

MARCO. How terrible!

PIPORELLO. Tragic! Be off, my good man!

FLAVIO. Yes, I must hurry because the wedding is tomorrow.

PIPORELLO. Then there's not a moment to lose. Go! Go! (Pushes FLAVIO, stops him.) But *how* will you save her from this fate worse than death?

FLAVIO. I will stop the wedding.

PIPORELLO and MARCO (in unison). How?

FLAVIO. When her father hears the news I have to tell him,
he will stop the wedding.

PIPORELLO. I see. What news?

FLAVIO (impatient). Urgent news. And now I *must* find my
poor Florinda.

MARCO. So romantic!

PIPORELLO. And we're always on the side of romance. We
wish you well. (He embraces FLAVIO and during the
embrace steals a locket and passes it to MARCO.) But
you must hurry, my dear Flavio. (He motions to MARCO
to hide.) Fly . . . fly! The fate of a beautiful maiden
depends on you. (He begins to rush FLAVIO off.)

FLAVIO (stopping in reverie). And she is *so* beautiful. You
have no idea. Her eyes are like . . .

PIPORELLO. . . . Deep pools of moonlight. (Again pushes
FLAVIO.)

FLAVIO (stopping). And her hair is as smooth and lustrous
as . . .

PIPORELLO (pushing). . . . A raven's wing. Now hurry!

FLAVIO. And her lips . . .

PIPORELLO. Yes, yes, who could forget her lips! (He
motions to MARCO to get away with the locket. MARCO
goes off.) *And* her shoulders . . .

FLAVIO. . . like carved alabaster.

PIPORELLO. And her knees . . . and her elbows. Now go . . .
go . . . go! (He gives FLAVIO one final big push.)

FLAVIO (to himself as he goes). Her *elbows*?

PIPORELLO (waving after FLAVIO). Swiftly, swiftly!
Take a carriage! But *fly*! (To himself.) Whew! Ah, yes,
love is wonderful, but it can't buy money. I can hardly
wait to get my hands on some. Now where is Marco
with that locket? (Offstage cries of "Help! Help!") He's
not too bright, but he certainly knows how to hide.

FLAVIO (offstage). Thieves! Help! They've stolen my locket!

PIPORELLO (never missing a beat). . . . Hide! . . . Hide! Where can I hide? (He looks around but sees no place. He crouches down by the stage curtain and pulls his cloak over his head to await the worst.)

(FLAVIO runs on.)

FLAVIO. Police! Thieves! (He sees PIPORELLO.) You there, old crone. Did you see two thieves go by? (PIPORELLO, taking his cue from the question, assumes an old lady voice.)

PIPORELLO. They went that way. (He points.)

FLAVIO. Thank you. (He starts off, then stops.) But how did you know? You weren't here before.

PIPORELLO. We gypsies *know*.

FLAVIO. Oh, I see, you're a gypsy. Which way did you say they went?

PIPORELLO (pointing in the other direction). That way. (FLAVIO starts off, then stops.)

FLAVIO. Wait a minute. I thought you said *that* way.

PIPORELLO. That's because you were turned around.

FLAVIO (thinking). Oh, I see. Well, thank you for your help.

PIPORELLO. Wait! For a few coins I can help you even more.

FLAVIO. How?

PIPORELLO. I can have a vision.

FLAVIO. You have visions?

PIPORELLO. Sometimes, for a few coins. (FLAVIO takes a coin from his purse.)

FLAVIO. Here.

PIPORELLO. That's hardly a few. Oh, well, give me your hand. (He studies Flavio's hand.) Hmm . . . hmmm.

(He is waiting for an inspiration. Then he sees a travel poster on the curtain.) I see . . . moonlight . . . a fountain . . . and the distant sound of bells . . .

FLAVIO. Moonlight . . . a fountain . . . and the distant sound of bells? That won't help me find the thieves who stole my locket.

PIPORELLO. No. But for one measly copper that's all I see. Now for a ducat perhaps . . .

FLAVIO. While I'm wasting time, those thieves are getting away with my locket. (He starts off.) Thieves! Thieves!

(FLAVIO bumps into COLOMBINA, who enters with a large basket of groceries.)

FLAVIO. Did you see two thieves . . . ?

COLOMBINA. *Two?* I've seen dozens. The market's full of them. Why, do you know what they charged me for this mackerel? (She pulls a large mackerel out of the basket and holds it in Flavio's face. He recoils from the smell.)

FLAVIO. Ugh! No, no, I mean, the two thieves who stole my locket.

COLOMBINA (shrugging). Who could tell?

FLAVIO. I *must* find that locket. (He hurries off.)

PIPORELLO (eyeing the basket). Ah! (Aside.) *Dinner!* (He shuffles up to COLOMBINA.) And who are you, my child?

COLOMBINA (suspiciously). My name is Colombina.

PIPORELLO. Ah, my dear Colombina, you are rushing into a future you know not of.

COLOMBINA. I'm rushing home to prepare dinner. And I'm tired and I'm late and my master . . .

PIPORELLO. . . is in a fearful state.

COLOMBINA. Yes. How did you know?

PIPORELLO. We gypsies *know!* But tell me child, *why* is

your master so upset?

COLOMBINA. Because his daughter, Florinda, is taken ill with madness . . . and on the day before her wedding, too.

PIPORELLO (aside). I think we're on to something! (Back to COLOMBINA.) So that is the meaning of the dark cloud I see hovering over your house. And the wedding must be delayed?

COLOMBINA. Yes. And Signor Coviello, the bridegroom, arrives tomorrow. My poor master is out of his mind with despair.

PIPORELLO. To say nothing of the poor bridegroom, I'm sure.

COLOMBINA. Oh, Signor Coviello knows nothing of this. He lives in Padua, but he arrives here tomorrow for the wedding. That's why my master . . .

PIPORELLO. Ah, your poor master . . . and your poor mistress, too.

COLOMBINA. Oh, yes, poor thing. It's so tragic. You see, she was in love with someone else, a handsome student . . .

PIPORELLO. But a *poor*, handsome student . . .

COLOMBINA (amazed). Yes! But her father, a highly respected . . .

PIPORELLO. . . . and wealthy merchant, Signor Pantalone . . .

COLOMBINA. Yes! But how could you know this?

PIPORELLO. I told you — we gypsies *know*. Continue . . .

COLOMBINA. Well, he forced her to betroth . . .

PIPORELLO. . . . Signor Coviello.

COLOMBINA. Yes. Who is very old, and *not* very handsome, but *very* rich. Well, right after that she went into a decline and now this terrible madness has come upon her.

PIPORELLO. Can you blame her?