

The Issues of One's Loins

by Luceta di Cosimo, BMDL, Aethelmearc, originally written for the *I Firenzi 2015 War of the Wings* Show.

Dramatis Personae

Pantalone, a rich merchant, *Isabella's* impotent husband

Isabella, a young noble woman, married to *Pantalone*

Franceschina, *Isabella's* servant and confidante

Dottore, *Isabella's* guardian, a learned man,

Arlecchino, his servant, madly in love with *Franceschina*

Capitano, a war hero, a swashbuckler, a lover of beauty and a beauty of a lover

HRM the King of Atlantia, a king of Atlantia

Messer Tofano, *Pantalone's* old cantankerous father

Brighella, his servant, a schemer and a con man

Properties

A letter

A rolling pin

A vial or a flask, first empty, then with something drinkable

A bottle of wine, or *Dottore's* courage potion

A giant enema syringe

A very impressive feather for *Capitano's* hat.

A padding for one's belly.

One Golden Diletto medallion

One Golden Fig medallion (*figa* is Italian slang for female genitals, feel free to use anything else that fits)

Random Baby Things

Dottore's house

Brighella enters

A Prologue is delivered by Brighella

A beautiful young orphan *Isabella*, whose guardian was the old drunkard and charlatan *Dottore*, was married off to old greedy merchant *Pantalone*. *Isabella* is an heiress to a great fortune and her husband will only have access to it if she produces a male heir.

Meanwhile, while old miser *Pantalone* wants to get his hands on *Isabella*'s money, his own father threatened to disown him, should he fail to produce a male heir, and while old *Pantalone* is rich, his old nasty father is even richer.

Brighella is here to deliver a letter from *Pantalone*'s father to remind him of the terms of the contract. Basically, if there is no male heir, *Pantalone* is screwed. But *Brighella* is going to stick around for a while. If the marriage is dissolved, *Isabella*'s fortune becomes much more accessible, and *Brighella* can con *Isabella* out of some of her money. But, as the contract deadline draws near, people become desperate. Desperate people and their money are easily parted, and *Brighella* can make this parting even easier. Either way, *Brighella* can turn the situation to his advantage.

Brighella knocks on the door

Dottore and Pantalone enter

Brighella delivers the letter and exits

Dottore and *Pantalone* read the letter. *Pantalone* is terrified that his father is looking into the issue. What is he decides to come and make sure *Pantalone* gets an heir? It will be a disaster!

Dottore wants to know, why is it a disaster, isn't *Isabella* pregnant yet? *Pantalone* says that no she isn't. *Dottore* panics, and says it's a disaster, because the date of the contract deadline approaches, and if there is no issue, the marriage may be dissolved! *Dottore* is concerned because he was promised a part of *Isabella*'s fortune for arranging her marriage to *Pantalone*. *Pantalone* is concerned because he's terrified of his father.

Dottore wants to know why *Isabella* is not knocked up yet, *Pantalone* is not forthcoming. Eventually, *Dottore* figures out that the marriage has not been consummated. *Pantalone* is not really interested in *Isabella* – just her money. *Dottore* asks him, what he has been doing every day of the week, *Pantalone* has been doing ridiculous things every day, and has basically been avoiding *Isabella*.

Dottore decides to take the matter into his own hands.

Tells *Pantalone*, there is not shame in outsourcing the deed. *Pantalone* is shocked to hear that – wouldn't it make him a cuckold? And bring shame to his household? *Dottore* gives him a long-winded speech explaining that, if done with *Pantalone*'s blessing, all will work out.

Pantalone agrees to go along with the plan, but is worried how poor, innocent naïve *Isabella* will take it. *Dottore* says, if done properly, she wouldn't even notice!

Both exit

Pantalone's house

Isabella and Franceschina enter

Franceschina is holding some phallic household object – like a broom or a rolling pin.

Isabella is complaining to *Franceschina* that married life is killing her. Her husband wouldn't even look at her, and when she tries to flirt with him, sends her to do household tasks (euphemisms abound – churning butter, threading needles, etc).

Franceschina tries to console *Isabella*, but *Isabella* is more interested in the rolling pin/or *Franceschina*.

Franceschina, who didn't realize how bad it's gotten, grabs the rolling pin from *Isabella* (they fight for it), and runs out promising to help.

Franceschina exits

Isabella delivers a passionate monologue about the horrors of being effectively a married widow.

Isabella exits

Dottore's house

Dottore and Brighella enter

Dottore talks to *Brighella* about *Pantalone's* problem – needs to get *Isabella* pregnant. *Brighella*, being a smart guy, realizes that if there is no issue, the marriage is dissolved, and *Isabella* is on the market, free and clear, making her fortune more accessible. This can work into *Brighella's* plans. But old fool *Dottore* looks like he has some money to spend right now. *Brighella* is all for easy money.

Brighella tells *Dottore* that he knows a guy who knows a guy who only makes sons. This guy's impregnating prowess is amazing. Women get knocked up when he merely sneezes in their direction; in fact, it has gotten so bad, the dude has to wear a mask in female company. To prevent this accidental impregnation, he has considered becoming a hermit. *Brighella* mentions several well known people (Pope? Duke of Padua? Local people you know?) who are in fact this guy's progeny. Says he can bring in some of the guy impregnating juice, for a price.

Dottore is very excited to hear and promises *Brighella* to pay him. They haggle. Eventually, they agree on a price, and *Dottore* gives *Brighella* a vial for the son-producing semen. *Dottore* makes *Brighella* promise to keep it a secret from all the townspeople.

Both exit

Arlicchino's room in Dottore's house

Franceschina and Arlicchino enter

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Franceschina and *Arlicchino* are flirting/making out. After they are done, *Franceschina* needs to run errands for her master and mistress. She takes out the Golden Diletto – now that she has *Arlicchino*, she doesn't need it anymore. *Arlicchino* has to get the Diletto to *Isabella* as soon as possible, she really-really needs it, but it's a secret, so no one should see him with it. *Arlicchino* really loves *Franceschina* and will do whatever *Franceschina* asks of him.

Franceschina exits

Arlicchino is still talking to himself about all kinds of things he will do for *Franceschina*

Arlicchino exits

Pantalone's house

Pantalone and Isabella enter

Pantalone calls *Isabella* and talks about how important it is to have children, and have a family. *Isabella* talks about passion and love. There is a major disconnect there. *Isabella* lets *Pantalone* know that she does not want to get pregnant – she wants to have fun first! And when she says fun, she means SEX. *Pantalone* is terrified by the thought of having sex with *Isabella* and retreats.

Pantalone exits

Isabella exits

City street

Brighella enters

Brighella talks to himself that now he just needs to find a virile handsome fellow to fill the vial. Decides that *Brighella* fits this description perfectly. Starts to get himself in the mood to fill the vial.

Capitano enters

Capitano greets *Brighella*. Wants to know what horrible circumstances reduced *Brighella* to masturbating in the street. Are there no women in this city? If this is the case, the *Capitano* must leave immediately.

Brighella says there are plenty of women, and plenty of foolish old men. *Brighella* explains his plan to *Capitano*. (He promised not to tell any townspeople, but *Capitano* is not one of them.) *Capitano* tells *Brighella* it is a noble cause to introduce a young lady to the joys of motherhood, and she will love the pitter patter of little *Brighella's* feet around her house, so “as you were!”

Brighella realizes that the old men are so terrified of *Pantalone's* father, they are crazy enough to carry out the plan, and there is a good chance his offspring will look like him, so everybody would know how he conned the *Vecchi*. But, *Capitano* is a stranger here, he is young, handsome, experienced, and very virile looking (plus he has a very impressive feather in his hat). So, if *Isabella* gets impregnated with *Capitano's* sperm, everybody will be thrilled with his offspring.

Brighella explains his plan to *Capitano*.

Capitano couldn't agree more, and graciously fills the vial for *Brighella*.

Capitano exits

Arlicchino enters

Arlicchino is carrying the *Diletto*. *Brighella* has the vial. Both are trying to hide what one is holding. *Brighella* has more success. *Brighella* asks *Arlicchino* what is it he's carrying. *Arlicchino* fumbles, but eventually says it's a stick to scare away the birds, and it's for *Isabella*. *Brighella* did not know *Isabella* was so plagued by birds, in fact he thought it was quite the opposite.

When *Arlicchino* asks what is it *Brighella* has, *Brighella* says he is carrying a magic potion that will make one invisible, and it's for *Dottore*. *Arlicchino* is very impressed.

Both leave

Dottore's house

Dottore and Pantalone enter

Pantalone is panicking after his conversation with *Isabella*. What is he going to do now? His father will disown him for sure! *Dottore* tells *Pantalone* about the impregnating juice plan, and then he and *Pantalone* argue about what is the best way to impregnate *Isabella*. *Dottore* explains *Pantalone* his brilliant idea of artificial insemination, and produces a giant enema syringe. *Dottore* convinces *Pantalone* that *Isabella* will be so happy to finally have sex with *Pantalone*, and she wouldn't mind the syringe. *Pantalone* is dubious. *Dottore* threatens to go and have sex with *Isabella* himself if *Pantalone* is not up to it. *Pantalone* capitulates and they try to figure out the best way to make the giant syringe look natural in the intercourse. In the end *Pantalone* is basically riding the enema, and *Dottore* stands in for *Isabella*, so they can practice.

Brighella enters

Brighella enters with a vial mid practice. The *vecchi* are very happy to see him, and *Dottore* takes the vial from him.

Arlicchino enters with the *Diletto*. The *vecchi* demand to know what he is doing and why is he bringing this thing to *Pantalone's* house. *Pantalone* feels threatened and tells

Dottore that now *Isabella* will not even look at the syringe, as long as this thing is in the house.

Arlicchino panics, grabs the "invisibility potion" vial from the *vecchi*, drinks it, and dances maniacally for a bit, waving the diletto in their faces, thinking that he is invisible. They chase him, and *Arlicchino* is very surprised that he is still visible - *Dottore* explains what actually was in the vial. *Arlicchino* is horrified and runs away.

Arlicchino exits

The *vecchi* lament the loss of the impregnating juice, and demand that *Brighella* does something about it. *Brighella* agrees, of course, for a price.

Brighella exits

Dottore and Pantalone exit

Pantalone' house

Franceschina and Arlicchino enter

Arlicchino enters, still carrying the Diletto. *Franceschina*, who is very amorous, wants to flirt with him, and is tempted to maybe use the Diletto one last time, takes it from *Arlicchino*. She will totally ignore her errands to fool around with *Arlicchino*. *Arlicchino* wants none of that, and informs her that she is being very irresponsible. *Arlicchino* is not in the mood. He feels horrible. He is nauseous, has food cravings, is bloated, his feet are swollen. *Franceschina* demands to know what happened. *Arlicchino* tells her he thinks he is pregnant. *Franceschina* doubts it. *Arlicchino* bursts in tears, tells her that she is an insensitive bitch who never listens to his problems and runs away.

Arlicchino exits

Isabella enters

Franceschina shows the Diletto to *Isabella* and explains to *Isabella* that it's OK to hope for true love and happiness in one's marriage, but while one is waiting for it to happen, there is nothing wrong with using THIS! *Franceschina* then inducts *Isabella* into the order of the Golden Diletto. *Isabella* decides to use her new medallion right away.

Franceschina runs after *Arlicchino*.

Franceschina and Isabella exit

Pantalone's house

Pantalone and Dottore enter

Dottore has the enema syringe

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They are very concerned about the loss of magic sperm, *Pantalone* is desperate for an heir, and pesters *Dottore* to catch this *Arlicchino* and maybe pump his stomach to get the sperm back. *Dottore* says it's probably too late for that. Both hope that *Brighella* can come back with the second batch. If not, they come up with ridiculous back up plans.

Brighella and Capitano enter

Brighella introduces *Capitano* to the *vecchi* as the impregnating machine extraordinaire. *Capitano* is truly impressive and strokes his very impressive feather to make his point. The *vecchi* are very impressed and want *Capitano* to get to work right away. *Pantalone* is very excited and sends *Brighella* to bring *Isabella*.

Brighella exits

Capitano tells *Pantalone* to basically consider himself a father and go set up the nursery.

Brighella and Isabella enter

Isabella is ignoring *Pantalone* and flirts with *Capitano*.

Pantalone sends *Brighella* to set up a nursery. Gives him money – his baby will have the best! Especially if it's cheap. *Brighella* takes the money and leaves.

Brighella exits

Capitano starts courting and seducing *Isabella* while the *vecchi* look on. His feather is very impressive. *Isabella* fully reciprocates his advances. *Pantalone* is not quite sure what's happening, so *Dottore* has to run play-by-play explanations like a sports commentator. *Pantalone* wants to know when the giant enema starts. *Dottore* explains that not everyone uses the enema. *Pantalone* is visibly disappointed.

They start shouting out helpful suggestions. Eventually, *Capitano* politely asks them to leave because they are ruining the mood. The *vecchi* reluctantly leave.

Dottore and Pantalone exit

Capitano plays a love scene with *Isabella*.

Capitano and Isabella exit

Dottore's house

Franceschina and Arlicchino enter

Arlicchino's belly is visibly bigger and he waddles in. *Arlicchino* is miserable, and nauseous, and bloated, and still upset with *Franceschina*. *Franceschina* gets concerned and makes *Arlicchino* list his symptoms. After he does, she worries that he actually may be pregnant. *Arlicchino* is very concerned where the baby will come out, and whether he will need a C-section, as he was always more of a natural birth man. *Franceschina* is concerned that *Arlicchino* was concerned about it. *Arlicchino* is talking baby names. *Franceschina* calls for *Dottore*.

Dottore enters

Dottore examines *Arlicchino* and declares him pregnant with a healthy baby boy. He knows it's a boy because *Capitano*'s sperm always produces boys – young healthy heirs! *Dottore* thinks this may be a way to get *Pantalone* an heir he needs. *Dottore* tells *Arlicchino*, that it is horrible that *Arlicchino* is pregnant out of wedlock. But it's OK, because he can set up his marriage to *Pantalone*, who will take care of him and his baby. *Arlicchino* doesn't want to get married to *Pantalone*, he wants to get married to *Franceschina*, and proposes to her. *Franceschina* accepts his proposal and they run away from *Dottore*.

Franceschina and Arlicchino exit

Dottore exits

Pantalone' house

Messer Tofano enters

Brighella enters

Messer Tofano demands *Brighella* brings him to his son, or, rather, grandson, and berates *Brighella* for being a bad servant. He notices the money pouch *Brighella* is carrying, recognizes it as *Pantalones'*, and takes it away from *Brighella*. He doesn't care that it's for a nursery – they are a foolish extravagances, especially without babies. “Show me the baby!” Furthermore, baby *Pantalone* never had a nursery – or toys, or diapers, or even a mother that he can recall, and he still turned out to be just fine!

Pantalone enters

Pantalone sees his father and is terrified. *Messer Tofano* demands grandchildren, or he will disown *Pantalone*. *Pantalone* tries to get away. *Messer Tofano* does not let him. He tries to pat search *Pantalone* for children.

Dottore enters

Pantalone tries to hide behind *Dottore*. *Dottore* tries to hide behind *Pantalone*. *Dottore* brought his favorite courage potion. Both drink from it and get completely sloshed. *Dottore* tires to tell *Messer Tofano* about pregnant *Arlicchino*, and that *Arlicchino*'s baby

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will make a great heir for *Pantalone*. Eventually *Messer Tofano* realizes he is getting nowhere and threatens to go and impregnate *Isabella* himself, if that what it takes to get some grandkids around here. He sends *Brighella* away to bring *Isabella*.

Brighella exits

Capitano enters

Capitano is in love with *Isabella* and wants to marry her.

Pantalone refuses, as he is *Isabella*'s rightful husband, but he is too drunk to be understood. *Pantalone*'s father insults *Capitano*, because *Capitano* is obviously here to interfere with his attempt of *Isabella* impregnating. *Capitano* is appalled to hear that, and challenges him to a duel. As *Capitano* is the challenger, *Pantalone*'s father has a choice of weapons. He chooses music. (This is how you get your singing scene.) Drunk *Dottore* and *Pantalone* join in. (You can also get the audience participation this way, should you want to.)

Basically, *Messer Tofano* wins and gloats. *Capitano* can't top this, has to concede, and is totally crushed.

Isabella and Brighella enter

Isabella is wearing her medallion.

Capitano declares his love for *Isabella*. *Isabella* really likes *Capitano*, but she is still married to *Pantalone*. *Messer Tofano* shoos away *Capitano* and grabs *Isabella* to impregnate her. Wants to show *Pantalone* how it's done. *Isabella* tries to beat away *Messer Tofano* with the diletto. *Messer Tofano* doesn't let go. *Capitano* and *Isabella* appeal to *Messer Tofano*, that it is wrong for a beautiful young woman to be trapped in loveless and sexless marriage. (you can have a scene where *Messer Tofano* and *Capitano* are pulling *Isabella* in different directions) *Messer Tofano* doesn't want to listen – he just wants someone to get knocked up. The lovers then appeal to the audience.

King of Atlantia enters

HRM King of Atlantia comes on stage and annuls the unconsummated marriage by a royal decree. *Messer Tofano* protests, and tries to shoo *HRM* back into the audience. *HRM* easily defeats *Messer Tofano*). *Isabella* is free to marry *Capitano*. *Isabella* offers herself and her medallion to *Capitano*. He produces a matching medallion from the reciprocal order of the Golden Fig. The medallions match perfectly. It's a match made in heaven. Both leave with *His Majesty*'s blessing.

Isabella and Capitano exit

King of Atlantia exits

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Dottore tries to console *Pantalone* over the loss of his young wife. *Pantalone* is not upset, and is actually relieved. He is actually happy, that it's now just two of them, just like the good old times. Both leave. *Pantalone* reminds *Dottore* to bring the enema syringe. As *Pantalone* leaves, *Messer Tofano* yells at him that he's disowned.

Pantalone and Dottore exit

Messer Tofano berates *Brighella* for ruining his plans. How is he going to get grandchildren? *Brighella* reminds him of pregnant *Arlicchino*. *Messer Tofano* says that as a plan B he's willing to consider it. *Brighella* calls for *Arlicchino*.

Arlicchino enters

Arlicchino looks normal. Apparently, he just had horrible indigestion from drinking the impregnating juice, and, after an epic bout of diarrhea, he's much better. *Messer Tofano* is very upset to hear that. Where is he supposed to get some grandkids now? Starts berating *Brighella* for being incompetent – what is easier than ensuring some progeny?

Franceschina enters

Franceschina is carrying random baby things. *Messer Tofano* tells *Brighella* that here is a perfectly good woman in working condition, and she even came pre loaded with baby gear, and *Brighella* should do something about it.

Franceschina responds along the lines of “don't even think about it” and intimidates the hell out of *Messer Tofano* and *Brighella*, who slink away.

Brighella and Messer Tofano exit

Franceschina finally came to grips with *Arlicchino*'s pregnancy. She agrees on the names *Arlicchino* wanted previously. She is vaguely disappointed when she realizes that *Arlicchino* is no longer pregnant, but decides that it's OK. Because the best thing about the babies is making them! She and *Arlicchino* are going to start right now. In fact, forget about babies, lets just go and have SEX. *Arlicchino* will do whatever *Franceschina* wants. Both exit, *Arlicchino* recounting things he will do for/to/with *Franceschina*. Both are quite happy.

Arlicchino and Franceschina exit

END