

# A Prestige Class

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## *Dramatis personae*

Dottore, a learned person  
Virginio, his son, a poet  
Spinetta, Virginio's servant

Beatrice, a courtesan

Franceschina, Pantalone's servant

Aurelia, a young lady, Octavia's sister, new in town, a gold digger  
Octavia, a young lady, Aurelia's sister, new in town, looking for love.  
(Aurelia and Octavia may or may not be Pantalone's daughters, up to you)

## *Properties*

Basket  
Arlicchino's shirt  
Money bag  
Baggy pants  
A clergyman's miter

## *Beatrice and Dottore enter*

Beatrice and Dottore argue. Dottore owes Beatrice money for visits and doesn't want to pay her, calls for his servants to kick her out. Nobody shows up and Dottore kicks her out himself.

## *Beatrice exits*

Dottore calls for Brighella. Nobody answers.  
Calls for Arlicchino. Nobody answers.  
Calls for anybody.

## *Spinetta enters*

Spinetta has to introduce herself, as Dottore has no idea who she is.

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He wants to know where are his servants, Arlichino and Brighella. Spinetta says that they left, as Dottore never paid them the money he promised them so they went to work for Pantalone. Pantalone promised them more money.

Dottore says that Pantalone will never pay them anything. Spinetta explains, that at this point it is not the money, it's the prestige. It is now more prestigious to work for Pantalone than Dottore, because Pantalone has more servants.

Dottore wants to know why Spinetta hasn't left, then. Spinetta says that she is Virginio's servant, not Dottore's.

Dottore is very surprised because he assumed Virginio would have a manservant, and also does it mean that Spinetta is actually getting paid?

Spinetta runs away without answering.

### ***Spinetta exits***

Dottore monologues and realizes that it **is** actually about prestige. He is afraid that he will lose his status without any servants, so he needs to get some servants fast.

### ***Virginio enters***

Virginio announces that he is actually all grown up, and wants to marry! Dottore agrees and wants him out of the house as soon as possible. Dottore wants to know if he has been paying Spinetta, and where he got the money. Virginio says that now that he is of age he can actually access the money his mother left him.

Dottore didn't realize it was such a large sum you could afford to pay servants. Reverses his speech, doesn't want Virginio married. Wants him to stay in the house., etc, etc, etc. especially as Dottore is now all alone. Doesn't Virginio know all the servants left?

Virginio says of course he knows, he wrote them excellent references, in verse! They all cried when they read them! He reads some excerpts.

Dottore wants to know just how excellent were the references, as Arlicchinio was a glutton and an idiot, and Brighella a con artist and a murderer for hire. Virginio says he didn't want to ruin their careers, and plus, the bad referenes would reflect poorly on Dottore, as he hired them first!

### ***Both exit***

### ***Spineta enters***

Spinetta at the market, buying silks, ribbons, and fancy shoes.

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***Aurelia and Octavia enter***

Aurelia and Octavia are two sisters, who are new in town. They want to know who Spinetta's mistress is who is getting all the fancy goodies. Spinetta says they are actually for Virginio, who is ready to start courting.

They ask questions about Virginio. She tells them all kinds of things.

Aurelia's take is that Virginio is rich and stupid, and ready for love. She just needs to tell him a few things he wants to hear, and his money is as good as hers.

Octavia thinks it's adorable that Virginio writes poetry and likes pink. He sounds so cute!

Spinetta complains that now that the servants have left she has to do all the work.

***Spinetta exits***

Aurelia gets this brilliant idea that Octavia should dress up as a man and get hired as Dottore's servant to get more information and to get them closer to Virginio. Octavia says Aurelia can do the same, they argue, Aurelia wins.

***All exit***

***Dottore enters***

Dottore has his delivery basket. Calls Spinetta

***Spinetta enters***

Dottore tells her make the deliveries, Spinetta who is all tired after the market trip reluctantly agrees. Then Dottore's whips out Arlicchino's old outfit and orders Spinetta to wear it while she is making the deliveries. It's for the prestige. Spinetta argues with Dottore and refuses.

***Spinetta exits***

Dottore, decides he can be his own servant, just as well. Then, at least his orders will be done right. He thinks he may be onto something. He takes the delivery basket and leaves.

***Dottore exits***

***Dottore enters***

Dottore enters, posing as Arlicchino. Tries to very exaggeratedly act as Arlicchino. He is doing his own deliveries, and can't be seen doing it himself. It's all about prestige.

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### ***Franceschina enters***

She sees Dottore, mistakes him for Arlicchino. Is very excited to see him, reminds him about his promises to meet her, then berates him for standing her up, various times and places: apparently they have a thing, and Arlicchino had promised to elope for food. Franceschina says that she almost has a basketful, and soon he will be hers! All of this comes from Franceschina, and Dottore can't get a word in edgewise..

Dottore is terrified – he doesn't want to be married to Franceschina.

### ***Beatrice enters***

Beatrice recognizes Dottore dressed as Arlicchino, pretends to fall for the disguise. She is still mad at Dottore because he owes her money for the appointments and decides to play a trick on him. She joins in berating Dottore for standing Franceschina up and reminds him that she was supposed to be their witness, describes ridiculous wedding arrangements. Franceschina initially doesn't remember the details, but totally remembers when reminded.

Dottore runs away terrified, with Franceschina in pursuit.

### ***Dottore and Franceschina exit***

Beatrice remains on stage laughing.

### ***Aurelia and Octavia enter***

Octavia is dressed like a man. Beatrice wants to know what's up with the dress up today. Aurelia is offended, the disguise was supposed to be perfect, and she wants to know how Beatrice knew that Octavia was not a man. Beatrice explains that she knows men very well, and gives Octavia and Aurelia some pointers, when they leave, Octavia is way more manly.

### ***All exit***

### ***Aurelia and Octavia enter***

Aurelia and Octavia are at Dottore's house. They knock on the door.

### ***Dottore enters***

Aurelia, who is the mastermind behind the operation, gives a sob story that they are poor orphans from ... Bologna? And they are here, and they were robbed on the way to

Venice, and have nothing, and now her brother Octavio is looking for a job as a servant so they can make some money and go back .

Dottore is very excited, because he now has a servant! The prestige is back. He is also very excited about Bologna, because it's his alma mater. He asks all kinds of leading questions, which Aurelia works with, and finally convinces himself, they must be orphans of one of his former class mates. Octavio is hired on the spot! And if they truly are his classmate's orphans, they would surely know the secret alumni dance! Aurelia and Octavia kind of fake it at first, Dottore joins in and leads, and they all dance the "secret dance".

### ***Virginio enters***

Virginio enters and joins in and for a bit they all dance together.

Dottore explains the situation, and Virginio is excited to have a new servant. He is also excited to meet Aurelia. He thinks Aurelia would make an excellent bride. Dottore realizes he doesn't want Virginio to get married and comes up with all kinds of excuses, which Aurelia brushes off easily. Finally Dottore says that Virginio can't get married, because he can't tell men from women. Even Aurelia is flabbergasted at that one.

Virginio says it's silly because he totally does know. Women wear skirts, and men pants! Easy. Points at Aurelia – woman, points at Octavia – man! Its only hard to tell when they are naked, so all the naked people go to Beatrice, because only she can tell them apart.

Virginio leaves triumphant, leaving everyone speechless.

### ***Virginio exits***

Dottore leaves after an "I told you so".

### ***Dottore exits***

Aurelia and Octavia argue, because now Virginio likes Aurelia, who is after his money, and Octavia is madly in love with Virginio, but he wouldn't even recognize her as a woman because of pants. Octavia rants against the pants, as the cause of her suffering and misfortune and wants to take them off. Aurelia tries to stop her.

### ***Franceschina enters***

Franceschina supposedly has a message for Dottore, but really is looking for Arlicchino, and jumps into the pants fight. She is totally on Octavia's side. She explains to Aurelia that you never stop a nice young man from taking off his pants, that's how you miss all the fun. Aurelia says that it's her brother. Franceschina says it's not Franceschina's brother, and continues with the pants.

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Octavia says that she likes Virginio. Franceschina loses all interest in Octavia, but then gets all suspicious that Octavia may be after Arlicchino as well. Octavia doesn't even know who Arlicchino is. Franceschina describes him as a total hunk.

***Dottore enters***

Dottore berates Octavio for going after Franceschina, it's just not proper. Franceschina gives him the message. Dottore reads the message. It's from Pantalone. He proposes that Virginio, who is now of age, marries one of his daughters. Dottore is outraged, he will never let Pantalone near his family's money, he would rather Virginio marry anybody else. Immediately gives his blessing for the marriage of Virginio and Aurelia.

Franceschina says the Dottore looks kinda familiar, Dottore, who doesn't want to get married to Franceschina, ushers them out in a hurry. Franceschina still talks about how dreamy Arlicchino is.

***Franceschina, Octavia and Arlicchina exit***

***Beatrice enters***

Beatrice again confronts Dottore about unpaid accounts. Dottore refuses to pay her, calls for Octavio, and then Spinetta, if he can remember her name. Gets upset when no one answers. What's the point of having the servants, if they never answer? Will kick out Beatrice himself. Beatrice says she always gets her money and leaves.

***Beatrice exits***

***Dottore exits***

***Octavia and Virginio enter***

Octavia and Virginio are at the market.

Virginio is talking about his bride Aurelia, and wants to know all about her. Octavia tries to tell Virginio that she likes him, and tries to tell him terrible and bizarre things about Aurelia, which he twists around until he likes her even more. At the end he finally clues in, and tells Octavia that he is into women only, and needs to make wedding arrangements with Aurelia.

As far as Octavio's predicament, he should go to Beatrice's, so she can set him straight.

***Virginio exits***

***Beatrice enters***

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Beatrice has heard her name. Octavia is surprised to see her, but as Beatrice already helped her to get to Virginio, she wants her help in getting Virginio. Beatrice agrees, in exchange for Virginio's money.

***Wedding scene. All are present.***

Spinetta officiates. She is wearing a bishop's miter

Aurelia is getting married to Virginio. They are using Virginio's money bag instead of the rings. When it comes to the part of "speak now or forever hold your peace", Octavia declares her love for Virginio, exposes Aurelia as a gold digger, and drops her pants. She wears a skirt underneath. Virginio is completely surprised, but is smitten on the spot, Takes the money bag and proposes to Octavia. Aurelia tries to stop them.

They decide to elope now and marry later. Octavia suggests they should run to Beatrice's and hide there. Virginio thinks it's a great idea, because everybody will be looking for a young man and woman, but they can just get naked at Beatrice's house and become totally unrecognizable. Octavia is all for the getting naked idea. Virginio is concerned how would they know who they are without clothes, so he tosses the money bag to Beatrice, so she will help them sort it out later.

***Virginio and Octavia exit***

Aurelia tries to get the money from Beatrice, who points out that she is going about is all wrong. Beatrice always gets her money and she doesn't even need to marry anyone. Beatrice promises to teach her all about it. Aurelia is intrigued.

***Aurelia and Beatrice leave together.***

Franceschina looks at Dottore and recognizes him as Arlicchino from the market, and asks Spinetta to marry them, which she does with spiteful pleasure.

Franceschina drags Dottore off stage. Dottore calls to Spinetta that she is fired.

***Franceschina and Dottore exit***

Spinetta answers, that first, she is Virginio's servant, and second, she quits! Calls them all idiots, throws down the mitre and walks out.

***Spinetta exits***

***End.***