

The Toga Party, or, When in Rome...

Written for *I Firenzi* 2016 War of the Wings performance by Luceta di Cosimo of *I Genesisii*.

Dramatis personae

Pantalone, a merchant

Brighella, Pantalone's servant

Isabella, his daughter

Nespola, Isabella's servant

Orazio, a nobleman

Capitano, a Spanish mercenary captain

Properties

A letter

Lots of fabric for togas

Two duke disguises, identical.

Fake fruit

City Street

Isabella and Nespola enter

Isabella talks about how her every whim is taken care of, usually by *Nespola*. Demonstrates.

Nespola takes care of whims, *Isabella* is happy but declares that something is missing.

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Orazio enters

Isabella sees *Orazio*, likes him, and realizes that's what is missing from her life. Demands that *Nespola* getsher *Orazio*

Nespola introduces *Orazio* to *Isabella*, lets it known that *Isabella* is *Pantalone's* daughter.

Orazio and *Isabella* fall in love

All exit

Pantalone's house

Brighella and *Pantalone* enter

Brighella brings *Pantalone* a letter from the duke of Ravenna about unpaid taxes, to be paid immediately. *Pantalone* freaks out about taxes.

Brighella gives him helpful suggestions, all of which involve somehow paying *Brighella*.

In the end *Pantalone* rejects them all as one time solutions, decides to marry *Isabella* to the duke of Ravenna to get a perpetual tax break.

Needs to throw a big party to impress the duke, and introduce him to *Isabella*. Will make it a charity ball to make it a tax write off. *Brighella* suggests different charities, all of which somehow involve paying *Brighella*.

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Brighella is pissed that *Pantalone* will not pay him, and tells him that it's a horrible idea as no one will show up for his party because of his reputation. *Pantalone* is upset with his reputation as a miserly uncultured stingy man, and really wants to impress the duke.

Wants to throw a famous and awesome and very elegant and cultured party.

Orazio enters

Orazio comes intending to ask for *Isabella's* hand in marriage.

Pantalone thinks *Orazio* is a tax collector and tries to divert his attention to *Isabella*, and talks about parties, asks *Orazio* what parties are the best, and most sophisticated. *Orazio* talks about grandeur of Ancient Rome, and how it is an inspiration to all. *Pantalone* eventually finds out *Orazio* is not a tax collector, rejects his suit and throws him out of the house.

Orazio exits

Pantalone decides to throw a toga party - It's Roman. Plus neither he nor *Brighella* know how to sew. So it should be easy.

Brighella is stuck with the task of putting on the toga party.

Brighella and Pantalone exit

Isabella and Nespola enter

Isabella begs *Nespola* to help her see *Orazio* again.

Nespola, who is getting really annoyed, convinces *Isabella* to go prepare herself for *Orazio's* arrival, so she looks her best.

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Nespola and Isabella exit opposite

City street

Capitano enters

He is carrying a lot of fabric, he is a mercenary who got paid in fabric. He is upset because you can't buy food with fabric.

Brighella enters

Brighella tells *Capitano* that he can find a way to unload the fabric and get him some food - He will sell the fabric to *Pantalone* to use for togas, pretend *Capitano* is the duke of Ravenna and marry him to *Isabella* so *Capitano* can get her dowry as payment, and split it with *Brighella*.

Capitano is on board with this.

Capitano and Brighella exit

Pantalone's house

Capitano enters

Nespola enters.

Capitano assumes it's *Isabella* and flirts with her.

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Nespola flirts back.

Capitano leaves the fabric there for the party.

Capitano exits

Orazio enters

Orazio begs *Nespola* to sneak him into the house so he can see *Isabella*

Nespola "reluctantly" agrees.

Pantalone enters

Nespola quickly wraps *Orazio* in fabric and pretends to bring in fabric for the party

Pantalone demands that *Nespola* get the fabric to *Isabella* and they work on togas. Gives *Nespola* some money to pay the fabric merchant.

Nespola is happy to oblige, pockets the money and calls *Isabella*.

Pantalone exits.

Isabella enters

Nespola exits

Isabella unwraps *Orazio* and they play a love scene

Pantalone enters

Pantalone walks on *Isabella* and *Orazio* in fabric and demands to know what they are doing *Isabella* says *Orazio* is a famous tailor helping *Isabella* with togas, and she is undressed to make sure the fit is right.

Pantalone demands to get fitted too, they wrap him in fabric and play a love scene under *Pantalone's* nose, and sneak out.

Orazio and Isabella exit

Pantalone all wrapped up calls for help.

Nespola enters

Nespola unwraps *Pantalone*

Pantalone is very upset, and rants against *Orazio*, who he now suspects is up to no good. Tells *Nespola* that soon it will all be over - at the party *Isabella* will get married to the duke of Ravenna.

Nespola exits

Brighella enters

Brighella was looking for the fabric, which was supposed to be right there! He was prepared to give *Pantalone* some lie why the fabric wasn't there, but *Pantalone* got the fabric somehow. *Pantalone* tells him never mind the fabric, *Nespola* took care of everything, *Brighella* should go and take care of food for the party.

Brighella is upset that *Nespola* pocketed the fabric money, which *Brighella* worked so hard for. *Brighella* wants to find *Nespola* and take the money back.

Brighella exits

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Isabella and Orazio enter

Isabella and Orazio pledge their love to each other, *Orazio* laments that *Pantalone* rejected his suit. *Isabella* tells him that she will ask *Pantalone* herself.

Nespola enters

Tells them that *Isabella* is to be married to the duke of Ravenna at the Party.

Isabella demands that she marry *Orazio*. They eventually decide that they will disguise *Orazio* as the duke and marry him to *Isabella*.

All exit.

From now on, all wear togas

Pantalone and Brighella enter

Brighella carries a tray of fruit

Capitano enters

Capitano is disguised as a duke

Brighella introduces him as such

Pantalone is pleased to meet him, tells him how cultured and generous he (*Pantalone*) is, and how he could throw even more of these fabulous parties if it weren't for these pesky taxes. *Pantalone* calls for *Isabella*.

Isabella enters

Pantalone introduces *Isabella* to the "duke". *Isabella* assumes it's *Orazio*, and flirts with him. *Capitano* likes her, but is not committing, because he thinks he has already met *Isabella* (when he met *Nespola*), and she is not it.

Isabella is offended. *Pantalone* is trying to smooth things out, and suggests that perhaps this *Isabella* looks different because she is wearing a toga. *Capitano* is not buying it. *Pantalone* orders *Isabella* to strip. She refuses and they get into an argument.

Isabella accuses "the duke", who she assumes is *Orazio*, of being fickle and unfaithful, and going back on his promises. *Capitano* swears that this is the first time he met this woman.

Capitano accuses *Brighella* of trying to get him married to a madwoman. *Brighella* reminds him of the dowry, compared to which a little madness is nothing.

Orazio enters

Orazio is disguised as a duke too.

He compliments the party, and declares his undying love for *Isabella*.

Pantalone is confused and wants to know who is the real duke. *Orazio* and *Capitano* argue.

Capitano declares his love for *Isabella*. So does *Orazio*. *Brighella* intervenes. Both dukes pummel each other with the fruit from *Brighella's* tray, and proceed to duke it out for the honor of *Isabella*.

Pantalone, *Brighella*, and *Isabella* are thoroughly confused as both men "look exactly alike".

Isabella calls *Nespola*.

Nespola enters.

Brighella demands the fabric money from *Nespola*, who ignores him, because

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Capitano declares her the real "beautiful Isabella" and proposes to her. *Nespola* accepts. *Capitano* and *Nespola* exit.

Pantalone protests the loss of his servant. Demands to know whether the *Orazio* is the real duke. *Orazio* points out that at this point it doesn't matter - if he is the real duke, then he shouldn't be yelled at, and should be married to *Isabella* as promised, and if he isn't the real duke, it means that *Pantalone* just set up the duke of Ravenna with a servant under false pretense, and probably needs to keep it quiet. So it will be in his best interest not to yell, and just get *Orazio* married to *Isabella* ASAP to keep him from blackmailing *Pantalone*, because it's bad form to blackmail your own father in law.

Pantalone agrees and gives *Isabella* to *Orazio*, whoever he is.

Pantalone, *Isabella*, and *Orazio*, discard togas as evidence, and

Exit

Brighella collects the fabric, lamenting the loss of fabric money and the things he has to resort to in order to get paid. He is the one who wrote the tax letter. He can't believe everybody fell for it - there is no duke of Ravenna, as since 1512 it's a part of the Papal States, controlled by Rome. Some taxes are of course due, but he's sure they will be happy to take some slightly used togas. When is Rome.....

Brighella exits.