

MASKS

A full-length comedy by
Paul E. Doniger

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

STAGEHAND #1, any age or gender.

STAGEHAND #2, any age or gender.

PIERETTE, who plays Pierrot, early twenties.

RUFFINA, who plays La Vecchia, middle-aged.

SCARAMOUCHE, her husband, who plays Capitano Spavento, middle-aged.

LAVINIA, an innamorata, early twenties.

SYLVIA, another innamorata, early twenties.

FLAVIO, the innamorato, early twenties.

RODERIGO, who plays Doctor Bungalo, late middle-aged.

CARLO, who plays Arlecchino, late twenties.

ISABELLA, who plays Colombina, early 30s.

GIULIO, her husband, who plays Pantalone, early 30s.

LOLA, the costume mistress, late twenties.

ONSTAGE AUDIENCE (6-12 TOTAL), mixed genders and ages – one must be a young girl of about 18-22.

Total cast of 6 females, 5 males, 2 either; 6-12 extras (one must be the young girl).

ACT I

(At rise is a stage in a transitory condition; there are a couple of elements of a set under construction – a flat, painted to resemble a brick wall with a small window and even smaller balcony in it, is on Stage Right; another similar flat with canvases hanging down one side, exposing part of the wooden frame is on Stage Left; a couple of bare, unpainted platforms with benches on them at the rear, where the on-stage "audience" sits; an unfinished tree frames the up left "exit," but otherwise the stage is bare. The whole set represents a scene in a Renaissance European village with houses on either side of the street.)

(As the curtain opens the stage is dark, and the applause of the on-stage audience can be heard, mixed with their laughter. Throughout the ensuing scene, they laugh and applaud often. Carlo, costumed and masked as Arlecchino; Pierette, costumed, capped, and masked as Pierrot; Isabella, costumed and masked as Colombina; Ruffina, standing at a slight distance from the others, costumed and masked as La Vecchia; and Giulio, costumed and masked as Pantalone are discovered. Carlo is about to whack Pierette in the behind with his slapstick.)

ISABELLA: *(To Carlo:)* Now honey-bunch, don't hurt the poor dumb lad.

CARLO: My darling Colombina, not only did he steal my sausages; he tried to steal you away from me, too.

ISABELLA: How sweet. Is my dearest Arlecchino jealous?

CARLO: Ha! No, but I'll have my revenge.

ISABELLA: How? Would you beat the poor boy?

CARLO: Yes! I'll teach him to try and steal my ladylove.

PIERETTE: *(Note: Whenever she plays Pierrot, Pierette tries to move and sound like a man.)* I don't need lessons.

CARLO: That does it!

(Carlo whacks Pierette in the rear with the slapstick. Pierette tumbles in a forward roll across the stage, landing in a seated position.)

GIULIO: Arlecchino, must I remind you to control your temper.

CARLO: Pardon, master Pantalone, but Doctor Bungalo's fresh young servant here, Pierrot, was taking liberties with my girlfriend.

GIULIO: What does that matter to me? As long as he doesn't try to steal my money, I don't really care. But you, my lowly servant, you must behave yourself or you will be out in the streets on your bum, begging for a living.

ISABELLA: Master Pantalone, I shall take your naughty servant away and strive to reform him. Meanwhile, your young ward awaits you in the orchard.

GIULIO: Ah, yes, my sweet Lavinia. Thank you, Colombina, for reminding me. I must wed by noon today if I am not to lose my inheritance. And what better choice for a bride than my already wealthy and quite pulchritudinous ward Lavinia!

ISABELLA: *(Aside:)* This dirty old miser will soon discover how sour his "sweet Lavinia" can be when she is crossed! *(To Carlo:)* Come my love, let's you and I get something to eat and discuss your cute, but naughty temper.

CARLO: An excellent idea. I'm hungry enough to eat the moon.

ISABELLA: *(Aside, to Carlo only:)* And while we're gone, let us help dear Lavinia prepare to wed her true love, Flavio, while this old miser isn't looking.

(Carlo and Isabella exit. Pierette stands up, holding her rear end.)

PIERETTE: I think I won't follow them.

GIULIO: Pierrot, run to your master, Dr. Bungalo, and tell him to come to my house to perform the long-awaited ceremony. I am ready to be married to my luscious, young, and wealthy ward Lavinia now.

PIERETTE: Post haste.

(Pierette exits. Meanwhile, two stagehands enter just off to stage right and look at the stage left house. They pantomime a discussion about the hanging canvas and leave quietly during the following scene.)

RUFFINA: *(Stepping forward, behind Giulio, and speaking in an old woman's voice:)* Oh, Pantalone, yoo-hoo.

GIULIO: Uh-oh!

(The on-stage audience laughs.)

GIULIO: *(With his back to Ruffina:)* He's not in.

RUFFINA: He's not in?

(Giulio keeps moving away from Ruffina, keeping his back to her throughout.)

GIULIO: No, he's not.

RUFFINA: Oh, well, where is he?

GIULIO: He...moved away.

RUFFINA: He moved away?

GIULIO: Far away.

RUFFINA: Far away?

GIULIO: Far, far away.

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RUFFINA: Where to?

GIULIO: Uh...Timbuktu.

RUFFINA: I know where that is. I will find you...uh, him.

GIULIO: He's not there anymore. He's moved farther away.

RUFFINA: Where to?

GIULIO: Um...Tajikistan.

RUFFINA: I know where that is.

GIULIO: He's not there any longer, either. He moved from there.

RUFFINA: Where to?

GIULIO: Kalamazoo?

RUFFINA: Oh, Kalamazoo.

GIULIO: Zoo, zoo, zoo.

RUFFINA: I'll be his girl in Kalamazoo.

GIULIO: You know where that is, too?

RUFFINA: I have family there.

GIULIO: But...he's not there any longer.

RUFFINA: Oh, really.

GIULIO: Really and truly.

RUFFINA: Well, where can he be?

GIULIO: Tahiti.

RUFFINA: Tahiti?

GIULIO: Yup, Tahiti.

RUFFINA: Tee hee, hee. I've been there, too.

GIULIO: Impossible.

RUFFINA: Why, impossible?

GIULIO: They only allow beautiful women in Tahiti.

(Audience laughs, "oohs," and generally reacts to the insult.)

RUFFINA: Once I *was* a beautiful woman.

GIULIO: What happened?

RUFFINA: Time.

GIULIO: It must have been a very *long* time.

(Audience laughs.)

RUFFINA: Not so long that I lost my mind along with my looks, dear Pantalone. You can't fool me. I'd know you anywhere.

GIULIO: I'm not Pantalone.

RUFFINA: You can't deny it.

GIULIO: I can try.

(Audience laughs.)

RUFFINA: Try all you like; I'm still the sweetheart for you.

GIULIO: Impossible.

RUFFINA: Quite possible.

GIULIO: Improbable.

RUFFINA: Very probable.

GIULIO: Unlikely.

RUFFINA: Most definitely.

GIULIO: Not until hell freezes over.

RUFFINA: Brrr, it's cold.

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GIULIO: Not until lead turns to gold.

RUFFINA: No problem; my father was an alchemist.

GIULIO: Not until you become good-looking.

RUFFINA: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

GIULIO: I can't see a thing.

(Audience laughs.)

RUFFINA: You need to look beneath the surface.

GIULIO: *(Finally turning to face her:)* Oh, try to make me blind, will you!

RUFFINA: Kiss me, my love.

GIULIO: Egad!

(Audience laughs. Giulio moves towards Ruffina.)

I see there's no escape from your clutches. Okay, close your eyes and pucker up.

RUFFINA: Okay.

(She closes her eyes, purses her lips, and points them towards Giulio.)

GIULIO: Are your eyes closed?

RUFFINA: *(Speaking with some difficulty through her puckered lips:)* Yup.

GIULIO: Tightly closed?

RUFFINA: I can't see a thing.

GIULIO: *(Moving away from her:)* Good. Now hold it. Don't move. Be patient; your kiss is on its way.

RUFFINA: I'm ready and waiting, my beloved. Send it this way.

GIULIO: Oh, it *is* on its way. (*Aside:*) From very far away!

(Audience laughs.)

Now will I *sneak* away. I must prepare for my marriage to my young, rich, and shapely ward, Lavinia. Better do that before this revolting old beast opens her eyes.

(Giulio quietly and quickly tiptoes off.)

RUFFINA: (*Through her puckered lips:*) I'm ready, dear. (*Pause.*) I'm ready and waiting... Dearest? Pantalone? Kiss me, my darling.

(Ruffina waits in vain, then opens her eyes and slowly looks around.)

Well, that was a nasty trick. But no matter. There are many ways to conquer a reluctant lover. I shall win him over soon. Oh, but who is this coming? They mustn't see me until I am ready to wed my dearest, wealthy Pantalone.

(Ruffina exits. Enter Roderigo costumed and masked as Dr. Bungalo talking to Pierette who is looking down despondently at the ground and rubbing her backside. Isabella enters, watching them, during their conversation.)

RODERIGO: Young man, let that be a lesson to you.

PIERETTE: Yes, ma'am.

RODERIGO: Sir!

PIERETTE: You can just call me by my name.

RODERIGO: Silence.

PIERETTE: No, not "silence." It's "Pierrot." My name is Pierrot, not Silence, remember? Pierrot: Your ever-faithful and competent servant. That's me.

RODERIGO: I meant you must *be* silent!

PIERETTE: Oh.

(Pierette puts her hands over her mouth. Audience laughs as she steps aside.)

RODERIGO: Where is the lucky couple?

(Carlo brings on Lavinia and Flavio, costumed as the innamorati [Note: the innamorati do not wear masks]. They wait beside Isabella as Carlo approaches Roderigo.)

CARLO: Doctor...Blowhard...I presume?

RODERIGO: No, that's not my name.

CARLO: Sorry. Doctor...Birdbrain, then?

RODERIGO: No, you insulated fool! I am Doctor Bungalo... Doctor Bung-a-lo!

CARLO: Ah, please forgive me, Dr. Bump-a-log, but I am here on a mission of love.

RODERIGO: Ah, really. You've come to the right man. I—Dr. *Bungalo*—am not only a speculist in such matters, but I am also a noted republic, having the power to perform marriages and to sign, seal, and deliver happy couples to one another.

CARLO: Good; I have just such a couple with me.

RODERIGO: *(Noticing Lavinia and Flavio:)* Ah, and who are these detractive competitors?

CARLO: Uh...yeah, sure...whatever... This is my...uh...niece... yes, my niece...and her betrothed. They are ready for you to

pronounce them husband and wife. Here is the marriage contract, ready for your signature.

(Carlo reveals a scroll from under his costume. He rolls it out; it's very long with a large ribbon attached to a seal at the bottom.)

RODERIGO: All I need to see are their signatures.

(Carlo searches everywhere on the paper but the bottom; he starts to get tangled up in it. Pierette steps in and shows him the signatures.)

CARLO: Thanks. Now go away.

(Pierette steps back.)

(To Roderigo:) Here they are.

RODERIGO: Good.

(He turns to Lavinia and Flavio who have been waiting patiently.)

Step forthward and kneel ye afore me!

(Lavinia and Flavio move downstage of Roderigo and face each other. Roderigo reads their names from the contract with some difficulty.)

Do you, Flavio take Lavinia to be your blushing bride and promise to be faithless and true for all your life to come.

FLAVIO: Yes, I do.

RODERIGO: Do you, Lavinia take Flavio to be your grinning groom and promise to be wrathful and true for all your life to come.

LAVINIA: Yes, I do.

RODERIGO: Who are the witnesses.

ISABELLA: I am.

PIERETTE: I am.

CARLO: Me, too.

RODERIGO: Then by the *Pax Vobiscum ad Nostrum Proboscis* settled on me by the Duke of Earldom, I now pronounce you ball and chain. *Sine Die*. You may kiss the broad.

(As they kiss, Giulio, as Pantalone, comes rushing in out of breath.)

GIULIO: Stop! *(Pause.)* What's going on here.

ISABELLA: Looks like a wedding to me.

GIULIO: No! She is supposed to marry me.

ISABELLA: Oops!

CARLO: Oops!

GIULIO: Oops!?

CARLO: It looks like you're too late, old man

(Giulio glares at Carlo.)

...Uh...I mean, it looks like they're already married, my lord.

ISABELLA: Yup, the wedding is over. She's already taken.

CARLO: *(To Giulio:)* Looks like *you've* been taken too, your honor.

GIULIO: *(Seeing Pierette:)* You! You were supposed to prevent this and bring the doctor to me.

PIERETTE: One tiny mistake.

(The onstage audience bursts into laughter.)

FLAVIO: Face it old man, you're just not her type, but I am.

(A pretty girl in the onstage audience laughs, is stared at by others in the "audience," and then blushes. Flavio tries to ignore this.)

LAVINIA: It was quite presumptuous of you to assume that I would marry a conceited old miser like you, wasn't it?

GIULIO: But I must find a bride by noon today, or I will lose all my inheritance!

(Ruffina re-enters and steps up behind Giulio.)

RUFFINA: Yoo-hoo. Here I am my angel.

(She puts her arms around him from behind; he struggles, but he can't get free.)

GIULIO: Ugh! My heart! I'm having palpitations.

RUFFINA: It must be love.

RODERIGO: *(Quickly:)* Pax Vobiscum! I now pronounce you ball and chain.

(Laughter from the onstage audience.)

GIULIO: But... What!? You can't... I mean...but...we never said "I do."

RODERIGO: A minor detail.

(The onstage audience laughs again.)

GIULIO: We don't have a notarized contract.

RUFFINA: I have it under my cloak.

GIULIO: I never signed it!

RODERIGO: A mere impetu-mint which you may remediate later. Your marriage, however, is unshakable, irrevocable, and final.

(Giulio resigns himself to the situation as Sylvia, costumed as the second innamorata, rushes in hand-in-hand with Scaramouche, costumed and masked as Capitano Spavento.)

GIULIO: Oh, dear! Well, at least now that I'm married, I can keep my gold...even if I have to live with this beast!

SYLVIA: Oh, Doctor Bungalo, while you're in the marrying mood...

RODERIGO: Take two aspirin and see me in the morning. Three marriages in one day is too much even for me. Now everyone, go home and never reveal a word of what has perspired here this evening. Go...go...go! Shoo. Beat it. *Fugato prestissimo!* Scarper! Scat! *BE GONE!!*

(The others finally realize that Roderigo is dismissing the whole company. Giulio is dragged off Stage Right into his house by Ruffina, moaning. Flavio and Lavinia exit hand-in-hand. Roderigo goes left into his house. The others remain in their places.)

SYLVIA: Just think, my love, tomorrow we'll be wed.

SCARAMOUCHE: What? Never. This is no fate for a soldier of fortune.

SYLVIA: But don't you love me?

SCARAMOUCHE: *(Directly to the audience:)* Love? Why a soldier like me must remain free to love all the women who desire him. And there are many...many...many young ladies who desire...me!

SYLVIA: *(Suddenly shrewish, stomping her foot and grabbing his ear:)* Don't you start that again. You will marry me tomorrow morning or else!

SCARAMOUCHE: *(Cowering and in pain:)* Ouch! Yes, dear. Whatever you say.

(Sylvia smiles as she leads him off by the ear. Carlo and Pierette both look at each other from opposite sides of the stage. They then turn to look at Isabella. She notices them, looking back and forth at them both. Then she starts to walk off, flirting with both.)

PIERETTE: Mine!

CARLO: Mine!

(They chase after Isabella off stage. The onstage audience laughs and applauds. Then all the characters of the Commedia come back on stage and bow to the on-stage audience. Scaramouche removes his hat and moves among the audience with his hat in his hand. Some members of the audience put a few coins in his hat; some put in paper money. Some ignore him and walk off.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: *(To Scaramouche as he puts money in the hat:)* Great show.

ANOTHER AUDIENCE MEMBER: That Pierrot was so weird.

A THIRD AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, but he's funny!

(Other audience members can be heard muttering a variety of comments like, "That wasn't too bad," "I've seen better," "What crappy scenery," "We gotta pay for this?," "Let's get something to eat," and "Good idea; I'm hungry." Eventually the on-stage audience filters out. Ruffina removes her mask and turns to the others. She speaks to several members of the troupe as they also remove their masks.)

SCARAMOUCHE: *(Looking sadly in the hat:)* Thank you.

RUFFINA: Nice work everybody. Good show, everyone. Isabella, great as usual.

ISABELLA: Thanks, Ruffi.

RUFFINA: Flavio, very nice work today.

FLAVIO: Thanks.

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RUFFINA: Giulio, nice bit with the money bags in Act I. Let's see if we can work it into *The Neighborly Fathers* for tomorrow's performance, too.

GIULIO: Sure, Ruffi, piece o' cake. I can do it right after the crying scene with Carlo in the beginning of the second act.

(Pierette re-enters without her mask.)

RUFFINA: Good. *(Turning to Carlo; severely:)* Carlo!

CARLO: Yes, I know, I know. I actually hit our little Pierette with the slapstick. Sorry. *(Looking at Flavio:)* My timing's off.

(Flavio stares back at him. Carlo turns to Pierette.)

Sorry, kid.

PIERETTE: That's okay. It didn't hurt.

RUFFINA: No, no; no excuses. It's not the first time, Carlo. Be careful.

CARLO: I will; I will. *(Turning to Sylvia:)* C'mon sis.

(Carlo and Sylvia exit.)

ISABELLA: Ruffi? How'd we do? Did you count the house?

RUFFINA: Not yet. My husband's probably counting the money now.

ISABELLA: Looked rather thin out there today.

RUFFINA: It's early in the season, dear. Don't worry.

ISABELLA: I'm not worried; I just like to eat.

RUFFINA: *(Not really convinced herself:)* Things will get better.

ISABELLA: *(Exiting:)* Sure they will.

(Ruffina calls off stage as Isabella and Giulio exit.)

RUFFINA: Lola!

FLAVIO: *(To Lavinia:)* Hey, Lavinia, you want to...get something to eat?

LAVINIA: *(Shooting a disgusted look in Flavio's direction:)* Forget it!

(Lavinia turns her back on Flavio and exits; he shrugs his shoulders and exits in the opposite direction. Pierette addresses Scaramouche and Ruffina.)

PIERETTE: Was it really okay?

SCARAMOUCHE: My dear child, it was grand.

RUFFINA: Absolutely fine. You have your father's touch.

PIERETTE: But did I really come across as a man?

SCARAMOUCHE: Definitely. The audience couldn't have thought otherwise. It's been a long time since we've had a Pierrot on our stage. It was hard to lose him... Almost as hard for me as it must have been for you. It's nice to have him back...and to have you in his place.

(Ruffina glances quietly at Scaramouche and smiles. Lola enters.)

RUFFINA: *(To Pierette:)* Go, relax, child. You've earned a good rest, and later, after rehearsal, we'll have a fine supper together and talk about tomorrow.

LOLA: What is it, Ruffi?

(Pierette exits.)

RUFFINA: We're performing *The Neighborly Fathers* tomorrow afternoon. Do the costumes need any work?

LOLA: Let's see... Dr. Bungalo's costume needs a minor touch or two. And Sylvia's wedding dress is a mess. But it's easy; I can get everything ready for tomorrow.

RUFFINA: Good. Do me a favor and let everyone know that we'll rehearse in about twenty minutes.

LOLA: Sure.

(Lola exits.)

RUFFINA: *(To Scaramouche:)* You don't look too happy, dear.

SCARAMOUCHE: The house was small.

RUFFINA: Yes, it was. And I think not very generous.

SCARAMOUCHE: Well, no, not very. We just about broke even.

RUFFINA: That's something anyway.

SCARAMOUCHE: Sure, it's better than I thought at first. We'll be alright. Tomorrow should be better.

RUFFINA: *(Doubtfully:)* I suppose so. Saturday's *are* usually better.

(Enter Stagehands 1 and 2.)

SCARAMOUCHE: Absolutely. We should make a lot more tomorrow.

RUFFINA: *(To stagehands:)* There you are. That wall is falling apart again.

STAGEHAND 1: I know. We saw it; we came to fix it.

STAGEHAND 2: It won't happen again.

RUFFINA: I hope not. *(To Scaramouche:)* Come on, let's get something to eat before the rehearsal starts.

(Ruffina and Scaramouche exit.)

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STAGEHAND 1: Go bring the ladder over here.

STAGEHAND 2: Sure.

(Stagehand 2 goes behind the flat SR and retrieves a small ladder. He brings it to the flat SL. Stagehand 1 climbs a couple of steps up, and examines the exposed flat.)

STAGEHAND 1: This is really annoying. I thought you fixed this.

STAGEHAND 2: So did I.

STAGEHAND 1: You're such a clod.

STAGEHAND 2: Oh, thanks! Listen, it ain't my fault if the walls are so old they can't stand up on their own.

STAGEHAND 1: Hey, we gotta work with what we got.

(Pierrette enters, carrying a towel. She is no longer in her Pierrot costume, but in exercise clothing. While the stagehands work, she practices rolls and falls. The stagehands continue working as they speak.)

STAGEHAND 2: She's pretty good, isn't she?

STAGEHAND 1: Just like her father.

STAGEHAND 2: Well, not *that* good! He was the best of the best. Not a better Pierrot anywhere in the world.

STAGEHAND 1: That's true. He started this company, you know. Him, Ruffi, and Scaramouche. But this one sure is his daughter, alright, and the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Give her a couple of years; you'll see. She'll be just as good as her old man.

STAGEHAND 2: I don't know about that. He was one of a kind. She's good, but...

(Pierrette stops her practice and addresses the stagehands.)

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PIERETTE: Are you talking to me?

STAGEHAND 1: Not me.

STAGEHAND 2: No, not at all.

PIERETTE: Oh.

(She moves off to an out-of-the-way corner to exercise. Enter Isabella, now out of the Colombina costume, and Lola, who has an armful of costumes and a sewing kit. They are oblivious of the Stagehands and don't see Pierette at first.)

ISABELLA: I'm telling you, Carlo is going to be pissed. Flavio's an idiot.

LOLA: *(Working on costumes throughout:)* Serves him right if he gets his face broken. He shouldn't mess with Carlo's sister. That's one hot-tempered family.

ISABELLA: Sylvia should know better. Everybody knows Flavio's a skirt chaser.

(Pierette stops her exercises and listens. She becomes gradually more concerned and disturbed as the conversation continues.)

STAGEHAND 2: You know, I'm hungry.

STAGEHAND 1: Really? So am I. C'mon, we've got time. Let's eat; we can come back and finish this later.

(The stagehands exit.)

LOLA: *(Half smiling:)* Well, he's good at it. He can be quite charming...until you really get to know him. Now he's even after Lavinia.

ISABELLA: His "charm" didn't fool me. You know he pulled his line on me, too, don't you?

LOLA: You gotta be joking! Doesn't he know that you're married?

ISABELLA: Sure, he knows. He doesn't care. There isn't a single principled bone in his whole body. He's a worm and only cares about one thing.

LOLA: Yeah, and we all know what that is, don't we?

ISABELLA: You've got that right.

LOLA: Men!

ISABELLA: Men!

(Lola notices Pierette, who is very near tears.)

LOLA: Hey, kid, what's the matter with you?

PIERETTE: Me, nothing; nothing.

ISABELLA: *(Somewhat surprised and flustered:)* Pierette? I didn't see you.

LOLA: Why are you looking so upset, Pierette?

PIERETTE: Upset? No, I'm fine.

LOLA: No you're not; you're practically crying. What's the matter?

ISABELLA: Leave her alone, Lola.

LOLA: Why? What did I do?

ISABELLA: Nothing.

LOLA: You still miss your dad, don't you? Poor kid; it's only been...what? Six months since he died? Not a very long time.

PIERETTE: No, that's not it.

LOLA: Well, then, what? It can't be that old anxiety about playing your dad's role, can it? Because you were great today, kid; I know, I watched. You're a fine Pierrot...so...what's the problem?

PIERETTE: Nothing. I'm just fine; really.

LOLA: No, you're not. Look at you. What's bothering you? Is it me? Did I say something?

ISABELLA: It's not you.

LOLA: What do you mean it's not me? How would you know? What's going on?

PIERETTE: It's nothing. Really. I'm fine.

LOLA: You're not fine; you're crying about something. Is it something I said? Something I did?

PIERETTE: No. It's nothing. Really. Forget it.

ISABELLA: I told you that it isn't you, Lola. Leave it alone. It's nothing that you said, nothing that you did, not about you at all.

LOLA: But how could you...? You know what's wrong!

(Pierette looks at Lola; then at Isabella.)

ISABELLA: Well...yes.

(Pause.)

PIERETTE: You *know*?!

ISABELLA: Yes, I know... Of course I know.

PIERETTE: How? How could you know? Nobody knows...not anybody.

LOLA: So there *is* something bothering you.

PIERETTE: You can't know!

ISABELLA: I do know. I can see it.

PIERETTE: You can see it?

LOLA: See? ...What?!

ISABELLA: *(To Lola:)* It's not for me to tell. But...I thought that everybody could see it.

PIERETTE: Oh God.

ISABELLA: But it's not for me to tell anybody, so I won't.

PIERETTE: Thank you.

LOLA: Oh come on. You can tell me. I'll keep quiet. Won't you tell me what's bothering you?

PIERETTE: It's nothing...only... *(To Isabella:)* I can't believe you know. I haven't told anyone. I thought I kept it to myself. How could you possibly...?

ISABELLA: I can see it in your face, lamb, and I can hear it in your voice, too.

PIERETTE: You can? When? How?

ISABELLA: Whenever...

(She stops herself at first but then decides to go on.)

Well, you know, whenever you're...

PIERETTE: *(Finishing Isabella's thought:)* Around him.

(Pause.)

ISABELLA: *(Looking from Pierette to Lola and back:)* Well...yes.

PIERETTE: Oh God.

ISABELLA: You can't help it. Love makes us all go crazy; that's all there is to it. It's not your fault if you get all soft and weak around the face and shaky in your voice when you're near him.

LOLA: Near who? I had no idea you were interested in anyone. Who is he, anyway?

PIERETTE: *(Trying to ignore Lola:)* My God, does he know? I'll die if he knows.

ISABELLA: Are you kidding?! Him! He's too full of himself to know anything. He wouldn't know if you put a fifty foot tall sign in front of his face.

LOLA: Whose face?!

PIERETTE: Please, you can't tell him. I'll die if he finds out.

ISABELLA: Don't worry; I wouldn't tell him. What good would it do? He's too shallow and self-centered, the little...!

PIERETTE: Please, don't.

ISABELLA: I'm sorry, but it's true. You've got to know that he's not worth it. I don't understand what any of you see in that nasty little playboy. You're worth a hundred times more than him.

LOLA: Oh, no! You can't mean...not...Flavio!? Why that lousy two-timing creep. That filthy little scab. You're crying over him?

PIERETTE: Please don't say anything. Please!

LOLA: I won't; don't worry, but I'd like to kick him where it would do the most damage. I don't believe he's flirting with you, too.

PIERETTE: Me, too! No, not me, too. Why, has he been flirting with you?

LOLA: Oh, more than that, sweetie. We were supposed to be an item, if you know what I mean. That is, until I caught him with Sy...with another item! The louse. What's he done to you?

PIERETTE: Nothing. Just... Nothing at all!

LOLA: That snake! He didn't pull that "You're my soul mate" line on you, did he? Or the "It's like I've known you all my life" routine? The rat. I'll wring his nasty little neck!

PIERETTE: He didn't pull anything on me. You don't get it. I'm the one girl he hasn't hit on!

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