

Polichinela's Wife – a tattered trophy wife, with an addiction to flashy jewels and a yearning for class

Scene VI

Signor Polichinela and His Wife arrive at Dona Sirena's house for her party. They have brought their beautiful daughter Sylvia with them.

Sirena: Oh, Mr Polichinela! I was afraid that you would not come. The party has not yet begun for me.

Polichinela: The delay was no fault of mine. It was my wife who could not decide which of forty dresses to wear.

Mrs P: If it was up to him I'd be wearing any old thing. See how flustered I am from so much rushing.

Sirena: You are as beautiful as ever.

Polichinela: And she's only wearing half of her jewels. She couldn't wear them all, they weigh so much.

Sirena: And who better than you to glory in his wife displaying the fruits of richness won through your own work?

Mrs P: But isn't it time to enjoy it, as I say to him, and to have more noble aspirations? Imagine. Now he wants to marry our daughter off to a businessman.

Sirena: Oh, Mr Polichinela! Your daughter deserves much better than a businessman! You mustn't contemplate that. You must not sacrifice her heart to your interests. What do you say, Sylvia?

Polichinela: She would prefer some young dandy, for, very much to my regret, she is given to reading novels and poetry.

Mrs P: My husband thinks that only money is of worth and value in this world.

Polichinela: I think that without money nothing is of worth or value in the world; that it is the price of everything.

Sirena: Don't talk like that! What about virtue, and knowledge and nobility?

Polichinela: Everything has its price, who can doubt that? Nobody knows that better than me, who bought most of all that, and for not very much.

Sirena: Oh, Mr Polichinela! You jest. You know very well that money isn't everything, and that if your daughter falls in love with a noble gentleman it would not be good to deny her. I know that you have the sensitive heart of a father.

Polichinela: That is true. I would be capable of anything for my daughter.

Sirena: Even of financial ruin?