

## Call Back Side for DOÑA SIRENA and COLOMBINA

*Doña Sirena and Colombina, coming out of the pavilion.*

Sirena:                    This will drive me to distraction, Colombina! That a lady should face such dreadful affrontery because of low-class out-of-control people! How dare you come back to me with such news?

Colombina:                And didn't you need to know?

Sirena:                    I would be better off dead! And did they all say the same thing?

Colombina:                One by one, as you heard ... The tailor, that he would not send you the dress until you pay everything you owe him.

Sirena:                    Insolence! Highway robbery! When it's he who owes me all his business in this town, because until I employed him to dress me he did not know what it was to dress ladies.

Colombina:                And the cooks and the musicians and the servants, they all said the same: that they will not serve at the party tonight if they are not paid in advance.

Sirena:                    Scum! Bandits! When has such insolence been seen in people born to serve us! Can we only pay in money now? Is money the only thing that's valued in the world? How sad for women like me, without the help of a husband, of family, of male kin ...! A woman on her own is worth nothing in this world, no matter how noble or virtuous she may be. Oh times of perdition! Times of the Apocalypse! The Antichrist must have come!

Colombina: I've never seen you so brow-beaten. I don't know you. You've been able to overcome worse plights than this.

Sirena: Those were other times, Colombina. In those days my youth and beauty were powerful allies. Princes and great lords surrendered at my feet.

Colombina: On the other hand, your experience and knowledge of the world were not as great as now. And as for your beauty, it was never so ripe, believe me.

Sirena: Don't flatter me! When would I find myself in this state if I were the Doña Sirena of my twenties? But you, you're not even twenty and you don't know how to make the most of it. I would never have thought it, when I found myself so alone, and I adopted you, a maid, as my niece. If instead of wasting your youth falling in love with that Arlequín, that poet with nothing to offer but verses and music, you made better use of yourself, we wouldn't find ourselves in such a sorry state!

Colombina: What do you want? I'm still too young to resign myself to being loved and not love in return. And if I must be skilled in making men suffer for my love, I need first to know how to suffer when I'm in love. I'll be able to get rid of him. I'm not yet twenty. Don't think that I have so little judgement as to consider marrying Arlequín.

Sirena: I do not trust you, you're very capricious and you let yourself get carried away by fantasy. But let's think about what's important now. What can we do amid so great a plight? My guests will be here momentarily, all people of quality and importance, and among them Señor Polichinela with his wife and his daughter, who, for many reasons, matter more to me than all the rest. You know how some of the most

noble gentlemen frequent this house, but, like me, their nobility is tarnished, for lack of money. For any of them, Señor Polichinela's daughter, with her lavish trust fund, and the immense fortune that she'll inherit on the death of her father, would be a very advantageous match. Many are they that pay her court. For the benefit of them all, I enlist my great friendship with Señor Polichinela and his wife. Whoever is favoured, I know he'll requite my good offices fulsomely, because I made each of them sign a contract to be sure. I have no other means than these to restore my estate; if, in the meantime, some rich businessman took a fancy to you ... who knows? This house could be again what it was in days gone by! But if tonight the insolence of those people prevails, if I cannot hold my party ... I don't want to think about it ..., it will be my ruin!

Colombina:                Don't worry. We will have what we need to entertain our guests. And as for musicians and servants, Arlequín, who not for nothing is a poet and in love with me, will know how to improvise it all. He knows a lot of good-humoured good-for-nothings who're up for anything. You'll see, nothing will be missing, and your guests will say that they've never in their life been at such a marvellous party.

Sirena:                    Ay, Colombina! If that were so, how you'd rise in my affection! Go and find your poet ... There's no time to be lost.

Colombina:                My poet? He's walking on the other side of these gardens, in secret, awaiting a sign from me ...

Sirena:                    It won't be right for me to be present when you meet, because I can't lower myself to ask for such favours ... I'll leave everything up to you. Let nothing

be missing for our party, and I'll be sure to repay them all; for this present distressing strait cannot last for ever ... or I wouldn't be Doña Sirena!

Colombina:            Everything will be arranged. Don't worry.

*Doña Sirena exits through the pavilion.*