

Jan Bach

THE STUDENT FROM SALAMANCA

An operatic farce in one act

LIBRETTO

freely adapted by the composer

from Cervantes' interludes

LA CUEVA DE SALAMANCA

and

EL VIEJO CELOSO

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DeKalb, Illinois

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARIANA, a beautiful young wife . . . . . Soprano  
CRACCIO, her aged husband . . . . . Tenor  
CRISTINA, their buxom, middle-aged servant. . . . Mezzo Soprano  
GONZALO, Craccio's apothecary . . . . . Tenor  
NICOLAS, Craccio's barber . . . . . Bass-Baritone  
STEPHANO, a handsome young student. . . . . Baritone

## COSTUMES

Mariana, Craccio, Cristina, Gonzalo, and Nicolas are dressed in appropriate Spanish costumes of the early seventeenth century. Stephano wears a simple hooded robe of Ecclesiastical design and sandals.

## STAGE SETTING

Stage right: The brightly-lit interior of Craccio's drawing room, furnished with tables and chairs of Spanish style. In its upstage wall is a door, above a low platform, which leads to the kitchen. An entrance door is set very far downstage in the room's side wall closest to center stage.

Stage left: Craccio's high-walled garden, lit by moonlight, in which are seen several potted shrubs and a path leading from the door of his house to offstage left.

The libretto for this opera was paraphrased from S. Griswold Morley's English translation of *THE INTERLUDES OF CERVANTES*, published by Princeton University Press. The source for the opera was suggested by Jack Weiner of Northern Illinois University's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Approximate duration of opera: 60 minutes

## THE STUDENT FROM SALAMANCA - SYNOPSIS

Craccio, an old man, packs for a trip with the help of his maid, Cristina, while his young wife, Mariana, begs him to stay. No sooner has he left for the coach than Mariana's true feelings for her husband are revealed: he wears her out with his constant, feebly amorous attentions. Cristina counters that he wears her out as well with his hypochondriac complaints and demands. She feels that Mariana needs some diversion, and has planned a party in Craccio's absence. That very afternoon a large hamper of food was brought secretly into the kitchen, and she has even invited two men in to liven up the party. Mariana's enthusiasm is short-lived when she learns that the two men are Gonzalo, the local apothecary, and Nicolas, Craccio's barber, but she agrees to play along. Cristina calls the two men in from the garden where they have been hiding, and soon Gonzalo is threatening to leave if he cannot sing the song he has composed in honor of the two ladies. He is interrupted in his song by the appearance of Stephano, a poor, but young and handsome, student from Salamanca who was robbed on a pilgrimage to Rome, is returning home, and begs a place to stay for the night. Cristina takes a fancy to the young man, and asks him to accompany her to the kitchen to prepare the poultry for the banquet. Gonzalo, jealous of Cristina's attentions to Stephano, allows her to leave only if she gives him a full report of her activities with the student while in the kitchen. Cristina's descriptions of the kitchen activities are thinly-disguised double-entendres which make it apparent, to the opera audience at least, that she and Stephano are locked in a lovers' tryst. Just as Gonzalo is preparing to storm the kitchen (thinking that Stephano is devouring the banquet by himself), offstage groans indicate the unexpected reappearance of Craccio. Gonzalo and Nicolas hide in the kitchen, leaving only Mariana to admit Craccio, who enters his house torn, dirty, and limping. He tells Mariana that he was no sooner out of town than the carriage lost a wheel and he was flung into a ditch full of garbage. He wants only a bowl of hot soup and his bed. When he calls for Cristina, she arrives from the kitchen nearly completely undressed, explaining that she was dressing for bed near the fire. A noise from the kitchen is heard; Craccio demands to know who is there. Cristina answers that it is only a poor student from Salamanca sleeping by the fire, and that Craccio mustn't deal with him — he has learned powerful magic in the Cave of Salamanca. Craccio, always suspicious, calls the student in anyway, and Stephano enters from the kitchen with the cowl of his hooded robe covering his face, presenting an awesome figure to Craccio, who nevertheless asks him to demonstrate his magical powers. Stephano answers that he will materialize a huge banquet, attended by two demons disguised as two of Craccio's closest acquaintances in order to avoid frightening the ladies. He produces a bag of gunpowder (left by the thieves who had robbed him), describing it as nitre scraped from the Salamancan cave which he will use to work his magic. He chants an incantation while using the gunpowder to draw a magic circle before the kitchen door. He lights it; there is a terrific explosion; when the smoke clears, Gonzalo and Nicolas are revealed flanking the overflowing hamper of food. Craccio is astounded — the student is indeed a magician whose magic could be used to good advantage in his house. He implores the student to stay with him. Stephano agrees to stay only as long as his two demons are allowed to remain to attend to his every wish, and Craccio agrees that they shall remain in his house as long as he lives. In a closing ensemble, all express their thanks for this turn of events—all, that is, but Gonzalo and Nicolas, who agree that they have now been placed in a situation from which they may never be able to escape.

# THE STUDENT FROM SALAMANCA

## *Orchestral Introduction*

### CURTAIN

*The drawing room of CRACCIO's house, stage right; a small formal garden with several potted shrubs, stage left. In the house, CRISTINA is bustling about, collecting the clothes and jewelry strewn about the room and packing them into a large wicker suitcase. She stops packing momentarily to admire a large necklace she has just picked up. She holds it in place at her neck, admiring her reflection in a mirror and turning this way and that. CRACCIO appears in the rear doorway of the room, notices CRISTINA, and shakes with growing rage and indignation.*

CRACCIO (*lispng throughout*)

CRISTINA

Cristina!

You'll have to pack it faster!  
Or must I prove, if you don't move,  
I'm headed for disaster!

Disaster! I'm headed for disaster!  
It is a fact, if I'm not packed  
I'm sure to miss the carriage!

The carriage which will take me to the marriage,  
the marriage of my brother's only son,  
In the name of Heaven, when will you be done?

*(CRISTINA bustles about, gathering clothes and other objects for the suitcase and packing them in.)*

My hose?

And have you found my other shoe?

And have you thought to pack my laxatives and pills?

Then go!

*(CRISTINA turns on CRACCIO)*

Cristina!

You really have to hurry!  
I'm so upset my brow is wet  
my heart is in a flurry!

My master?

Disaster?

The carriage?

I think that I am nearly through.

They're with your other clothes.

It's here, you have no need to fear.

Oh, no!

You must remind me that you suffer  
constipation and the gout and apoplexy  
and a host of other ills!

Don't worry —

A flurry?

A flurry, my heart is in a flurry! It's getting late, it's nearly eight, the hour of my departure!

Departure for the carriage which will take me to the marriage, the marriage of my brother's only son, for the love of Heaven, when will you be done?

*(CRISTINA moves about, gathering more clothes and stuffing them in the suitcase.)*

My ruff?

And have you packed my wig of wool?

Have you remembered to include my extra truss?

Then go!

*(CRISTINA again turns on CRACCIO)*

Cristina!

My nerves are overwrought!  
If they find me dead it's on your head,  
you've got me so distraught!

Distraught! You've got me so distraught!  
My time is gone, I must go on, I really have to hasten!

To hasten my departure for the carriage which will take me to the marriage, the marriage of my brother's only son, by all the saints in Heaven, when will you be done?

*(CRISTINA gathers the few remaining objects, stuffs them in the suitcase, and slams it shut.)*

My boots?

Have you the present for the bride?

And have you packed my teeth,  
the extra set of pearl?

Departure?

I think your case is nearly full,

It's with the other stuff!

It's there, and prepared for you to wear.

Oh, no!

I'm only human, there's no need for you to treat me like an animal, I do the best I can and I can do without your fuss!

Now what?

Distraught?

To hasten?

I think now everything's inside.

With the figs and other fruits.

I have, with the ointment and the salve.

Then go!

*(CRISTINA turns on CRACCIO one final time, backing him near a corner of the room)*

*(MARIANA enters through the upstage doors)*

Cristina!

*(CRACCIO notices MARIANA)*

Mariana?

MARIANA

My darling husband, must you leave now?

CRACCIO

Dear Mariana, do not grieve now.

MARIANA

What shall I do the seven days that you are gone?

CRACCIO

Never fear, Cristina's here, must you be so sad and drawn?

MARIANA

How can I live without your presence?

CRACCIO *(to Cristina)*

My hose?

MARIANA

I'll waste away without your pleasance.

CRACCIO *(to Cristina)*

My shoe?

Oh, no!

There is no need for you to treat me so, I do the best I can, you know. I'll call your bluff, I've had enough, you'll have to get yourself another girl!

*(aside to the audience)*

I'm the door, I won't take this dreadful treatment any more!

I'm a wreck! There's a soreness and a throbbing in my neck!

You'll do without,

without a doubt! I have to go.

I'll leave this town without a frown and take a ship to Mexico!

*(unless I drown)*

*(to Craccio)* I said they're with your clothes!

*(a burying ground fathoms down?)*

*(to Craccio)* I've included quite a few!

When you return you'll find me dead and all the  
curtains drawn, don't go away, ----

(even if I drown, I'll leave this town. I have to go!  
I'll leave this town in my new gown and say hello  
to Mexico. )

CRACCIO (*to Mariana*)

All right, I'll stay!

MARIANA

What will you do when *I* am gone?

MARIANA AND CRISTINA

What did you say?

CRACCIO

I said, I'll stay.

MARIANA AND CRISTINA  
(*obviously disappointed*)

You *won't* go away?

CRACCIO

No, my nephew can get married without me, he has his own.  
You ladies have convinced me that I'm needed more at home.

MARIANA AND CRISTINA

(*to each other*)

What did we say?

CRACCIO (*to the audience, but  
overheard by the ladies*)

I have a good-for-nothing servant girl of dubious  
design who is continually threatening to leave.

MARIANA (*to Cristina*)

You overplayed your role when you  
vowed you'd start a new and diff'rent life.

I have my darling Mariana who would wither on the  
vine, who cannot get along without me, who  
would grieve.

CRISTINA (*to Mariana*)

*You* overplayed your role as the young  
and helpless tender loving wife.

Although I cannot really blame her, I was considered quite the young and ardent lover in my time.

And ev'ry morning since our wedding I've bestowed on her some proofs of my affection, though no longer in my prime.

Why, if I'm gone a week, in all that time I won't be getting any . . . younger, and ev'ry day away from Mariana is an age.

And if Cristina goes and leaves my wife alone, how could I keep her safe from danger, temptation? Could I lock her in a cage?

Oh, no, it's better that I stay, rather than upset my Mariana so.

CRISTINA

My master! Forgive me! You've made me see the error of my ways.

I would not spoil your journey, I surely can remain for only seven days.

But, you know your health is failing, it would do you so much good to get away.

MARIANA (*to Cristina*)

Could he think me so dependent on his love I could not bear to see him go?

CRISTINA (*to Mariana*)

You only have yourself to blame for flattering the ego of your aging Romeo.

MARIANA (*to Cristina*)

I don't know what to do. Cristina, can you save me from this plight?

CRISTINA

I guess it's left to *me* to set this situation right.

MARIANA (*to Cristina*)

You'd better do it soon, it doesn't look as if he really wants to go.

(*CRISTINA approaches CRACCIO*)

CRACCIO

What do you mean? I've made my resolution, there's no need to make a scene.

This is absurd! If you want to go I'll let you, I won't hear another word!

That's true. A little trip could strengthen, regenerate, renew!

And remember that she'll love you more when you return,  
much more than if you stay.

She will? She led me to believe that my  
absence could kill! How could she gain  
in passion if I wander?

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

*(CRACCIO muses over this quotation, a leering smile slowly spreads over his lips, and then gradually his new decision dawns on him, which he announces to the great relief of MARIANA and CRISTINA, who resume their stereotypical roles)*

CRACCIO

MARIANA

CRISTINA

I'll do it! I'll go!

My darling husband, must  
you leave me?

Ev'rything is packed?

Except your cane, and the  
clothes upon your back.

You know your absence, it will  
grieve me.

And the present for the bride?

I have it! It's tucked away inside.

Hand me the case!

What shall I do the seven  
days that you are gone?

It's late. You'll have to race!

*(Loud offstage whistle)*

Don't go aw-

*(CRACCIO grabs MARIANA and kisses her on the lips, stifling her vocal climax)*

There's the whistle of the  
coachman, I'm off!

Don't forget to take the potion  
for your cough.

I'll keep your loving wife  
here safe 'til your return.

*(CRACCIO again kisses MARIANA)*

I'm so excited! I have no  
time to burn.

Convey my greetings and my  
love to all your kin.

You left us with the name  
and address of your Inn?

*(CRACCIO again kisses MARIANA)*

One final kiss—

*(Again CRACCIO kisses MARIANA and continues to embrace her)*

Ahh --What Heaven, what bliss!

CRACCIO

MARIANA

CRISTINA

Good-bye?

Good-bye.

Good-bye?

Good-bye.

Good-bye.

Good-bye.

Good-bye.

*(MARIANA breaks CRACCIO's embrace, and gently pushes him toward the door. CRACCIO picks up his bag and, struggling, moves out the door which MARIANA holds open for him. CRACCIO moves up the garden path to the stage left wings.)*

Good-bye.

Good-bye.

Good-bye.

*(looking after CRACCIO)*

Good-bye.

*(softly and sweetly)*

Good riddance!

*(CRACCIO moves offstage to the left wings. When he disappears, MARIANA suddenly and very violently slams the door shut)*

You can go to the devil  
and stay there, for all  
I care!

*(MARIANA slowly sinks down wearily into a chair by the door)*

I don't know how much longer I can bear my husband's love;  
He is so old his body is cold, and yet he's full of ardor.  
If he were only stronger he would have no need to prove that  
He's still youthful. To be truthful, it is getting so much  
harder to remain his faithful spouse.  
I'm a pris'ner in my own house.  
The best of him is dead and gone, and yet he *will* go on and on.  
He wants to share my bed all day  
and night, he's wasting me away!  
It's flattering to be admired,  
but he is making me so tired.  
No longer capable of sin, he plays a game he cannot win.  
His favors only make me yawn and yet he *will* go on and on!  
I don't know how much longer I can bear his stifling love.

*(CRISTINA advances to MARIANA)*

CHRISTINA

MARIANA

My lady, forgive me, but you only have  
yourself to blame, remaining with a  
grey old man like that!

Why, Cristina, how can you say that? You  
know that I was forced into this marriage by  
an uncle!

That may be true, that is all the better reason you  
should have a fling or two!

That may be so, but that isn't any reason not to gull  
the so-and-so.

I only said I'd keep you here 'til his return, I  
never said we'd be alone!

Forget the past a little while, be glad  
he's gone away.

You should be glad he's taken leave, but  
you're young and so naive. You simply  
must believe me, for your good you must  
deceive him!

*(with forced courtesy — barely containing her irritation with Mariana)*  
Forgive me if I must discuss your husband with such scorn,  
but I have done his bidding since the day that you were born.  
You presume his youth was better, but I cannot hold my tongue,  
why, he hasn't changed a minim since the days when *he* was young.

Cristina this, Cristina that; "Take off my boots, hang up my hat!"  
Cristina that, Cristina this; "I'm having a terrible stroke of paralysis!"  
Cristina once, Cristina twice; "A steaming bath! My body's cold as ice!"  
Cristina twice, Cristina once; "I'm dying, send for the priest, send for the nuns!"

He wouldn't have been any better for you before he turned so grey.  
When young he didn't think he'd live to see another day.  
He was always at the surgeon's with his tales of fancied ills,  
I was always at the chemist's for more laxatives and pills —

Cristina poor, Cristina rich; "Send for the doctor! I have an itch!"  
Cristina rich, Cristina poor; "I need an emetic, I need a cure!"  
Cristina tall, Cristina short; "I need a cathartic, go and get me a quart!"  
Cristina short, Cristina tall; "I'm dying, prepare my litter and my pall!"

Why, Cristina, how can you say that?  
My husband's very jealous,  
he never lets me out.  
You've seen the ways I must behave  
to keep him free from doubt  
of my affections.

*(MARIANA, protecting herself, misunderstands  
CRISTINA's meaning)*

Cristina! I'm surprised at you! I never had  
suspected you were *that* way, and you promised  
to protect me while he's gone!

Cristina! Cristina! *(acquiescing)* Cristina!  
*(musing)* Cristina? *(coolly)* He never gives me  
any rest when he is home.  
I was so looking forward to some leisure on  
my own.

I should be faithful to my husband, I'm  
surprised at what you say.

*(lost in thought)* Your suggestion  
feeds a hunger  
I'd never have had if he were younger. . .

CRISTINA

I never saw such a man in *my* life, at least nowhere in Spain.  
So what if he makes you go to bed? He's making me go insane!  
I know he always tires you out with amorous advances.—  
Consider how he tires me out with all his worried dances!

Cristina cold, Cristina hot —

MARIANA  
(*playing the game*) "You've"  
forgotten to empty the chamber  
pot!"

(*both ladies laugh*)

Cristina hot, Cristina cold —

"I'm starting to rot! I smell the mold!"

(*more laughter*)

Cristina here, Cristina there —

"Bandage my rupture!  
Say a prayer."

Cristina there, Cristina here — (together)  
"I'm dying. Prepare my coffin and my bier!"

Cristina there, Cristina here —

There's never been such a man in the world,  
not anywhere at sea,  
not anywhere on earth.

There's never been such a man in the world  
not anywhere on land,  
Anywhere on earth.

He does not need a maid to call —  
He does not need a wife at all —

(together)

He only needs one thing on earth —  
He needth a nurth!"

(*both ladies laugh*)

My lady, it's so good to see you laugh.  
I've seen nothing but tears  
for the last two years  
since you became his better half.

Say no more, my dear Cristina,  
no more arguments — you've won.  
I may be tired,  
but you've now inspired  
me to have a little fun.

You may be tired, but tired of what?  
You may be tired of my master!  
Now that you're free,  
you must agree with me  
it would be better if we put him out to pasture!

Your words are queer, but the meaning's clear ---  
no more arguments — you've won.  
After two years served, I certainly deserve  
the chance to have a little fun.

You've performed your wifely duties well,  
but now you need to sing and dance.  
"When the cat's away, the mice will play,"  
or so they say on such a day —

Exactly!

*(soothing MARIANA)*

Calm your fears, he's no longer here,  
and it's a week 'til his return.

*(MARIANA still looks doubtful)*

*(angrily)* Forget the old man!  
Here is my plan —

This may be my only chance!

I'm a little apprehensive.  
If my husband should ever learn -

What shall we do?  
I leave it all to you.

CRISTINA

*(barely containing her excitement)*

This very afternoon at my request, an old washerwoman whom I've  
known for years brought a large covered hamper to your pantry.  
Your husband was told it was laundry, but had he grown suspicious  
and looked under the cloth he would have seen a feast fit for a king!

MARIANA

Cristina! You amaze me!

CRISTINA

A veritable Easter basket it was, with every dish a person could wish:  
poultry and fish, beef and swine — every dish the best of its kind;  
and best of all, a four-gallon flagon of the finest wine!

MARIANA

Cristina! You bedaze me!

CRISTINA

I intended we should have a little party the moment he left.  
And for the final touch I invited two men of my acquaintance  
to share our banquet, our songs and dances, *(secretively)* and  
who knows what else they may be sharing before this night is over!

MARIANA

Cristina! You amaze me! You knew all along I'd accept your scheme,  
placing an order for such a feast, every dish a dish supreme,  
fish and fowl, wine and beast; inviting two men to dine with us —

MARIANA

CRISTINA

These men you speak of, I need more information.  
Are they young?

Younger than my master!

(That remark gives me little consolation!) Are they strong?

(That's hardly reason for a joyous celebration!) Can they dance some?

Are they tall, dark, and handsome?

*(taken aback)*

Oh. Well at least are they passably amusing?

(If I could only know!) Are they defensive, shy or self-accusing?

(If they were, I'd make them go.) And are their skin and hair of passing brightness?

And do their manners show much breeding and politeness?

*(taken aback)*

Oh. Well then, (disconcerted) well --

Oh Hell!  
It cannot be Gonzalo and Nicolas you mean?  
Those good-for-nothing asses!  
My God, this is obscene!

I'll never let them enter anymore!  
How could you dare to ask into this room  
such gentlemen of service whom  
my husband knows surpassingly?  
Are you harassing me?

CRISTINA

Oh no, my lady, I never would do that;  
but you have some cruel neighbors who would love to see a spat  
between your ardent, aging husband and his young and blushing bride.  
What would they say to Craccio if they saw men come inside  
whom they had never seen before? *These* men will they ignore,  
for they've been here very often; who's to know what they've come for?  
Perhaps the barber left his strop, the chemist brought a potion.  
There is no cause to give your neighbors any other notion!  
You know Gonzalo's keen on me, and Nicolas does like you.  
They'd never give your husband any reason for to strike you  
and they never would abuse you. Who knows? They might amuse you!  
Please let me ask them in once more— they are just outside the door.

They can run much faster!

They'll give your feet some clearance.

Let's not be too concerned with  
personal appearance.

I think you'll find them so.

I've never found them so.

I've never seen two men scrubbed any  
cleaner.

Let's not be too concerned with  
personal demeanor.

My lady! Why all these questions? You  
know these men full well — they are  
your husband's chemist and his barber!

Shh! They're liable to hear.  
They are hiding very near.  
In fact, they're just outside the door!

MARIANA (*confused, uncertain*)

I don't know what I'm doing, I know it is a sin, I don't know what will happen —

(CRISTINA goes to the door, opens it, and leans out)

CRISTINA

Psst! Gonzalo!

(GONZALO stands up behind a large potted plant in the garden)

Nicolas!

(NICOLAS stands up behind another potted plant, rubs his eyes, and yawns widely, making no attempt to conceal it)

You can both come in.

(GONZALO and NICOLAS leave the bushes and begin to move toward the door. They pause)

GONZALO and NICOLAS

CRISTINA

The coast is clear?

It is, you can both draw near.

(They stealthily approach the door, and pause again)

It's safe to come inside?

It is, you need no longer hide.

(They enter the room stealthily, then gradually relax as CRISTINA closes the door. GONZALO bows deeply, perhaps preferring a bouquet to MARIANA. NICOLAS, however, stares dumbfounded at MARIANA. The two ladies attempt to greet the men, but are continually interrupted by GONZALO's speech which underscores his grand entrance.)

GONZALO

MARIANA and CRISTINA

Dear ladies —

the apples of our eyes,

endowed with those endearing traits that we both idolize,

at last you see that we are here,

Gonzalo —

Good evening.

Nicolas —

NICOLAS

Good ----

our courage did not fail us.

evening.

Behold your ardent lovers dear,  
*Semper Fidelis!*

MARIANA

I take that as a compliment, although I've never  
understood that Latin that you speak.

CRISTINA

You've learned the language of your chemist's calling well,  
although for me you might as well be speaking Greek!

NICOLAS

*(making advances to MARIANA)*

I never learned me Latin, but I can tell you this —  
it doesn't take much learning to pucker up me lips to place a —

GONZALO *(interrupting NICOLAS)*

You see before you  
a chemist and a barber

MARIANA *(to CRISTINA)*

There's more?

CRISTINA *(to MARIANA)*

It's an encore!

who openly adore you,  
afame with burning ardor.  
You have admirers everywhere  
but Nick and I surpass them  
weighed down with all this love we bear —  
*Gradus ad Parnassum!*

CRISTINA *(to MARIANA)*

Isn't he the scholar though? There's much there to commend him.

MARIANA *(to CRISTINA)*

That may be so, but what a pity that I'll never understand him!

NICOLAS *(again advancing to MARIANA)*

I never learned me Latin, I never read a book.  
I'm just a simple barber, but I can do much more than stand and —

*(alternative  
for X-rated  
performance)*

I never learned me Latin, I never had much luck.  
I'm just a simple barber, but I can show how well I've learned to —

GONZALO *(interrupting NICOLAS)*

MARIA

Dear ladies,

What? Again?

CRISTINA (disgusted)

in honor of your glory  
(*he produces a guitar from his cloak*)  
I've composed some lines of music.  
May I sing them *Ex Tempore*?

Men!

(*MARIANA and CRISTINA look briefly at each other*)

MARIANA

That would be very nice, I'm sure —  
but aren't you hungry after waiting for so long?

CRISTINA

There's a hamper in the kitchen full of food and drink.  
Let us dine and then we'll hear your little song.

NICOLAS

A hamper full of food, Gonzalo! Let's take a look.  
There's more pleasure in the eating than you'll find in any song or  
any book!

GONZALO

"*Ars Longa, Vita Brevis*" is my motto;  
how can you think of food and drink compared with my legato?

MARIANA

We do appreciate the thought, you are so very kind —

CRISTINA

But we planned to have the entertainment *after* we have dined.

NICOLAS

A hamper full of food, Gonzalo, wouldn't that be dandy?

GONZALO

But that is so contrary to my *Modus Operandi*!

MARIANA and CRISTINA

GONZALO

NICOLAS

Come, let us dine first!

But the song that I've rehearsed!

I'm dying of thirst!

Don't act a part!

Then may everyone be cursed!

How dare you denigrate my art?

I'm starving, let us start!

I think that I'll depart!

Don't be like that!

Where's my hat?

you flutterbat!

I won't take that!

*(Holding his guitar like a racquet, GONZALO takes a swing at NICOLAS but misses him. NICOLAS easily overpowers GONZALO and is preparing to strike him when CRISTINA's warning freezes him in place)*

CRISTINA

Hold it! Hold it right there!

MARIANA *(to CRISTINA)*

Perhaps it would help to clear the air  
if you recited the bill of fare.

*(CRISTINA moves over to GONZALO)*

CRISTINA *(seductively)*

The basket contains some cold meat pies, a ham, cod and tuna,  
a squid, eels and shellfish, two plump young chickens yet to be plucked —

GONZALO

Cristina! I ignore you!

*(CRISTINA turns her attention to NICOLAS)*

CRISTINA

A suckling pig, dates and figs, fresh ripe tomatoes,  
sweet melons, a bowl of passion fruit —

NICOLAS

Cristina! I adore you!

CRISTINA

Oranges, bananas, boiled custard, candied fruits, marzipan,  
and best of all, a four-gallon flagon of the finest wine!

GONZALO *(angrily)*

Cristina! I implore you,  
don't tell us any more of what you have in store,  
the treats to eat from such a basket  
filled with cold meat pies, a ham,  
cod and tuna,  
a squid, eels and shellfish,  
two plump young chickens  
yet to be plucked, a veritable Easter basket  
within the kitchen.

*(GONZALO)*

You'll have to wait  
to taste the wares that  
they've supplied. First  
sample how I sing my song

CRISTINA

Gonzalo! Won't you  
reconsider? You cannot  
mean it, you're an awful  
kidder! Gonzalo! Won't you

NICOLAS *(enraptured)*

I cannot wait to taste the  
wares that you've provided,  
If Gonzalo thinks his song  
compares he is misguided.  
I've had enough of him,  
the outlook for his song is dim  
unless he lets me eat before  
he sings.

*(NICOLAS)*

And don't forget the  
suckling pig, the dates  
and figs and the ripe  
tomatoes, sweet melons,  
passion fruit, oranges,

and then you may decide.  
To judge a song unheard  
would kill the soul of any  
bird. It is absurd to criticize a  
song unheard, and your  
criticism stings!

reconsider? Your song will  
still be heard, don't be so  
bitter! We only ask that first  
you let us dine, and then we'll  
gladly hear the song of thine.  
We really are most grateful,  
you need not be so hateful,  
but grant us first a plateful of  
food, a glass of wine.

bananas, boiled custard,  
candied fruits and  
marzipan, and best of all,  
a four-gallon flagon of  
the finest wine!  
Get me a plate,  
I cannot wait,  
I salivate,  
to masticate a fig or date  
won't satiate  
this growing hunger!

(GONZALO)

You'll have to wait to taste  
the wares that they've  
supplied. First sample  
how I sing my song and  
then you may decide. To  
judge a song unheard  
would kill the soul of any  
bird. It is absurd to criti-  
cize a song unheard and  
your criticism stings!

MARIANA

Gonzalo! Won't you  
reconsider? You  
cannot mean it, you're  
an awful kidder!  
Gonzalo! Won't you  
reconsider? Your song  
will still be heard,  
don't be so bitter! We  
only ask that first you  
let us dine, and then  
we'll gladly hear the  
song of thine. We  
really are most  
grateful, you need not  
be so hateful, but  
grant us first a  
plateful of food,  
a glass of wine!

(CRISTINA)

Gonzalo! Won't you  
reconsider? You  
cannot mean it!  
Gonzalo! Won't you  
reconsider? We don't  
demean it! We only  
ask that first we dine  
and then we'll hear  
the song of thine.  
We're really grateful,  
don't be hateful, grant  
us first a plateful of  
food, a glass of wine.

(NICOLAS)

I cannot wait to taste the  
wares that they've pro-  
vided. If you think your  
foolish song compares,  
you are misguided. I've  
had enough of you, the  
chances for your song are  
through unless you  
would let me get some  
food before you sing.

(GONZALO)

Yes?

No, unless you hear the song  
that I've rehearsed.

Yes?

No, I'll see this party  
go to pieces first.

You've got it!

You brought it on yourselves!

Only listen!

Then I'll kiss and  
take my leave!

MARIANA, CRISTINA, NICOLAS

Gonzalo!

Won't you reconsider?

Gonzalo!

Won't you reconsider?

You mean that you would flee?

But we can't have a party with three

How can we hold you?

But we told you —

I'll go away!

Please stay!

Adios!

Don't go!

(GONZALO turns and opens the door, preparing to leave,

CRISTINA

Conference!

(*MARIANA, CRISTINA, and NICOLAS gather in a huddle a short distance from GONZALO. GONZALO pauses in his flight, turns toward the group, and strains to hear their conversation. The door is left ajar.*)

MARIANA (*spoken*)

What can we do? He'll leave unless we let him sing his song, and we really need him for the party. I suppose we've hurt his feelings. After all, he did compose it and he meant for us to hear it as a tribute to our willingness to bring him here tonight. Our banquet can wait a little longer; shall we listen to his song now?

CRISTINA (*spoken*)

This is so silly. I don't know why Gonzalo feels he has to act this way. Perhaps he's never been in such a situation, and he felt that it deserved a special contribution. His song would not have taken any longer than the time we've spent to argue with him, and it's getting late — every minute counts!

NICOLAS (*spoken*)

Gonzalo may be very good as an apothecary but he doesn't sing a song with any more ability than I have, and I sound like a bullfrog! How dare he cast a pall on our proceedings with his firm resolve to leave unless we listen to his song? We must indulge his wishes in the interest of the party.

(*MARIANA, CRISTINA, and NICOLAS move to GONZALO*)

MARIANA, CRISTINA, and NICOLAS

All right, you win. We'll listen to your song.  
We only hope it's not too long.

GONZALO (*happily,  
slightly humbled*)

I promise when my song has ceased,  
I'll lead the way myself to your sumptuous feast!  
Just let me see how my guitar plays —

(*he strums its strings*)

In perfect tune, as always.

(*GONZALO sings, accompanying himself on his guitar*)

When I fill a prescription in pharmacy  
and I pour out a portion of remedy,  
I'm tempted to drink to your charms demure,  
*Gaudeamus Igatur.*

(*STEPHANO's voice is heard offstage left, as GONZALO pauses in his singing to drink from a glass of water*)

STEPHANO

Can anyone pity a poor wandering pilgrim alone on  
the highway bemoaning his griefs?

MARIANA and  
CRISTINA (*reacting to  
Stephano*)

What beautiful singing!

GONZALO

Thank you!

When my mortar and pestle are stored away, and I come  
to your home at the end of the day, I'm hopeful that later  
I may say with glee, "*Veni, Vidi, Vici.*"

*(STEPHANO is again heard offstage, somewhat closer, while  
GONZALO sprays his throat with a large atomizer produced  
from his cloak)*

STEPHANO

Will anyone pity a poor wandering pilgrim, a victim  
of highwaymen, robbers and thieves?

MARIANA and CRISTINA

What a beautiful sorrowful song.

GONZALO

I knew you'd like it. Just wait until you've heard the  
third stanza.

MARIANA and CRISTINA

No more, we prithee --listen!

*(STEPHANO appears in view, at the edge of the garden)*

STEPHANO

Shall anyone pity a poor wandering pilgrim, alone with  
his terror, alone with his fright; a poor wandering pilgrim  
alone on the highway who wants but some bread and a  
bed for the night?

*(STEPHANO notices the open door)*

I see an open door and a dazzling light. Perhaps  
they'll take pity upon my sad plight. At least I'll  
inquire.

*(STEPHANO reaches the door)*

Is anyone at home?

MARIANA and CRISTINA *(to each other)*

What a handsome young sire!

*(The two ladies startle STEPHANO and nearly knock him over in their haste to bring him inside. The door is left standing open)*

CRISTINA

MARIANA

Come in!

Come in!

Come in!

We overheard you singing.

What tales you must be bringing!

Our ears continue ringing  
from the beauty of your singing!

*(The ladies bring STEPHANO into the room and the light)*

MARIANA and CRISTINA

He's the strongest young squire!

NICOLAS

GONZALO

Be careful!

Your husband's very jealous; *(together)*  
we might be on the spot!

We might be victims of a plot!  
Your husband's very jealous;  
we might be on the spot!  
And what does this young man have  
that we haven't got?

CRISTINA

MARIANA

He's got his youth, its strength and spirit.  
we thrill to hear it! *(together)*  
Charm and poise which everyone enjoys,  
hair like a mop —

A beautiful voice,  
we thrill to hear it!  
Charm and poise which everyone enjoys,  
a handsome face —

GONZALO

NICOLAS

Stop! I only mean that he could be a spy!  
We all could die! *(together)*

He might inform old Craccio!  
We all could die!

CRISTINA

MARIANA

Nonsense! By now he's several miles away.

There's no truth in what you say. *(together)*

And he'd never hire a *young* man  
to lead us all astray.  
There's no truth in what you say.

STEPHANO

I wish to make no trouble — I'll just be on my way.

GONZALO and NICOLAS

CRISTINA

There won't be any trouble  
if you leave without delay.

We know that you will have the  
kindness to forgive these  
doubtful men.

Leave now without delay!

MARIANA

We weren't expecting company  
when you walked in.

Leave now without delay!

CRISTINA

(MARIANA)

We don't know where you're going —

Have the courtesy to tell us!           *(together)*

We don't know where you've been —  
Have the courtesy to tell us!

GONZALO and NICOLAS

Have the decency to tell us!

STEPHANO

Let's see. Where shall I begin?

CRISTINA

MARIANA

He's so very masculine!

Amen.

STEPHANO

They call me Stephano, a native of Salamanca,  
a town in the hills of the river Tormes.  
I'd spent all my life as a cloistered young student,  
removed from men's hatred and devious ways.

CRISTINA

MARIANA

He's so innocent and chaste.

What a terrible waste!

STEPHANO

I had just begun a trip to Rome with my only surviving relative,  
an uncle who died on the road in the heart of France.  
I turned to go homeward alone with my heartache,  
alone with confusion in a disordered trance.

GONZALO

NICOLAS

He's playing on their pity!

I'll put the finish to his ditty!

STEPHANO

But I lost my directions, took the wrong tuna instead,  
and came upon a band of some barbarous thieves.  
They beat me and robbed me and left me for dead  
at the side of the road with a ditch for a bed and  
covered with a blanket of rotting leaves!

When I awoke, my possessions were missing.  
They'd taken everything but the clothes on my back.  
The only thing remaining was some ammunition they dropped,  
a ration of gunpowder here in this sack.

*(STEPHANO produces a small sack which he  
displays for all to see)*

I'm making my way back to Salamanca.  
I only stopped here as a pause in my flight  
to beg your indulgence for a poor, starving student  
who wants but some bread and a place for the night.

MARIANA

CRISTINA

What a sorrowful story!

So touching and gory!

We wish you to stay.

What do you say?

*(together)*

What do you say?

GONZALO

I'll give him some money and let him be off,  
and he can eat his supper at someone else's  
trough,  
and sleep on someone else's bed of straw or  
hay —  
this evening only four can play!

(CRISTINA)

Not so fast! Your worries should be  
past.  
There's room for a fifth at our  
evening repast!

But why should we feed him?

We certainly don't need him.

He'll just be in the way.

You heard me say that only four can play!

I know we didn't choose him but consider we  
might use him if you promise not to bruise him.  
There's food in the kitchen to prepare,  
the food in the kitchen over there —

He looks like a winner.  
He might help to fix our dinner  
ere we all grow any thinner!

But you haven't a clue  
to the things that he can do.  
I admit that he's good looking,  
but can he do the cooking?

*(CRISTINA sidles up to GONZALO; lays her hands on his shoulders, and openly flirts suggestively with him)*

CRISTINA

If he can, I'll be free to spend more time with you.  
If he can't, I can teach him a thing or two.  
I'm sure that we can both find things to do.  
Stephano! Have you ever plucked a chicken?

STEPHANO

Are you making fun of me?  
I've been plucked of all my feathers by mine enemy!

*(CRISTINA flirts with STEPHANO in the same manner she flirted with GONZALO)*

CRISTINA

We've been given two chickens that need to be plucked.  
If you don't know how to do it I'll be happy to instruct  
you in the culinary art.

STEPHANO

I don't know how.

CRISTINA

Then it's time you start.  
Mariana, you amuse our other guests  
while Stephano and I prepare to get undressed  
our chickens. And I'll show you how to grease  
my cooking pot. Excuse us, please.

*(CRISTINA seductively leads STEPHANO to the kitchen door)*

GONZALO

You have my permission to go,  
but only if you give me a blow-by-blow  
account of what you're doing in there!

*(CRISTINA opens the kitchen door and gently guides STEPHANO within, following him. She addresses GONZALO, her body hidden by the kitchen door)*

CRISTINA

I'll furnish you a detailed description, I swear.

*(CRISTINA disappears into the kitchen, the door closing quietly behind her, as GONZALO watches her helplessly)*

GONZALO *(angrily)*

Why do I tolerate a wench like that?  
A man of my learning and professional position!  
God knows she isn't young or smart or much to look at,  
while I'm the next best thing to surgeon or physician!  
She's always flirting,  
her moves are always calculated to make me jealous!  
Why do we men put up with women like that?  
Can anybody tell us?

MARIANA

GONZALO

You love her. You won't admit it  
but you know it's so,  
you love her. It's an emotion you  
will ne'er outgrow.  
You love her, although she  
treats you with disdain, I sympathize.  
You may be wise but love has deafened you  
each time her words offended you.

You love her.

I love her. I know I shouldn't  
but it can't be helped,  
I love her. It's an emotion  
I have always felt.  
Above her the sun will always  
shine upon her in my eyes.  
I may be wise but love has  
blinded me  
although she's seldom kind to me.

You love her. You won't admit it  
but you know it,  
you adore her. You will deny it  
but you show it  
as before her you lose your  
resolution to ignore her.

NICOLAS

(GONZALO)

I'm hungry.

*Amo, amas, amat, amamus, amant.  
Adoro, adoras, adorat, adoremus te. Ante.  
Fidem prodere.*

I'm thirsty.

*(CRISTINA's cry is heard behind the door. Everyone on stage freezes at the sound)*

GONZALO

I knew it! He's killing her!  
Let me at him!

*(GONZALO starts for the kitchen door, stops when he hears CRISTINA, and is then restrained by NICOLAS)*

CRISTINA

Ooh! This student learns so quickly!

NICOLAS

Hold, Gonzalo, he isn't killing her —

MARIANA

He's only thrilling her with the speed in which he runs her course.

CRISTINA

Ooh! He's panting like a horse!  
I can't keep pace with him!

NICOLAS (*stupidly*)

Is she running a race with him?

GONZALO

He must be quite the scholar  
to make Cristina holler  
in that way — what is he doing?

CRISTINA

i

Ooh! He's got my coffee brewing!

GONZALO

Coffee? What about the chickens?

CRISTINA

Ooh! He's squeezing my melons!

GONZALO

Squeezing your melons? Are you sure?

MARIANA

No doubt he wants to see if they're  
mature, and ready to eat.

CRISTINA

Ooh! He's peeling my oranges— and  
finds them very sweet!

GONZALO

What happened to the chickens you  
were going to pluck?

CRISTINA

Ooh! What luck! Now he's kneading my dough!

NICOLAS

I thought the pastry was ready long ago!

CRISTINA

Ooh! Now he's peeling a banana!

GONZALO

Did you hear that, Mariana?

CRISTINA

Ooh! Now he's heading for my pudding!

NICOLAS

GONZALO

He's spoiling all our menu!

He'd better discontinue!

CRISTINA

Ooh! Now he's setting fire to my wine!

GONZALO

That pleasure should be mine. Enough!

CRISTINA

Ooh! Now he's playing rough!

GONZALO

I knew he needed food,  
but I didn't think that hunger would make him so rude!

CRISTINA

Ooh! *(variously and repetitively)*

GONZALO

Don't worry, Cristina, I'm coming for you!

*(GONZALO takes a step toward the kitchen door,  
NICOLAS behind him)*

I only need a sword. You!  
Nicolas! Give me a weapon for him who preys upon us.

*(GONZALO opens his hand to receive the weapon which he asks NICOLAS to give him. After fumbling in his pockets for a moment, NICOLAS produces a shaving brush and hands it to GONZALO, placing its handle in GONZALO's outstretched hand. GONZALO's eyes are still on the kitchen door)*

Sic Semper Tyrannis!

*(GONZALO strikes a battle pose like some ancient warrior, . the shaving brush held aloft and vertical in his right hand, ready for the onslaught. For the first time, GONZALO sees what he actually holds)*

What is this? I can't use this!

*(GONZALO drops the brush on the floor, and faces NICOLAS)*

Have you nothing else to show, man?

NICOLAS

Only a comb and my razor!

GONZALO

Give me the blade.

*(NICOLAS draws the razor from his pocket and hands it to GONZALO. Opening the blade of the razor, GONZALO holds it aloft (as he did with the scissors) and addresses the kitchen door)*

Cristina! I'm coming to your aid!  
Prepare for me to save you!  
Stephano! Prepare for me to shave you!

*(GONZALO starts toward the kitchen door, then suddenly redirects his attention as CRACCIO's moans are heard offstage left)*

What's that? Her voice is changed!  
How very strange! Am I deranged  
in my angry rage, *Non Compos Mentis*?

MARIANA

That voice shows age — I know! It's Craccio!

GONZALO and NICOLAS

Your husband?

MARIANA

He's come back!

*(MARIANA slams and bolts the outside door, which has remained open since before STEPHANO entered. CRACCIO appears at the edge of the garden, torn, dirty, and limping. As he slowly makes his way to the door of his house, his movements make a contrasting counterpoint to the madly aimless rushing about of MARIANA, GONZALO and NICOLAS.)*

GONZALO

*A Deus Ex Machina?*  
He'll send me back in a  
basket torn from limb to  
limb!  
The consequence is very grim  
to me! No remedy, no  
strategy — except on  
bended knee.

*(GONZALO sinks to his  
knees and prays)*

*Ave Maria, gratia plena  
Dominus te cum benedicta  
tu in mulieribus et benedictus  
ventris tui Jesus.*

NICOLAS

I've got to get out, or hide  
hereabout! He's drawing  
near — if he finds me here  
He'll call me a traitor! He  
will beat me and kill me  
and ask his questions  
later!

MARIANA

Alas, alack!  
He cannot find me here,  
his trust will be diminished!  
There's everything to fear,  
our marriage will be finished!  
My spirits get moroser  
as I hear him getting closer!  
What can I do?  
Who can help me, who?

*(After each groan, CRACCIO takes a few steps forward toward his house, and then pauses to brace the small of his back with the palm of his hand before continuing. CRACCIO limps forward the few remaining steps to the door of his house as MARIANA crosses the stage to a position on the threshold of the entrance. CRACCIO fumbles for his keys, but can't find one that will open the door. MARIANA takes charge of the situation)*

MARIANA

Gonzalo! Nicolas!  
Hide in the kitchen while I keep my husband waiting  
Just outside the door.  
Tell Cristina and the student I would join you but I couldn't —  
hurry! Wait no more!

*(GONZALO and NICOLAS run to the kitchen door and open it.  
CRISTINA's cries are heard within, and NICOLAS and  
GONZALO, embarrassed, slam the door with a bang)*

I'll try to delay him, but hurry or you'll pay him with your lives!

*(CRACCIO throws his keys down to the ground in disgust, and raps  
loudly at the door. GONZALO and NICOLAS again open the kitchen  
door cautiously)*

He arrives!

*(Without further deliberation, GONZALO and NICOLAS  
disappear into the kitchen. CRACCIO knocks again)*

CRACCIO

Cristina! *(knocks)* Mariana! *(knocks)*

MARIANA

CRACCIO

Who is there? It's very late,

My husband? Impossible!  
He's very far from here.  
I doubt you are sincere.

You say you are my husband, but  
how can I be certain?

It's your loving husband Craccio.  
Don't make me wait.

Don't play the game of cat and mouse.  
Just let me come into the house!

Don't ask me all these questions!  
Just look around the curtain.  
You'll see my clothes are smeared  
with dirt  
and grime and I have torn my shirt  
in rags and all my wounds are hurtin':  
open up the door!

*(During this section, MARIANA delays CRACCIO's admittance because GONZALO and NICOLAS are constantly leaving the kitchen to pick up things — guitar, hat, scissors, etc. — which would indicate their presence to GRACCIO)*

Just two questions more —  
Can you describe the way I acted  
when you last were here?

You implored me not to leave,  
and you shed at least one tear.  
Open up the door!

Your manner is convincing,  
You sound as if you're wincing  
from a pain. Perhaps that's  
why I didn't know you!

Open up the door!

Just one question more —  
Can you describe my little birthmark?

Of course! I've seen it many times!  
It's a red one on your shoulder,  
the size of a dime. Open up the door!

You've convinced me you're my husband,  
I'll open up the door.

Be quick about it. I'm getting very sore.

One moment —

*(Certain that GONZALO and NICOLAS have returned to the kitchen to stay, MARIANA lifts the bar and opens the door. CRACCIO steps in, obviously annoyed)*

You needn't be so angry, I had to be  
assured. What brings you back so  
soon to me?

Ah, what I've endured!

*(CRACCIO goes to a chair, and sinks into it wearily)*

My dearest husband, you're such a mess!  
Whatever could have happened?  
Just look at the state of your dress.

The carriage lost a wheel just as  
we were leaving town.  
The horses kicked their traces, and  
the carriage tumbled down  
into a ditch full of garbage!  
I thought that I would die,  
and I had to kiss my trip goodbye.  
This evening I have had my taste  
of humble pie.

My poor dear darling husband!

I only want some soup to drink,  
and then it's bed for me, I think.  
Cristina!

*(CRACCIO gets out of his chair and begins heading for the kitchen  
door. MARIANA attempts to constrain him)*

No! Don't bother! I'll get your soup!

Nonsense! What do I pay her for?  
Cristina!

*(The door opens and CRISTINA steps into the room. She  
is dressed only in her chemise, and her hair is  
dishevelled)*

CRISTINA

(CRACCIO)

My master! You weren't expected back so soon.

Apparently! I wouldn't be here if there  
hadn't been a moon. Where is your  
clothing? Why are you so undressed?

I was changing by the fire, preparing for my  
rest.

I'd like to have a bowl of soup when you  
can spare the time. My bath can wait 'til  
later.

But, master — why are you covered with  
such grime?

*(A loud noise is heard in the kitchen)*

What was that? I heard a noise!  
We have no cat. While I've been  
gone have you been entertaining boys?

Relax, my master. It's only a middle-aged  
squire. He asked to take his supper and  
his bed before the fire.

*(defensively)*

He had sought our hospitality  
while travelling from Rome.  
You have often heard it  
simply worded,  
"Charity begins at home."

I'll ask him if he'll see you,  
but do not show surprise.  
He's a Salamancan student  
with dark, bewitching eyes.

I'll ask him if he'll see you,  
but beware of his powers.  
He's a Salamancan student.  
His ways are not ours.

For many years this student  
has been living in the Cave  
of Salamanca — do you see now  
why I ask you to be brave?

I'll ask him if he'll see you,  
but take a special care —  
He has unearthly powers.  
Beware, beware.

*(CRISTINA addresses  
the kitchen door)*

Stephano, there's someone out here  
who would speak with you.

*(The kitchen door opens quietly and STEPHANO steps out, his  
hood pulled up covering his face)*

How dare you let a man in here  
to share my home and bread  
after everything I've said?  
You must have been misled!  
What brought him here to interfere?  
My food? My drink? or your bed?

Always spouting platitudes!  
Will you never stop?  
Bring him here to see me  
before I blow my top!

A Salamancan student!  
What do I care for that?  
Bring him here to see me —  
I'll show the little brat.

What powers do you mean?  
There's nothing he has seen  
to match my powers  
when I'm venting my spleen.  
Bring him here to see me!

The Cave of Salamanca? That fabled  
oracle of sand and lime  
that claims to know the secrets  
of the universe  
and tells them all the time  
to any fool who listens?  
Don't make me laugh!  
Bring him here to see me!  
I'll write his epitaph!

HaH

(STEPHANO *yawns, stretching his arms. The gesture appears ominous to CRACCIO, who jumps back, startled, and then regains his bearings.*)

STEPHANO

Ohh, —— who dares to call me from my bed of slumber? Foolish mortal, do you know to whom you speak?

CRACCIO (*aside*)

He can't fool me with that air of mystery.  
He doesn't even rhyme, though I can do it all the time!

(*to STEPHANO*)

Oh most horrible apparition, pity my condition,  
but it's been my firm ambition to resist all superstition.  
Quiet my suspicion and tell me of your mission —  
are you a trained magician?

STEPHANO

Ohh, —— don't sport with me, you foolish fellow. You'll be sorry if you do. The secrets of the universe have been revealed to me by the Cave of Salamanca! Witchcraft, black magic — I have practiced all. Would you have a demonstration of my powers, o ye of little faith?

CRACCIO

I know it is a trick, but he does it very well.  
I'll indulge him for a moment, then send him off to Hell!

Oh, most horrible apparition, I'm brimming with contrition.  
Work your charms for good or ill, whatever you will.

STEPHANO

You are tired and hungry. I shall provide a feast, the likes of which you've never seen before. And for good measure I'll produce a pair of demons to serve this feast and to attend your every wish.

CRACCIO

Produce a pair of demons? Nay, not so ——  
they would frighten both the ladies. I pray thee no!

STEPHANO

Ohh, —— they will not frighten anyone. I'll give them human forms of your barber and your chemist. I too will change my shape to a young man scarcely grown. Will that convince you of my powers?

CRACCIO

I'll play along for now, though I can't see how  
he can do the things he claims — such foolish games!

Oh, most horrible apparition, please demonstrate your skill.  
Produce your demons and the banquet, or whatever you will.

*(STEPHANO displays the bag of gunpowder he showed earlier)*

STEPHANO

This pouch contains black nitre which I've scraped from off the walls of the Cave of Salamanca. I'll use it to describe a magic circle in which to work my magic.

*(STEPHANO begins drawing a magic circle with the gunpowder on the platform in front of the kitchen door)*

CRACCIO

When his incantation fails, I will  
end this comedy —

CRISTINA

Do not underrate his magic.  
He's been astounding me!

MARIANA

I can't believe the scene I'm viewing.  
Does he know what he is doing?  
Stephano shows a cleverness for fooling  
I would never have suspected.  
What could he do if such resourcefulness  
were redirected?

CRISTINA *(to Mariana)*

Don't give him all the credit —  
the scheme was my idea.  
With your husband near convulsions,  
I devised this panacea.

*(STEPHANO completes his drawing of the circle)*

STEPHANO

There. The circle's drawn. Now I'll ignite it and pronounce the  
magic charm.

*(STEPHANO ignites the circle. Steam  
or smoke begins to rise from vents in the  
platform)*

Whereas the Cave of Salamanca has given me the powers to command  
the Prince of Darkness, by his strong and mighty name do I conjure you,  
demon spirits, to immediately appear in human form within this circle,

on pain of eternal misery unless you speedily fulfill all my commands. Be quick about it, and bring the hamper with you. Make haste, my demon spirits, and move your tails — you know what is to happen if my magic fails!

*(The flash powder is ignited by remote control as a huge explosion is heard in the orchestra. STEPHANO flips his hood back. As the smoke clears, a large hamper, turned on its side and overflowing with food, is revealed, flanked by GONZALO and NICOLAS meagerly disguised in CRISTINA's cast-off clothing. STEPHANO, now a young man again, turns downstage to CRACCIO)*

CRACCIO

You've done it! I see it! I hardly can believe it!  
A dinner there beyond compare. How did you e'er achieve it?

MARIANA *(to Cristina)*

He's done it! We've won it! You've fooled him so completely,  
no longer will he want to kill —

CRISTINA *(to Mariana)*

We'll make him sign a treaty!

CRACCIO

Each demon looks so harmless, the image of a friend.  
And you appear much less to fear — it's just too much to comprehend.  
My dear young student, I'm so glad you've come our way.  
Your talents could be utilized if you would care to stay.  
We all could learn a lot from you — what do you say?

STEPHANO *(hesitantly)*

I will accept the gracious offer you extend me,  
but only if my demons can remain here to attend me.

CRACCIO

So be it! Your demons can remain here for the balance of my life.

STEPHANO

Then I'll gladly take my pleasure with yourself, your maid and wife!

*(One by one, CRACCIO, CRISTINA, and MARIANA gather around STEPHANO to welcome him.)*

CRACCIO

I am so happy you will stay.  
It surely would be tragic  
if one with all your magic  
powers had to go away.

CRISTINA

I am so happy you will stay.  
You're such a willing student,  
as long as you are prudent  
I will teach you games to play.

MARIANA

I am so happy you will stay.  
You are so very clever  
I never thought you'd ever  
be the kind to come our way.

CRACCIO, MARIANA, and CRISTINA

The Cave of Salamanca has pointed out the way  
to charm us so in each and every day.

STEPHANO

I am so happy here to stay.      \*  
I'll dedicate my leisure  
to give your ladies pleasure  
to their liking every day.

CRACCIO, STEPHANO, MARIANA, and CRISTINA

The Cave of Salamanca has given you (me) the power  
to charm us (you) so in each and every hour.

*(As MARIANA, CRISTINA, and CRACCIO congratulate STEPHANO,  
GONZALO and NICOLAS comment on the recent developments, still in their  
frozen postures as STEPHANO 's demons)*

GONZALO

I wish that he would go away.  
There's nothing I can gain here,  
so long as he remain here  
I am "*Sine Nomine*."

NICOLAS

I wish that he would go away.  
I'll never call his bluff here.  
I'm doomed to always suffer  
in my uncomplaining way.

GONZALO and NICOLAS

The Cave of Salamanca has given him the power  
to harm us all and turn our spirits sour.

CRACCIO, STEPHANO, MARIANA, and CRISTINA  
*(variously and repetitively)*

I am so happy here to (you will) stay today.  
The Cave of Salamanca has pointed out the  
way to charm you all in each and every way.

GONZALO and NICOLAS

I wish that he would go away —

CRISTINA

I am so happy you will stay —

CRACCIO and MARIANA

We are so happy you will stay —

STEPHANO

I am delighted here to stay.

CRACCIO, MARIANA, CRISTINA

STEPHANO

GONZALO and NICOLAS

Hip, hip, hooray!

All in a day.

O, Lackaday!

OMNES

¡Ole!

*(CRACCIO moves upstage to the banquet and begins to hungrily devour it in random fashion as MARIANA, CRISTINA, and STEPHANO watch him downstage, their backs to the audience. On cue, STEPHANO gooses CRISTINA, then puts his arm around MARIANA as the threesome begin moving upstage to CRACCIO.)*

CURTAIN