



The Servant of Two Masters

By Carlo Goldoni, Constance Congdon

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Goldoni's eighteenth-century masterpiece is an enduring story of love, passion, and mistaken identity. Young Venetian Clarice can't marry her lover, Silvio. She had been betrothed to Rasponi, who appears to have returned from the dead to claim her. But the Rasponi who appears is actually Beatrice, Rasponi's sister who is in disguise as her brother and has come to Venice to find her suitor, Florinda. Complications arise when a servant greedily seeks employment with both the disguised Beatrice and Florinda and spends the rest of the play trying to serve two masters while keeping the two unaware of the other's presence. The play is based on the Italian Renaissance theater style, Commedia dell'arte, and reinvigorated the genre, which is so heavily based on carnival, while bringing to it an element of realism, mishaps, mix-ups, confusions, disguises and mistaken identity that come with the style. "... madcap farce, heroic romance, operetta and dramatic dueling with a feminist slash. Goldoni's simple but convoluted story turns on two sets of lovers, two impossible fathers and manipulative servants ... As adapted by Constance Congdon, this SERVANT jumps from formal language and fractured Latin gags to familiar phrases ('sweet bird of youth' and 'a palpable hit') to American slang ... a silly, stylish tour of comedy's infinite variety." - Malcolm Johnson, The Hartford Courant

"... freshly funny ... wickedly goofy, sometimes bawdy delight." -Hartford Advocate

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Editorial Review

Review

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From the Publisher

Carlo Goldoni's crafty servant who turns somersaults to please both his masters and serve himself is one of the great classic commedia dell'arte plays of world drama.

About the Author

Carlo Goldoni (1707-93) was an Italian dramatist born in Venice who wrote over 200 comedies, tragedies and tragicomedies in his lifetime. His many popular comedies include A Servant to Two Masters (1746), The Respectable Woman (1749) and The Mistress of the Inn (1753). In 1762 Goldoni moved to Paris where he directed the Italian theatre and continued to write more plays, including The Fan (1764).

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