

Knowledge Organiser – A Servant to Two Masters

A Servant To Two Masters is a Commedia dell'arte play by Carlo Goldoni – we are studying the Lee Hall adaptation. It tells the story of Truffaldino and how he ends up with two very complicated masters.....who are not exactly what they seem. It is a comedy which uses masks to tell the story.

Characters		Context		
Truffaldino	The protagonist and eponymous "servant" from the title of the play. A cheeky, rude and crafty servant who is out for what he can get. As part of the Lazzi he is driven by three things only: food, sex and money. Most of his actions cause the confusion in the play leading to difficulties for the rest of the characters.	Carlo Goldoni	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Italian playwright and librettist from Venice in the 1700's 2. Known for his wit and honesty in plays 3. Often wrote plays mocking the lives, values and views of the newly emerging middle class in Venice. 4. Also wrote under the pen name Polisseno Fegeio, Pastor Arcade 5. Wrote "THE Servant to Two Masters" which was adapted to "A Servant to Two Masters" 	
Clarice	Daughter of Pantalone, Clarice was originally promised to Federigo, whom she disliked. However, he is now dead, so at the beginning of the play she is planning on marrying her true love, Silvio.			
Florindo	Beatrice's lover, Florindo is rumored to have killed Federigo in a duel in Turin. He flees to Venice to seek his beloved Beatrice.			
Dr Lombardi	Silvio's father, Dr. Lombardi's self-absorbed pontifications are a source of constant irritation to all those around him.	Lee Hall's adaptation	Previewed in December 1999, Lee Hall's adaptation was performed by The Royal Shakespeare Company. It included new jokes and updated language, as well as being in English. There is no mention of masks in this updated version.	
Pantaloon	Clarice's father, Pantalone is motivated almost entirely by the acquisition of money and goods. He would have preferred that his daughter marry Federigo Rasponi (brother of Clarice), whom he considered a "better catch".			
Smeraldina	Clarice's maid, Smeraldina is strong-willed and lovely. She is also the object of Truffaldino's affection. A very flirty character who speaks her mind regardless of her position as a maid.	Social context	Goldoni used ASTTM to mock the middle classes – his portrayal of, for example, Silvio, shows how ridiculous their thoughts of status are. He uses the stock characters to make fun of their obsession with money and status. Smeraldina becomes Goldoni's voice throughout the play, questioning the role of women and power.	
Beatrice/Federigo	Sister of Federigo Rasponi, Beatrice comes to Venice disguised as her brother and hoping to acquire the dowry owed to Federigo by Pantalone	Political context	Venice in the 1700s was in a time of turmoil politically. When the Turks declared War on their sovereign state meaning that the trade routes that Venice relied on were blocked. Their sovereignties were cut off and supplies could not get through, leaving them vulnerable and open to attack. Pirates were also rife in the area and Venice fell into a decline.	
Brighella	Friend of the Rasponi family, Brighella is the owner of the local inn. He knows who Beatrice really is but keeps her cover.			
Silvio	The son of Dr. Lombardi, Silvio is planning on marrying Clarice; however, the wedding is disrupted by the rumor that, contrary to original reports, Clarice's intended groom-to-be, Federigo Rasponi, is still alive	Cultural Context	Prior to the decline in Venice, it had been opulent and money spent on works of art and public amenities. There was a newly emerging "middle class" and it was this class of people who Goldoni mocks. He felt they were obsessed with money, power and status and this is mirrored through the Vecchi characters in the play.	
Lieutenant Will Dawes	Dawes is the colony's astronomer and he couldn't care less about the convicts or the officers. He agrees to the play going ahead as long as he doesn't have to watch it.			
First Waiter/ Second Waiter	Involved in the farce scene at brighella's in. Allow Truffaldino to direct the food to cover his tracks.	Historical context	Originally Goldoni wrote the play with large sections open to improvisation from the performers, however, following multiple performances he finalized his version which was adapted by Lee Hall. It was written at the request of Antoni Sacco, one of the greatest Truffaldinos in history according to legend.	
First porter/second porter	Make mistakes that allow Truffaldino to direct cases – hich he does incorrectly, helping Beatrice and Florindo finally uncover his plot.	Commedia	Commedia has 'set pieces' which are seen in every play, The most famous set-piece of the play is the scene in which the starving Truffaldino tries to serve a banquet to the entourages of both his masters without either group becoming aware of the other, while desperately trying to satisfy his own hunger at the same time.	
Commedia Stock Characters		Events		
		Act 1	Act 2	Act 3
Vecchi	Class of characters: the noblemen (Pantalone, Dr Lombardi, Silvio)	Silvio and Clarice become engaged as her previous betrothed man has been killed, Federigo Rasponi Federigo Rasponi arrives at the door to the shock of everyone with his rude servant, Truffaldino. It is revealed to the audience only that Federigo is really his sister, Beatrice in disguise, come to collect the dowry and business arrangements promised to her brother. Florindo, Beatrice's lover, and the person who killed her brother arrives in Venice and hires Truffaldino as his servant. (He now has two masters) Florindo finds out Beatrice's plan and attempts to find her Beatrice tells Clarice who she really is – Clarice agrees to help her	Silvio threatens Pantaloon over his betrayal in the marriage to Clarice Clarice attempts to kill herself as she is distraught at Silvio's reaction, Smeraldina stops her. The dining room scene happens to much hilarity and confusion	Trufaldino opens the trunks belonging to Beatrice and Florindo, not realising he has mixed them up. When Florindo finds a picture of himself, that he gave to Beatrice, Truffaldino lies about how it got into the wrong jacket and says Beatrice is dead. When Beatrice finds letters she wrote to Florindo, Truffaldino lies and says the Florindo is dead. Silvio and Pantaloon discover who Beatrice really is and Silvio is free to marry Clarice. Beatrice and Florindo attempt suicide but see each other and are saved. Truffaldino comes clean and asks for Smeraldina's hand.
Pantalone	The master. He is a senile, wealthy Venetian merchant who is always being cuckolded. In many storylines, he attempts to control his daughter and protect his money from thieving servants, but of course he is thwarted. He is dressed almost always in red with a large, red-nosed mask. (Pantaloon in ASTTM)			
Il Dottore	Pantalone's middle-aged neighbor from Bologna. He's pompous and claims to be educated, although he doesn't really know anything, and speaks in a comical fake Latin. In Commedia performances, he is either Pantalone's devoted friend or bitter enemy, and he is always jealous of Pantalone's success. Sometimes he is the father of one of the lovers. He is often costumed in black, with a black mask and white doctor's collar. (Dr Lombardi in ASTTM)			
Inamorati	Class of characters: the lovers. They are usually the daughters and sons of the vecchi, and thus enjoy a high status in society. They almost always have the play's dilemma—do they follow their hearts or obey the wishes of their parents? They more serious than the other characters, and are the only ones who do not wear masks. (Silvio and Clarice in ASTTM)			
Zanni	Class of characters – the servants (Truffaldino and Smeraldina in ASTTM)			
Columbina/Columbine	The only female servant character, Columbina is a cunning little soubrette, often employed by the Inamorati to help them convince their feuding parents to let them marry. Although she is impudent, she is also very charming, and one of the few genuinely intelligent characters onstage. She is Arlecchino's female opposite, and they are often romantically involved. Columbina usually wears slightly ragged clothes (to show that she is a servant). (Smeraldina in ASTTM)	Assessment Demands	Pre 20th century text (Drama through the ages) Component 1: Section A Section A consists of a CHOICE of question from two. ONLY ANSWER ONE QUESTION There will always be a performing question. The other MAY be directing, designing or another performance question. Exampler Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a director, or as a performer playing Truffaldino, discuss how you would exploit master/servant relationships to create comedy for your audience in at least two separate sections of the play. - As a set designer, discuss how your design concept for the play would be reflected in one interior setting and one exterior setting and allow for the necessary action of two chosen sections of the play. You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of <i>A Servant to Two Masters</i> in your answer.	
Arlecchino	By far, the most popular (and famous) character to come out of Commedia dell' Arte. Literally, "Harlequin," he is Pantalone's witty prankster of a servant. He uses agility and acrobatics to get out of sticky situations; failing that, he always carries around a slapstick with which to hit people. He wears a multicolored, triangular-patterned outfit and a black mask with a blunt nose. (Truffaldino in ASTTM)			
Brighella	A coarse, scheming, low-level merchant. He is thieving, mean-spirited, and occasionally violent, especially to characters who are lower in station than he is (and, like Arlecchino he is often equipped with a slapstick). His outfits are white with green trim and he wears a green mask. (Brighella in ASTTM)	Themes	Disparity between what is said compared to what is done, confusion, thwarted love, dishonesty, status.	
Il Capitano	The Captain, an arrogant Spaniard. He is a bombastic braggart who intimidates the townspeople with his warrior bravado, but he is usually less brave than he'd like everyone to think. During the 1500s. Il Capitan most likely represented all of Spain during Italy's confrontation with the Spanish; he was often the butt of the jokes and the target of the lazzi. He is always colourful and elaborately overdressed, sometimes with goofy-looking feathers in his hat. (Does not appear in ASTTM however some characteristics can be seen in Silvio)	Style of presentation	Commedia dell'Arte is a mased performance with stock character types, not unlike a moder-day pantomime. Characters regularly break the forth wall. The play is a comedy with highly physical moments.	

