

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S WOMEN

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Robert F. Ciccotelli

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LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S WOMEN

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SYNOPSIS: *Lord Chamberlain's Women* is a classic farce with a Shakespearean twist. It incorporates many classic comedic elements, including mistaken identity, cross-dressing, innuendo, deceit, word play, romantic entanglements, and also, a dog. Set in the backstage area of the Globe Theatre in 1595, it focuses on a famous actor's attempts to seduce a beautiful French woman while avoiding various suitors, both male and female. Performed with dizzying speed and multiple costume changes, the play rushes forward in a whirlwind of humor, lust and chaos.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 MEN, 2 WOMEN)

- JONATHAN**.....Famous Elizabethan actor known for his female portrayals. *(280 Lines)*
- FERNANDO**.....Jonathan's Spanish dresser. *(212 Lines)*
- SIR GLUTTONY OF BRITTANY**.....Delilah's obese father, from France. *(56 Lines)*
- DELILAH**.....The beautiful daughter of Sir Gluttony. *(39 Lines)*
- DUKE OF BESTMISTER**.....Attracted to Fernando. *(71 Lines)*
- LADY ANDRESS**.....Jonathan's former lover. *(36 Lines)*
- DAIQUIRI**.....The Duke's pet dog.

PLACE:

The backstage area of the Globe Theatre in London, England.

TIME:

1595 A.D.

SETTING:

The stage is divided into three areas, at upstage centre, a large walk-in closet full of various costumes, at stage right, a dressing room, and at stage left, a receiving room.

DO NOT COPY

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

MUSIC: An English Tudor piece. This music can be used as a transitional piece during the play when JONATHAN is changing from one costume to another. LIGHTS: Full wash. JONATHAN and FERNANDO rush in. JONATHAN quickly removing his Juliet costume, throwing pieces all about, while FERNANDO frantically tries to keep up with him, picking up pieces as they are thrown. JONATHAN also struggles to pull a stage knife from his chest.

JONATHAN: That's it. That is it. You can go tell Will and Kemp and Mr. Barbarge himself. Tonight was my last performance of Juliet. I refuse to play Juliet ever again.

FERNANDO: But Yannithan . . .

JONATHAN: Stop calling my Yannithan.

FERNANDO: Yanni.

JONATHAN: Yanni either.

FERNANDO: Yankme then.

JONATHAN: Don't be rude.

FERNANDO: Yannithan, please.

JONATHAN: It's Jonathan, not Yannithan nor Yanni nor Yankme. Jonathan! You superfluous, superstitious, Spanish knave.

FERNANDO: Who you calling a Spanish slave, Britian boy? I am no slave to no one. I work here like everyone else. I am principal dresser, thunder clapper, trap-door dropper, and sometimes, sometimes . . . master brassier maker.

JONATHAN: Master brassier maker?

FERNANDO: Yes, my flat chested crossdresser. Brassier maker.

JONATHAN: More like a master brassier shaker, you dirty old Latin lover.

FERNANDO: Well, what can I say. They don't call me Fernando, The Farm Stud From A Small Village West of Seville, for nothing.

JONATHAN: That's idiotic.

FERNANDO: Sounds better in Spanish. It loses in the translation.

JONATHAN: As I was saying, I refuse to play Juliet again. Today was my last and final performance.

FERNANDO: But Yannithan, joo are the best female character actor in the Lord Chamberlain's Company.

JONATHAN: Someone else can do it.

FERNANDO: Who can do it?

JONATHAN: Somebody else.

FERNANDO: Yannithan.

JONATHAN: No.

FERNANDO: Yannithan.

JONATHAN: No. I refuse.

FERNANDO: Yannithan. Listen to me. Who make the Queen weep with his performance of Ophelia? Joo. Who make the King wale with his performance of Cordelia? Joo.

JONATHAN: And who make the Earl of Kent practically rape me after a performance of Katerina? Not joo. Me.

FERNANDO: Rapey. Shmapey. The Earl is a man of great affection.

JONATHAN: The Earl is a man of great erection.

FERNANDO: Yannithan. Be nice.

JONATHAN: The Earl of Kent is a horny old fart that'll boink anything in a skirt. Including a man!

FERNANDO: But what does this have to do with Hooliet?

JONATHAN: Juliet? I'll tell you what this has to do with Juliet. Ever since I took on this part, I can't go anywhere backstage without the entire Company pawing my hair, grabbing my ass, and cupping my breasts! Do you know how long it takes to get my boobies to hang just right?

FERNANDO: Joo don't have to 'splain to me, girlfriend. I make that booby holder.

JONATHAN: I am tired of being a sexual boy toy for these overrated, has-been thespians.

FERNANDO: Yannithan. Just because they grab your boobies, that don't make them . . .

JONATHAN: I said thespians, you fool. Thespians!

FERNANDO: Oh, sorry. But what can joo do? Joo have a contract with Senor Barbarge. You have to play Hooliet.

JONATHAN: Yes, I know. I know. But maybe I can get Will to change the script. Maybe he can make Juliet less . . . I don't know . . . sensual.

FERNANDO: Sure, Willy changes the play for joo. Willy loves Yannithan. Maybe he make Hooliet a spoiled little Italian princess who marries her gino boyfriend Romeo, who moves to a Casa Loma near the Wood by the Bridge, who has six bambinos, and who grows fat to the size of Falstaff before she's twenty-five!

JONATHAN: All right. All right. Forget I mentioned it. At least I have one consolation. We start rehearsing MacBeth tonight. Finally, I get to play a great woman. The psychotic, homicidal bitch, Lady MacBeth.

FERNANDO: You right, Yannithan. You can't find good psychotic, homicidal bitch roles anymore. Not since Marlowe's "Wife of Noah" anyway.

Through the following bit of dialogue, FERNANDO begins to wax JONATHAN'S back with candle wax and clothe strips. JONATHAN'S "scream" occurs each time FERNANDO whips of the clothes and rips JONATHAN'S back hair off.

JONATHAN: "Wife of Noah"?

FERNANDO: Remember. A few year's ago. Christopher Marlowe's play, "Wife of Noah."

JONATHAN: *(Screams)* No, I don't remember, "Wife of Noah".

FERNANDO: In the play, Noah, he no build the ark for the animals. He build it to get away from his freakin' nagging wife, Mrs. Noah. And when Mrs. Noah find out Noah take off on the boat, she have a royal cow.

JONATHAN: *(Screams.)* You don't say.

FERNANDO: Yes. Mrs. Noah ripped out the heart of every man in the village named Noah. Except, in her town, every man in the village *is* named Noah, like Smith in London, and the town is massacred. Jesu, who needs forty days of rain and flooding when you can have a menopausal woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown. To this day, I don't understand why the play was a flop.

JONATHAN: *(Screams)* Yes. The theatre business is a mystery. But Fernando, I forget to tell you. I am in love.

FERNANDO: Again bro.

JONATHAN: No, really. I am in love.

FERNANDO: Yes, yes my mini-moochacho. Just like last week.

JONATHAN: No, you don't understand. Today, during my performance, I saw her right in the front row. The most beautiful woman in all of Londonium.

FERNANDO: Master, the Queen herself was in the front row and she's uglier than a one eyed street dog from Barcelona. She's more hideous than a castrated bull from Toledo. She's more disgusting than . . .

JONATHAN: All right already. She was in the second row then. And she is the most perfect vision of beauty that I have ever seen. She is dark and mysterious and wore a white shimmering dress.

FERNANDO: A white shimmering dress?

JONATHAN: Yes.

FERNANDO: She's dark?

JONATHAN: Yes.

FERNANDO: And she's mysterious.

JONATHAN: Yes. Yes. Do you know her?

FERNANDO: No. Yes. Of course, I know her you wannabe transsexual transvestite. Her name is . . . Delilah.

JONATHAN: Delilah?

FERNANDO: Delilah.

JONATHAN: Delicious.

FERNANDO: Delightful.

JONATHAN: Delirious.

FERNANDO: Delectable.

JONATHAN: Delinquent.

FERNANDO: Demented.

JONATHAN: We can stop now.

FERNANDO: Good idea.

JONATHAN: I must meet her.

FERNANDO: But how?

JONATHAN: Somehow, I must. Let me think. *(Pause)* I've got it! You must get the Duke to introduce us.

FERNANDO: Excuse me?

JONATHAN: You must get the Duke to introduce us.

FERNANDO: No-hooway-hozay you freakin' son of a motherless goat! Har you crazy men? I don't want to see the Duke ever again, the way he undresses me with those bulging anglo eyes, let alone ask the Duke for a favour.

JONATHAN: Please, Fernando. The Duke will do anything for you.

FERNANDO: Are we not talking about the Duke of Bestmister?

JONATHAN: Yes, mister.

FERNANDO: No, mister.

JONATHAN: Your mister.

FERNANDO: My mister?

JONATHAN: Go mister.

FERNANDO: No mister.

JONATHAN: Please mister.

FERNANDO: Bye mister.

JONATHAN: I kissed your sister.

FERNANDO: Excuse me?

JONATHAN: Just testing.

FERNANDO: You touch my sister actor man and I chop off your ballinas. Then you play girlie roles real good.

JONATHAN: Calm down Zorro. No time to play the part of a malicious moyle. I'm in love with Delilah, remember. I must meet her. But how?

SOUND: A door knock.

JONATHAN: Fernando, please see who it is.

FERNANDO: Ho my God, Yannithan. Ho my God. It's Lady Andress. Lady Andress!

JONATHAN: Andress.

FERNANDO: What?

JONATHAN: Andress.

FERNANDO: Excuse me.

JONATHAN: Andress!

FERNANDO: Right now?

JONATHAN: What?

FERNANDO: Please Yannithan, just because I like to dance and have a flair for interior design, does not mean . . .

JONATHAN: No, you idiot. Lady Andress. You said, "Lady Andress." Is she out there?

FERNANDO: Oh yes, she's out there. I think she wants to, you know, play with your...props again.

JONATHAN: Oh God. Oh God. Not again. That woman is insatiable. Last week, we made love for eight hours straight. Afterward, she said, "Ok, enough with the foreplay, let's get to business."

FERNANDO: And your point is?

JONATHAN: I have to get out of here. I have to get out. But I can't. I'm trapped. What to do? What to do?

FERNANDO: (*Throwing him a female costume.*) Here, throw this on. We'll let her in and tell her you're not here.

JONATHAN: What? She'll never believe . . .

FERNANDO: She won't believe Jannithan, the greatest female impersonator since Joan of Arc is not here?

JONATHAN: Joan of Arc wasn't a . . .

FERNANDO: (*Dressing JONATHAN.*) Hey, wake up and smell the paella. Do you really think little Joany was some warrior goddess with an armour breastplate?

JONATHAN: Well, I never really thought much . . .

FERNANDO: You should now better. She was a French drag queen with a messiah complex. Leave it to the French to come up with a new neurosis.

JONATHAN: Of course. Stall her while I finish getting changed.

FERNANDO lets in LADY ANDRESS.

FERNANDO: Lady Undress. Please come in. How may I stall you/serve you?

LADY: Good afternoon, Fernando. I'm here to see . . . Jonathan. Is he in?

FERNANDO: Yannithan. No, I'm afraid he's not here. It's just me and . . . and . . .

JONATHAN enters wearing an elaborate Queen's costume.

FERNANDO: Princess . . . Espania, daughter of . . . Queen Espania of . . . Espania.

LADY: Your highness. Please excuse my interruption.

FERNANDO: Escuse me Lady Andress, but the Princess does not speak any English.

LADY: Su reina. Por favor, excusame por la interupcion.

FERNANDO: Or Spanish.

LADY: Votre Majeste. Veuillez pardonner cette interruption.

FERNANDO: Or French.

LADY: Principessa . . .

FERNANDO: She's mute actually.

LADY: I'm so sorry. *(She begins to sign language.)*

FERNANDO: She's blind too.

LADY: Oh my. How tragic. Well then, um, Princess, I guess I shall be departing. Please excuse me. Fernando, do tell Jonathan that I wish to . . . speak to him.

FERNANDO: Of course, Lady Andress. As soon as I see him.

LADY ANDRESS exits.

JONATHAN: *(Hitting him.)* What are you crazy? Mute and blind? It's hard enough playing a woman. Let alone, a mute and blind woman.

FERNANDO: Well, what did you expect? You had to wear the Queen Gertrude costume?

JONATHAN: First, you gave it to me! And second, I like the way it accents my figure. The others make my bottom look big.

FERNANDO: Oh dio. I have to serve the only actor in England with a body image problem.

JONATHAN: Hurry. Help me out of this. We have to leave quickly. She may come back.

FERNANDO begins to take JONATHON's costume off. When he's half finished, JONATHAN remaining in bra, garters and panties, SIR GLUTTONY enters. Throughout the rest of the play, SIR. GLUTTONY continuously eats French éclairs. His table manners are horrible, often talking with his mouth full, whipped cream smeared over his face, at times eating entire éclairs in one mouth full. SOUND: A door knock.

JONATHAN: Oh God, she's back. Hurry, stall her. Stall her.

FERNANDO: Yannithan, it's not the Lady Andress. It's . . . it's . . .
Sir Gluttony.

JONATHAN: Who?

FERNANDO: Sir Gluttony of Brittany.

JONATHAN: Who the bleedin' hell is Sir Gluttony of Brittany?

FERNANDO: He's...well...he's Sir Gluttony of Brittany.

JONATHAN: I know he's Sir Gluttony of Brittany. But who the hell is
Sir Gluttony of Brittany and why the hell is he here?

FERNANDO: Why? I don't know. But, who? Well, I do know he's
Delilah's father.

JONATHAN: Delilah's father?

FERNANDO: Yes, Delilah's father.

JONATHAN: Delicious Delilah?

FERNANDO: Yes, delicious Delilah.

JONATHAN: Delightful Delilah?

FERNANDO: Yes, delightful Delilah?

JONATHAN: Delirious . . .

FERNANDO: Yes, yes. Your freakin' Delilah. The one you're in love
with this week.

JONATHAN: What does Delilah's father want?

*SIR GLUTTONY enters. JONATHAN is half dressed, wearing only his
panties, garters and bra.*

SIR: Excuse moi monsieur, I was just looking for . . . Oh excuse moi
madamaselle. I didn't mean to barge in on a lady in her private
chamber. Please excuse my intrusion. I'm terribly sorry.

FERNANDO: Sir Gluttony. What brings you into our humble
presence?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S WOMEN

SIR: I just wanted to congratulate Jonathan on his excellent portrayal of Juliet this afternoon.

FERNANDO: Yannithan is . . .

JONATHAN: Not here at the moment, Sir Gluttony. He stepped out for some supper. I am his, um . . . his . . . sister.

SIR: I thought I noticed a resemblance. Sir Gluttony of Brittany, at your service madam.

JONATHAN: Thank you. It is an honor. I'm sure you could service me quite well. Did you come to the theatre alone Sir Gluttony?

SIR: Alone? Why yes, alone. I've been widowed now for five years.

JONATHAN: Widowed?

SIR: Oui, I haven't had a woman in a long time.

JONATHAN: Excuse me?

SIR: I mean I haven't had a serious relationship in a long time.

JONATHAN: Serious relationship?

SIR: (*Forcing JONATHAN onto his lap.*) Why don't you sit here and we can get to know each other a bit better?

FERNANDO: Oh my, where has the time gone. I must be going.

JONATHAN: Fernando! Where are you going?

FERNANDO: Oh, Mr. Barbage wants me to fit him for a brassiere, who can understand the English and their cross-dressing fetishes?

JONATHAN: Fernando!

FERNANDO: Oh, I'll be right back Lady Yannithan.

FERNANDO exits.

JONATHAN: Fernando!

SIR: Yannithan. What a unique name.

JONATHAN: Yes, my mother was . . . Greek.

SIR: Really. How exotic.

JONATHAN: Exotic?

SIR: She must have been a beautiful woman.

JONATHAN: Not really. She was fatter than a Franciscan friar and hairier than a Greek orthodox priest. Look, I inherited her traits.

SIR: How beautiful. I love a woman with very fine . . . facial hair.

JONATHAN: Please, Sir Gluttony. I am still a maiden.

SIR: And you are the prettiest maiden I have ever seen . . . after my daughter of course.

JONATHAN: Your daughter, Sir Gluttony?

SIR: Yes, my daughter. Delilah. She was with me . . . oh my. She's waiting for me in the town square. I apologize Lady Yannithan. But I must be leaving.

JONATHAN: I'm so sorry. Please come back. And I would love to meet your daughter some time. Please drop by, together, sometime.

SIR: I'll take that as an invitation.

JONATHAN: Yes. No. I mean, yes.

SIR: Very good. Good day then my lady.

JONATHAN: Yes, yes. Good day.

SIR GLUTTONY exits.

JONATHAN: Fernando!

FERNANDO rushes in.

FERNANDO: Yes boss.

JONATHAN: (*Hitting Fernando.*) How dare you leave me with that bloated French éclair! What were you thinking?

FERNANDO: Please Yannithan. I thought you could get some information about Delilah from him. Please.

JONATHAN: Get information? He was too busy messaging my face. I should . . .

SOUND: A door knock.

JONATHAN: Yes. What? What? Who is it now?

JONATHAN opens the door. DELILAH stands there alone.

JONATHAN: Delilah?

DELILAH: Do I know you madam?

JONATHAN: Madam? Oh, madam. Um. No. But I know of you.

DELILAH: Excuse me?

JONATHAN: Your beauty proceeds you my Lady. Please come in.

DELILAH: Yes, well, I was just looking for my daddy. He said he was coming to thank a Monsieur Jonathan for his powerful performance today.

JONATHAN: Your father is Sir Gluttony of Brittany is he not?

DELILAH: Yes. Yes. Was he here?

JONATHAN: Yes. He just left moments ago. Please sit down.

DELILAH: Oh, no thank you madam. I must be leaving.

JONATHAN: Oh no, please. I must speak with you. I have a huge crisis on my hands and only you can save me.

DELILAH: Moi? A crisis? But what crisis can I save you from?

JONATHAN: Well . . . um . . . my, my, well, my panties are giving me the most painful . . . wedgie. That's it. Wedgie. How do the French relieve these undergarment entanglements?

DELILAH: A wedgie?

JONATHAN: Yes, a wedgie?

DELILAH: But what is a wedgie?

JONATHAN: Well . . . a wedgie is when your panties slide right up your . . .

DELILAH: Please madam. I do not believe I can help you with your wedgie. I must be going now. My daddy will be worried sick. Au revoir Madam.

DELILAH exits.

JONATHAN: Delilah, please. Come back. What about garters? They keep getting stuck on my . . . oh forget it. *(To Fernando.)* Great help you were.

FERNANDO: I thought you were doing fine.

JONATHAN: Do you think she liked me?

FERNANDO: Oh yes. But she thought you were from Lesbos. Besides, wedgies and garters are not exactly appropriate topics for romantic poetry.

JONATHAN: Damn. How could I have been so stupid?

FERNANDO: The good news is that she hasn't met you yet.

JONATHAN: What?

FERNANDO: Delilah has not yet met Yannithan, the great female impersonator.

JONATHAN: That's right. She hasn't. Good thinking Fernando.

FERNANDO: I have my moments.

SOUND: A door knock. FERNANDO goes to open it.

FERNANDO: Did you know that the Spanish . . .

FERNANDO opens the door, sees the DUKE, and slams the door in the DUKE's face.

FERNANDO: Shit.

JONATHAN: Yes, yes. And so do the English and the French and the Italians too. The Germans, on the other hand, release most of their bodily waste through their belches.

FERNANDO: Oh shit, shit, shit.

JONATHAN: Oh diarrhea. Well, what do you expect? With all those spicy foods you Spanish eat.

FERNANDO: No, master. At the door. It's the Duke. The Duke has come to see me.

JONATHAN: Oh my. The Duke. How tragic. Now it's my turn to go for a walk.

FERNANDO: Oh please master. You must stay. You must protect me.

JONATHAN: Oh really, the way you protected me from Sir Gluttony.

FERNANDO: Oh master. I'm so sorry. But I am finished without your help. He is a Duke. I, a humble dresser. He'll spank me and thank me, if you know what I mean.

JONATHAN: Sorry Fernando. You're on your own.

FERNANDO: Please. I will do anything. Anything. Please.

JONATHAN: Anything.

FERNANDO: Please.

JONATHAN: Delilah.

FERNANDO: Yes, Delilah. I will get you Delilah. Please. Do not go.

JONATHAN: Are you sure? Delilah for the Duke.

FERNANDO: Absolutely. Delilah for the Duke.

JONATHAN: Very well then. Come with me. I have an idea. But first . . . (*Through the door with a Spanish accent.*) We'll be a right there. Hold a your horses.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S WOMEN

JONATHAN and FERNANDO exit and quickly return dressed as two old Spanish women.

FERNANDO: Coming Senor. Coming.

The DUKE enters, holding his white dog.

JONATHAN: Please come it in, Senor.

DUKE: Good afternoon, Ladies. I am Duke Bestmister of Edinburgh and this is my cat, Blackie.

JONATHAN: Your cat, Blackie? But that's not a cat. That's a white dog.

DUKE: It's not a white dog! It's a black cat!

FERNANDO: *(Taking JONATHAN aside.)* Jonathan, trust me on this one. Don't mention the poochie.

JONATHAN: No poochie?

FERNANDO: No poochie.

JONATHAN: No poochie?

FERNANDO: No poochie.

JONATHAN: Poochie?

FERNANDO: Poochie.

JONATHAN: Poochie?

FERNANDO: Poochie.

DUKE: I'm sorry to interrupt your afternoon but . . .

FERNANDO: Oh no sorry. We just having . . . siesta. Afternoon nap nap.

JONATHAN: You look it for someone?

DUKE: Yes, I was just coming to speak to . . . Fernando.

FERNANDO: Fernando?

DUKE: Yes, Fernando.

FERNANDO: You mean Fernando Juan Manuel Jesu Rodriques des Cortes?

DUKE: Yes, Fernando One Minwell Hey-you Rodriguess des Corteese, Mr. Barbage's principal dresser.

JONATHAN: Oh, Fernando. My nephew.

DUKE: Your nephew?

JONATHAN: Ci, my nephew, Fernando.

DUKE: Yes, Fernando.

FERNANDO: Fernando no here.

JONATHAN: Fernando just step out.

FERNANDO: Fernando visiting . . .

JONATHAN: Visiting . . . boyfriend.

DUKE: Boyfriend?

FERNANDO: No boyfriend.

JONATHAN: Yes boyfriend.

FERNANDO: No boyfriend.

DUKE: No boyfriend?

JONATHAN: Yes boyfriend.

FERNANDO: No boyfriend. But boy friend.

JONATHAN: Oh, boyfriend.

DUKE: Fernando has a boyfriend?

JONATHAN: Oh yes, many boyfriend.

FERNANDO: Oh no, not too many boyfriend.

JONATHAN: Not too many?

FERNANDO: Not too many.

DUKE: Well, he only needs one.

JONATHAN: That's true. Only one?

FERNANDO: No, one no good.

DUKE: One no good?

JONATHAN: More than one better?

FERNANDO: No, not one. Not more than one. None.

DUKE: None?

FERNANDO: None?

DUKE: Then he's single?

JONATHAN: Oh yes. He's single.

FERNANDO: Oh no, not single.

JONATHAN: Oh yes, single.

FERNANDO: Oh no.

JONATHAN: Oh yes.

FERNANDO: Oh no.

JONATHAN: Oh yes.

FERNANDO: Oh, why don't you shut your mouth before I cut off your tongue and shove it in your ear so you can taste your own brain.

JONATHAN: You can't taste your brain through your ear.

FERNANDO: Have you tried?

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JONATHAN: I have all right and you can't taste your brain through your ear.

DUKE: Very well, then. I think Blackie and I will be leaving. I may return later. Please pass on my regards to the lovely Fernando.

JONATHAN: Yes, absolutely.

DUKE: Tell him that his master, the Duke Bestmister, called and I'll return shortly. Come on kitty.

JONATHAN: Hokay. No problem, Duke Best-bastard.

DUKE: That's Bestmister! Not Best-bastard. (*DUKE exits.*)

JONATHAN: So sorry. No worry. I tell him. Bye, bye Mister Best-Bastard.

FERNANDO: Bye, bye, Dukey wooky. (*To JONATHAN.*) You are a bitch master! (*Hits Jonathan.*)

JONATHAN: Oh, relax. I have to have some fun.

SOUND: A door knock.

FERNANDO: Oh God, he's back. The Duke. The Duke. Master, please.

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