

*The Coin Collection*

*Punchinello: Glenn?*

*Pantalone: Dave?*

*Smeraldina: Deborah?*

*Capitano: Mark?*

*Isabella: Denita or Leeann?*

*Doctor One: Ken*

*Doctor Two: John?*

*(It opens with Punchinello walking toward Pantalone's house.*

*Insert a lazzi for him to do while he's on the way. When he arrives,  
he hears Pantalone inside, groaning.*

*By slight, wiggly foot movements, we are taken inside the house, Punchinello  
moving backward and Pantalone emerging, though seemingly standing still, and  
moving around and to the side as if the whole scene were rotating.*

*Punchinello is semi-frozen in a listening pose so we focus on Pantalone who is  
pointing at a calendar and crying.*

*Punchinello, having arrived at Pantalone's door, knocks on it. Pantalone goes  
through locks and bolts and bar routine on doorto unlock it. Opens door but  
Punchinello has wandered away and is not in sight. Pantalone returns to room,  
closes door, goes through locking routine. Punchinello knocks again. Same  
mimed unlocking routine.*

*This time Punchinello is standing right there. Pantalone grows weak at the sight  
of him, staggers over, gets calendar, indicates to Punchinello, who sez)*

*Punchinello: Yes, I know! It's the last Saturday in the month AND it's a prime  
number. You have to pay me this time for sure!*

*Pantalone: Alright, alright, That was the agreement, I admit. A deal's a deal! I'll  
get you your money. But wait outside!*

*(He rushes Punch out the door, going through the whole routine opening it all  
over again. Out goes Punch.*

*Pantalone goes through door locking. But then he can't remember how much he has to pay Punchinello. Goes through door unlocking, drags Punch in, locks door, seems exhausted. Asks how much. Punch whispers, Pantalone reeling about, goes through unlocking routine with Punchinello still standing gazing on then*

*escorts a chair or something out the door before locking up again.*

*After he thinks he has ejected Punchinello, Pantalone goes to his lockbox (mime hauling up rope etc.), talks lovingly to his coins tells them he had made arrangements for them in his will, Punchinello listening to all this in amazement.)*

Pantalone: Here you are. . . my little friends, my little pals! How well I know each of you and recall how each of you came into my hand! *(with a tremendous show of effort he shakes the lockbox)*

Let's see which of you will come out on top tonight! Ah Hah, hah!. . . it's Little Jim! Hello, Little Jim! Little Jim! Ah, Little Jim! And here's Brave Harry! And the Rooster! And look, here's Golden Belinda, and Klinking Klank, Big Louie, the Golden Eagle Family . . . and all the Silver Joeys and all the Golden Galleonies! I have good news for all of you! I have arranged for all of you to go to a good home where you will truly be appreciated in the event I should, somehow. . . . pass on. . . which I doubt very much will happen because I don't think it applies to me in the first place. Anyway, I have today completed my will and the documents will be delivered a little later on in the show. There! I knew you'd be pleased! And now, I must fix my resolve, I shall steel myself, I shall now peel off ten of these lovely ten dollar notes to pay my worthless servant, Punchinello, blast him!

*(It's like peeling off his skin) Pantalone removes one hundred dollars in ten dollar bills and replaces the lock box - reverse mime)*

*Pantalone goes to door, not noticing Punchinello still inside and he goes through door unlocking, looks outside, steps back and calls,)*

Pantalone: Punchinello!

Punchinello, *loudly, directly behind him*: Hi, boss! Are you all right? You don't sound at all well!

*(Pantalone is startled and clutches at his heart)*

Pantalone, *muttering*: How did you . . .? Tricky, impudent fellow. Get along with you! Go on! Beat it!

Punchinello: You pay, I go away. You cough up the dough, away I go. You . . .

Pantalone: Oh, yes, that's right! Very well, you villain . . . here you are. I'm sure there's a trick here somewhere. This calendar doesn't look at all right.

*(With many a grimace, Pantalone counts out the ten ten dollar bills into Punchinello's hand. Some trickery where Punch tries to get some more.)*

Pantalone: Four five six. . . nine, ten, there you are! Now get out of my sight!

Ohhh! ~~(groans)~~ coughs

Punchinello: Gee, Boss, you sound terrible! Are you sick? Boss, are you feeling ill?

Pantalone: Yes, Yes, I'm sick. . . I'm sick of looking at you! Get out! Get out! Highway robbery!

*(Punchinello undoes all the locks and removes the bar, very rapidly, as if he has done it a hundred times before and out he goes.)*

Punchinello (*outside*): He doesn't look at all well. And he's made out his will. Hmmm. . . Maybe I'd better tell Lady Isabella. . . it should be worth something. Maybe there'll be a party!

*(exit)*

*(Entire new scene now enters from stage right as Punchinello strides off, left, to find Pantalone's wife and tell her the news about Pantalone's will. The new scene features Smeraldina and Capitano, who essentially enter from the right side at the same time Punchinello exits, left.)*

*The Capitano is out shopping for a new linen shirt.)*

Smeraldina: Is there anything I can do for you, Capitano?

Capitano: Yes, indeed there is . . . can you direct me to a linendraper's? I must buy a shirt.

Smeraldina Why, I'm a linendraper! What a coincidence!

Capitano: Yes, yes. . . a coincidence no doubt, but I must still find my way to the linendraper's

Smeraldina: Capitano, my name is Smeraldina and I am standing directly in front of you here on this street corner selling linen shirts. (*distinctly*) Would you like to buy one? (*holds it up*)

Capitano: Ahh! What a fine shirt! Why, I'm looking for one exactly like it! Could you direct me to the linendraper's?

(*Smeraldina holds up sign saying "Linendraper" with an arrow pointing directly at her. The Capitano is startled. Looks at sign, then at Smeraldina.*)

Capitano: Why, here is a linendraper right before my eyes! Oho! I'll just ask her ~~if~~ if she would have any shirts that would suit me!

Smeraldina: Capitano! Here! Look at me! Now look at this shirt! I have high-grade Holland linen and fine sweat-proof bedsocks!

Capitano: Hmm, this shirt would suit me well enough. I'll just change shirts.

(*He opens up his jacket.*)

Smeraldina: Capitano, you aren't wearing a shirt.

Capitano: Ah, yes, that is true enough. . . . you see, I am an exceeding fierce and violent man, and when I am made angry, the hairs which cover my entire body in goodly quantity have a tendency to stand on end, and so riddle my shirts with holes that ~~it falls~~ <sup>they</sup> to pieces off my body. But I have found of late that I am beginning to be able to control my temper to a degree and so have to decided to . . . buy a linen shirt.

Smeraldina: Going to give shirts a try again, eh? Very wise! Can't get far in this world without a shirt!

Capitano: Yes, yes. . .well, how much are you asking for it?

Smeraldina: It is three coins and a good bargain

Capitano: Three Coins!? That is a completely outrageous price! Don't provoke me wench! I will give you half a coin for this shirt!

Smeraldina (*putting away shirt*): You're not used to wearing shirts, I see. . .

Capitano: Woman, you are beginning to stir anger in my brow. You should be wise to show some respect! I warn you it would be truly terrible were I to be thrown, unwillingly of course, into one of my murderous rages!

Smeraldina: Three coins!

Capitano: Do not attempt to goad me!

Smeraldina: Three coins!

Capitano: I am known by many names! Capitano! *Captain* Capitano! Prince of Cavaliers! Son of Thunder and Lightning!

Smeraldina: Three Coins!

Capitano: I've cut through tons of human flesh! I level cities! I flatten mountain ranges! There are runners sent from city to city to warn the population of my coming!

Smeraldina: *Three Coins!* This is a fine shirt and it is worth five coins at least. I will give it to you for three. From your description of yourself, you seem to have done pretty well in the world and your general appearance has about it a . . . distinct air of . . . success, excepting only the lack of a shirt, which I can certainly remedy if you'll only pay me three reasonable coins!

Capitano (*turning away in rage*): Ah, these impertinent citizens! By rights I should hack you all to little pieces! I happened by your miserable city today and spared you all horrible, bloody deaths out of the goodness that occasionally wells up out of even the fiercest of hearts!

*(whirls on Smeraldina)*

Woman, you are putting yourself in great danger by infuriating me so! Ah Ahhh! I feel in a way strangely similar to how I felt immediately before attacking and laying waste the great fortress of Troy! By coincidence, I met an army of Greeks under the wall of the city! I led them up to the main gate and when I was close enough. . . I leapt upon it, tearing it off its hinges with my teeth! I carried a

massive battle axe in each hand and I set to chopping my way through a mob of enraged Trojans, whom I had interrupted as they attempted to set fire to a large wooden horse. I ran down the main boulevard towards the palace of the king and through the plazas, which were so densely packed with soldiers that there was no place for any of them to fall once I had cut them in half! My arms whirled like a bumblebee's wings and the force of the wind stirred up was sufficient to blast the crowd of bisected soldiers back and away from me as I raced on. The Greek army had paused just inside the city gates to rescue some of their comrades who had somehow become trapped inside the burning horse. But, seeing a pathway possible over and through the bodies of their enemies, they set to carrying on sacking the city with great enthusiasm! Straight to the treasure room I went and I made off with all I could carry. . . an immense weight of treasure! I chartered a fair vessel out of Asia Minor . . . and that colossal treasure, all the beautiful jewels and goblets, all that gold, everything, *everything* . . . was lost at sea. . . save this single coin, taken as a souvenir and sewn into my right sock, which I will now exchange with your for your rather quaint and home-spun shirt!

*(he hands Smeraldina a quarter)*

Yes! It is a coin of great value, I know, but the shirt is well-made. Ahh! Hold it up to the light! See how it gleams!

Smeraldina: It's a quarter.

Capitano: Do you want me to kill you and take the shirt?

Smeraldina: Now Capitano, perhaps we could come to some. . . arrangement?

*(She tries out some feminine wiles,)*

*but Capitano is very dense. He turns away)*

Capitano: I've seen the same shirt three streets over for three quarters of a coin. They were selling them off the boat at half a coin not a week ago. . .

Smeraldina *(still trying wiles)*: Capitano, you are so fierce that it is difficult to get your attention!

Capitano: *(muttering)* An inferior grade of flax. . .

Smeraldina: Now, wouldn't it be better if we talked over the matter of the three coins and what might be gained by them?

*(She has succeeded in interesting the Capitano)*

Capitano: Oho! It would be a pleasure to buy something from you! This wench is comely and well-favored! And she has fallen in love with me! Not an uncommon occurrence! I feel curiously drawn to you as if by some kind of strong natural attraction!

*(attempts to embrace her)*

Smeraldina: Three coins!

*(Capitano, frustrated, turns away)*

Capitano: Where can I get some money?

*(Just then, Punchinello comes running through with his message, runs straight into the Capitano as Smeraldina looks on. Capitano snags Punchinello, who is very much out of breath.)*

Capitano: Ahh, Punchinello! The Punchmeister! Punchy, Puncharino! My old pal! Just the man I was looking for! Do you know what today is? Have you been to Pantalone's house yet? What's the matter? Are you ill?

*(Still winded, Punch has been trying to communicate what he believes is happening to Pantalone through gestures. Indicates writing something, Pantalone's will in fact, getting it stamped a couple of times, putting it in a safe, clutching his heart and keeling over. Capitano is alarmed.)*

Capitano: What is it my friend? He grabs Punchinello by the coat and violently pulls him up Wake up Wake up! Heal! Hah! There! I have saved your life!

Punchinello: No, you haven't . . . I was . . . telling you about . . . Mr. Pantalone!

Capitano: Ungrateful dog! Yes I did! I saved his life *(to Smeraldina)*

Punchinello: No, you didn't! It was Mr. Pantalone who was . . .

Capitano: Yes, I most certainly did!

Punchinello: No, you most certainly didn't! I was just trying to tell you . . .

Capitano: It is indeed! the most fortunate of days! The last Saturday of the month . . . AND a prime number to boot! And I have just saved your life!

Punchinello: No you haven't! I was at Mr. Pantalone's . . .

Capitano: Well, of course you were! It's payday, isn't it? How much?

Punchinello: A hundred dollars! But Mr. Pantalone . . .

Capitano: A hundred dollars!? Well, I think you should give me half of it for saving your life, AND for being such a good pal, you know, keeping you safe and all. We've always been partners, you and I!

Punchinello: Safe? Who do I need to be kept safe from besides . . . (he looks at sword on Capitano's belt) . . . oh . . . uh huh.

Capitano: Come, come! We've always been such good friends, haven't we?

Friends should share, don't you think? Fifty-fifty, that's all I ask . . . half for me and half for you . . . *(takes the bills from Punchinello)* Here, let me count it out . . . One for you and one for me. Two for you and one, two for me. Three for you and one, two, three. . .

Punchinello: Wait a minute. Hold it! Start over!

Capitano: I was just joking! Alright, then! Half and half! Fifty-fifty! One, two, three, four, five . . . there that's five ten dollar bills for you and five ten dollar bills for me. You have your fifty dollars and I have fifty, too.

*(Punchinello slow take)*

Punchinello: Wait a minute, what was that?

Capitano: I said you have your fifty dollars, right?

Punchinello: I have my fifty dollars . . .

Capitano: And I have my fifty, too!

*(Punchinello is startled, but speaks carefully)*

Punchinello: As you say, it's good to share with friends. But you said fifty-fifty, half and half! What I don't get is why you should end up with two extra dollars more than me!

Capitano: No, NO! You don't understand. Half of a hundred is fifty, isn't it?

*(Punchinello does the math)*



Punchinello: Yeah. . . .

Capitano: So you have your fifty dollars. . .

Punchinello: I have my fifty dollars . .

Capitano: And I have my fifty, too!

Punchinello: Give me the money and let me count it out.

Capitano: Very well, here!

Punchinello: That's one, two three, four ,five ten dollar bills. And ~~five~~ ten dollar bills for me. You've got your fifty dollars!

And I've got my fifty, too!

*(Stops, stunned at the implications)*

Capitano: Figure it out!

Punchinello: I guess I . . . I owe you a dollar!

Capitano: Well, then, give it to me! Half and half!

*(Insert material from dollar routine from Melodrama. Go as far as the Biggest Diamond in the world, or add other bits, if possible.)*

*(After he has been thoroughly swindled, Punchinello finally remembers his big news.)*

Punchinello: Lady Isabella! I have to go and find the Lady Isabella. Pantalone has made out his will and I heard him groaning and moaning as I came in. I asked him if he was sick and he said, and I quote, "Yes, I'm sick!" Lady Isabella should know as soon as possible!

Capitano: Why didn't you tell me this earlier! Are you sure about this? What's the matter with you? Why didn't you tell me?!

Punchinello: I tried, I tried! I was all out of breath!

*(demonstrates mime, same as earlier)*

Capitano: Well, never mind about that now! This is big news, m'boy, big news indeed! Pantalone has made his will? And you heard him say he's sick?

Punchinello: He was coughing . . .

*overheard*  
Capitano: He was coughing!! I mean. . . that poor fellow. . .

This is big new, m'boy, big, biggoty big, big news, indeed!

Punchinello: You ~~say~~ said that.

Capitano: I have to tell Isabella! Ahh, I mean . . . Lady Isabella . . . Mrs.

Pantalone, this great. . . ! Uh, the shocking news. . . Isabella! Isabella!

*(In walks an elegant person with Lauren Bacall-like dignity, the lady Isabella.*

*She doesn't notice Punch)*

Isabella: Hello Capitano. Nice to see you again Slain any monsters? Wiped out any armies? I'd like to hear a little more about the sack of . . . Troy . . . Why don't you come in and tell me all about it, hmmm?. .

Capitano: Isabella, Isabella! I have great . . . I mean shocking news . . . your esteemed husband has, how shall I say it. . . he has. . .

Isabella: Has he. . . ? (looks keenly interest)

Capitano: No, no, no. . . it's not that bad. . . he has however made out a will.

Isabella: A will! (interested again)

Capitano: Yes, and he was overheard groaning dreadfully, coughing and declaring that he is sick!

Isabella: Oh, darling, this is wonderful!

Capitana: Ixnay on the arlingday! Punchinello, here, *overheard* the whole thing and is prepared to swear on his life that it is true.

*(It's news to Punchinello)*

Isabella: Oh! Punchinello! What a sad state of . . . of . . . of . . .

Punchinello: (helpfully) Affairs. . .

Isabella: Who said anything about affairs? I don't recall saying anything about affairs! (backing him around)

Punchinello: State of affairs! A sad state of affairs . . .

Isabella: Ah, yes, of course. My poor husband! (*thoughtfully*) My husband and I enjoyed many blissful years. Then we met. Poor dear. What did he say?

Punchinello: He said he had made arrangements for his coin collection to have a good home after he passes away.

*overheard*  
Capitano: He was coughing!! I mean. . . that poor fellow. . .

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Punchinello: He said he had made arrangements for his coin collection to have a good home after he passes away.

Isabella: Who was he talking to?

Punchinello: The coin collection!

Isabella: Yes, yes . . . but who was he saying all this to?

Punchinello: The coins!

Isabella: The coins. . . He was talking to his coins. . . ?

Punchinello: Certainly! He went on at some length. And he had little names for some of them. Brave Harry, the Rooster, Golden Belinda, Klinking Klank. . . Oh, and Little Jim! Little Jim came out on top!

*(pause while they stare at him for a second)*

Isabella: *Never mind about the little names!* What did he say was wrong with him? What else did he do?

Punchinello: He just opened a trapdoor and removed a lockbox. He said nothing about the cause of his misery, but from his groaning and carry-ing on it was clear that something was the matter . . . then he paid me and I left.

Isabella: Go back to him and fix him something that will make him feel better.

The Capitano and I have an important subject to discuss. I'll be along soon!

*(Punchinello exit.)*

*Isabella and Capitano celebrate their good luck)*

Isabella: For years I've nagged him about making out a will. And he was never willing to do it! It's because he couldn't stand to think of being separated from his coin collection!

Capitano: Oh? It must be some coin collection!

Isabella: Oho! It's a treasure chest alright. And he thinks no one knows about it! Apparently even Punchinello knows the location of the lockbox. You know. . .my husband and I have had four pleasant years together. We've been married twenty six years. . . and now . . . an interesting development! He's made out a will!

Capitano: You mean. . .

Isabella: There's a big box full of gold coins, currency and who knows what else hidden under the floor of his study. And now that he has made out his will, it may be that that treasure may soon fall into my . . . our hands! Let's look in on him, shall we?

*(They go back the way Isabella entered.)*

*Punch enters as in beginning of play. He is holding a glass. Pantalone emerges as before, standing still, looking pale.)*

Punchinello: Boss, boss! Are you still feeling bad?

*(Pantalone nods, miserably)*

Punchinello: Here, drink this! It'll help! They call it the "hair of the dog that bit you!"

*(Pantalone nods understandingly, takes a big drink)*

Pantalone: *(gasps)* What's in it?

Punchinello: Dog hair!

*(Pantalone starts to retch.)*

Punchinello: Say, you really aren't at all well! You'd better lie down for a little while!

*(Punchinello tries to comfort Pantalone. His efforts make Pantalone feel sicker.)*

*Punchinello runs back into the last scene and tells*

*Isabella, Capitano, Punchinello, Smeraldina to come running to Pantalone's bedside. They all dash in, spilling all over the room and bed.)*

Isabella: I have sent for the doctor . . .

Pantalone: No, no . . . Not the doctor, not the doctor!

Isabella: I have sent for the best doctor in town!

Pantalone: Not him!

Isabella: How do you feel my dear?

Pantalone: I was fine until just now! No doctors!

*(pretentious fanfare. Doctor enters)*

Doctor enters: I am the doctor!

Isabella: You are the doctor?

Doctor: Yes, I am the doctor!

Isabella: Do you have credentials?

Doctor: Yes, I have them very badly! (scratches, both laugh)

Doctor: What is the situation?

*(Isabella takes him off to speak with him privately. Pantalone strains weakly to hear. Capitano, Smeraldina, and Punch form a wall.*

*Doctor and Isabella come back.)*

Doctor, puzzled: Little names?

*(Isabella grabs him by the arm and drags him back out of earshot, but not before we hear☺*

Isabella: Forget about the little names! The point is . . .wsp, wssp . *(We hear the doctor say, Oh, right! And he returns to Pantalone's bedside.)*

Doctor to Pantalone: Mr. Pantalone. . . Mr. Pantalone, you are not at all well!

Pantalone: But you haven't even looked at me! You just got here! How can you tell if I'm well or not well?

Doctor: Mr. Pantalone, I am a very expensive doctor. I have three hundred and fifty nine degrees and I decided I'd better stop there and get no more, in case I had to start all over at one after I hit three-sixty! Believe me, if I'm here talking to you, you are not at all well! It's a foregone conclusion! Now what are your symptoms? What's the matter with you?

Pantalone: I have some hair stuck in my throat! Could I get some water?

Doctor: Umm, hmm. . . the sensation of hair in the throat, oh dear, oh dear. . .and water would be the worst thing for it. . . yess. . . go on!

Pantalone: What?

Doctor: You said I hadn't looked at you. Well, I'm looking at you now and, frankly, I don't like what I see!

Pantalone: You don't?

Doctor: NO! I definitely don't! You said you craved water?

Pantalone: I said I was thirsty, could I get. . . ? You see, my throat . . .

Doctor: And with the throat again. . . hmm. . . well, I wish I had better news Mr.

Pantalone. . . let me ask you . . . Have you made out a will lately?

Pantalone: How did you know that?

Doctor: Answer the question please!

Pantalone: Why, yes! Yes I have, But only just today!

Doctor: Well, at least you have good timing going for you!

Pantalone: What?

Doctor: I'm sorry to tell you that you will pass away in . . . ten. . . *(pause)*

Pantalone: I will . . . WHAT? In . . . Ten? Ten! Ten what? Ten months? Ten weeks?

Doctor: . . . Nine. . . Eight. . . Seven *o o*

*Pantalone shrieks and faints. Assembled characters dance around him, death certificate is produced, handed over to the doctor who flourishes his pen, all chanting the rest of the count down. Pantalone sits bolt upright on ONE! to general disappointment.*

*And now there is another pretentious fanfare announcing the arrival of yet another illustrious doctor, who we'll call Doctor Two for now.)*

Doctor One: What's this? Another doctor!? Lady Isabella. . . ?

Isabella: I know nothing about him!

Doctor One, to Doctor Two: Good afternoon, sir. You appear to be a medical man, is that so?

Doctor Two: Yes, indeed! As are you, yourself, I see!

Doctor One: Yes, we are colleagues, then!

Doctor Two: Indeed! I am Dr. Blaukase from Deusseldorf!

Docotr One: Pleased to meet you! I am Dr. Bluecheese from right here. As chance would have it I am in the middle of a case. As you are a man of letters perhaps you could render me consultation in a most intriguing problem which I am investigating.

Doctor Two: I would be glad so to ponder, Doctor, for I practice medicine out of pure love for it! I have classified thousands of disease symptoms which affect the spirit; thousands which afflict the mind; and thousands still which continually wrack the body! Seventy different varieties of deadly chill! Over three hundred digestive disorders!

Doctor One: You are a veritable avalanche of medicine!

Doctor Two: I purge!

Doctor One: I sound!

Doctor Two: I operate!

Doctor One: I saw!

Doctor Two: I cup!

Doctor One: I slash!

Doctor Two: I split!

Doctor One: I break!

Doctor Two: I extract!

Doctor Two: I tear!

Doctor One: I cut!

Doctor Two: I dislocate!

Doctor One: I trim!

Doctor Two: I slice!

Doctor One: I give haircuts to everybody in the neighborhood!

*(Doctor Two gives him a funny look)*

Doctor Two: I am the bane of all maladies whatsoever. I exterminate all fevers and chills, the itch, gravel, measles, common plague, ringworm, gout, apoplexy, erysipelas, rheumatism, pleurisy, both wind colic and ordinary colic. In short, I wage such cruel and relentless warfare against all forms of illness that when I see a disorder becoming ineradicable in a patient, I even go so far as to kill the patient in order to relieve him of his disorder.

Doctor One: That is an excellent cure!



Doctor Two: I know of no other!

Doctor One: I believe we will get along splendidly! Tell me, sir, what brings you here!

Doctor Two: Among my many degrees, there is embedded one which is a degree in a rather new discipline – Doctor of *Juris Prudence*.

Doctor One: What? You're a lawyer, as well?

Doctor Two: I am. And, as such, I have the duty of delivering a copy of Mr. Pantalone's will into his hand.

Doctor One: You're *Pantalone's* lawyer? Why didn't you say so? Did you write up the will?

Doctor Two: No, I didn't draw up this particular document. I don't know what is in it, I'm just delivering it for the law firm.

Doctor One: Don't know what's in it, eh?

Doctor Two: That is correct, sir!

Doctor One: So you have no advantage over us in this matter.

Doctor Two: That, too, is correct, in fact, I have exactly the same disadvantage that you have, in that, I don't know what's in it.

Doctor One: Well, good! That makes us even! But you have been led to believe that the will involves a lot of. . . how shall I put it. . . MONEY?

Doctor Two: I have been led so to believe!

Doctor One: Good, good! Oh, Mrs. Pantalone! Lady Isabella!

*(Calls to Isabella and indicates Doctor Two with his head. Isabella comes over, takes Doctor Two by the arm, leads him out of earshot, talks with him earnestly for a few seconds. They return. Doctor Two looks puzzled)*

Doctor Two: Little names?

*(He too is dragged off by Isabella, as Doctor One was earlier, but this time too fast for us to hear anything.*

*Doctor Two returns by himself)*

Doctor Two: I have a much clearer understanding of the situation.

Doctor One: Good, good. Then perhaps we should confer some more.

Doctor Two: Let's do so without delay.

*They huddle together. One by one the others wander over to join the huddle, until all others are huddled and Pantalone straining to hear what they are saying.*

*Occasionally, one of them pops his head out at an angle to look at Pantalone.*

*The Two Doctors go over and introduce themselves to Pantalone.)*

Doctor Two: Hello, sir! I am Dr. Blaukase!

Doctor One: And you know me, don't you? I'm Dr. Bluecheese!

Pantalone: Yes, yes, of course I know you. You are both doctors?

Doctors (*Tweedle dee and Tweedle-Dum pose*): Yes!

Pantalone: Are you any good?

Doctor One: What? Ha!

Doctor Two: I'll have you know, sir, that I recently single-handedly brought under control a horrible creeping skin disease in which the sufferer's necks and upper limbs stretch painfully to incredible lengths, sometimes dragging on the ground as they walk!

*Demonstrates symptoms*

Doctor One: Well, only last week I healed an entire village of victims of the terrible yammering sweats! The poor souls! They shook all over and yammered, and sweated!

*Demonstrates symptoms*

Doctor Two: Oh? That was probably when I was busy curing an entire town of the foot-pounding cramp!

*(Demonstrates symptoms)*

Doctor One: I had just come from putting an end to the dread cross-eyed hysterical squeaking sickness. I assemble two hundred victims and led them around the main plaza! Ahh! The din was terrific!

*(Demonstrates symptoms. Pantalone is becoming more and more disturbed by these spectacles,)*

Doctor Two: Thursday afternoon, I heard of an epidemic of growling and snapping that had broken out in the capital! I was asked by a growling messenger to come quickly into the presence of the king to advise him.

Doctor One: The king!

Doctor Two: The king! I found his majesty down on all fours, growling and snapping. Not wishing to do him any disrespect, I, too, fell to my knees and in an attempt to converse with him, growled a little, in a respectful way. Like this!

*(Demonstrates)* The king seemed pleased and began to howl. *(Looks at Doctor One)* Would you mind, sir?

Doctor One: In the interest of science, it would be my pleasure! *(clears throat, gets on all fours, begins howling)*

Doctor Two: We chatted for a while, thusly. . .

*(He growls, barks and snaps, while Doctor One converses with him by howling, both of them on all fours kind of surrounding Pantalone)*

Pantalone: You two are insane! You aren't doctors! You're madmen! Get out! Get out!

*(The two doctors immediately stand and try to soothe Pantalone)*

Doctor One: There, there! Please don't excite yourself Mr. Pantalone!

Doctor Two: Calm yourself! You know, it might be better if we just leveled with you.

Doctor One: You think so?

Pantalone: Yes, yes. . . that would be better! I think that would . . . what do you mean? What do you mean "leveled with me"?

*(Both doctors stand off to one side and whisper together for a moment. Then they return to Pantalone's bedside)*

Doctor One We have come to a decision. We're going to cut you in!

Pantalone: What!? You're going to what . . . ?

Doctor Two: We have decided to combine forces. We're going to sign the certificate, that goes without saying. But we like you. If you play along, you'll get a cut of your money just like the rest of us!

Pantalone: WHAT? What are you talking about A cut of my money? You are crazy! This is outrageous! It's a scheme! You scoundrels! I'm contacting my lawyer!

Doctor Two: Over here!

Doctor One: Take it or leave it, it's the best we can do.

*(Pantalone sputtering)*

Doctor Two: There, there Mr. Pantalone, you are getting all worked up. You need something to calm your nerves. Isn't that right, doctor. ?

Doctor Two: Of course, doctor. And, you know. . . it's certainly a bad sign when the patient starts accusing the doctors of being crazy, wouldn't you agree? That's often a sign of mental instability. He may be having a psychotic episode right now.

*(gestures significantly with his head)*

Pantalone: That would explain a lot if it were only true!

Doctor Two: Ahah! You see. . . he admits it!

Doctor One: I get it! I understand! It only takes two doctors' signatures to have someone committed to the local Bedlam! I wonder how long we'll be able to get away with that! Hurray for the sixteenth century!

Doctor Two: And If we signed that particular form he would be officially *non compos mentis*.

Doctor One: Oh, my! We would have to declare him incompetent to handle his affairs!

Doctor Two: And someone else would have to control all his money. Probably his lawyer!!

*(Pause as they consider this with joy and anticipation and they look at Pantalone with undisguised greed.)*

*Pantalone gasps and passes out. Everyone excitedly gathers around the two doctors)*

Doctor One: Or we could just stick to the original plan!

Doctor Two: Quick! The certificate!

Doctor One (*producing death certificate, signs it*) There! Now for the will!

Doctor Two (*producing will with a flourish*): I'll read it . . . (*clears throat*)

"I, Leonardo Pantalone, being of sound mind. . ."

*(reaction, big laugh all around)*

"Do hereby bequeath my beloved coin collection and all my worldly wealth to. . ."  
"

Isabella: Yes?

Capitano: Yes?

Doctor One: Yes?

Punchinello and Smeraldina (*dancing in a circle*): Party! Party! Party! Partee!

Doctor Two: ". . . all my worldly wealth to . . . the Piccolo Theater <sup>at</sup> ~~in~~ the Evanston Arts Depot." Hmmm. . . looks like that's all of it.

*(Pause)*

*Everybody takes turns saying, What? Isabella, shrieking and enraged.*

Isabella: *WHAT?* The Piccolo Theatre. . . ??

*Isabella goes to Pantalone and smacks him a good one, reviving him immediately. She shouts at him and starts a wild chase, involving whole cast and, could it be. . . Yackety Sax? Doctors are shouting "Non Compos Mentis!"*

*End*