

The False Servant by Pierre Carlet de Marivaux



When a woman spies her fiancé, Lelio, flirting with a countess at a masked ball, she disguises herself as a man – Chevalier – and follows him to the countess's estate. Discovering Lelio's intentions to inherit the countess's money in marriage, Chevalier takes it upon herself to woo the countess away from Lelio. In doing so, she manages to prevent the marital union, while Lelio still gets the countess's money and can return to Paris to wed his intended. The question of who is the servant of the title is constantly in flux in the play.

The False Servant was first performed in 1724 by the Comédie Italienne.

'Thrills, chills and belly laughs – this addictively adult comedy has got the lot... What a superbly elegant, erotic and chillingly cold-hearted play this is.' *Daily Telegraph*

Genre:	Romantic drama	Fee:	£40 plus VAT, per performance
Cast:	m5 f3 m/f1	Scripts:	ISBN 9780413185600 £14.99
Set:	suggestion – a dark, unkempt house	Length:	3 acts
Contact:	amateur-rights@bloomsbury.com		

EXTRACT

Lelio (*aside*) It looks like I got things wrong. He is a man. A real man.

Chevalier (*fiery*) You are a coward. You're as frightened as a little girl.

Lelio All right, Chevalier. I'll come clean. I did think you were a woman. It's the truth. It's your fault. You've got the kind of face that would look . . . right with make-up. Any woman would be glad to have a face like that. You're a man with a woman's face.

Chevalier You're the one with a false face. Let's get back to the wood.

Lelio No. I was testing you. For a reason I can't understand, you told Trivelin to give money to Harlequin.

Chevalier (*seriously*) The reason is simple. When I thought I was alone with Trivelin, Harlequin overheard me say something concerning our project that he could go and tell the Countess. That's the reason, sir . . .

Lelio How could I guess? The way Harlequin spoke of you I thought you were a girl. You're good-looking. I was suspicious. But I give in. You may be pretty but you are also brave. Let's kiss, make up and press on with what's in hand.

Chevalier When someone like me has got his blood up, it's difficult to calm down.

Lelio Yet another thing you have in common with women.

Chevalier Whatever.

If you enjoyed this, you might like:

- *Double Inconstancy* by Marivaux (m4 f3)
- *The Lucky Ones* by Charlotte Eilenberg (m3 f4)
- *The Stone* by Marius von Mayenberg (m1 f5)