

(Lights come up. The scene shows that we are in a rug store. PANTALONE is checking inventory when ARLECCHINO enters.)

PANTALONE

Arlecchino, do you realize what time it is?

ARLECCHINO

Yes.

PANTALONE

And what time is it?

ARLECCHINO

Time for work.

PANTALONE

Do you know what time you're supposed to show up for work?

ARLECCHINO

Yes, Mr. Pantalone.

PANTALONE

When?

ARLECCHINO

Around 9:00, give or take a minute or two.

PANTALONE

But what time is it now?

ARLECCHINO

I don't know, my name's Arlecchino, not Casio!

PANTALONE

It is 9:45.

ARLECCHINO

Oh, my how the time flies! When I walked in it was 9:00! Do you realize we've been talking for forty-five minutes?

PANTALONE

Arlecchino!! I have two employees besides you. Granted, one of them is my worthless son, but nevertheless, they don't seem to have a problem showing up on time. Why can't you do what they do?

ARLECCHINO

Certainly, you don't want me to imitate others, sir. Wouldn't you rather see me be my own man?!

PANTALONE

I would rather you show up on time! Normally I would berate you for something like this, but since this is the one hundred and fiftieth day in a row you've been tardy, I'll let it slide today.

ARLECCHINO

I told you I was consistent on my resume!

PANTALONE

What amazes me more is you've only worked for me 150 days!

ARLECCHINO

(aside) I'm batting .1000!

PANTALONE

This is not a habit I will be tolerating for much longer.

ARLECCHINO

Mr. Pantalone, can we please just get to work? Ever since I've arrived, you've distracted me from my duties, and, if you must know, the reason I'm a little late this morning is this blistering wart that's grown inside my nose. Surely you've noticed how it's affected my voice.

PANTALONE

(aside) Your voice has always had a nasal sound to it. - Yes, I have.

ARLECCHINO

Good of you, and furthermore, our conversation has done nothing but aggravate it! If you don't mind, silence may be the best fashion in which to work today.

PANTALONE

Yes, let's get to work. Arlecchino, I need you to make a delivery, several deliveries actually. Take this black rug to Mr. Ruby, this green rug to Dr. Black, and this red Persian to Mrs. Green.

ARLECCHINO

Now that's confusing.

PANTALONE

Yes, I thought so too at first. Just remember: black-Ruby, green-Black, and red-green. Be extra careful with the Persian.

ARLECCHINO

No, no, I understood that part. What's confusing is the arrangement of who is purchasing what color. Shouldn't Dr. Black buy the black rug, Mrs. Green acquire the green rug, and Mr. Ruby seeks the red Persian?

PANTALONE

The arrangement may not line up exactly, but that's not really our concern, is it? You just deliver those rugs.

ARLECCHINO

But it is our concern, Mr. Pantalone! What do you suppose your elite customers would think if you told them you ate a peanut butter and shrimp sandwich along with a bowl of jelly etouffee?

PANTALONE

That is disgusting!

ARLECCHINO

Is that anymore grotesque than selling Dr. Black a green rug and the red Persian to the unsuspecting Mrs. Green?!

PANTALONE

Arlecchino...