



The Calandria

Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena

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A 500 year old play about a foolish husband, a desperate housewife, a greedy necromancer, some misbehaving servants, and a pair of almost identical twins with a talent for cross-dressing. Twins Lidio and Santilla were separated as small children when their home was destroyed by Saracens. Santilla escaped slavery by disguising herself as a boy and assuming her brother's identity. Nearby, Lidio has taken to dressing as a girl and calling himself Santilla in order to visit his much older lover under the very nose of her dim-witted husband. The trouble is, they look so much alike, not even the servants can tell them apart. Written by a cardinal, this Italian Renaissance play was deemed so racy that barely a page of translation has survived the Victorian era. Still as funny and almost as shocking as ever, this annotated translation preserves the meaning, the poetry, and ribald humor, while using modern English to ensure it is as entertaining as it was when first performed in the time of Da Vinci, Machiavelli, and Michelangelo.

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