

You cannot match the falsehood of your words
With the sincerity of what you're feeling.

ROSAURA. All I can say is—that I want the portrait.

ASTOLFO. As you require a fiction, with a fiction
I shall reply. Go and tell Stella this:

That I esteem her so, it seems unworthy
Only to send the counterfeit to her
And that I'm sending her the original.
And you, take the original along with you,
Taking yourself to her.

ROSAURA. When a man starts
Forth on a definite task, resolved and valiant,
Though he be offered a far greater prize
Than what he seeks, yet he returns with failure
If he returns without his task performed.
I came to get that portrait. Though I bear
The original with me, of greater value,
I would return in failure and contempt
Without the copy. Give it me, Your Highness,
Since I cannot return without it.

ASTOLFO. But
If I don't give it you, how can you do so?

ROSAURA. Like this, ungrateful man! I'll take it from you.
She tries to wrest it from him.

ASTOLFO. It is in vain.

ROSAURA. By God, it shall not come
Into another woman's hands!

ASTOLFO. You're terrifying!

ROSAURA. And you're perfidious!

ASTOLFO. Enough, my dear
Rosaural

ROSAURA. I, your dear? You lie, you villain!

They are both clutching the portrait.

Enter STELLA.

STELLA. Astrea and Astolfo, what does this mean?

ASTOLFO, *aside*. Here's Stella.

ROSAURA, *aside*.

Love, grant me the strength to win

My portrait.

To STELLA.

If you want to know, my lady,
What this is all about, I will explain.

ASTOLFO, *to ROSAURA, aside*. What do you mean?

ROSAURA. You told me to await

Astolfo here and ask him for a portrait
On your behalf. I waited here alone
And as one thought suggests another thought,
Thinking of portraits, I recalled my own
Was here inside my sleeve. When one's alone,
One is diverted by a foolish trifle
And so I took it out to look at it.

It slipped and fell, just as Astolfo here,
Bringing the portrait of the other lady,
Came to deliver it to you as promised.
He picked my portrait up, and so unwilling
Is he to give away the one you asked for,
Instead of doing so, he seized upon
The other portrait which is mine alone
And will not give it back though I entreated
And begged him to return it. I was angry
And tried to snatch it back. That's it he's holding,
And you can see yourself if it's not mine.

STELLA. Let go the portrait.

She snatches it from him.

ASTOLFO. Madam!

STELLA. The draughtsman

Was not unkind to truth.

ROSAURA. Is it not mine?

STELLA. Why, who could doubt it?

ROSAURA. Ask him for the other.

STELLA. Here, take your own, Astrea. You may leave us.

ROSAURA, *aside*. Now I have got my portrait, come what will.

Exit.

STELLA. Now give me up the portrait that I asked for