

(EXCERPT OF)

THE ROSEWATER OF DOÑA FELICIDAD

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A Parable in One Act

by

Hortense Gerardo

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Cast of Characters

<u>Doña Felicidad:</u>	A woman in her late 50s.
<u>Don Pasquale:</u>	A man in his late 50's.
<u>The Face in the Mirror:</u>	A non-descript personage
<u>Don Xavier:</u>	A man in his late 60s.
<u>Assorted Villagers:</u>	A minimum of three

Scene

A small village in Patagonia.

Time

Early September, 1973.

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: Each scene should flow seamlessly into the next to give the impression of occurring in a wall-less, black box. Thus, each set should be very minimal, giving the essentials of a dream-like setting rather than a highly-detailed set.

AT RISE: DOÑA FELICIDAD rises from her bed and goes about the business of preparing herself for her day. She stares at herself in the mirror at a wash basin, washes her face, combs her hair, and tries to tap out the remaining drops of a bottle of facial lotion onto her face, without success. Giving up, she stares at herself a moment longer in the mirror and emits a prolonged, soundless wail. Afterwards, she applies her makeup, dresses in a simple shift, puts on her shoes, finds a small bag of papers and leaves her home. On the street, she carries herself in a dignified, regal way that also serves to hide a stiffening of her joints.

VILLAGER #1

Good morning, Doña Felicidad. How are you today?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(gently weary)

Another day older, but still breathing, thank God.

VILLAGER #1

Doña Felicidad! You don't look a day over sixteen!

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Ah, you sweet liar! There is a special place in Dante's Hell for those who lie but with good intentions. Bless your soul.

(VILLAGER #1 tips his hat, chuckles, and DOÑA FELICIDAD moves off slowly toward the town library. At the library, she assumes her position behind the reception desk, quietly takes out a book from her bag, and settles in to read. After a while DON PASQUALE shuffles up to her reference desk with a stack of books)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Good morning, Don Pasquale! Don't tell me you have finished reading all of these books already. You were here only two days ago!

DON PASQUALE

(shyly)

Don't you know by now? I only come here to see you, Doña Felicidad. When will you finally come with me to the village square for dinner under the moonlight?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(coyly)

Oh, do not mock me with your honeyed tongue Don Pasquale. Reserve your energy for the young ladies who flutter around you like butterflies.

DON PASQUALE

(laughing)

Doña Felicidad, do not be fooled by what your eyes see. What matters is what the heart tells you is true.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

If that is true, then what matters are the books that comfort me in my bed at night.

DON PASQUALE

(slightly embarrassed)

Ah! Well, thank goodness then, for that.

(DON PASQUALE suddenly looks  
at his watch)

Goodness! I'm almost late for an appointment at the Café Florian this morning. I'll be back for more books soon.

(DON PASQUALE bows grandly and leaves)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(to herself, bitter)

Don't be late for your appointment with the sixteen year-old girl you have been courting behind her parents' back!  
(after a time, DOÑA FELICIDAD places her book back into her bag and leaves the library. She waits at a bus stop and after a while, Don Xavier steps up to the stop, tips his hat and stands beside her.)

DON XAVIER

Good day, Doña Felicidad. How goes it at the library?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

The books come in, the books go out. The books get a little moldier, a little more faded every day. They are not always treated well.

DON XAVIER

Are you speaking of the books, or of yourself, Doña Felice?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(DOÑA FELICIDAD is surprised at first, then sees that Don Xavier is gently smiling at her. After a moment, she laughs and confides to him.)

Sometimes, Don Xavier, I wish I could be like a book.

DON XAVIER

How so, Doña Felicidad?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

I wish I could be invited into peoples' homes because of the knowledge contained in me, no matter how moldy or faded I become.

DON XAVIER

Ah, but you, yourself, said the books are not always treated well.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Even so, Don Xavier. Even so.

(Just then, the bus pulls up, and when it pulls away, only DOÑA FELICIDAD

remains at the curb. She watches the bus for a moment, then walks home. At her home, DOÑA FELICIDAD sits at her dressing table and stares at herself in the mirror. She tries again to extract the remaining drops of a bottle of face lotion, to no avail. She stares at herself at the mirror again, and eventually emits an anguished though soundless wail. She combs her hair and is massaging her face in a slowly deliberate manner as she speaks to herself in the mirror.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Every night I massage my face, hoping it will make me look younger. I don't know who is more foolish, Don Pasquale chasing after girls young enough to be his granddaughter, or me rubbing my face, hoping it will bring back my youth. I wish I no longer felt burdened by the relentless onslaught of time.

(Suddenly, DOÑA FELICIDAD notices THE FACE IN THE MIRROR and freezes. After a while, she speaks.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

How did you get in here!?

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR stares back silently. DOÑA FELICIDAD turns to look behind her and sees no one there.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Who are you? What do you want?!

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR points a bony finger at her but remains silent.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Are you coming for me? Because if you are I'm ready. I'm not afraid of you. Do what you have to do and make it quick.

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

I only come to take people who are truly alive, Doña Felicidad.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Well, if you came to insult me, Father Time already does that on a daily basis. Go away.

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

I came to grant you a wish, Doña Felicidad.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

A wish? Why? So that you can torment me knowing what I long for most and then, not grant it?

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

I will grant you whatever you wish, Doña Felicidad.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

I see. You will grant me my wish, and then take it away. That is how you will watch me suffer.

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

Whatever you wish will not be taken away unless you, yourself, ask me to take it away.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

And then you will take my life?

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR remains silent.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(after a moment)

Well it seems that this is the easiest proposition. What if my wish is to be young again forever?

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

Is that your wish?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

You said you would grant anything I want and not take it away unless I ask, is that correct?

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR nods but remains silent.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(laughing)

Then of course that is what I want! Who would not want to be young forever? Do you think I will ask for this wish to be taken away? Ha! Then you are profoundly mistaken. Because I will NOT ask for it to be taken away and you will NOT come back to claim my life! Ha ha! I can not believe

you would grant such a ridiculous offer! Why has no one else thought of this before!? Ha ha ha ha ha! Yes! I wish to be young forever! Ha ha ha ha ha.

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR nods then appears to give DOÑA FELICIDAD a bottle through the mirror.)

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

Rub this into your skin each night as you do your nightly massage.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

What is it?

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

Rosewater.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

That's all? Rosewater? How do I know this will not disfigure me and do exactly the opposite of what you suggest it will do?

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

You do not have to do as I say. You can continue as before in your nightly rituals and your daily humiliations. But your wish will not be granted. The choice is entirely yours to make.

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR fades away. DOÑA FELICIDAD stares at the bottle, then at herself in the mirror. She looks behind her and sees nothing, then looks back at the mirror. A long time elapses. Nothing. After a while she speaks to herself in the mirror.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

That's it, Felicidad. You have finally lost your mind. Talking into a mirror...hah!

(She pauses, then looks at the bottle in her hands. The other bottle of face lotion is now gone.)

But then, where did this rosewater come from? Could it be I bought it on the way home today? Yes. Of course. That must be it. It's been another long day and I'm tired.

(She opens the bottle and sniffs it.)

Smells nice! Perhaps the rosewater will help. What are you waiting for, Felice? You're not getting any younger! What is there to lose?

(DOÑA FELICIDAD carefully rubs a small amount of the unguent onto her face. As she does this, while her eyes are closed, THE FACE IN THE MIRROR appears, and her own reflection fades away. When she opens her eyes again, she does not notice THE FACE IN THE MIRROR is now her own.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Hhmmmmmm. Smells nice and it feels good too! Maybe this rosewater wasn't such an extravagance after all!

(DOÑA FELICIDAD stares at her face from many angles. She moves it from side to side, as does THE FACE IN THE MIRROR. She looks on approvingly, then trundles to bed, reads for a short while, then falls asleep.)

(FADE OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 2

SETTING: Same as in Scene 1.

AT RISE: DOÑA FELICIDAD rises from her bed and goes about the business of washing and dressing herself for her day. She stares at herself in the mirror at a washbasin, washes her face, combs her hair, and taps out some rosewater into her palm, rubs her palms together, and slowly rubs her palms onto her face. Afterwards, she stares at herself a moment longer in the mirror and emits a prolonged, soundless bout of laughter. Afterwards, she applies her makeup, dresses in a simple shift, puts on her shoes, finds a small bag of papers and leaves her home. On the street, she carries herself in a dignified, regal way that is also noticeably lighter than before

VILLAGER #1

Good morning, Doña Felicidad. How are you today?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(gently weary)

Another day older, but still breathing, thank God.

VILLAGER #1

(VILLAGER #1 is about to tip his hat and walk past her when he glances at her and suddenly stops in his tracks, shocked.)

Doña Felicidad! You don't look a day over sixteen!

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Ah, you sweet liar! There is a special place in Dante's Hell for those who lie but with good intentions. Bless your soul.

(VILLAGER #1 tips his hat, dumbfounded, and DOÑA FELICIDAD moves off slowly toward the town library. At the library, she assumes her position behind the reception desk, quietly takes out a book from her bag, and settles in to read. After a while DON PASQUAL shuffles up to her reference desk with a stack of books.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Good morning, Don Pasquale! Don't tell me you have finished reading all of these book already. You were here only recently!

DON PASQUALE

(shyly)

Don't you know by now? I come here only to see you, Doña Felicidad. When will you finally come with me to the village square for dinner under the moonlight?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(impatiently)

Reserve your energy for the young ladies that flutter around you like butterflies.

DON PASQUALE

(laughing)

Doña Felicidad, do not be fooled by what your eyes see.

(suddenly, DON PASQUALE notices a change in Dona Felicia and is stunned. After a moment, he regains his compusure but speaks ardently.)

What matters is what the heart tells you is true.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

If that is true, then what matters are the books that comfort me in my bed at night.

DON PASQUALE

Then I wish devoutly to be one of your books.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(slightly embarrassed)

Do not mock me with your honeyed tongue Don Pasquale.  
 (after an awkward pause, DOÑA FELICIDAD  
 suddenly points to DON PASQUALE's watch)

Goodness! You'll be late for your appointment at the Café  
 Florian. Come back tomorrow for more books after you've  
 amused yourself with your...amusements.

(DON PASQUALE begins to speak,  
 reconsiders, then bows grandly  
 and leaves. After a time,  
 DOÑA FELICIDAD places her book back  
 into her bag and leaves. She waits  
 at a bus stop and after a while,  
 DON XAVIER steps up to the stop,  
 tips his hat and stands beside her.)

DON XAVIER

Good day, Doña Felicidad. Are the books getting better  
 treatment today?

DOÑA FELICIA

The books attracted unwanted attention today, but at least  
 they are, for the most part, intact.

DON XAVIER

Are you speaking of the books, or of yourself...  
 (DON XAVIER looks at DOÑA FELICIDAD and is  
 suddenly taken aback)  
 ...Doña Felicidad!?!)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(DOÑA FELICIDAD is surprised at first, then sees  
 that Don Xavier is genuinely admiring her.  
 After a moment, she laughs and asks)  
 Don Xavier, why are you looking at me in that way?

DON XAVIER

In what way, Doña Felicidad?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

In the way a lover of books covets an original folio.

DON XAVIER

If you were a folio, Doña Felicidad, I would savor each  
 page between the covers.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

A book is meant to be savored for the ideas it contains. The pages and covers are merely the vessel on which ideas are served.

DON XAVIER

Even so, Doña Felice. Even so. The vessel serves the important function of housing and conveying what is inside. These things should not be ignored.

(Just then, the bus pulls up,  
and when it pulls away, DON XAVIER  
and DOÑA FELICIDAD remain at the curb.  
They stare at one another a long  
moment.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Don Xavier, you have missed your bus.

DON XAVIER

That is true. However, I will not allow myself to miss the boat: Doña Felicia, would you do me the honor of gracing me with your presence at the village square this Friday night?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(taken aback)

Don Xavier, forgive me, but were you not only recently widowed?

DON XAVIER

It might seem like only yesterday in the eyes of some, but my dearly-departed wife, Gertrude, passed away seven years ago.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Indeed, it does seem like only yesterday, may she rest in peace.

DON XAVIER

I believe a suitable mourning period has passed. Will you not join me as I return to the land of the living?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Yes, of course, I would be delighted to accompany you, Don Xavier. (A pause) I see you every day at this bus stop, and I wonder, why only now have you asked me to accompany you to the village square?

DON XAVIER

I do not understand it, myself. But I feel as though I am only seeing you now, for the first time, Doña Felicidad.

Allow me to walk you home so that I might revel in your beauty a while longer and contemplate how it is possible I had not noticed it all these years.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

(At her home, DOÑA FELICIDAD sits at her dressing table and stares at herself in the mirror. She does not seem to notice the change in her that everyone else sees. She combs her hair and is applying rosewater to her face and limbs in a slow, deliberate manner as she speaks to herself. THE FACE IN THE MIRROR appears as her reflection.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

I have longed many years for Don Xavier to ask me to the village square for Friday dance and now after I massaged the rosewater only one time onto my skin, it has happened.

(DOÑA FELICIDAD stares into the mirror and does not seem to notice THE FACE IN THE MIRROR is not her own as she speaks.)

Maybe I will not look younger, but if DON XAVIER falls in love with me, I will feel young forever. Won't I? Maybe it is the rosewater. Then again, maybe it is not. Maybe he has finally come to see me for who I truly am.

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR stares back, and emits a prolonged, soundless bout of laughter.)

(FADE OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 3

SETTING: The village square at night.

AT RISE: There are musicians playing lively vallenato music. There are long tables with benches for people to sit and people are dining, drinking and generally having a good time under the stars. Strings of light bulbs light the square and the air is festive. DON XAVIER and DOÑA FELICIDAD are at one of the tables, laughing and clearly having a wonderful time. Both are dressed in fine clothes that are slightly ill-fitting as though they were last worn when their owners were somewhat younger and leaner.

DON XAVIER

I have not laughed this way in years, Doña Felicidad! I feel like celebrating! Would you dance a milonga with me?

(DON XAVIER and DOÑA FELICIDAD rise from their table and approach the dancing area in front of the musicians. As they approach, the musicians stop what they were playing and the other dancers politely clear an area for them. All eyes are on the couple as they stand side by side. DON XAVIER addresses the musicians.)

Play the music of one who has risen from the dead and wants to rejoice.

(The musicians look at one another and begin to play a lively tango. DON XAVIER and DOÑA FELICIDAD assume their respective dance positions as though they had been partnering for many years. As they dance, the chatter among the villagers diminishes as people begin to watch and stare admiringly.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

I never knew you were such an elegant dancer, Don Xavier!  
You are very light on your feet.

DON XAVIER

I dance as one who has escaped the bonds of the earth and  
is now floating with an angel.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

I am so happy at this moment that I will accept your kind  
flattery, even if for just one night.

DON XAVIER

I assure you, I would like to repeat many nights with you  
like this, Doña Felicidad. I only hope you will not tire  
of dancing with me.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

How can I ever tire of this moment with you? You make me  
feel like a young girl again!

DON XAVIER

I am not surprised by this: you actually look like a young  
girl again, Doña Felice! I never noticed what beautiful  
skin you have.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

I have my rosewater to thank for that. Each night I  
massage it into my skin as though my life depended on it.

DON XAVIER

Do you mean to say that the only reason you look so young  
is because of rosewater?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Absolutely! I am a woman of limited means, Don Xavier.  
That is the only luxury I have permitted myself.

(At this moment, THE FACE IN THE MIRROR  
appears in the crowd unnoticed and silently  
watches DON XAVIER and DOÑA FELICIDAD, who are  
now the only people dancing.)

DON XAVIER

Then I will gladly provide you with rosewater for the rest  
of my living days, Doña Felicidad! I am like a man who has  
lost his mind tonight, and to prove it to you, I will dance  
like a madman trying to pound dust from the marble!

(At this, DON XAVIER begins a dramatic dance solo. The musicians take notice and begin to play at a faster tempo to keep pace with DON XAVIER's highly skilled but increasingly frantic dance movements. DOÑA FELICIDAD and the rest of the villagers take notice and cheer him on. After a while, the villagers continue to clap and urge him on, but DONA FELICIDAD becomes alarmed.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Don Xavier! Please slow down! You must not exert yourself so!

DON XAVIER

(gasping for breath, but continuing his dance)  
I'm hardly exerting myself at all! I am intoxicated by your loveliness, Doña Felice! I have no other way to express how I feel.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Please, Don Xavier! I am afraid you will hurt yourself. Please stop!

DON XAVIER

Nonsense! I can dance like this forever!

(By now, DON XAVIER is clearly struggling to catch his breath but his movement continue wildly. The musicians keep pace with his faster movements.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Then please stop for my sake! I am tired and wish to sit down, Don Xavier!

DON XAVIER

You!?! A woman who looks like this is her first dance!? Come and dance with me, Doña Felice! Dance as though the world were watching!

(The villagers clap in rhythm to the music and there is much mirth in watching DON XAVIER dance, until suddenly, he sees THE FACE IN THE MIRROR in the crowd, freezes for an instant, then suddenly drops to the floor and remains still. The crowd gasps. The music stops. DOÑA FELICIDAD runs to DON XAVIER and cradles him in her arms.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Don Xavier! Wake up! Please! Wake up, Don Xavier!

(DOÑA FELICIDAD stops to listen to his heart and hearing nothing, begins to shake him and shout for assistance.)

Help! Please help! Someone. Anyone! Don Xavier needs help!

(Several villagers surround DOÑA FELICIDAD, and they huddle around the body of DON XAVIER, murmuring. After a moment, DOÑA FELICIDAD stands up in the midst of them, notices THE FACE IN THE MIRROR standing off to the side, and addresses it.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

No! This was not part of the bargain! No!

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR turns and walks away from the scene silently, unseen by anyone else.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Come back! This is not fair! (she wails loudly) No! Come back!

VILLAGER #2

Who is she talking to?

VILLAGER #3

Don Xavier, you fool. The woman is begging Don Xavier to come back.

VILLAGER #2

But Don Xavier is down here. Not over there.

VILLAGER #3

The poor woman is insane in her grief. Don Xavier is the first man to ask her to the village dance in many years.

VILLAGER #1

(speaking to DOÑA FELICIDAD)

I am sorry to inform you, that Don Xavier has passed away, Doña Felicidad.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(still addressing THE FACE IN THE MIRROR)

You are not being fair! Come back!

(FADE OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

Scene 4

SETTING: Same as in Scene 1.

AT RISE: DOÑA FELICIDAD rises from her bed and goes about the business of washing and dressing herself for her day. She stares at THE FACE IN THE MIRROR at the washbasin, washes her face, combs her hair, and taps out some rosewater into her palm, rubs her palms together, and slowly rubs her palms onto her face. Afterwards, she stares at herself a moment longer in the mirror and emits a prolonged, soundless bout of sobbing. Afterwards, she applies her makeup, dresses in a simple shift, puts on her shoes, finds a small bag of papers and leaves her home. On the street, she carries herself in a dignified, regal way that is yet youthful.

VILLAGER #1

Good morning, Doña Felicidad. I am very sorry to hear of your loss.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(gently weary)

I appreciate your sentiments, but a loss implies something that was owned. The late Don Xavier, God rest his soul, was not mine to lose.

VILLAGER #1

Doña Felicidad! Surely you know he died happily in your arms.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Ah, you sweet liar! He did not die in my arms. (pause)  
There is a special place in Dante's Hell for those who lie but with good intentions. Bless your soul.

(VILLAGER #1 tips his hat, chuckles, and DOÑA FELICIDAD moves off slowly toward the town library. At the library, she assumes her position behind the reception desk, quietly takes out a book from her bag, and settles in to read. After a while DON PASQUALE shuffles up to her reference desk with a stack of books)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Good morning, Don Pasquale! Don't tell me you have finished reading all of these book already. You were here only days ago!

DON PASQUALE

(shyly)

When will you believe me? I come here only to see you, Doña Felicidad.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(suspiciously)

Oh, do not mock me with your honeyed tongue Don Pasquale. Reserve your energy for the young ladies that flutter around you like butterflies.

DON PASQUALE

Doña Felicidad, I must tell you: ever since I saw you with the late Don Xavier...

DON PASQUALE AND DOÑA FELICIDAD

...may God rest his soul..

DON PASQUALE

I have thought of no other woman than you.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Please, Don Pasquale. My heart is still heavy with grief for the late Don Xavier...

DOÑA FELICIDAD AND DON PASQUALE

...may God rest his soul...

DON PASQUALE

The truth is, I never thought you would accept the attentions of a man. You are always so engrossed in your books. I thought I would have nothing to offer you.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

I do not blame you for thinking these things, Don Pasquale. Perhaps I have cultivated this impression to mask the simple truth that I am a woman of a certain age who remains alone.

DON PASQUALE

(moved)

Whatever your age, Doña Felicidad, you remain as beguiling as any woman in full bloom.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Goodness! You are almost late for your appointment at the Café Florian this morning. Come back for more books soon!

DON PASQUALE

Doña Felicidad...forgive my forwardnsss, but will you allow me the honor of accompanying me to the town square this Friday?

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Don Pasquale! How can you ask me such a thing when I am still grieving the loss of the late Don Xavier...

DOÑA FELICIDAD AND DON PASQUALE

...may God rest his soul...

DON PASQUALE

No disrespect, Doña Felice, but a loss implies something that was owned. The late...he...was not yours to lose. I only say this because I would not want to see you wasting away in a state of mourning that is not, by our customs, expected of you. I stand before you a man, perhaps a little past his prime in his life, but younger in years at least than the late...

DOÑA FELICIDAD

...I know to whom you refer...go on...

DON PASQUALE

...yes...and who can think of nothing sweeter than the thought of accompanying you to the Friday dance.

DOÑA FELICIDAD

(after a pause)

I would be honored to accompany you to the town square on Friday, Don Pasquale. But please, no dancing! We will talk and laugh, but no dancing. I beg you.

DON PASQUALE

As you will! Whatever we do, Doña Felicidad, as long it is in your company, will be a source of utmost delight to me.

(DON PASQUALE bows grandly and leaves)

FADE OUT

FADE IN

(At her home, DOÑA FELICIDAD sits at her dressing table and stares at herself in the mirror. She still does not seem to notice the change in her that everyone else sees. She combs her hair and is applying rosewater to her face and limbs in a slow, deliberate manner as she speaks to herself. THE FACE IN THE MIRROR appears as her reflection.)

DOÑA FELICIDAD

Why shouldn't I accept Don Pasquale's invitation to ask me to the village square for Friday dance? I am not officially in mourning, after all! Don Xavier was not my husband. And why shouldn't Don Pasquale want to ask me to the dance? After all, I have kept my figure all these years and I am a respectable woman.

(DOÑA FELICIDAD stares into the mirror and does not seem to notice THE FACE IN THE MIRROR is not her own as she speaks.)

Maybe it is the rosewater. But then again, maybe it is not. Maybe Don Pasquale has finally come to see me for who I truly am.

(THE FACE IN THE MIRROR stares back and emits a prolonged, soundless bout of sobbing.)

(FADE OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(TO READ MORE, CONTACT THE PLAYWRIGHT)