

**THE  
COURTSHIP OF  
SEÑORITA  
FLORABELLA**

by

**Richard Davis, Jr.**

# THE COURTSHIP OF SEÑORITA FLORABELLA

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SETTING:

A walled garden, as simple or as elaborate as the director wishes. Entrance to the garden is through an arched opening up center of the upstage stone wall. Walls stage left and right have smaller arched openings. There is a fountain (or a tree) up right and two benches downstage: one right and one left.

AT RISE:

House lights dim just enough to alert the audience that the play may start.

ACTRESS

(SHE carries the costume SHE will wear as SEÑORA MARCHITA. SHE enters via SR arched opening, crosses from right to center, stops, looks at audience as if startled, drops HER costume, speaks as SHE gathers it up.)

Oh! I'm sorry; you startled me.

(SHE contemplates audience for a beat.)

You're very early, aren't you? You *are* her for the play, right?

(Response.)

I was afraid of that...

(SHE holds up the costume SHE's carrying.)

Well. As you can see, we're not quite ready, so I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you all to come back later-

VOICE (Off.)

Wait! You can't ask the children to leave!

ACTRESS

(SHE looks off right.)

I can't?

VOICE (Off.)

Of course not. They went to a lot of trouble to get here. Transportation, chaperons –

ACTRESS

(SHE looks off right.)

But I'm not ready. I haven't even put my costume on yet...

(To audience.)

I haven't even put my costume on yet, so –

VOICE (Off.)

You can put it on later-

ACTRESS

Later?

VOICE

Yes. The children aren't early; you're late...again. Everyone else is ready, and we don't have a lot of time, so we really must start the play. Music please!

(Spanish music begins.)

ACTRESS

(SHE reacts to the music.)

Wait!

(Music stops abruptly.)

But they'll see me changing into my costume.

VOICE

You're just going to put it on over your clothes, aren't you?

ACTRESS

Yes, but-

VOICE

So, there's no problem. Music!

(Music starts. House lights down.)

ACTRESS

Oh. Well...

(SHE looks to the audience, fidgets a bit, clears HER throat.)

Yes. Ummmm. Hello!

(SHE looks off right.)

Is that alright?

VOICE

Just a little louder, please.

ACTRESS

But I don't exactly know what I'm supposed to say –

VOICE

(Sotto voce.)

I'd like to tell you the story of...

ACTRESS

(To audience.)

I'd like to tell you the story of...ah....

(SHE looks right.)

VOICE

(Sotto voce.)

Señorita Florabella...

ACTRESS

Señorita Florabella...  
(SHE looks right.)

VOICE

And Don Juan.

ACTRESS

And Don...

(SHE suddenly remembers.)

Oh. That's right. I know this part.

(SHE turns to the audience.)

I'd like to tell you the story of Señorita Florabella and a very famous Spanish nobleman named Don Juan.

(SHE gestures and looks to HER left as SHE says "DON JUAN," expecting HIM to appear. House lights instantly go out and a spot comes up at HER gesture, but DON JUAN does not appear. SHE repeats HIS name – loudly – and gestures a second time.)

...a very famous Spanish nobleman, Don Juan!

(Spot jiggles, but no DON JUAN. SHE takes a few steps left, yells through HER hands.)

...DON JUAN!!!

(Nothing. SHE reaches into one of HER pockets, pulls out a whistle, blows it loudly. DON JUAN bursts on left and scrambles to get into the spot.)

Thank you very much.

DON JUAN

(HE bows.)

My pleasure, Señora.

ACTRESS

You're late.

(DON JUAN shrugs, SHE speaks to audience.)

As I was saying, Don Juan is a very famous Spanish nobleman, who is very rich...

(JUAN holds up money bags.)

and *very* handsome...

(DON JUAN casually tosses the money bags off left and postures.)

He has, as you can see, big brown [*blue, green*] eyes...

(JUAN blinks about 96 times.)

rich, dark [*light, red*] hair...

(HE arranges HIS hair in some way.)

and an excellent physique...

(JUAN flexes. Several times.)

He is an accomplished swordsman...

(HE whips out HIS epee, but it flies out of HIS hand. HE snaps HIS fingers in exasperation, scrambles after it. ACTRESS adlibs.)

A...very funny accomplished swordsman...

(DON JUAN cuts HIS finger on HIS sword.)

DON JUAN

Owee!

ACTRESS

Well. Anyway, he has an excellent physique.

(JUAN quickly drops sword, flexes again.)

And he is very, very smart.

DON JUAN

( DON JUAN picks up the epee, crosses to SL bench, stands atop it, and recites.)

Two times two is four; four time four is sixteen; sixteen times sixteen is thirty-two; thirty-two

–

ACTRESS

Don Juan, as you might imagine, could marry –

DON JUAN

One moment, please, Señora. I'm not quite finished being very, very smart.

ACTRESS

Oh. Sorry.

DON JUAN

(HE draws HIMSELF up to HIS full height, touches HIS temple, breathes deeply.  
Beat.)

Handsome. H-a-n-d-s-o-m-e. Handsome.

ACTRESS

Thank –

DON JUAN

(HE stops HER with a gesture.)

Popular. P-o-p-u-l-a-r. Pop –

ACTRESS

Thank you, Don Juan. That's enough.

DON JUAN

But I assure you, Señora, I can spell many difficult words.

(HE poses, continues.)

Muscular. M-u-s-c-u-l –

ACTRESS

Enough!

DON JUAN

Well. If you insist...

ACTRESS

I insist.

(To audience.)

Intelligent, yes. Modest, no. Ah...where was I?

DON JUAN

You were saying that because I am so handsome, I could marry any girl –

ACTRESS

Yes. Don Juan could marry any señorita in the entire kingdom –

DON JUAN

Any señorita in the kingdom. You name her, and I – Don Juan Constanzo Philip de la Castile – could marry her.

ACTRESS

But Don Juan remains unmarried...

(JUAN nods, shows audience HIS unadorned ring finger.)

because he is very, very choosy.

(DON JUAN postures appropriately, perhaps gazes at HIMSELF in a pocket mirror as

ACTRESS speaks.)

None of the ladies in the entire kingdom could quite meet his specifications. Some were too tall, others too short. Six were too old, three were too skinny, and 14 could not – or would not – prepare his favorite dish: pizza with anchovies and Spanish rice. Yuck.

(JUAN can almost taste it. ACTRESS speaks sotto voce.)

One young woman was immediately disqualified, so it is said, because...

(SHE glances at JUAN.)

she was better with a sword than he...

DON JUAN

What was that, Señora?

(DON JUAN draws HIS sword. Again, it flies out of HIS hand. HE snaps HIS fingers in disgust, retrieves sword.)

ACTRESS

Nothing. I was just saying how handsome you are.

DON JUAN

Oh.

(HE poses.)

Yes. Si. Please continue.

ACTRESS

But it is also said that Don Juan would not care this much...

(SHE snaps fingers.)

about a woman's age, height, size, beauty, cooking ability, or...

(SHE looks at Juan.)

(ACTRESS Cont.)

skill with a sword...

(JUAN shifts uncomfortably.)

if only she were as intelligent as Don Juan himself.

DON JUAN

This is true, but she should be a *little* bit beautiful because I am so handsome –

(ACTRESS stops HIM with a gesture.)

ACTRESS

Yes, it is true, Don Juan insists that the woman he marries – who, he has said, will share his vast riches, his fine horses, and his magnificent hacienda – this woman, I say, must, above all, be very, very smart.

DON JUAN

And beautiful. Also, she must understand that sword play is for men alone –

(HE starts to draw HIS sword.)

ACTRESS

Please!

(HE looks at HER.)

You might hurt someone.

DON JUAN

(Aside.)

Yes. Probably myself.

(To ACTRESS.)

As you wish, Señora. But let me assure you that when it comes to the sword, I am a master.

ACTRESS

Yes. Of course. Don Juan, I called you here because I think I have found the perfect wife for you...

DON JUAN

(HE crosses to HER.)

She is beautiful?

ACTRESS

Yes.

(SHE shows picture of FLORABELLA.)

DON JUAN

(HE takes picture.)

Va-va voom! Carumba! She is – how do you say in Ingles? – a knockout. She is a good cook?

ACTRESS

Yes.

DON JUAN

She is modest?

ACTRESS

Yes.

DON JUAN

She is smart?

ACTRESS

She is beautiful.

DON JUAN

She is smart?

ACTRESS

She is interested only in gentlemen who are skilled with a sword.

DON JUAN

(Aside.)

Uh-oh.

ACTRESS

Would you like to meet her?

DON JUAN

Yes. Si.

(HE whips out the cards.)

Does she understand that she must answer these four very difficult questions to prove to me how smart she is?

ACTRESS

(Aside.)

Uh-oh.

(To DON JUAN.)

Yes, of course.

(SHE gestures. DON JUAN freezes.)

The Spanish people, it is often said, are very polite, very friendly, and very intelligent. And Florabella is a typical Spanish person in most respects. But she is not, alas, overly intelligent – which is alright, of course, since not everyone can be overly intelligent. And this Don Juan will learn that intelligence is not always the most important thing when he comes to know Florabella a little better. But in the meantime, I think I must help her *seem* very intelligent. Let me see these difficult questions...

ACTRESS (Cont.)

(ACTRESS takes cards from HIS outstretched hand. ACTRESS moves about freely while DON JUAN is frozen.)

Let me see how difficult these questions are. Hmmmm.

(SHE reads the first question.)

"How many feet are in a mile?" That *is* a difficult question, but I think the correct answer is...Five thousand, two hundred and eighty.

(SHE turns card over, reads.)

Yes. Here's the answer on the back. "Five thousand, two hundred and eighty feet are in a mile."

(SHE returns card to HIS immobilized hand, reads next one.)

"What do we say of those who are clumsy dancers?" Hmm. That's a silly question, and I'm afraid I don't know the answer.

(SHE turns card over, reads.)

"We say clumsy dancers have two left feet." Two left feet? Oh. I see; it's a joke because anyone with two left feet would be very, very...well, clumsy, I guess.

(SHE returns card, reads next.)

"What is the highest elected office in America?" That's easy. The President of the United States is the highest elected office in America.

(SHE turns card over, reads.)

Right. "The President of the United States." One more.

(SHE returns the card, reads the last one.)

Oh, this one is a mathematics question. Let me see...What number do we get when we divide the product of five factorial and the natural logarithm of e cubed by the square root of 8100?

(SHE looks up.)

No fair! That's far too difficult.

(SHE looks at the card again.)

Only someone as smart as a teacher could hope to answer such a question. But let me try to figure it out. Let's see:

(SHE figures on an "air blackboard", mutters calculations as SHE goes.)  
square root...divide by 90...carry the six....Hmmm. I think the correct answer is...243.

(SHE turns the card over, reads.)

Gosh, I wasn't even close. The correct answer is four.

(SHE looks up.)

Four! Florabella will never ever get that one correct.

(SHE returns the card.)

At least there are only four questions. That shouldn't be too hard for Florabella – as long as I give her a little help.

(SHE gets in position, gestures again. DON JUAN unfreezes.)

And you understand that you must prove your skill with a sword before Florabella will consent to marry you?

DON JUAN

(HE looks around confused.)

Huh? Oh...Si. Yes, of course. Ah...did I...doze off for a momento, Señora?

ACTRESS

Doze off? No, I don't think so.

DON JUAN

No, of course not. I knew that. I was...simply making a little joke. Yes. Just a tiny little joke.

(BOTH laugh a phony laugh as HE begins backing away.)

I would know whether I dozed off or not. True?

ACTRESS

True.

DON JUAN

Of course it is true....And I definitely did not doze off. Correct?

ACTRESS

Correct.

DON JUAN

Yes...Correct. Ah, excuse me Señora, but before I meet the Señorita, I must...ah...sharpen my sword. So that I can show her how skillful I am.

(Aside as HE wanders off left.)

Perhaps I can glue it to my hand so that I do not drop it again. Perhaps I should also drink some very strong coffee, so I do not fall asleep again...

(To ACTRESS.)

I shall return in a momento, Señora.

ACTRESS

The young lady will meet you there...

(SHE points.)

by the fountain.

DON JUAN

Already, I am counting the moments.

(HE exits SL kissing picture. ACTRESS crosses center, watches HIM go, as SHE begins transforming HERSELF into SEÑORA MARCHITA. This can be as simple or as elaborate as the director wishes, but the contrast between the two characters should be obvious.)

ACTRESS

(HER voice changes.)

Now, this lady I was telling Don Juan about –

DON JUAN

(Off.)

You are so beautiful.

(Kissing sound.)

(DON JUAN Cont.)

I hope you will like me.

ACTRESS

Please, Don Juan. Control yourself.

(SHE tries to continue.)

This lady I was talking about is a shy young –

DON JUAN

(Off.)

But is she modest? She must be very modest.

ACTRESS

(SHE answers JUAN.)

Si. She is very modest...

DON JUAN

Oh. You are modest!

(Kissing sounds.)

ACTRESS

Don Juan, please control yourself!

DON JUAN

Sorry, Señora.

ACTRESS

This young lady I was speaking of is a shy young señorita who lives not far from here-

DON JUAN

(Off.)

And smart. She must be very, very smart.

ACTRESS

(SHE calls to JUAN.)

She is very, very...beautiful.

DON JUAN

Pardon me, Señora, but I said 'smart.'

ACTRESS

Sharpen your sword.

DON JUAN

Si, Señora.

ACTRESS

(SHE produces from somewhere four cards identical to the ones DON JUAN had, writes on them as SHE speaks.)

This young lady just happens to be the right size and the right age. She is an excellent cook whose favorite dish by sheerest coincidence is...

(SHE gulps in distaste.)

pizza with anchovies and Spanish rice – which she cooks, so it is said, to perfection. Her name is Señorita Florabella, which in Spanish means beautiful flower. And she *is* beautiful. Very beautiful...

(SHE gestures right. FLORABELLA enters gracefully, crosses to SR bench.)

And she is also very modest...

(FLORABELLA sits, opens a fan before HER face.)

And it is said that she can sing like a bird...

(FLORABELLA rises, stands on the bench. Beat. SHE sings – horribly off-key.

ACTRESS cringes.)

Enough!

(Beat.)

Well. Anyway. She is very beautiful.

(HER voice, posture and costume now suggest a much older woman.)

Florabella is a very lucky señorita, for she is blessed with a wonderful mother whose name is Señora Marchita. I know this name very well because, you see, I *am* Señora Marchita,

Florabella's mother.

(SEÑORA MARCHITA bows.)

And my deepest wish is to see my beautiful daughter married-to the right gentleman, of course. And Don Juan *is* the right gentleman because he and Florabella would make a perfect match. She is everything-well, almost everything-Don Juan could want in a wife.

(SHE looks at FLORABELLA, then back at the audience.)

There is one teeny little – How do you say in Ingles? – one teeny little fly in the Sangria. Florabella is sometimes a little bit slow to catch on to things – which is a very small problem for most people, and *this* Don Juan must learn...

FLORABELLA

(SHE flounces angrily to HER mother.)

Mamasita! Why do you never let me finish my beautiful songs?

SEÑORA MARCHITA

My darling daughter. You are very beautiful...

FLORABELLA

(SHE curtsies.)

Thank you, Mamasita.

SEÑORA MARCHITA

And very modest...

FLORABELLA

(SHE curtsies.)

Thank you, Mamasita.

SEÑORA MARCHITA

But what you call your beautiful songs sound very much like bullfrogs croaking in the night.

(Beat as the two look at each other.)

FLORABELLA

(As SHE hugs SEÑORA MARCHITA.)

Oh, thank you, Mamasita!

(Enter SEÑOR GAZPACHO through upstage arch. HE sees the OTHERS, darts behind the fountain, peeks out.)

SEÑORA MARCHITA

(Sotto voce over FLORABELLA's shoulder during the hug.)

Sometimes my darling daughter is a bit slow to catch on...

(SHE adjusts FLORABELLA's dress as GAZPACHO speaks.)

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

(To audience.)

Slow to catch on? Why that's the very quality I – Señor Gazpacho – most desire in a wife. Because only a wife who is not very smart will do everything her husband demands. When I say "Get my supper!" she will get my supper. No questions asked. In addition, this señorita is very beautiful. Hmmm. Perhaps I have found the perfect wife.

SEÑORA MARCHITA

Have you prepared your dear father's supper yet, Florabella?

FLORABELLA

(SHE curtsies.)

Si, Mamasita. Exactly as you said. No questions asked..

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

This girl, I like. She *is* the perfect wife. She'll cook mornings, she'll cook afternoons, she'll cook nights. No days off. I'll move her bed into the kitchen. She shall prepare taco supremes, burritos el Gazpacho –

FLORABELLA

I also set the table with our finest silver, our most beautiful china and our loveliest linens...

SEÑORA MARCHITA

Very good, Florabella.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

I shall kidnap this Señorita and force her to work day and night in my kitchen preparing the finest dishes in all the world for me. She shall become my wife, the new Señora Gazpacho – whether she likes it or not!

FLORABELLA

But Papa would not eat his dinner, Mamasita.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

Eh?

SEÑORA MARCHITA

Was he not hungry, my darling Florabella?

FLORABELLA

(SHE mimes the actions SHE describes. MARCHITA and GAZPACHO, caught up in it, do the same.)

I thought he was, Mamasita. But when I put his dinner in front of him, he looked at it, then he looked at me. He looked at it; he looked at me. He looked at it; he looked at me. He did this many times. He looked at it –

SEÑORA MARCHITA

(SHE snaps out of it.)

Yes, yes. I understand. Then what happened?

FLORABELLA

He ran screaming from the kitchen, Mamasita.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

Screaming from the kitchen? This is not a good sign.

SEÑORA MARCHITA

That is very strange indeed. What did you prepare, my darling daughter?

FLORABELLA

Pizza with anchovies and Spanish rice, Mamasita.

SEÑORA MARCHITA/SEÑOR GAZPACHO

Yuck!

FLORABELLA

Yuck?

SEÑORA MARCHITA

There are so many wonderful dishes you can make –

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

Perhaps she should work in my stables...

FLORABELLA

But Mamasita pizza with anchovies and Spanish rice –

SEÑORA MARCHITA/GAZPACHO

Yuck.

FLORABELLA

...is my favorite. Besides, it's the only dish I know how to cook.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

She *shall* work in my stables.

SEÑORA MARCHITA

(Grasps FLORABELLA by the shoulders.)

My darling daughter. Your taste buds I am afraid perfectly match your brains.

FLORABELLA

And my singing also. Yes?

SEÑORA MARCHITA

Si. That too.

FLORABELLA

(SHE curtsies.)

Thank you, Mamasita.

SEÑORA MARCHITA

Yes.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

(Aside.)

Si. She is slow to catch on.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

But she is also very beautiful. I shall marry her!

SEÑORA MARCHITA

(To FLORABELLA.)

I have a fine gentleman for you to meet. His name is Don Juan.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

Don Juan?! Don-*key* is more like it! Ohhh. How I hate this donkey!

FLORABELLA

(SHE opens HER fan, turns modestly.)

A gentleman caller?

SEÑORA MARCHITA

(SHE crosses to HER.)

Si, my darling daughter. A gentleman caller.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

(HE whips out HIS sword.)

This is what I would like to give to this donkey.

FLORABELLA

I am so happy. A gentleman caller...

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

(Expertly, HE thrusts with the epee.)

Here is a gift for you, Señor Donkey. Take this. And this –

FLORABELLA

Will this Don Juan become my husband, Mamasita?

SEÑORA MARCHITA

Perhaps.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

(HE listens.)

Perhaps not!

SEÑORA MARCHITA

He will soon meet you there...

(SHE points, GAZPACHO ducks.)

by the fountain. Perhaps you can bring him a taste of your pizza-

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

(From HIS hiding place.)

Yuck.

(SEÑORA MARCHITA and FLORABELLA look in direction of GAZPACHO, see nothing, shrug, continue.)

SEÑORA MARCHITA

- Pizza is his favorite dish.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

(HE sticks HIS head out.)

He will meet *me* at the fountain.

FLORABELLA

He loves pizza with anchovies and Spanish rice?

SEÑORA MARCHITA

Si.

SEÑOR GAZPACHO

And the only thing he will taste...

(HE brandishes HIS epee.)

is my sword!

SEÑORA MARCHITA

But there is one teeny little problem-

**To Read The Rest,  
Please Purchase The  
Script**

