



'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE

written by John Ford

presented by

The Gay Beggars Drama Group

PROGRAMME



playing with your mind



BURGWEG 15, 4058 BASEL
WWW.ROOMESCAPE.CH



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With more than 900 members, Centrepoint is the largest English-speaking community organization in Basel. Since 1996 it has been a meeting point for people from all over the world. It promotes the integration but also values the diversity of races, religions and nationalities that make up our membership.

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A Note from the Directors

Laura says: Who does not want to fall in love? Who does not want to fight for his or her dreams? Who does not want to be loved? Who does not want to be successful? The list could go on endlessly... When I first saw *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* a few years ago, I was impressed by the dynamics of the play: Every single character pursued his or her goal without thinking and to sometimes disastrous consequences. People were running on and off stage. There was love, hope, jealousy, hate and completely surprising events... There was not one character which was not fascinating. Then I thought how amazing

it would be to stage it in the theatre cellar of the Department of English. The location with its stony walls, its high ceiling and its sometimes gloomy atmosphere would suit the play perfectly. Once the thought was formed, it was very difficult to shake off. Two years later the play was still on my mind and I knew I would have to stage it in order for it to let go of me. So the next step was to find a cast and a partner brave enough to sign up for such a journey...

Céline says: Laura approached me with the words "I would love to stage *'Tis Pity She's a Whore!* The play is awesome, so dynamic!" Ah yes, dynamic, a play performed in 1630, I thought and read it for Laura's sake. What I found was not Laura's great dynamics but rather a very classic structure. This was not at all surprising to me since theatre was something entirely different in Ford's time: the audience did not sit quietly in the audi-

torium, since going to the theatre was a big social event: people were talking and eating and not always paying attention to the play itself. So people had to be kept informed about what and why something was happening, for example with announced entrances and a lot of repetitions. And that did not really contribute to the dynamics of the play. However,



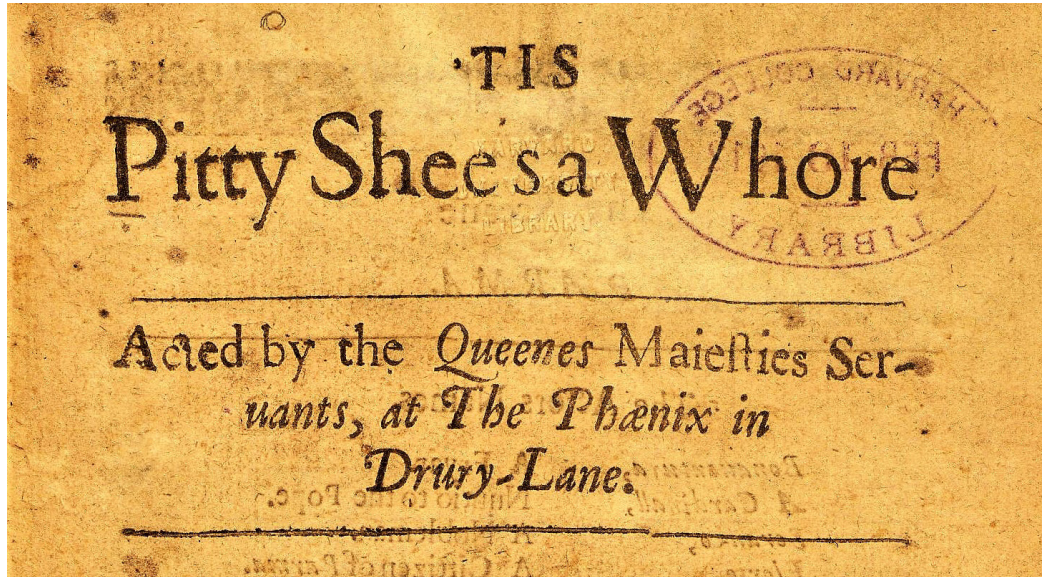
what I did find in the play were complex relationship structures and the question of how much egoism is still healthy. The fact that the play was almost 400 years old was quickly forgotten because its central question is as relevant today as it was

then: How far do I go in the pursuit of my own happiness and how much do I care about the happiness of others?

Putting together the play with such a great cast has been a fantastic experience. From the very beginning, everyone has made a huge effort, having fun experimenting and never just going for the easiest way. All the actors and actresses put their hearts into their characters and have brought them to life each in their own unique and special way. Now, about three months later, we are very proud of the result and we hope that you will enjoy watching the story of every single character unfold as much as we have enjoyed rehearsing it. All that is left for us to say is: *'Tis pity* it is almost over.

Enjoy the show!

Céline & Laura



The plays by John Ford that we know of were all written about three decades after Shakespeare's most active years as a playwright and actor and several years after his death. Though Ford's language may not sound much different from that of his Elizabethan predecessors, the main focus of the plot as well as the favoured build of theatre houses had shifted in these thirty years.

The Phoenix, where *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was played at in 1633, was an indoor theatre which was smaller than Shakespeare's Globe and which had to be lit by candles. It is easy to imagine that this enclosed space led to a more immediate experience of what was going on on stage. Moreover, the small space allowed for music to become a more dominant part of plays, since a host of instruments could be used that would have been too quiet outdoors.

Many playwrights of the Jacobean and Car-

oline era strengthened the immediacy of the increasingly popular indoor theatres by placing the action in the city rather than the court or a mystical landscape. John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is, of course, a perfect example of such a city play.

The main focus of the plot lies on the (mis-) fortunes of the family of Florio, a wealthy citizen of Parma. Worried that his "over-bookish" son Giovanni may not provide him with an heir, he is eager to see his daughter Annabella married. Though Florio claims to want her to marry for love, his favour clearly lies with the nobleman Soranzo who in his eyes could ensure the prosperity of his family. Annabella's favour, however, lies with her brother Giovanni who himself cannot contain his love for his sister any longer.

Plans that do not work out make for great tragedies and Ford's play has one ready for (seemingly) each of its protagonists.

Luca Balosetti is a fourth year medical student at the University of Basel. His Italian ancestry allows him to play the part of the Roman soldier and nobleman Grimaldi perfectly. Apart from being a stunningly talented actor, he is also a remarkably good dancer. Luca loves playing basketball and is quite fond of the taste of Ice Tea. He is twenty three years old. (Elias Kraus)



Luca about his character:

***Grimaldi** is a Roman gentleman whose biggest pride lies in his military background. He came to Parma in order to pursue the beautiful Annabella and create a place in this society for himself. He values strictness, honour and order above all else. Usually, his actions speak louder than words.*



Roman Bischof has been acting in and around Basel for several years now. So far he has played with the Gay Beggars and Freies Theater Therwil. His part in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* reminds him of his first part with the Beggars. In *Galathea* he was part of a silly duo, just as he is now with Andy. Roman likes cake and wants the audience to know that the cake is never a lie. (Laurence Sauter)

Roman about his character:

***Bergetto** is a grown-up in the sense that he is old enough to have stopped growing. Other than that, he has pretty much stayed the spoilt brat he was in his childhood and his aunt Donada has a hard time trying to turn him into a responsible adult. Maybe marrying a sensible young woman would help? It would certainly be a more promising situation than having him hang out with his more intelligent but equally good-for-nothing friend Poggio all the time.*

Cast and Characters

Xander Deubelbeiss, a fellow of infinite puns! All the world seems to be a stage to him, as he can come up with a pun or song (in)appropriate to any situation. Though technically he wasn't there when the Beggars were founded, in the meantime he's become a fixture of the drama group. (Andy Gabriel)



Xander about his character:

***Richardetto** has a cunning plan to get back at his unfaithful wife, Hippolita. As a side effect of this elaborate scheme he now has his niece Philotis from out of town living with him, but I'm sure he will soon find an elegant way to dispose of her.*



When **Andy Gabriel** is not busily studying the science of life (at the FHNW), defeating us at a game of Cards Against Humanity or finding every single double entendre there possibly ever has been uttered in the universe, he roams the theatrical stage with great endurance. Apart from acting, Andy likes reading and alluding to an amalgam of different fandoms.

(Wanda Siegenthaler)

Andy about his character:

*Honest **Poggio**, possibly honest to a fault. The fault being that he can't come up with lies on the spot. Bergetto and he bring some comic relief to the play, but as things get tougher, Poggio has to step up and show his more adult and responsible side. Or at least try to.*

Cast and Characters

Those who know **Nicolas Hunziker** might notice a slight discrepancy between his usual behaviour and the ideals his character lives by. The only thing he and the Friar seem to have in common is a preference for the colour black. As a senior 'Beggard', Hunzi exhibits many useful traits of an experienced actor and former director: team spirit, the knowledge to program stage lights and the ability to memorize his lines (just in time for première). (Jessica Meier)



Nicolas about his character:

*As **Friar** of this small town I have the privilege to be His Holiness's direct representation on earth; and for that I am glad. For never else have times been so frivolously unlawful than the ones we face these days. Thankfully, my good friend Giovanni, being a learned scholar like myself, is a pillar of light in this otherwise unchristian world. Although we do not always see eye to eye on worldly and heavenly matters, he does follow my counsel more eagerly than the other inhabitants of Parma, who all seem to be obsessed with personal gains and general lust for sinful behaviour.*



Elias Kraus is an aspiring doctor (i.e. fourth year medical student) with a knack for thespian pastimes. The enthusiasm and energy he brings to the stage reflect his sporty nature which is owed at least in part to his fondness for running. (Simon Waldner)

Elias about his character:

***Soranzo** is a young nobleman of Parma with a love interest in Annabella. This, however, has not hindered him from enjoying the company of other women, notably that of Hippolita, a rich noblewoman with a recently deceased husband. He is wealthy, well educated and liberal. He is well aware of his status and very much used to always getting what he wants.*

Cast and Characters

Jessica Meier is a very gentle but strong headed woman that deeply cares about her friends. She loves cooking, yoga and, ever since her first role in primary school, acting. But she can also get very competitive, once she gets passionate about something. The role of Annabella is a challenge that she is ready to take on at anytime. (Luca Balosetti)



Jessi about her character:

*Born into a rich and prestigious family, **Annabella** is acutely aware of society's expectations. But submissive behavior doesn't pair well with her pride. When the men of Parma line up to ask Annabella's father for her hand in marriage, she values love higher than virtue and runs off into an affectionate relationship with her own brother. Nothing would ever make her marry somebody else. At least she thinks so...*



Michael Mittag is a first-time Beggar but not a first-time actor. In fact, there are few creative activities he has avoided so far. He draws, he writes, he teaches, he dances ... it would actually be easier to list the things he can't do. His homepage (google him) conveniently provides that list, too. Apart from being a versatile artist, Michael is a very pleasant human being to have around who took no time at all to fit right in with the Beggars. (Roman Bischof)

Michael about his character:

***Florio** is the father of two children in a story that involves incest, treachery, murder and a wedding. It's basically Game of Thrones with clothes on, and Florio is something of a Tywin Lannister. He supports his daughter, he is disappointed by his son and he does what is needed to keep the family together in difficult times. Of which, in a tale not unlike Game of Thrones, there are many.*

Cast and Characters

Making her debut with the Beggars in not one, but two short plays (*In the Dark*), **Laurence Sauter** quickly showed that she was a force (on and off stage) to be reckoned with. She has since acted in several plays as well as co-directed the Beggars' latest production, *Lords & Ladies*. Always up for a laugh and not one for turning down a good Scumble-induced booze-up, Laurence has certainly cemented herself as an integral part of the Gay Beggars. (Nicolas Hunziker)



Laurence about her character:

*In a society where everyone has hidden agendas, knowledge is power. **Vasques** plays the game better than anyone because secrets are her asset. She inspires trust and she knows exactly how to use that to her advantage. While she deals with the secrets of others as she pleases, there is one secret she keeps against her own will.*



Skilled in the art of make-up as well as acting, **Johanna Schüpbach** is a veteran with the Gay Beggars. She infuses her role with authenticity alongside finishing her MA in literary studies. She likes tea very much and her other hobbies include making cards and other crafts. Jo is one of the nicest people around and gives the strongest, warm-hearted hugs. (Danielle Zammit)

Jo about her character:

***Hippolita** has fallen in disgrace in Parma's society due to an accumulation of unfortunate circumstances. Though wife of the nobleman Richardetto, she is seduced by Soranzo and his promises of a future together. Getting so caught up in the affair had led her to make a bad decision. With her husband (presumably) dead, her reputation lost and Soranzo suddenly unwilling to marry her, she is resolved to do whatever it takes to get her revenge.*

Cast and Characters

Wanda Siegenthaler studies English and German and is known for her contagious laugh. She likes to spend her free time with her dog or the occasional *Harry Potter* marathon. Wanda has been part of several Beggars productions where her roles have touched upon aristocracy as well as witchcraft. Wanda's planner is a weapon of mass admiration among the stationary geeks in the group and it also reminds her not to miss a vote or an election. (Selina Wolfisberg)



Wanda about her character:

Putana, Annabella's BFF, loves drama – and she likes it just like she likes her men: exciting, but without consequences. She is self-confident and likes to appear strong and feminine, but behind the façade there slumbers a sensitive and warm-hearted young woman.



Even without his orangutan costume, **Simon Waldner** sports an impressive head of hair. With studies ranging from English to Biology, and interests from choral singing to martial arts, he will offer an opinion on any topic you may choose to name. (Xander Deubelbeiss)

Simon about his character:

*Buried in books and searching for knowledge is how **Giovanni** usually spends his days, much to the displeasure of his father. He's been friends with the Friar for ages and they spend most of their time discussing their divergent world views. Lately, though, Giovanni has started to be interested in more worldly matters...*

Cast and Characters

Selina Wolfisberg is a third-year medicine student and claims to be rather boring. However, there is strong evidence that this is, in fact, not the case. She has been seen dancing the Cha-cha for one. Also, she's a big *Harry Potter* fan which does result sometimes in very creative baking. She wants it to be known, however, that she also likes other books, films, and stuff. Especially stuff (no stuffing, though). And especially so if it happens to be blue. (Johanna Schüpbach)



Selina about her character:

*After the death of her parents, **Philotis** is brought to Parma by her uncle Richardetto. Determined to leave her old life behind and start anew, Philotis tries to make friends among the leading clans in the city. When she reluctantly agrees to help her uncle in his scheming, she soon finds herself in the midst of intrigue and revenge.*



Apart from being Maltese, **Danielle Zammit** is our most Swiss cast member: She works in Pharmaceuticals and Economics, she likes skiing, and she has an accent when she speaks high German. She appears to have lived in different countries, is involved in book clubs and she has a deserted Google+ page, according to Internet research which was conducted because she had to run off during the interview for this text, being busy like Swiss people always are. (Michael Mittag)

Danielle about her character:

*Signora **Donada** is a wealthy widow who continues to increase her fortune through playing the stock market. A contemporary of Signior Florio (her late husband's business partner), she has no children of her own to pass on her wealth to, but accepts Bergetto as her heir - if only she can see him settled in marriage, away from the dubious influence of his good-for-nothing friend Poggio. She soon learns that she cannot gamble so successfully with human lives, especially when young, foolish love is involved.*

Acknowledgments & Credits



Cast (in order of appearance):

Friar Bonaventura	Nicolas Hunziker	Putana	Wanda Siegenthaler
Giovanni	Simon Waldner	Annabella	Jessica Meier
Vasques	Laurence Sauter	Bergetto	Roman Bischof
Grimaldi	Luca Balosetti	Poggio	Andy Gabriel
Florio	Michael Mittag	Richardetto	Xander Deubelbeiss
Donada	Danielle Zammit	Philotis	Selina Wolfisberg
Soranzo	Elias Kraus	Hippolita	Johanna Schüpbach

Directed by

Laura Vegh & Céline Meyer

Costumes

Céline Meyer

Stage design

Céline Meyer & Laura Vegh

Make-up

Alina Meyer

Lights

Laura Vegh & Nicolas Hunziker

Poster & flyer design

Sophie Ammann

PR & social media

Julia Brosi

Programme, website, backstage stuff

Roman Bischof

Many thanks to the English Seminar of the University of Basel and especially **Alex Van Lierde** for their support for this production and The Gay Beggars in general.

Special thanks to **Nicolas Hunziker & Xander Deubelbeiss** for their great help with installing the lights and more.

Last but not least, thanks to **Alex, Anouk, Daniel, Fabienne, Joana, Jorian, Julia, Kathrin, Liv, Mark, Pablo, Sam, Sarah, Stephanie & Sydney** for taking care of our box office & bar.

Feel like joining?

GAY BEGGARS

The Gay Beggars are an independent and non-professional theatre company, which has specialised in the production of plays (etc.) written in English. Founded by stu-

dents of the Department of English at the University of Basel in the early 40s, the Gay Beggars have in recent years managed to stage one to two plays per year.

Our group functions mainly project-based and people with an insatiable interest in theatre and a reasonably good command of the English language are very welcome to look in and join at any time. Though quite demanding and time-consuming, theatre work with the Gay Beggars offers you a brilliant opportunity

to get involved in a rewarding activity and get to know other students.

We don't know yet what our next project is going to be or who is going to produce and/or direct it. If you want to stay informed or if you want to share your own idea, please drop us a line at info@gaybeggars.ch.

More information on past and upcoming productions, many pictures and witty posts can be found through the following channels:

www.gaybeggars.ch

www.facebook.com/gaybeggars

Twitter and Instagram: [@thegaybeggars](https://twitter.com/thegaybeggars)



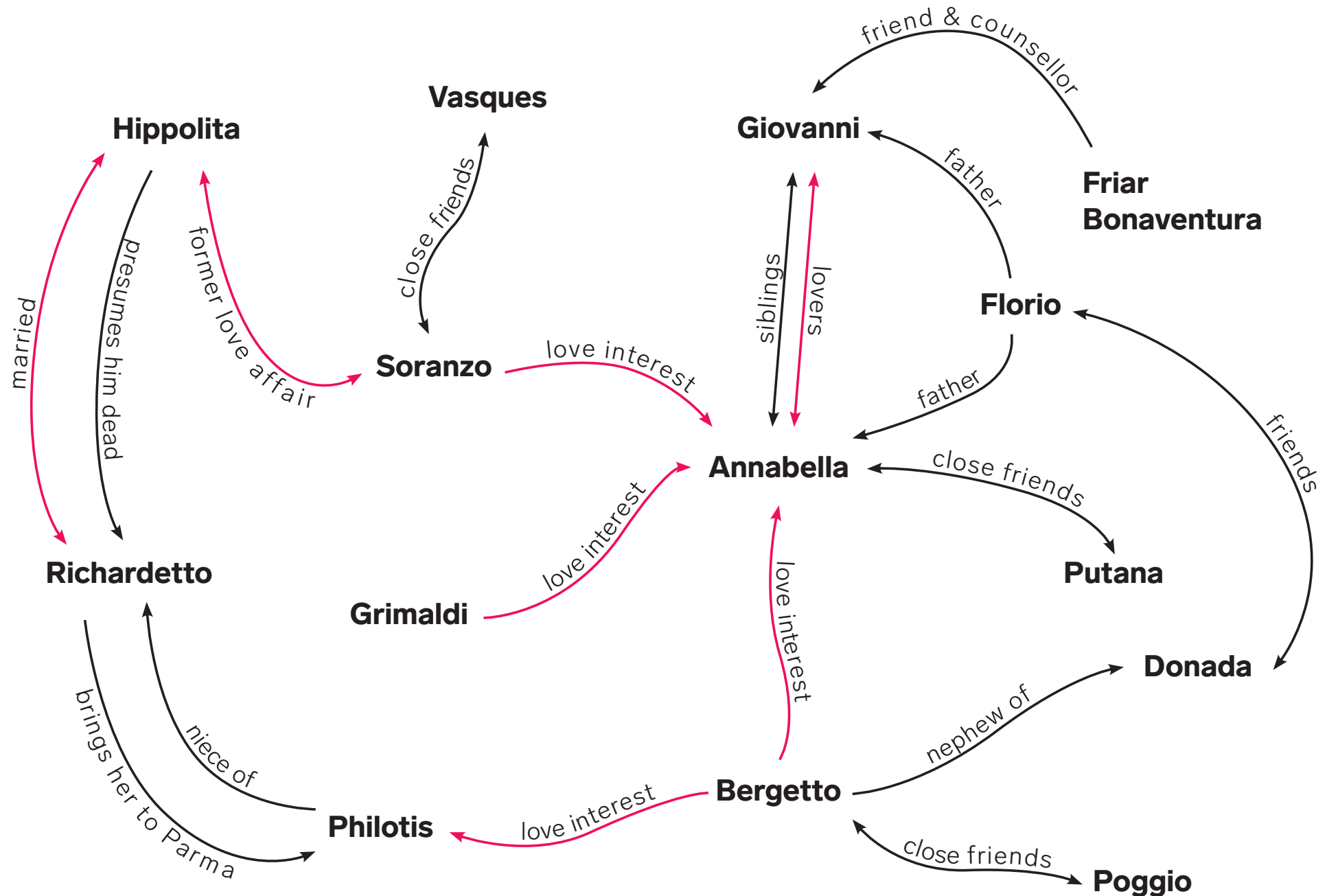
**However life plays out.
We're playing on your side.**

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die Mobiliar



'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE

*The Gay Beggars Drama Group
Department of English, University of Basel*

**On my knees, brother, even by our
mother's dust, I charge you,
Do not betray me to your mirth or hate:
Love me, or kill me, brother.**

26 | 29 NOV 2016

1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 10 DEC 2016

Mo – Sa shows at 8 PM | Sunday shows at 5 PM

Cellar Theatre of the English Seminar
University of Basel
Nadelberg 6, 4051 Basel

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