

### NOVEL III

*Master Simone, at the instance of Bruno and Buffalmacco and Nello, makes Calandrino believe that he is with child. Calandrino, accordingly, gives them capons and money for medicines, and is cured without being delivered.*

---

When Elisa had ended her story, and all had given thanks to God that He had vouchsafed the young nun a happy escape from the fangs of her envious companions, the queen bade Filostrato follow suit; and without expecting a second command, thus Filostrato began:

Fairest my ladies, the uncouth judge from the Marches, of whom I told you yesterday, took from the tip of my tongue a story of Calandrino, which I was on the point of narrating: and as nought can be said of him without mightily enhancing our jollity, albeit not a little has already been said touching him and his comrades, I will now give you the story which I had meant yesterday to give you. Who they were, this Calandrino and the others that I am to tell of in this story, has already been sufficiently explained; wherefore, without more ado, I say that one of Calandrino's aunts having died, leaving him two hundred pounds in petty cash, Calandrino gave out that he was minded to purchase an estate, and, as if he had had ten thousand florins of gold to invest, engaged every broker in Florence to treat for him, the negotiation always falling through, as soon as the price was named. Bruno and Buffalmacco, knowing what was afoot, told him again and again that he had better give himself a jolly time with them than go about buying earth as if he must needs make pellets;(i) but so far were they from effecting their purpose, that they could not even prevail upon him to give them a single meal. Whereat as one day they grumbled, being joined by a comrade of theirs, one Nello, also a painter, they all three took counsel how they might wet their whistle at Calandrino's expense; and, their plan being soon concerted, the next morning Calandrino was scarce gone out, when Nello met him, saying:

"Good day, Calandrino:" whereto Calandrino replied:

"God give thee a good day and a good year." Nello then drew back a little, and looked him steadily in the face, until:

"What seest thou to stare at?" quoth Calandrino. "Hadst thou no pain in the night?" returned Nello; "thou seemest not thyself to me." Which Calandrino no sooner heard, than he began to be disquieted, and:

"Alas! How sayst thou?" quoth he. "What tak'st thou to be the matter with me?"

"Why, as to that I have nothing to say," returned Nello; "but thou seemest to be quite changed: perchance 'tis not what I suppose;" and with that he left him.

Calandrino, anxious, though he could not in the least have said why, went on; and soon Buffalmacco, who was not far off, and had observed him part from Nello, made up to him, and greeted him, asking him if he was not in pain. "I cannot say," replied Calandrino; "'twas but now that Nello told

me that I looked quite changed: can it be that there is aught the matter with me?"

"Aught?" quoth Buffalmacco, "ay, indeed, there might be a trifle the matter with thee. Thou look'st to be half dead, man." Calandrino now began to think he must have a fever. And then up came Bruno; and the first thing he said was:

"Why, Calandrino, how ill thou look'st! thy appearance is that of a corpse. How dost thou feel?" To be thus accosted by all three left no doubt in Calandrino's mind that he was ill, and so:

"What shall I do?" quoth he, in a great fright. "My advice," replied Bruno, "is that thou go home and get thee to bed and cover thee well up, and send thy water to Master Simone, who, as thou knowest, is such a friend of ours. He will tell thee at once what thou must do; and we will come to see thee, and will do aught that may be needful." And Nello then joining them, they all three went home with Calandrino, who, now quite spent, went straight to his room, and said to his wife:

"Come now, wrap me well up; I feel very ill." And so he laid himself on the bed, and sent a maid with his water to Master Simone, who had then his shop in the Mercato Vecchio, at the sign of the pumpkin. Whereupon quoth Bruno to his comrades:

"You will stay here with him, and I will go hear what the doctor has to say, and if need be, will bring him hither."

"Prithee, do so, my friend," quoth Calandrino, "and bring me word how it is with me, for I feel as how I cannot say in my inside." So Bruno hied him to Master Simone, and before the maid arrived with the water, told him what was afoot. The Master, thus primed, inspected the water, and then said to the maid:

"Go tell Calandrino to keep himself very warm, and I will come at once, and let him know what is the matter with him, and what he must do." With which message the maid was scarce returned, when the Master and Bruno arrived, and the Master, having seated himself beside Calandrino, felt his pulse, and by and by, in the presence of his wife, said:

"Harkye, Calandrino, I speak to thee as a friend, and I tell thee that what is amiss with thee is just that thou art with child." Whereupon Calandrino cried out querulously:

"Woe's me! 'tis thy doing, Tessa, for that thou must needs be uppermost: I told thee plainly what would come of it," Whereat the lady, being not a

little modest, coloured from brow to neck, and with downcast eyes, withdrew from the room, saying never a word by way of answer. Calandrino ran on in the same plaintive strain:

“Alas! woe’s me! What shall I do? How shall I be delivered of this child? What passage can it find? Ah! I see only too plainly that the lasciviousness of this wife of mine has been the death of me: God make her as wretched as I would fain be happy! Were I as well as I am not, I would get me up and thrash her, till I left not a whole bone in her body, albeit it does but serve me right for letting her get the upper place; but if I do win through this, she shall never have it again; verily she might pine to death for it, but she should not have it.”

Which to hear, Bruno and Buffalmacco and Nello were like to burst with suppressed laughter, and Master Scimmione<sup>(2)</sup> laughed so frantically, that all his teeth were ready to start from his jaws. However, at length, in answer to Calandrino’s appeals and entreaties for counsel and succour:

“Calandrino,” quoth the Master, “thou mayst dismiss thy fears, for, God be praised, we were apprised of thy state in such good time that with but little trouble, in the course of a few days, I shall set thee right; but ’twill cost a little.”

“Woe’s me,” returned Calandrino, “be it so, Master, for the love of God: I have here two hundred pounds, with which I had thoughts of buying an estate: take them all, all, if you must have all, so only I may escape being delivered, for I know not how I should manage it, seeing that women, albeit ’tis much easier for them, do make such a noise in the hour of their labour, that I misdoubt me, if I suffered so, I should die before I was delivered.”

“Disquiet not thyself,” said the doctor: “I will have a potion distilled for thee; of rare virtue it is, and not a little palatable, and in the course of three days ’twill purge thee of all, and leave thee in better fettle than a fish; but thou wilt do well to be careful

thereafter, and commit no such indiscretions again. Now to make this potion we must have three pair of good fat capons, and, for divers other ingredients, thou wilt give one of thy friends here five pounds in small change to purchase them, and thou wilt have everything sent to my shop, and so, please God, I will send thee this distilled potion to-morrow morning, and thou wilt take a good beakerful each time.” Whereupon:

“Be it as you bid, Master mine,” quoth Calandrino, and handing Bruno five pounds, and money enough to purchase three pair of capons, he begged him, if it were not too much trouble, to do him the service to buy these things for him. So away went the doctor, and made a little decoction by way of draught, and sent it him. Bruno bought the capons and all else that was needed to furnish forth the feast, with which he and his comrades and the doctor regaled them. Calandrino drank of the decoction for three mornings, after which he had a visit from his friends and the doctor, who felt his pulse, and then:

“Beyond a doubt, Calandrino,” quoth he, “thou art cured, and so thou hast no more occasion to keep indoors, but needst have no fear to do whatever thou hast a mind to.” Much relieved, Calandrino got up, and resumed his accustomed way of life, and, wherever he found any one to talk to, was loud in praise of Master Simone for the excellent manner in which he had cured him, causing him in three days without the least suffering to be quit of his pregnancy. And Bruno and Buffalmacco and Nello were not a little pleased with themselves that they had so cleverly got the better of Calandrino’s niggardliness, albeit Monna Tessa, who was not deceived, murmured not a little against her husband.

---

1 i.e. bolts of clay for the cross-bow.

2 i.e. great ape: with a play on Simone.