

## Act I, Scene ii

The setting switches entirely to doctor Alibius' madhouse, which strikes an immediate comic tone, as he and his servant, Lollo, form a ridiculous double act, in which Lollo both plays the fool, and simultaneously undermines his master. Alibius voices his concerns to his assistant about the fidelity of his young and attractive wife, Isabella. He instructs Lollo to guard her for him while he is out, being particularly suspicious of visitors to the madhouse, who come to watch its inmates for their own entertainment. Pedro arrives with Antonio, acting as a fool (although to the audience the act is not wholly convincing), presenting him as a gentleman from a well-respected family, and leaving him for treatment. Lollo proceeds to test his wit with a series of comic riddles and questions, making a fool of Alibius in the process. We hear several madmen calling from offstage, which prompts Lollo to go and serve up dinner to quieten them down.

### Questions (I. ii)

1. What is the effect of such a comic scene immediately after the mildly sinister end to the previous scene?
2. Consider the presentation of '**madness**' and '**foolishness**' as two separate conditions in the scene. Make a chart listing the qualities which are specific to each.

## Act II, Scene i

Beatrice meets Jasperino to inform him about the time and place for a planned meeting with Alsemero. She then soliloquises about the wisdom of Alsemero's judgement, and of her own in choosing him. She compares him to her undesired fiancé, Alonzo, commenting that she must find 'some speedy way' to escape her engagement to him. De Flores enters, bemoaning his obsession with Beatrice, and questioning why it is that she finds him so repulsive, when he knows others worse looking than himself who have more success with women. He approaches her to give her word that Alonzo and his brother Tomazo de Piracquo have just arrived, to which she responds abusively. Vermandero welcomes in the Piracquos, asking (on Beatrice's insistence) that the wedding be postponed for three days, to which Alonzo agrees. When they are alone, Tomazo counsels his brother to abandon Beatrice, claiming that it is obvious that she loves someone else. Alonzo ignores him, refusing to see his fiancé as anything other than honourable and faithful.

### Questions (II. i)

1. Consider De Flores' monologue (lines 26-51). What kind of relationship does his imagery imply exists between personal **appearance** and **morality**? What is the effect of his detailed description of ugliness on your perception of his character?
2. Reread Beatrice's short monologue (lines 89-96). Is her response to De Flores really the 'small disturbance' she describes it as, or is she fooling herself?