

MOLIERE

Four Plays

The Bourgeois Gentleman

The Doctor In Spite of Himself

The Affected Damsels

The Miser
(Regular Edition)

The Miser
(Short Edition)



MOLIERE
Jean-Baptiste Poquelin

BERSERKER

BOOKS



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***The Bourgeois
Gentleman***

**(LE BOURGEOIS
GENTILHOMME)**

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Using Lully's original musical score and with the help of a professional musician I have translated Lully's lyrics and synchronized them to his music. I know of no other translation that does this which may account for the fact that THE BOURGEOIS GENTLEMAN is among the least performed of Moliere's works on the American stage. The irony is that it is the most revered and most performed in France.

CHARACTERS:

MR JOURDAIN, a Bourgeois

MRS JOURDAIN, his Wife

DORANTE, a Nobleman

DORIMENE, a Noblewoman

LUCILLE, Mr. Jourdain=s daughter

CLEONTE, his Valet and Suitor to Nicole

NICOLE, his Servant

MUSIC MASTER, DANCING MASTER

FENCING MASTER, PHILOSOPHY MASTER

MASTER TAILOR and HIS APPRENTICE

TWO LACKEYS

A STUDENT

SINGERS and MUSICIANS

COOKS

In the Turkish Ceremony: MUFTI, DERVISHES, TURKS, SINGERS and DANCERS

ACT I

Scene 1: Music Master, Dancing Mstr, 3 Singers, 2 Violinists, 4 Dancers

The overture is performed by a musical ensemble. At a table at Center Stage a student of the MUSIC MASTER composes a serenade requested by the master of the household.

MUSIC MASTER (**To his Musicians**) Into this room, please. You may sit here until he comes.

DANCIN' MSTR (**To his Dancers**) And you as well. This way, please.

MUSIC MASTER Is it done?

STUDENT Yes.

MUSIC MASTER Let's see. That's fine.

DANCIN' MSTR Is this something new?

MUSIC MASTER Yes, it's a melody for a serenade that I had him compose while waiting for our man to be awakened.

DANCIN' MSTR May I look at it?

MUSIC MASTER You will hear both melody and lyrics when he comes, which will be soon.

DANCIN' MSTR Business is good for both of us these days, isn't it?

MUSIC MASTER Indeed it is, thanks to the man we found here. What a sweet source of revenue he is, our Mr. Jourdain, with his notions of nobility and gallantry, and how wonderful it would be for your dancing and my music were everyone like him.

DANCIN' MSTR I Wouldn't go that far. If only he weren't such a poor student.

MUSIC MASTER He may learn poorly but he pays well and that is what our professions need more than anything else.

DANCIN' MSTR Yes, but I must confess that for me it's the glory, the recognition that counts. How distasteful it is in any of the fine arts to produce for fools, to have one's compositions sullied by the barbarism of a simpleton. True pleasure is only to be derived by working for people with a refined appreciation of the arts, who know how to respond to the

beauty of a given work and how to gratify its creator with appropriate praise. Yes, the sweetest reward for the artist is the honor bestowed upon him by the adulation and celebrity of his work. Enlightened praise is the most exquisite form of satisfaction for the artist and, in my opinion, he can ask for no greater recompense than that for his efforts.

MUSIC MASTER I agree and I relish it as much as you do. There is certainly nothing more flattering than the applause of which you speak. But one does not live by praise alone, however enlightened it might be. It must be blended with something a bit more substantial. For me, the best way to praise is with an open purse. It's true that we are dealing here with a man of meager wit, who utters nothing but nonsense and whose applause is always ill times and inappropriate; but his money more than compensates for the inadequacies of his judgment. There is discernment in his purse and gold in his praise. Thus our ignorant bourgeois is of more value to us than the highly cultured lord who introduced us here.

DANCIN' MSTR There is an element of truth in what you say, but I feel that you overemphasize the importance of money, and that a true gentleman should never concern himself with anything as base as that.

MUSIC MASTER You are, nevertheless, very quick to accept the money that our man gives you.

DANCIN' MSTR Of course, but it takes more than that to make me happy. I only wish that along with his wealth, he possessed greater refinement of taste.

MUSIC MASTER That would please me as well. After all, this is the very thing the two of us are striving to develop in him. But we must keep in mind, however, that it is through him that we are establishing our reputations, and that his purse paves the way for the praise of others.

DANCIN' MSTR Here he comes.

Scene 2: Mr Jourdain, Music Master, Dancing Mstr, Violinists, Singers, Dancers, Two Lackeys, Student.

MR JOURDAIN Well, gentlemen, what have we here? May I look at your little ditty?

DANCIN' MSTR How's that? What little ditty?

MR JOURDAIN Eh? Over there... What do you call that? Your prologue or your dialogue of songs and dance?

DANCIN' MSTR Aha!

MUSIC MASTER Yes, sir. We're ready for you.

MR JOURDAIN I'm sorry you had to wait for me, but the fact is that I am dressing myself today as do the people of quality, and I had a devil of a time trying to put on a pair of silk stockings that my tailor sent me.

MUSIC MASTER We are here solely to await your pleasure, sir.

MR JOURDAIN I would like both of you to stay until my new outfit arrives, so that you might see me in it.

DANCIN' MSTR Whatever pleases you, sir.

MR JOURDAIN You shall see me properly decked out from head to toe.

MUSIC MASTER We do not doubt it, sir.

MR JOURDAIN This oriental robe was especially made for me.

DANCIN' MSTR It is truly beautiful, sir.

MR JOURDAIN My tailor told me that people of quality dress like this in the morning.

MUSIC MASTER That suits you perfectly, sir.

MR JOURDAIN Lackeys! Hey there! My two lackeys!

The Two LACKEYS Enter.

1ST LACKEY What is it, sir?

MR JOURDAIN Nothing. I just wanted to know if you could hear me.

The LACKEYS bow and Exit.

MR JOURDAIN **(To the MASTERS)** What do you think of my liveries?

DANCIN' MSTR They are magnificent, sir.

MR JOURDAIN **(Half-opening his robe to reveal a straight pair of breeches of red velvet and a green velvet spencer)** And this is something casual for my morning exercises.

MUSIC MASTER It is truly elegant, sir.

MR JOURDAIN Lackeys!

The LACKEYS re enter.

1ST LACKEY Yes, sir?

MR JOURDAIN The other lackey.

2ND LACKEY Sir?

MR JOURDAIN (Removes robe) Hold my robe. (To the MASTERS) How do I look?

DANCIN' MSTR Very good. One couldn't possibly look any better.

MR JOURDAIN Let's have a look at your little chore.

MUSIC MASTER First I would like you to listen to a melody that he has just composed for the serenade that you commissioned. He is a student of mine with a true gift for this type of thing.

MR JOURDAIN Yes, but this isn't something for a student to do; were you too good to do this yourself?

MUSIC MASTER Sir, you must not be misled by the word "student," for the knowledge of this kind of student can match that of the greatest masters. Just listen and you will find the melody to be of incomparable beauty.

SINGER(**Singing**) I languish here night and day,

And I've known naught but deep despair

Since I became the slave of your eyes oh so fair.

If you so poorly treat, Iris, one who loves thee,

Alas, what would you do were I your enemy?

Mr JOURDAIN I find this song a little too dreary; it puts me to sleep.
Couldn't you liven it up a bit here and there?

MUSIC MASTER The music must coincide with the words, sir.

MR JOURDAIN Someone taught me a really nice one a while ago. Hold onY How does it go?

MUSIC MASTER In faith, sir, I have no idea.

MR JOURDAIN There's lamb in it.

MUSIC MASTER Lamb, sir?

MR JOURDAIN Yes... Ah! (**Begins to sing**)

Oh, how sweet and pretty

Did my Jeannie appear.

Oh, how fair and saintly,

No lamb could be as dear.

Alas, alas, so very cruel,

My sweet faced Jeannie,

The tiger would never be.

Mr Jourdain looks around him expectantly.

MR JOURDAIN Now wasn't that nice?

MUSIC MASTER As nice as could be.

DANCIN' MSTR And you sing it so well.

MR JOURDAIN That's without ever having learned music.

MUSIC MASTER You ought to learn music as well as dancing, sir. These two arts are very closely related.

DANCIN' MSTR And they open the mind to beautiful things.

MR JOURDAIN Do the people of quality also learn music?

MUSIC MASTER Yes, sir.

MR JOURDAIN So then shall I. But I don't know where I'll find the time to fit it in for, in addition to the fencing master who is teaching me, I have also engaged a philosophy master who is to start this morning.

MUSIC MASTER Philosophy is not without some importance, but music, sir. Music.

DANCIN' MSTR Music and dancing music and dancing, that's all that's really necessary.

MUSIC MASTER There is nothing more useful in a state than music.

DANCIN' MSTR There is nothing more necessary for mankind than dancing.

MUSIC MASTER Without music a state could not subsist.

DANCIN' MSTR Without dancing man can do nothing.

MUSIC MASTER All the disorder, all the wars that we see in the world stem from not learning music.

DANCIN' MSTR All of man's misfortunes, all the afflictions that fill the pages of history, all the blunders of politicians and the failures of great commanders, all of this was brought about by want of dancing skill.

MR JOURDAIN How is that?

MUSIC MASTER Is not war the outcome of a lack of union among men?

MR JOURDAIN That is true.

MUSIC MASTER And if all men were to learn music, would that not be a means of promoting harmony among them and of achieving universal peace?

MR JOURDAIN You are right.

DANCIN' MSTR When a man commits some breach of conduct, be it in

the affairs of the family, government or army, don't we always say that he took the wrong step in the matter in question?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, we say that.

DANCIN' MSTR And the act of taking a wrong step, could that be due to anything else but the lack of dancing skill?

MR JOURDAIN That is true. Both of you are right.

DANCIN' MSTR We point that out so that you might appreciate the excellence and usefulness of dancing and music.

MUSIC MASTER Would you like us to show you our compositions?

MR JOURDAIN Yes.

MUSIC MASTER As I have already told you, this is a minor work that I composed a while back which demonstrates the various emotions that music can express.

MR JOURDAIN Very good.

MUSIC MASTER (**To the Singers**) Come forward. (**To Mr Jourdain**) You must picture dressed as shepherds.

MR JOURDAIN Why always as shepherds? That's all you see everywhere.

DANCIN' MSTR When you have people speaking to music, for the sake of believability they must do so as shepherds. For a prince or a townsman to his express his arduous feelings in a musical dialogue would be highly unnatural, and this is why the singing roles have always been assigned to shepherds.

MR JOURDAIN All right, then. Let's see.

DIALOGUE TO MUSIC between a Two Male Singers and One Female Singer.*

My heart in love's domain hath strayed,
The tender prey to its snares must it be.
For sighs and languishing do comprise
cruel love's serenade.

Surmount this barricade,
Foolish heart, naught's more sweet
Than is our liberty.

Ah! What a joy it is
When two hearts beat together.

MR JOURDAIN Is that it?

MUSIC MASTER Yes.

MR JOURDAIN That's what I call a very nice piece of work, and there are some very wise sayings in it.

DANCIN' MSTR And now, for my part, I present a little work comprised of some of the most beautiful movements and attitudes with which a dance might be varied.

MR JOURDAIN Will they be shepherds again?

DANCIN' MSTR They'll be whatever you like.

BALLET SEQUENCE with Four Dancers executing all the different movements and steps at the command of the Dancing Mstr.

DANCIN' MSTR **(To the Dancers)** Ready, dancers, with solemnity...
Begin. Let's go dancers, up tempo. Solemnly, now, for the saraband. And now, the bourree. Cheerfully, now, for the gaillarde. And now to conclude with the glorious Canarian air.

*** This song becomes excessively tedious if sung in its entirety. For this reason, the Comedie Francaise sings an abbreviated version. My translation limits itself to the excerpts sung by the Comedie Francaise and can be sung to the music. Attention to meter and rhyme necessitated some slight liberties with meaning.**

ACT II

Scene 1: Mr Jourdain, Music Master, Dancing Mstr, Lackeys

MR JOURDAIN That was no stupid thing they just did. Those fellows really know how to flap about.

DANCIN' MSTR The dance will be all the more impressive once its blended with the music and, in the little ballet that we have prepared for you, you will see something truly elegant.

MR JOURDAIN That's for a little later, and the person that I'm having all this done for is to do me the honor of coming here for dinner.

DANCIN' MSTR All is in readiness.

MUSIC MASTER May I add, sir, that this is inadequate. A person with your sumptuous tastes and refined inclinations should hold concerts at his residence every Wednesday and Thursday.

MR JOURDAIN Do the people of quality hold them?

MUSIC MASTER Yes, sir.

MR JOURDAIN So then shall I. Will they be beautiful?

MUSIC MASTER Without a doubt. You will need three voices: a treble, a counter tenor, and a bass, which will be accompanied by a bass viol, a theorbolute, and a harpsichord for the sustained bass, and finally two violins for the ritournelles.

MR JOURDAIN You must also add a trumpet marine. Now there's an instrument that really pleases me, and that is very harmonious.

MUSIC MASTER Leave those matters to us, sir.

MR JOURDAIN Well, anyway, don't forget to send me the musicians who are to sing at the table.

MUSIC MASTER You will have everything you need.

MR JOURDAIN But above all, make sure the ballet is beautiful.

DANCIN' MSTR Everything will be as you like it including among other things, certain minuets that you shall see.

MR JOURDAIN Ah! The minuet is my dance! I want you to see me dance it. Let's do it, master.

DANCIN' MSTR A hat, sir, if you please.

Mr Jourdain takes the hat off his Lackey's head and wears it over his nightcap. The Dancing Mstr takes Mr Jourdain's hand and sings the melody to a Minuet to which he makes his student dance.

DANCIN' MSTR La la la... Watch the cadence, if you please. La la la... Lift the right leg La la laYTry not to move your shoulder so muchY La la la... Don't hold your arms so rigidly... La la la... Lift up your head... Kindly turn out your toes; don't turn them in... La la la... Hold your body straight...

MR JOURDAIN Aha?

MUSIC MASTER A matchless performance!

MR JOURDAIN That reminds me; teach me how I should bow when greeting a marchioness, for I shall soon have need to know.

DANCIN' MSTR How to bow when greeting a marchioness?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, a marchioness by the name of Dorimene.

DANCIN' MSTR Give me your hand.

MR JOURDAIN No, you just have to do it. I'll remember it.

DANCIN' MSTR Well, if you wish to greet her with great respect, you must bow once and fall back; then, advancing towards her, you make three more bows bending down to her knees on the last one.

MR JOURDAIN Let's see you do it.

The Dancing Mstr takes the three bows.

MR JOURDAIN Good!

1ST LACKEY (Entering) Sir, your fencing master is here.

MR JOURDAIN Have him come in and give me my lesson. **(To the Music Master and Dancing Mstr)** I'd like you to watch me at this.

Scene 3: Mr Jourdain, Dancing Mstr, Music Master, Fencing Mstr, 1st Lackey.

FENCIN' MSTR **(Taking two foils from the Lackey and handing one to Mr. Jourdain)** Let's begin, sir, with the salute. Your body erect, leaning slightly upon the left thigh. Your legs not so far apart. Your wrist opposite your hip. The tip of your

sword at shoulder level. Your arm not quite so extended. Your left hand at eye level. Angle your shoulder more. Your head up. Assume a look of confidence. Advance. Your body steady. Hit me in quart and follow through. One, two. Recover. Once again, steadily. One, two. Jump backwards. When you thrust, sir, you must disengage your sword first and then have your body lean into that attack. One, two. Let's go. Hit me in tierce and follow through. Advance. Thrust from there. One, two. Recover. Once more. One, two. Jump backwards. (He scores two or three touches as he calls out.) On guard, sir. On guard!

MR JOURDAIN Aha!

MUSIC MASTER You're doing marvelously.

FENCIN' MSTR As I have already told you, the whole secret of fencing consists of two things: to give and not to receive, and, as I showed you the other day by means of demonstrative reasoning, it is impossible to receive if you know how to deflect the sword of your adversary from the line of your body. This can be accomplished quite simply by a slight movement of the wrist either inward or outward.

MR JOURDAIN In this way, therefore, a man of little courage can be sure to kill without being killed himself?

FENCIN' MSTR Without a doubt. Did you not see the demonstration?

MR JOURDAIN Yes.

FENCIN' MSTR And from this you can see the basis for the esteem that the state must bestow upon the men of our profession, and why the science of arms is so vastly superior to all the useless sciences such as dancing, music andY

DANCIN' MSTR Easy does it, my good fencing master. I'll have you speak more respectfully of dancing.

MUSIC MASTER I'll thank you, sir, not to abuse the excellence of music.

FENCIN' MSTR I find you both very laughable in your wish to compare your sciences to mine.

DANCIN' MSTR Behold the man of importance.

MUSIC MASTER Behold the funny animal with his plas-tron!

FENCIN' MSTR My little dancing master, I'm going to teach you some very fancy steps; and you, my little musician, are going to have some very pretty tunes sliced out of you.

DANCIN' MSTR I'll teach you your own trade, swashbuckler!

MR JOURDAIN (**To Dancing Mstr**) Are you mad, quarreling with someone who understands tierce and quart, and who knows how to kill a man by demonstrative reasoning?

DANCIN' MSTR I scoff at his demonstrative reasoning and at his tierce and his quart!

MR JOURDAIN (**To the Dancing Mstr**) Gently, I say!

FENCIN' MSTR (**To Dancing Mstr**) How's that? You impertinent dwarf!

MR JOURDAIN Oh! My fencing master...!

DANCIN' MSTR (**To Fencing Mstr**) How's that? You bulky drayhorse!

MR JOURDAIN Oh! My dancing master...!

FENCIN' MSTR If I go after you...

MR JOURDAIN (**To Fencing Master**) Gently!

DANCIN' MSTR If I lay my hands on you...

MR JOURDAIN (**To Dancing Mstr**) Easy now!

FENCIN' MSTR I'll slice you in such a way...

MR JOURDAIN (**To Fencing Mstr**) Please...!

DANCIN' MSTR I'll thrash you so that you...

MR JOURDAIN (**To Dancing Mstr**) I beg you...

MUSIC MASTER (**To Dancing Mstr**) Let's teach him how to speak.

MR JOURDAIN (**To Music Master**) Good heavens! Stop this!

Scene 4: Mr Jourdain, Dancing Mstr, Music Master, Fencing Mstr, Philosophy Mstr, Two Lackeys

MR JOURDAIN (**As Philosophy Mstr enters**) Hello, my dear philosopher! You arrived in the nick of time with your philosophy. Come here and make these people stop fighting.

PHLSPHY MSTR What is it? What is the problem, gentlemen?

MR JOURDAIN Each of them is arguing about the superiority of his profession to the point where they're insulting each other and threatening to come to blows.

PHLSPHY MSTR Come now, gentlemen, Must you allow yourselves to be carried away by such passion? Haven't you read Seneca's learned treatise on anger? Is there anything more base and shameful than this passion which turns man into a ferocious beast? And must not our behavior be ever subject to the dictates of reason?

DANCIN' MSTR Indeed, sir, he has been offending both of us with his slurs on dancing which is my profession, and music, the specialty of my colleague here.

PHLSPHY MSTR A man of wisdom is above all the insults directed towards him, and the best answer to an offense is moderation and patience.

FENCIN' MSTR They both had the audacity to want to compare their professions with mine.

PHLSPHY MSTR Must you let that disturb you? Men should never fight over vainglory and rank, for the only true distinguishing attributes of mankind are wisdom and virtue.

DANCIN' MSTR I'll have him know that dancing is a science to which one could never pay sufficient homage.

MUSIC MASTER And for my part let him know that music is a science that has been revered throughout the centuries.

FENCIN' MSTR And I assert to both of them that the science of arms is the most beautiful and most necessary of all sciences.

PHLSPHY MSTR And just where does that leave philosophy? How dare the three of you address me with such arrogance, and give shamelessly the name of science to things that don't even merit the name of art, and that can only be classified under the shabby titles of gladiator, singer and mountebank?

FENCIN' MSTR Be gone, you mongrel of a philosopher!

MUSIC MASTER Be gone, you pedant good for nothing!

DANCIN' MSTR Be gone, you pompous pedagogue!

PHLSPHY MSTR How's that? Scoundrels that you are...!

The Philosophy Master lunges at them as the Dancing, Music and Fencing Masters beat him.

MR JOURDAIN My learned philosopher!

FENCIN' MSTR A plague on the animal!

MR JOURDAIN Gentlemen!

PHLSPHY MSTR Impudent dogs!

MR JOURDAIN My learned philosopher!

DANCIN' MSTR To blazes with the pompous ass!

MR JOURDAIN Gentlemen!

PHLSPHY MSTR Villains!

MR JOURDAIN My learned philosopher!

MUSIC MASTER The devil take the impertinent runt!
MR JOURDAIN Gentlemen!
PHLSPHY MSTR Knaves! Tramps! Traitors! Impostors!
MR JOURDAIN My learned philosopher! Gentlemen! My learned philosopher! Gentlemen!

All the Masters exit fighting.

MR JOURDAIN Oh, fight on as you will; there's nothing I can do about it, and I'm not going to spoil my robe trying to keep you apart. I'd be crazy to butt into that and chance getting myself hurt.

Scene 5: Philosophy MSTR, Mr Jourdain, Two Lackeys

PHLSPHY MSTR (**Straightening his collar and regaining his composure**) And, now to our lesson.

MR JOURDAIN Ah, sir! I am sorely distressed by the beating they gave you.

PHLSPHY MSTR That was nothing. A philosopher knows how to take things as they come and I'm going to compose a satire in the style of Juvenal that will cut them most splendidly to shreds. But enough of that. What is it that you wish to learn?

MR JOURDAIN As much as I can for I have the most burning desire to be learned, and I am extremely angry with my parents for not making me study all the sciences when I was young.

PHLSPHY MSTR A most reasonable sentiment. Nam sine doctrina vita est quasi mortis imago. You understand that... You know Latin, of course?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, but let's make believe I don't. Tell me what it means.

PHLSPHY MSTR That means that without science life is practically an image of death.

MR JOURDAIN That Latin is right.

PHLSPHY MSTR Are you familiar with any of the principles or fundamentals of the various sciences?

MR JOURDAIN Oh yes. I know how to read and write.

PHLSPHY MSTR Where would you like us to begin? Do you want me to teach you logic?

MR JOURDAIN What's logic?

PHLSPHY MSTR It is logic that teaches the three operations of the mind.

MR JOURDAIN And what are they, these three operations of the mind?

PHLSPHY MSTR The first, the second and the third. The first is to conceive properly by means of universals; the second is to judge properly by means of categories; and the third is to draw the correct conclusion by means of the figures Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio, Baralipon, and so forth.

MR JOURDAIN Those words are much too unlovely. I don't find that logic very nice. Let's learn something more pretty.

PHLSPHY MSTR Would you care to learn ethics?

MR JOURDAIN Ethics?

PHLSPHY MSTR Yes.

MR JOURDAIN What does it have to say, this ethics?

PHLSPHY MSTR It deals with happiness, teaches men to moderate their passions and...

MR JOURDAIN Oh, no! I'll have none of that! I'm as bilious as the devil, and no ethics is going to deny me my bellyful of passion when I feel like it.

PHLSPHY MSTR Is it physics that you want to learn?

MR JOURDAIN Physics? What's that about?

PHLSPHY MSTR It is physics that explains the principles of natural things and the properties of the bodies, that discusses the nature of the elements metals, minerals, rocks, plants, and animals, and teaches us the causes of all the meteors, rainbows, will o the wisps, comets, lightning flashes, thunderclaps, thunderbolts, rainfalls, snowfalls, hailstorms, winds, and whirlwinds.

MR JOURDAIN There's too much hurly burly in all that, too much confusion.

PHLSPHY MSTR What is it then that you want me to teach you?

MR JOURDAIN Teach me how to spell.

PHLSPHY MSTR With pleasure.

MR JOURDAIN Afterwards, you will teach me the almanac, so that I'll know when there's a moon and when there isn't.

PHLSPHY MSTR So be it. However, to pursue your idea properly, and to treat this matter as a philosopher, I must proceed according to the order of things and begin by developing a precise understanding of the nature of the French letters and of the different way each is pronounced; and accordingly, I must

tell you that the letters are divided into vowels...so called because they express the voice, and into the consonants...so called because they sound with the vowels and function only to mark the various articulations of the voice. There are five French vowels: A, E, I, O, U.

MR JOURDAINI understand all that.

PHLSPHY MSTR The vowel A is pronounced by opening the mouth wide...A, A.

MR JOURDAIN A, A. Yes.

PHLSPHY MSTR The vowel E is pronounced by bringing the upper and lower jaws closer together...A, E.

MR JOURDAIN A, E. A, E. Good heavens! Yes! Oh, how beautiful that is.

PHLSPHY MSTR And the vowel I by bringing the jaws even closer together and drawing back the corners of the mouth towards the ear...A, E, I.

MR JOURDAIN A, E, I, I, I, I, I. That's true! Long live science!

PHLSPHY MSTR The vowel O is formed by re opening the jaws and drawing the upper and lower lips close to each other at the corners: O

MR JOURDAIN O, O. Nothing could be more true. A, E, I, O, I, O. That's really admirable! I, O, I, O.

PHLSPHY MSTR The overture of the mouth forms an actual circle that represents an O.

MR JOURDAIN O, O, O. You're right! Oh, what a beautiful thing it is to know something!

PHLSPHY MSTR The vowel U is formed by bringing the teeth together without clenching them entirely, and extending the lips forward, drawing them close to each other but without having them meet: U

MR JOURDAIN U, U. You're absolutely right! U!

PHLSPHY MSTR Your lips should protrude as if you were pouting; therefore, when you wish to ridicule someone, all you have to do is say U.

MR JOURDAIN U, U. That's true! Ah, why did I not study sooner so that I might know all this?

PHLSPHY MSTR Tomorrow we shall discuss the other letters which are the consonants.

MR JOURDAIN Are there as many curious things about them as there are in these?

PHLSPHY MSTR To be sure. The consonant D, for example, is pronounced by placing the tip of your tongue above the upper teeth: Da.

MR JOURDAIN Da, Da.. Yes! Ah, what beautiful things! What beautiful things!

PHLSPHY MSTR The F by pressing the upper teeth against the lower lip: fa.

MR JOURDAIN Fa, Fa. That's true! Ah, father and mother of mine, how mad I am at you!

PHLSPHY MSTR And the R by curling the tip of the tongue back against the high point of the palate so that, being brushed by the air that escapes forcefully, the tongue yields and snaps back to its original position making a kind of trill: R R R Ra.

MR JOURDAIN R R R Ra. R R R Ra. That's true! Oh, what a clever man you are! And how much time I have wasted! R R R Ra

PHLSPHY MSTR I will explain all these curiosities to you in depth.

MR JOURDAIN Pray, do. Moreover, I must tell you a secret. I am in love with a person of very high quality and I would like you to help me write something to her in a short letter that I would drop at her feet.

PHLSPHY MSTR Very well.

MR JOURDAIN That will be very gallant, right?

PHLSPHY MSTR To be sure. Do you wish to write to her in verse?

MR JOURDAIN No, no. No verse.

PHLSPHY MSTR Then you only want prose?

MR JOURDAIN No, I want neither prose nor verse.

PHLSPHY MSTR But it's got to be one or the other, sir.

MR JOURDAIN Why?

PHLSPHY MSTR For the simple reason, sir, that one can only express one's self in prose or in verse.

MR JOURDAIN Is there nothing then but prose or verse?

PHLSPHY MSTR No, sir. All that is not prose is verse, and all that is not verse is prose.

MR JOURDAIN And when one speaks, what's that?

PHLSPHY MSTR Prose.

MR JOURDAIN How's that? When I say: "Nicole, bring me my slippers and give me my nightcap," that's prose?

PHLSPHY MSTR Yes, sir.

MR JOURDAIN By Jupiter! I've been speaking prose for forty years

without even knowing it, and I am greatly obliged to you for having taught me that. I would like you to put in the letter: "Beautiful marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love;" but I would like that to be said in a gallant fashion, and that it have a more genteel turn.

PHLSPHY MSTR Say that the fire of her eyes reduces your heart to ashes; that you suffer day and night from the throes of a...

MR JOURDAIN No, no, no. I don't want all that. I only want what I said to you: "Beautiful marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love."

PHLSPHY MSTR But you must expand on that a bit.

MR JOURDAIN No, I tell you, those are the only words I want in the letter but phrased in style and with a proper arrangement. I beseech you to show me the various ways they can be put.

PHLSPHY MSTR Well, first of all, they can be arranged as you said: "Beautiful marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love." Or: "Of love they make me die, beautiful marchioness, your beautiful eyes." Or: "Your beautiful eyes of love they make me, beautiful marchioness, die." Or: "Die your beautiful eyes, beautiful marchioness, of love they make me." Or: "They make me your beautiful eyes die, beautiful marchioness, of love." Or: Y

MR JOURDAIN But of all those ways, which is the best?

PHLSPHY MSTR They way you said it: "Beautiful marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love."

MR JOURDAIN I have never studied and I got that with the first try. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I beseech you to come early tomorrow.

PHLSPHY MSTR I shall not fail to do so. Remember now: Fa Fa Fa. (He exits)

MR JOURDAIN (To 1st Lackey) How's that? My coat hasn't arrived yet?

1ST LACKEY No, sir.

MR JOURDAIN That blasted tailor makes me wait on a day when I have so many things to do. I'm boiling with rage! May the quartan fever strangle that wretched tailor! The devil take that tailor! The plague choke that tailor! If I had my hands on him now, that hateful tailor, that mongrel of a tailor, that treacherous tailor, I'd Y

Scene 6: Mr Jourdain, Master Tailor, Apprentice Tailor (carrying coat), Lackey

MR JOURDAIN Ah, there you are! I was about to get mad at you.

MSTR TAILOR I was unable to come sooner, and I had twenty people working on your outfit.

MR JOURDAIN The silk stockings that you sent me were so tight that I had a devil of a time trying to put them on, and there are already two runs in them.

MSTR TAILOR They'll stretch easily.

MR JOURDAIN Of course, they will if I keep getting runs; and these shoes you made me are hurting me ferociously.

MSTR TAILOR Not at all, sir.

MR JOURDAIN What do you mean, not at all?

MSTR TAILOR No, they don't hurt you at all.

MR JOURDAIN I tell you they are hurting me!

MSTR TAILOR You're just imagining that.

MR JOURDAIN Imagine it because I feel it. That's why!

MSTR TAILOR Hold on, sir. Behold the most beautiful and best matched coat in all the court. To design a sedate outfit without using black is a true work of art, and I'd venture that your most gifted tailors in court wouldn't do as well had they six tries at it.

MR JOURDAIN What the deuce is this? You've got the flowers upside down.

MSTR TAILOR You never told me, did you, that you wanted them right side up?

MR JOURDAIN Did I have to tell you that?

MSTR TAILOR Yes, indeed. All the people of quality wear them thus.

MR JOURDAIN People of quality wear them upside down?

MSTR TAILOR Yes, sir.

MR JOURDAIN Oh, well, in that case, I guess it's all right.

MSTR TAILOR If you wish, I'll put them right side up.

MR JOURDAIN No, no.

MSTR TAILOR You just have to say the word.

MR JOURDAIN No, I tell you, you did the right thing. Do you think the outfit will look well on me?

MSTR TAILOR What a question! I'll defy any painter with his brush to do better. I have an apprentice at my place who is the greatest

genius in the world when it comes to making breeches, and I have another whose talent for doublets makes him the hero of our time.

MR JOURDAIN Are the wig and plumes as they should be?

MSTR TAILOR Everything is just right.

MR JOURDAIN (Looking at the coat) Aha, my dear tailor, this is something you made from the material of my last outfit. I recognize it.

MSTR TAILOR Well, sir, the fact is that the material seemed so beautiful to me that I felt like using it to cut out a coat for myself. Would you like to try on your outfit?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, give it to me.

MSTR TAILOR Wait. That's not the way it's done. I have brought some people who will dress you to music. Clothes like these must be put on with ceremony. You there! Enter. Dress the gentleman as you do for people of quality.

Four Apprentices enter and two of them remove his exercise breeches while the other two remove his spencer. Then they put on his new outfit. Mr. Jourdain walks among them showing them his outfit to see if it's all right This is all done with orchestral accompaniment.

APPRENTICE My Gentleman, may I request a gratuity for the apprentices?

MR JOURDAIN What did you call me?

APPRENTICE My Gentleman.

MR JOURDAIN "My gentleman?" This is what it's like to dress a person of quality. Go about dressed as a bourgeois and you'd never anyone say to you: "My Gentleman."

He hands the Apprentice Tailor some money.

APPRENTICE Your Lordship, we are deeply obliged.

MR JOURDAIN "Your lordship!" Hoho! "Your lordship!" Hold on, my friend. "Your lordship" deserves something, and those are no little words, "Your lordship." Here you are, that's what your lordship gives you. He hands out more money.

APPRENTICE Your lordship, we shall all drink to the health of your Grace.

MR JOURDAIN "Your Grace!" Oh! Oh! Oh! Wait. Don't leave. "Your

Grace" to me! (Aside) Good heavens, if he goes as far as Your Highness, he'll have my entire purse. (Aloud as he hands out more money) Here you are. That's for "My Grace."

APPRENTICE We thank his Lordship most humbly for his generosity.

MR JOURDAIN A good thing he stopped for I was about to give him everything.

The four Apprentice Tailors express their joy with a dance upon their exit.

ACT III

Scene 1: Mr Jourdain, Nicole, Two Lackeys

MR JOURDAIN Follow me as I walk about town to show my new outfit;
and take special care, both of you, to stay close behind me
so that everyone will know that you are mine.

LACKEYS Yes, sir.

MR JOURDAIN Call Nicole for me. I have to give her some orders. Don't
bother. There she is... Nicole!

NICOLE What is it?

MR JOURDAIN Listen.

NICOLE Hahahahaha.

MR JOURDAIN What are you laughing at?

NICOLE Hahahahaha.

MR JOURDAIN What's that hussy up to?

NICOLE Hahaha... Oh, my, don't you look dandy! Hahaha.

MR JOURDAIN What's that?

NICOLE Hoho... Saints above! Hahahaha...

MR JOURDAIN Little vixen that you are, are you making fun of me?

NICOLE Oh, no sir. I'd just feel awful if I didY Hahahahaha

MR JOURDAIN I'll punch you in the nose if you laugh anymore.

NICOLE Sir, I can't help itY Hahahahaha

MR JOURDAIN You won't stop?

NICOLE Sir, please forgive me, but you look so funny that I can't keep
from laughing... Hahahahaha...

MR JOURDAIN Did you ever see such insolence?

NICOLE You couldn't look more funny if you triedY Hahaha

MR JOURDAIN I'llY

NICOLE Please excuse me, sirY Hahahahaha

MR JOURDAIN See here, if I hear the slightest titter out of you, I'm going
to give you the biggest slap that was ever given.

NICOLE Very good, sir. It'sY finishedY I won't laugh anymoreYheheh

MR JOURDAIN See that you don't. Now in preparation for later on, you
must cleanY

NICOLE Hahahahaha...

MR JOURDAIN You must clean thoroughly...

NICOLE Hahahahaha...

MR JOURDAIN I say that you must clean the parlor andY

NICOLE HahahahahaY

MR JOURDAIN Again!

NICOLE (**Crumbling with laughter**) Go to it, sir. I=d rather you hit me
and let me laugh my bellyful. I=d be better for it.
HahahahaY

MR JOURDAIN This is too much!

NICOLE For mercy=s sake, sir, please let me laughY HahahaY

MR JOURDAIN If I lay my hands on youY

NICOLE Sir, I shall split my sides if I don=t laughY hahaha

MR JOURDAIN Did you ever see such a brazen female who laughs in my
face instead of taking orders?

NICOLE What do you want me to do, sir?

MR JOURDAIN I want you to think about preparing the house for the
company that will be arriving soon.

NICOLE By the saints, sir, I don=t feel like laughing anymore. All that
company of yours makes such a mess around here that all it
takes to put me in a bad mood is to hear mention of it.

MR JOURDAIN Perhaps for your sake I ought to shut the house up to
everyone?

NICOLE No, sir, not to everyone; just to certain people.

Scene 3: Mr Jourdain, Nicole, Mrs. Jourdain, Two Lackeys

MRS JOURDAIN Aha! Here's a new kettle of fish! What kind of a get up is
that? Do you care that little about what people will think to
deck yourself out like that? Do you really want to be the
laughing stock wherever you go?

MR JOURDAIN Only the fools will laugh at me, dear wife.

MRS JOURDAIN Well, they've already started. In fact, your peculiar ways
have been making people laugh for quite some time now.

MR JOURDAIN And just who are these people, if you please?

MRS JOURDAIN People who are right and who have more sense than you.
For my part, I am scandalized by the life you are leading. I
don't know what's become of our house. You'd think we
were having daily carnivals here. And just so there'll be no
let up, we disturb the entire neighborhood with early
morning screeching of fiddlers and singers.

NICOLE Madame speaks the truth, sir. I'll never be able to keep a clean

house with that bunch of people you have coming here. They have feet that look for mud in all sections of town just to bring it here; and poor Françoise has just about worn herself out scrubbing the floors that your fancy masters dirty regularly every day.

MR JOURDAIN Hold on there, our servant Nicole, you've got a pretty sharp tongue for a peasant girl.

MRS JOURDAIN Nicole is right, and she's got more sense than you. I'd like to know what you expect to do with a dancing master at your age?

NICOLE And with a fencing master whose foot stomping shakes the whole house and uproots the tiles of the parlor floor.

MR JOURDAIN Be quiet, my servant and my wife.

MRS JOURDAIN Do you want to learn how to dance for the time when your legs give out?

NICOLE Do you have a notion to kill someone?

MR JOURDAIN Be still, I tell you! You're ignorant creatures, the both of you, and you don't know the advantages of all that.

MRS JOURDAIN You ought to be thinking instead about marrying off your daughter who is of age now.

MR JOURDAIN I'll think about marrying off my daughter when the right party comes along; but I also want to think about learning the finer things.

NICOLE I also heard, madame, that he hired today, to top it all, a philosophy master.

MR JOURDAIN That's right. I want to be learned and to know how to reason about things with people of culture.

MRS JOURDAIN Soon you'll be going to the lycee for a whipping, at your age.

MR JOURDAIN And why not? Would to heaven I be whipped right now in front of everyone and knew what they teach at the lycee.

MRS JOURDAIN Oh, yes indeed, a lot of good that will do you.

MR JOURDAIN To be sure.

MRS JOURDAIN You really need all that to run your household.

MR JOURDAIN Certainly. Both of you are talking like imbeciles, and your ignorance makes me ashamed. (To Mrs Jourdain) For example, do you happen to know what you're speaking right now?

MRS JOURDAIN Yes, I know that what I'm saying is right and that you

ought to be thinking about another way of life.

MR JOURDAIN I'm not talking about that, I tell you. I'm asking you: what I am speaking with you and what I am saying to you now; what is it?

MRS JOURDAIN Nonsense.

MR JOURDAIN No, no. It's not that. What both of us are saying, the form of language we are using this instant.

MRS JOURDAIN Well, what about it?

MR JOURDAIN What is that called?

MRS JOURDAIN That's called whatever one wants to call it.

MR JOURDAIN That's prose, imbecile!

MRS JOURDAIN Prose?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, prose. All that prose is not verse, and all that verse is not prose. So there! That's what studying is all about. (To Nicole) And you, do you know what you have to do to say U?

NICOLE What?

MR JOURDAIN Go ahead. Say U and see.

NICOLE All right, U.

MR JOURDAIN Yes, but when you say U, what are you doing?

NICOLE I'm doing what you tell me to do.

MR JOURDAIN Oh, how strange it is to have to deal with simpletons! You extend the lips forward, and you bring the upper and lower jaws close together; U, do you see? I'm pouting: U.

NICOLE Oh, yes, that's just dandy.

MRS JOURDAIN Now isn't that admirable.

MR JOURDAIN Other things are completely different. If only you had seen O, and DA, DA, and FA, FA.

MRS JOURDAIN What's all that gibberish?

NICOLE What's all that going to get you?

MR JOURDAIN Seeing ignorant females drives me mad.

MRS JOURDAIN Go on, you ought to send all those people packing with their stuff and nonsense.

NICOLE And especially that lout of a fencing master who fills the house with dust.

MR JOURDAIN Aha! That fencing master really grates you. I'm going to show you now just how impertinent you really are. **(He calls for the foils and gives one to Nicole.)** Now then, demonstrative reasoning, the line of the body. When you

push in quart, you have only to do this; when you push in tierce, you just have to do that. In that way you'll never get killed. Isn't it nice to be so sure of things when you're fighting someone? Here, I'll show you. Make a few thrusts at me.

NICOLE Very well, like this? **(Nicole makes several thrusts at him.)**

MR JOURDAIN Gently now! Oh! Easy does it! A plague on the little vixen!

NICOLE You told me to thrust.

MR JOURDAIN Yes, but you're thrusting in tierce before thrusting quart, and you're not giving me the chance to parry.

MRS JOURDAIN You are mad, my husband, with all your silly notions and you've been acting like this since you started mixing with the nobility.

MR JOURDAIN When I mix with the nobility I show my sound judgment, and it's much better than mixing with your common folk.

MRS JOURDAIN Oh, yes indeed. There's a great deal to be gained by keeping such fancy company; and you've been acting very smart with that fine count of yours whose got you so bamboozled.

MR JOURDAIN Quiet! Think about what you're saying. Do you realize, my dear wife, who it is you're talking about when you speak of him. He's a person of much greater importance than you might think...a lord of great esteem at court, who speaks to the king just like I speak to you. Don't you consider it a great honor for me that a person of such quality be seen coming to my house so often, and that he call me his dear friend and treat me as if I was his equal? You could never imagine how kind he's been to me and how he has overwhelmed me by the compliments he has paid me in front of everyone.

MRS JOURDAIN Oh yes, he's nice to you and pays you compliments as he borrows your money.

MR JOURDAIN Indeed! Isn't it an honor for me to loan money to a man of such rank? And could I do any less for a lord who calls me his dear friend?

MRS JOURDAIN And this lord, what does he do for you?

MR JOURDAIN Things that would astonish you if you knew.

MRS JOURDAIN How's that?

MR JOURDAIN Enough. I can't explain that. All you have to know is that, if I loaned him money, he'll return it to me and soon.

MRS JOURDAIN Yes, wait for that.

MR JOURDAIN Certainly. Didn't he tell me so?

MRS JOURDAIN Yes, yes, he won't fail to fail to do so.

MR JOURDAIN He gave me his word as a gentleman.

MRS JOURDAIN Fiddlesticks!

MR JOURDAIN Ah! But you're a stubborn one, my dear wife. I tell you he'll keep his word; I'm sure of it.

MRS JOURDAIN And I'm quite sure that he won't, and that all those compliments are to puff you up.

MR JOURDAIN Hold your tongue. Here he comes.

MRS JOURDAIN That's all we need now. He's here perhaps to borrow some more money from you. Just the sight of him turns my stomach.

MR JOURDAIN Quiet, I say!

Scene 4: Mr Jourdain, Mrs Jourdain, Nicole, Dorante

DORANTE My dear friend, Mr Jourdain, how are you?

MR JOURDAIN Well enough, sir, to render you whatever service I may.

DORANTE And, Mrs Jourdain there, how is she?

MR JOURDAIN Mrs Jourdain is doing as well as she can.

DORANTE My, my, Mr Jourdain! Your attire is absolutely matchless!

MR JOURDAIN As you see.

DORANTE You look thoroughly striking in that outfit, and there's not a gentleman at court that could top you.

MR JOURDAIN Aha!

MRS JOURDAIN (Aside) He scratches him where he itches.

DORANTE Good heavens, Mr Jourdain, I could hardly wait to see you. I respect you more than any man in the world, and I was discussing you again this morning in the king's chambers.

MR JOURDAIN You do me too much honor, sir. (To Mrs Jourdain) In the king's chambers!

DORANTE Come now, put your hat on.

MR JOURDAIN Sir, I know the respect that I owe you.

DORANTE Good Lord, put it on. Let's not stand on ceremony, I beseech you.

MR JOURDAIN SirY

DORANTE Put it on, I say, Mr. Jourdain; you are my friend.

MR JOURDAIN Sir, I am your servant.

DORANTE I'll not put my hat on unless you put on yours.

MR JOURDAIN (Putting on his hat) I would rather be unmannerly than bothersome.

DORANTE (Aside) I am your debtor, you know.

MRS JOURDAIN Yes, we know only too well.

DORANTE You have generously loaned me money on several occasions, and you have obliged me in what is certainly the most gracious of manners.

MR JOURDAIN You jest, sir.

DORANTE But I know how to acknowledge favors, and repay what is loaned.

MR JOURDAIN I have no doubts about that, sir.

DORANTE I'd like to settle our account, and I am here so that we might work it out together.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside, softly, to Mrs Jourdain**) There! Do you see your impertinence, wife?

DORANTE I am a man who likes to discharge his debts as soon as possible.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside, softly, to Mrs Jourdain**) I told you!

DORANTE Let's see how much I owe you.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside, softly, to Mrs Jourdain**) You and your ridiculous suspicions!

DORANTE Do you remember the total amount of money you loaned me?

MR JOURDAIN I believe so. I've kept a little memorandum. Here it is. On one occasion I gave you two hundred louis d'or.

DORANTE That is true.

MR JOURDAIN Another time. Six score.

DORANTE Yes.

MR JOURDAIN And once, one hundred and forty.

DORANTE You're right.

MR JOURDAIN These three items amount to four hundred and sixty louis which comes to five thousand and sixty francs.

DORANTE Your figures are correct. Five thousand and sixty francs.

MR JOURDAIN One thousand thirty two francs to your plume merchant.

DORANTE Exactly.

MR JOURDAIN Two thousand eighty francs to your tailor.

DORANTE That is true.

MR JOURDAIN Four thousand three hundred and seventy nine francs, twelve sous and eight deniers to your cloth merchant.

DORANTE Very good. Twelve thousand and eight deniers. The account is accurate.

MR JOURDAIN And one thousand seven hundred forty-eight francs, seven sous and four deniers to your saddler.

DORANTE All true. What does that come to?

MR JOURDAIN Sum total: Fifteen thousand and eight-hundred francs.

DORANTE The sum total is exact. Fifteen thousand and eight hundred francs. Add to that the two hundred pistoles that you are going to give me, and that will make exactly sixteen thousand francs that I will pay the first chance I get.

MRS JOURDAIN (**Aside to Mr Jourdain**) There. Didn't I tell you?

MR JOURDAIN Hush!

DORANTE Loaning me that sum won't put you out, I hope.

MR JOURDAIN Oh, no!

MRS JOURDAIN (**Aside to Mr Jourdain**) That man is milking you dry.

MR JOURDAIN Hold your tongue!

DORANTE If that would inconvenience you, I could go elsewhere.

MR JOURDAIN No, sir.

MRS JOURDAIN He won't be happy until he's put you in the poorhouse.

MR JOURDAIN Quiet, I say.

DORANTE You have only to say that this would cause the slightest difficulty.

MR JOURDAIN Not at all, sir.

MRS JOURDAIN (**Aside**) What a cajoler!

MR JOURDAIN Keep quiet!

MRS JOURDAIN (**Aside**) He'll drain the last sou out of you.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside**) Will you be still?

DORANTE I have several people who would gladly oblige me, but since you are my best friend, I felt that asking anyone else would be an injustice to you.

MR JOURDAIN You do me too much honor, sir. I shall go fetch what you need.

MRS JOURDAIN (**Aside**) What? You're going to give him that too?

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside**) What can I do? Do you expect me to refuse a man of such rank, a man who only this morning spoke of me in the king's chambers?

MRS JOURDAIN (**Aside**) Off with you; you're a born dupe.

Scene 5: Dorante, Mrs Jourdain, Nicole

DORANTE You are sad of countenance; what can be the matter, Mrs. Jourdain?

MRS JOURDAIN My head may not be swelled up but it's still larger than my fist.

DORANTE Where is your daughter? I don't see her.

MRS JOURDAIN My daughter is doing quite nicely where she is.

DORANTE How is she getting along?

MRS JOURDAIN On her two legs.

DORANTE Wouldn't you like to come with her one of these days to the ballet or comedy theater at court?

MRS JOURDAIN Yes, indeed, we really feel like laughing. Don't we ever feel like laughing?

DORANTE I imagine, Mrs Jourdain, that you had many suitors in your younger days, being as beautiful and sweetly humored as you were.

MRS JOURDAIN Indeed, sir! Has Mrs Jourdain grown decrepit, and does she have the shakes already?

DORANTE Ah! In faith, Mrs. Jourdain, I beg your pardon. It did not occur to me that you are young; I am absent of mind more than not, and I beseech you to forgive my impertinence.

Scene 6: Mr Jourdain, Mrs Jourdain, Dorante, Nicole

MR JOURDAIN Here are two hundred louis d'or in exact count.

DORANTE I assure you, Mr. Jourdain, that I am completely at your disposal, and that I am most eager to be of service to you at court.

MR JOURDAIN I am much obliged, Sir.

DORANTE If Mrs. Jourdain wishes to see the royal entertainment, I'll get her the best seats in the house.

MRS JOURDAIN Mrs. Jourdain kisses your hand.

DORANTE (**Aside to Mr Jourdain**) As I advised you in my letter, our beautiful marchioness will be here soon for the ballet and dinner; I finally got her to agree to attend the

divertissement you're planning in her honor.
MR JOURDAIN Let's move off a bit, for obvious reasons.

They move to one side of the stage.

DORANTE It's been eight days since our last meeting, and I have not sent you news about the diamond you gave me which I was to present to her as a gift from you; but the fact is that I had a devil of a time overcoming her scruples, and it was only today that she agreed to accept it.

MR JOURDAIN How did she like it?

DORANTE She loved it! And, unless I'm sadly mistaken, the beauty of that diamond will have a very favorable effect on her feelings towards you.

MR JOURDAIN Would to heaven that be so!

MRS JOURDAIN (**Aside to Nicole**) Once he's with him, he can never part company.

DORANTE I got her to appreciate the richness of the gift and the depth of your love.

MR JOURDAIN Your kindness overwhelms me, and it confounds me to see a person of your quality stoop to do what you are doing for me.

DORANTE You jest, sir. Do scruples of that sort carry any weight with friends? And would you not do the same for me were the occasion to arise?

MR JOURDAIN Oh, certainly, and with the greatest of pleasure!

MRS JOURDAIN (**To Nicole**) Oh how his presence weighs on me.

DORANTE For my part, when it comes to serving a friend, nothing else matters; and when you told me in confidence about your arduous feelings for that delightful marchioness whom I know socially, you saw how quickly I offered to serve the cause of your love.

MR JOURDAIN True. These favors are what confound me.

MRS JOURDAIN (**To Nicole**) Will he ever leave?

NICOLE They do get on well together.

DORANTE You have taken the right steps to captivate her, for there is nothing that women love more than to have money spent on them. And your frequent serenades, your incessant bouquets, the superb fireworks on water, the diamond she

received from you and the entertainment you are preparing for her, will all serve to express your love far more eloquently than any words that you yourself might utter.

MR JOURDAIN If money could put me on the road to her heart, I would spend my last sou. A woman of quality has charms that dazzle me, and it is an honor that I would buy at any cost.

MRS JOURDAIN (To Nicole) What are they talking about all this time? Sneak up on them and listen.

DORANTE You will soon have the pleasure of seeing her and then you may feast your eyes to your heart's content.

MR JOURDAIN To have a free rein, I have arranged to have my wife dine at my sister's where she will spend the entire afternoon.

DORANTE You did the wise thing, for your wife's presence would complicate matters. I have given the necessary orders to the cook and have made all the arrangements for the ballet. It is I who planned the entire affair and, if my orders are carried out properly, I am sure that...

Mr Jourdain suddenly notices Nicole eavesdropping and slaps her.

MR JOURDAIN Aha! That's for your impertinence! (To Dorante) Let us leave, if you please.

Dorante and Mr Jourdain exit

Scene 6: Mrs Jourdain, Nicole

NICOLE By the saints, madame! I paid a high price for my curiosity, but I believe they're up to something. They're talking about some affair that they don't want you to attend.

MRS JOURDAIN I've had suspicions about my husband for some time now, Nicole. Unless I'm sorely mistaken, there's some love affair in the works, and I've been trying to get to the bottom of it; but let's think about my daughter. You know how much Cleonte loves her. He's a fine lad and I want to help his courtship along and give him Lucille, if I can.

NICOLE In truth, madame, I can't tell you how happy I am that you feel this way since your esteem for Cleonte is no greater than my love for his valet, and I would like our marriage to take

place in the shadow of theirs.
MRS JOURDAIN Go tell Cleonte that I want him here immediately so that I might be with him as he asks my husband for Lucille's hand in marriage.
NICOLE I shall go at once, madame, and with great joy for this is the nicest errand I shall ever do.

Mrs Jourdain exits and Nicole is alone

NICOLE Oh, how gladdened certain hearts will be when they hear what I have to say.

Scene 7: Nicole, Cleonte, Covielle

NICOLE (**To Cleonte**) Ah! There you are. I've been looking for you. I am an ambassadress of joy and I come...
CLEONTE Off with you, traitor! I'll have no more of your treacherous speeches.
NICOLE Is this the way your receive me...?
CLEONTE Be gone, I say. Go at once and tell your unfaithful mistress that she will no longer dupe the overly simple Cleonte.
NICOLE What madness is this that grips him? My poor Covielle, tell me what this is all about.
COVIELLE Your poor Covielle? You little minx! Quickly now! Out of my sight and leave me in peace.
NICOLE What? You, too?
COVIELLE Out of my sight, I say, and never speak to me again.
NICOLE (**Aside**) Saints above! I wonder what's bitten the two of them. I must tell my mistress about this.

Scene 8: Cleonte, Covielle

CLEONTE Can you imagine anyone treating a sweetheart like that...a sweetheart second to none in faithfulness and passion?
COVIELLE It's a dreadful thing they did to us.
CLEONTE I display towards a person all the ardor and tenderness conceivable. She is all that I love in this world, and she occupies my every thought. All my concern, all my desires, all my joy centers upon her. Everything I say, think or

dream concerns her. She is the reason for the very breath I take and for every beat of my heart. And this is the worthy recompense for such affection! It's been two days now since I've seen her...two days that have seemed like two frightful centuries. I meet her by chance; my heart is transported by the sight of her. My face bursts with joy; I fly to her in ecstasy...only to have that unfaithful creature look the other way as she brushes past me as if never in her life had she seen me.

COVIELLE My sentiments exactly.

CLEONTE Could anything ever match, Covielle, the perfidy of that ungrateful Lucille?

COVIELLE And that of that hussy, Nicole?

CLEONTE After all the ardent sacrifices, sighs and vows that her charms drew out of me.

COVIELLE After all those assiduous compliments, courtesies and favors that I have showered upon her in the kitchen.

CLEONTE All the tears that I shed at her feet!

COVIELLE All the buckets of water that I drew for her!

CLEONTE All the ardor I've shown cherishing her more than myself.

COVIELLE All the heat I've endured turning the spit for her.

CLEONTE She avoids me disdainfully!

COVIELLE She snubs me impudently!

CLEONTE Such perfidy deserves the greatest punishment.

COVIELLE Such treachery merits a thousand slaps in the face.

CLEONTE Never speak to me of her again, I beseech you.

COVIELLE I, sir? God forbid!

CLEONTE You are never to proffer excuses for the actions of that unfaithful creature.

COVIELLE Have no fear.

CLEONTE No, all your speeches in her defense will be to no avail.

COVIELLE I wouldn't dream of it!

CLEONTE I am determined to retain my ill feelings and to break all communication with her.

COVIELLE I agree with that.

CLEONTE She is perhaps attracted by the looks of that fancy count that visits her, and the dazzling effect that gentility has upon her is quite obvious to me; but honor dictates that I not allow her fickleness to prevail. I shall match her step for step in

her headlong rush to change things, so that it won't be she alone who will reap the satisfaction of this separation.

COVIELLE Beautifully said. Those are my sentiments exactly.

CLEONTE Help me retain my resentment towards her and to resist whatever remaining tenderness I might feel towards her that might cause me to speak in her favor. Describe her to me in such a way as to have her appear contemptible in my eyes. Emphasize all the defects that you see in her that should arouse my displeasure.

COVIELLE In her, sir? She's a childish snob, a pretentious coquette whose physical attributes are hardly enrapturing. I see nothing in her that is not mediocre, and you could find a hundred others more worthy of you. First of all, she has small eyes.

CLEONTE That's true; her eyes are small, but they are full of fire. They sparkle, they pierce, they excite like nothing else on earth.

COVIELLE She has a wide mouth.

CLEONTE Yes, but it has charm that is not seen on other mouths. The desire that wells up in me when I gaze upon it renders it the most attractive and lovable mouth in the world.

COVIELLE She is rather small of build.

CLEONTE Yes, but she is graceful and well proportioned.

COVIELLE She affects a nonchalance of speech and action.

CLEONTE That is true; but she does so with such gracefulness, and her ways are so engaging, so indescribably charming that they capture my heart.

COVIELLE As for her wit...

CLEONTE Ah! That she has, Covielle, the most refined, the most delicate.

COVIELLE Her conversation...

CLEONTE Her conversation is charming.

COVIELLE She is always serious.

CLEONTE Would you prefer a perpetual display of joviality? Is there anything more insufferable than a woman who laughs at anything?

COVIELLE Lastly, she is as capricious as anyone I know in this world.

CLEONTE Yes, she is capricious, I agree. But when a woman is beautiful, everything about her is becoming, and there is nothing we cannot endure from her.

COVIELLE Well, since that's the way it is, it's obvious that you wish to love her always.

CLEONTE I? I would rather die, and I shall hate her as much as I have loved her.

COVIELLE How will you do that since you find her so perfect?

CLEONTE My vengeance will be all the more striking because of this. As beautiful, attractive and lovable as I find her, I shall nevertheless hate her and leave her, and this will amply demonstrate my strength of will. Here she comes.

Scene 10: Cleonte, Covielle, Lucille, Nicole

NICOLE **(To Lucille)** For my part, I was thoroughly shocked by it.

LUCILLE It can be nothing else, Nicole, but what I said. But there he is.

CLEANTE **(To Covielle)** I don't even want to speak to her.

COVIELLE I shall do likewise.

LUCILLE What is this all about, Cleonte? What's troubling you?

NICOLE What ails you, Covielle?

CLEONTE What is it that grieves you thus?

NICOLE What is it that puts you in such a bad humor?

LUCILLE Have you lost your tongue, Cleonte?

NICOLE Are you dumb, Covielle?

CLEONTE Oh, what a brazen creature!

COVIELLE Oh, what a Judas!

LUCILLE I can see that our recent meeting has upset you.

CLEONTE **(To Covielle)** Aha! She realized what she has done.

NICOLE The reception we gave you this morning got your dander up.

COVIELLE **(To Cleonte)** She has guessed where the shoe pinches.

LUCILLE Isn't it true, Cleonte, that this is the cause of your resentment?

CLEONTE Yes, faithless one, that is it, since speak I must; and I say to you that you are wrong to believe that your unfaithfulness will prevail, for it shall be I who will be first to break our relationship, thereby depriving you of the satisfaction of rejecting me. It will be difficult, of course, for me to overcome my love for you. This will occasion much anguish. I shall suffer for a time but I shall get over it; and I would rather put a dagger through my heart than to be so weak as to return to you.

COVIELLE **(To Nicole)** That goes for me, too.

LUCILLE That's much ado about nothing. I'd like to explain to you, Cleonte, why I avoided you this morning.

CLEONTE (**Drawing away from her**) No, I don't want to hear it.
NICOLE (**To Covielle**) I'd like to tell you why we passed you by so quickly.
COVIELLE (Drawing away from her) No, I don't want to listen.
LUCILLE (**Following Cleonte**) I want you to know that this morning...
CLEONTE (**Retreating further**) No, I tell you.
NICOLE I want you to understand...
COVIELLE (**Retreating further**) No traitoress.
LUCILLE Listen!
CLEONTE I'll have none of it.
NICOLE Let me explain.
COVIELLE I am deaf.
LUCILLE Cleonte!
CLEONTE No.
NICOLE Covielle!
COVIELLE Not at all!
NICOLE Stop this!
CLEONTE Nonsense.
NICOLE Hear me!
COVIELLE Folderol!
LUCILLE Wait a moment!
CLEONTE In no way.
NICOLE A little patience.
COVIELLE Fiddlesticks.
LUCILLE Just two words.
CLEONTE No, it's over.
NICOLE One word.
COVIELLE No, it's finished.
LUCILLE (**Stopping the chase after Cleonte**) Very well then. Since you refuse to listen, you can keep your opinions and do whatever you please.
NICOLE (**Also stopping**) Since that's the way you're going to act, you can take it anyway you like.
CLEONTE (**Turning to Lucille**) All right, let's hear what you have to say.
LUCILLE (**Avoiding Cleonte**) I no longer wish to discuss it.
COVIELLE (**Turning to Nicole**) Very well, what was that all about?
NICOLE (**A avoiding Covielle**) I no longer wish to explain it to you.
CLEONTE (**To Lucille**) Tell me...
LUCILLE (**Still drawing away**) No, I shall tell you nothing.

COVIELLE (**Following Nicole**) Explain to me...

NICOLE (**Drawing away**) No, I shall explain nothing.

CLEONTE For pity's sake...

LUCILLE No, I say.

COVIELLE Have a heart...

NICOLE I'll have none of it.

CLEONTE I beseech you.

LUCILLE Let me be.

COVIELLE I beg you.

NICOLE Go away.

CLEONTE Lucille!

LUCILLE No.

COVIELLE Nicole!

NICOLE In no way.

CLEONTE For heaven's sake!

LUCILLE I don't want to.

COVIELLE Speak to me!

NICOLE Not at all.

CLEONTE Remove my doubts.

LUCILLE No, I shall do nothing.

COVIELLE Ease my mind.

NICOLE No, I don't feel like it.

CLEONTE Very well, ingrate, since you care so little about my suffering,
and since you refuse to explain your abuse of my love for
you, I shall make this our last meeting and go off to some
distant place and die of a broken heart. (**He starts to leave**)

COVIELLE (**Following Cleonte**) Me, too.

LUCILLE Cleonte!

NICOLE Covielle!

CLEONTE (Stops) Yes?

COVIELLE (Stops) What is it?

LUCILLE Where are you going?

CLEONTE Where I told you.

COVIELLE We are going off to die.

LUCILLE You're going to die, Cleonte?

CLEONTE Yes, cruel one, since this is your wish.

LUCILLE I? I want you to die?

CLEONTE Yes.

LUCILLE Who told you this?

CLEONTE (Nearing her) What else am I to make of your refusal to remove my suspicions?

LUCILLE Am I to blame? Had you only been willing to listen to me, would I not have told you that the incident that has so sorely grieved you was due to the presence this morning of an old aunt who is convinced that a girl is dishonored by the mere approach of a man, who lectures us constantly on this subject and who depicts all men as devils to be shunned?

CLEONTE This is the truth you're telling me, isn't it, Lucille?

COVIELLE You're not lying to us?

LUCILLE Nothing could be more true.

NICOLE That's exactly the way it was.

COVIELLE (To Cleonte) Well, do we accept this?

CLEONTE Ah, Lucille, just one word from your mouth and the anguish in my heart is appeased. Who can resist the persuasion of one's beloved?

COVIELLE With what ease do these infernal creatures cajole us!

Scene 11: Mrs. Jourdain, Cleonte, Lucille, Covielle, Nicole

MRS JOURDAIN I am pleased to see you, Cleonte, and you arrive just in time. Here comes my husband. This is the moment for you to ask for Lucille's hand in marriage.

CLEONTE Ah, madame, what sweetness do your words contain, and how they respond to the yearnings of my heart! Could ever there be a more delightful order, a more precious favor?

Scene 12: Cleonte, Mr. Jourdain, Mrs Jourdain, Lucille, Nicole, Covielle

CLEONTE Sir, for some time now I have wanted to make a certain request of you. The matter is of such moment to me that I have decided to do so personally rather than engage anyone else to act in my behalf, and, without further ado, I shall request of you the glorious honor of becoming your son in law.

MR JOURDAIN Before giving you my answer, may I ask you, sir, if you are a gentleman?

CLEONTE Sir, most people can answer that question with little hesitation or difficulty. They have no qualms about assuming that

title, and seem to do so nowadays with the blessings of society. As for myself, I must confess that my convictions in this regard are somewhat stronger. I feel that all forms of imposture are unworthy of a man of honor, and that it is shameful to disguise what heaven has made us by parading about with a stolen title and presenting a false image of one's self. For my part, I was born of parents who held positions that were undoubtedly honorable. I acquired the honor that comes from six years of service in the military and my resources are sufficient for me to maintain a passably high rank in the world. But despite all of this, I don't have the slightest intention of bestowing upon myself a title to which others in my place would feel justified in laying claim, and I shall state to you frankly that I am not a gentleman.

MR JOURDAIN Let's shake on that, sir. My daughter is not for you.

CLEONTE How's that?

MR JOURDAIN You are not a gentleman; you shall not have my daughter.

MRS JOURDAIN What's all this gentleman stuff? Does our family descend from Saint Louis?

MR JOURDAIN Hold your tongue, wife. I know what you're leading up to.

MRS JOURDAIN Don't both of us descend from plain working people?

MR JOURDAIN There goes that slanderous tongue of yours again!

MRS JOURDAIN And wasn't your father a tradesman just like mine?

MR JOURDAIN The plague take that woman! It's always the same story with her. If your father was a tradesman, that was his bad fortune; but it is only the ignorant who would say that of my father. For my part, all I have to tell you is that I want a gentleman for a son in law.

MRS JOURDAIN What your daughter needs is a husband who suits her. She'd be better off with an upright young man who is rich and handsome than with a penniless and homely gentleman.

NICOLE That's true. We have the son of a gentleman in our village who is the clumsiest and biggest nincompoop I ever saw.

MR JOURDAIN Hold that impertinent tongue of yours! You are forever sticking your nose into the conversation. I have enough money for my daughter; all that I need is honor, thus it is my wish that she be a marchioness.

MRS JOURDAIN A marchioness?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, a marchioness.

MRS JOURDAIN God forbid!

MR JOURDAIN My mind is made up.

MRS JOURDAIN And my mind will never consent to it. There can be painful disadvantages to marrying above one's station. I don't want a son in law who'll reproach my daughter for her parents; nor do I want her children to be ashamed to call me Grandma. If she had to visit me dressed as a grand lady, and if by accident she failed to greet someone in the neighborhood, they would be quick to say all kinds of nasty things about her. Things like: "Look at the fancy marchioness with her haughty airs. She's the daughter of Mr. Jourdain. When she was little, she was only too happy to play the fine lady with us. She wasn't always as uppish as that. Her two grandfathers sold cloth at St. Innocent's Gate, and they made lots of money for their children for which they're probably paying now in the other world, for you don't get rich by being honest." I'll have none of that tittle tattle. In a word, I want a man who'll be beholden to me for my daughter, and to whom I can say: "Sit there, son in law, and join me for dinner."

MR JOURDAIN There's that small mind of yours at work again, always clinging to the bottom rung of the ladder. No more discussion! My daughter will be a marchioness in spite of everyone and, if you keep pestering me, I'll make her a duchess! (He exits)

MRS JOURDAIN Cleonte, you mustn't let this discourage you. (To Lucille) Follow me, child, and tell your father firmly that you either marry Cleonte or you marry no one.

Scene 13: Covielle, Cleonte

COVIELLE You really handled that nicely with your fancy notions.

CLEONTE What would you have me do? For me, it was a matter of principle.

COVIELLE Principles with a man like that? Can't you see that he's mad, and would it have cost you anything to go along with his fancies?

CLEONTE You're right; but I didn't think I would have to give proof of nobility to be the son in law of Mr. Jourdain.

COVIELLE Ha! Haha!

CLEONTE What are you laughing at?

COVIELLE At a way I just thought to trick our man into giving you what you want.

CLEONTE How?

COVIELLE The idea is really very funny.

CLEONTE What is it?

COVIELLE There was a certain masquerade performed just recently that fits in perfectly here, and I plan to make it a part of a little joke I shall play on our foolish friend. The whole thing is a bit farcical, but with him we could venture anything. There's no need for elaborate subterfuge for he'll play his role marvelously and will believe whatever nonsense we deem to tell him. I have the actors and the costumes. Leave everything to me.

CLEONTE But tell me...

COVIELLE I'll explain it all to you, but let's withdraw from here for here he comes.

Scene 14: Mr. Jourdain, Lackey

MR JOURDAIN What the devil was that all about? All that they can criticize me for is my respect for nobility. For my part, there is nothing more beautiful than to hobnob with great lords. With them, there is nothing but honor and civility, and I would give two fingers of my hand to have been born a count or a marquis.

1ST LACKEY Sir, the count is here and he's got a lady with him.

MR JOURDAIN Good heavens! I've got some orders to give. Tell him I'll be with them in a moment.

Scene 15: Dorimene, Dorante, Lackey

1ST LACKEY The master said to tell you he'll be with you in a moment.

DORANTE Very good.

The Lackey exits

DORIMENE I don't know, Dorante. Allowing you to bring me to a house where I know no one is another strange thing for me to do.

DORANTE Where else would you have me entertain you then, madame, since our fear of gossip has ruled out your house or mine?

DORIMENE But you fail to mention that little by little I am compromising myself by accepting each day your lavish testimonials of love. My defenses are futile; there is a genteel persistence about you that overcomes my resistance and causes me to comply with all your wishes. It began with your frequent visits which were followed in turn by declarations of love, serenades, entertainments and gifts. I opposed all these things, but you are not one to lose heart, and my resolve grows weaker with each day. I find myself no longer capable of contesting anything, and I believe that this will ultimately lead to marriage...something I had not even remotely considered.

DORANTE In faith, madame, you should be married already. You are a widow and depend on no one but yourself. I am my own master and love you more than life itself. What is there to keep you from making the rest of my days those of untold bliss?

DORIMENE Good heavens, Dorante! There are many qualities that both parties must have in order to live happily together, and the two most reasonable people in the world can often have difficulty in establishing a satisfying union.

DORANTE You are wrong, madame, to anticipate so many difficulties, and the experience that you have had provides no conclusions for others to draw.

DORIMENE Well, my conclusion is always the same. The expenses that you undergo in my behalf trouble me for two reasons: one is that they commit me more than I care to be. and the other...please, don't take offense...the other is that I am sure that they are more than you can afford, and I don't want that.

DORANTE Ah! Madame, I beg you not to esteem so highly something that is unworthy of my love for you, and to allow... **(Mr. Jourdain interrupts him with his entrance)** Here is the master of the household.

Scene 16: Mr Jourdain, Dorante, Dorimene, Lackey

MR JOURDAIN (**After making his second bow to Dorimene and finding himself too close to complete with the third bow**) Er... Step back a little, madame.

DORIMENE How's that?

MR JOURDAIN Just one step, please.

DORIMENE What?

MR JOURDAIN Back up a little for the third.

DORANTE Madame, Mr. Jourdain is very strong on etiquette.

MR JOURDAIN Madame, it is a great glory for me to see myself being so fortunate to be so happy to have the good fortune of your having had the kindness to grant me your presence; and, if I merited enough to...um...merit a merit like yours, and if heaven...envious of my good fortune...had granted me...the advantage of seeing myself worthy...of the...um...

DORANTE That will do, Mr. Jourdain. Madame does not care for great compliments and she recognizes your nimble wit. (**Aside to Dorimene**) As you can tell by his manners, you're dealing with a rather ridiculous bourgeois.

DORIMENE (**Aside to Dorante**) That's rather obvious.

DORANTE Madame, here is my best friend.

MR JOURDAIN You do me too much honor.

DORANTE A gentleman to the core.

DORIMENE I hold him in very high esteem.

MR JOURDAIN I have done nothing as yet, madame, to deserve such consideration.

DORANTE (**Aside to Mr Jourdain**) Take care not to mention the diamond you gave her.

MR JOURDAIN Can't I even ask how she likes it?

DORANTE How's that? You must do nothing of the sort. That would be most ungentlemanly of you and, to act as a man of refinement, you must pretend that it was not you who gave her this gift. (**Aloud**) Mr. Jourdain says, madame, that he is delighted to have you as his guest.

DORIMENE He does me great honor.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside to Dorante**) How obliged I am to you, sir, for speaking to her thus in my behalf

DORANTE (**Aside to Mr. Jourdain**) I can't tell you how difficult it was for me to get her to come here.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside to Dorante**) I don't know how I can ever repay you for it.

DORANTE He says, madame, that he considers you the most beautiful person in the world.

DORIMENE How very gracious of him.

MR JOURDAIN Madame, it is you who are gracious, and...

DORANTE Let us proceed with the dinner.

1ST LACKEY (**Entering and addressing Mr Jourdain**) Everything is ready, sir.

DORANTE Let's sit at the table and bring in the musicians.

Six cooks perform a dance which constitutes the third interlude, concluded by bringing in a table laden with various dishes for the feast, Mr Jourdain, Dorimene and Dorante take their seats.

ACT IV

Scene 1: Mr. Jourdain, Dorante, Dorimene, Lackeys, Cooks, Singers

DORIMENE Really, Dorante, what's a thoroughly sumptuous meal!

MR JOURDAIN You jest, madame. I only wish that it was more worthy of you.

DORANTE Mr. Jourdain is right, madame, to speak thus, and he obliges me by the excellent manner in which he does you the honors of his household. I agree with him that the dinner is not worthy of you. Since it is I who ordered it, and since I am not as enlightened in these matters as are some of my friends, its preparation is not particularly ingenious. You will find in it certain culinary incongruities and some barbarous examples of taste. If Damis had a hand in it, all would have been done according to rule. It would have abounded in elegance and erudition, and he would have expanded upon each course, thereby convincing you of his exceptional competence in the science of good eating. He would have spoken to you of bread "de rive," slanted and golden at each end and with a crust that crumbles tenderly in the mouth; of a fragrant, velvety wine with a heartiness that does not overpower; of a breast of lamb garnished with parsley; of a loin of veal "de riviere" this long, white, delicate, pate of almonds in the mouth; a partridge imbued with a surprising aroma; and, for his chef d'oeuvre, he would have intoned upon a pearled bouillon soup backed up by a young plump turkey bordered by squabs and crowned with white onions stuffed with chicory. However, for my part, I can only confess my ignorance, and join Mr. Jourdain in his most proper wish that the dinner were more worthy of being offered to you.

DORIMENE My only response to that compliment lies in the way I am eating.

MR JOURDAIN Ah! Such beautiful hands!

DORIMENE My hands are very ordinary, Mr. Jourdain, but you're probably referring to the diamond which is indeed beautiful.

MR JOURDAIN Me, madame? Heaven keep me from ever wishing to

discuss it; that would not be very gentlemanly on my part,
and the diamond is a mere trifle.

DORIMENE You are very gallant.

MR JOURDAIN You are much too kind.

DORANTE (**After signaling to Mr Jourdain**) Come now, some wine for
Mr Jourdain, and for these gentlemen who will be so kind
as to sing a drinking song for us.

DORIMENE To blend good food with music is to provide the perfect
seasoning. How admirably you do entertain me!

MR JOURDAIN Madame, it is not...

DORANTE Mr Jourdain, let us listen to these gentlemen; their singing will
surpass anything we might say.

**The Singers take glasses and sing two drinking songs accompanied by
the orchestra.**

DRINKING SONG:

Be always faithful, forever be true
To your beloved; Then you will know
All the joy that love can bestow.

Often in anger and passion,
We're spiteful and unyielding,
But love's sole demand
Is to love constantly.

A sip or two, Louise,
As we begin the round,
Ah, how a glass that you hold becomes a thing of beauty!
You and the wine combine to overpower me,
And my heart for them both is by love doubly bound.

Glass in hand, you and I,
Let's vow, let's vow, my beauty,
To love for all eternity.

Bring on the wine,
Let good cheer flow for everyone!

Pour it, my lad, pour it;
Pour it; pour it freely,
Until they say "Enough!"

DORIMENE No one could possibly sing any better. That was absolutely beautiful.

MR JOURDAIN I see here, madame, something even more beautiful.

DORIMENE Dear me! Mr. Jourdain is more gallant than I thought.

DORANTE How's that? Madame, for whom do you take Mr. Jourdain?

MR JOURDAIN I would have her take me for what I would say.

DORIMENE Again!

DORANTE You don't know him.

MR JOURDAIN She shall know me whenever she pleases.

DORIMENE Oh, you're too much for me.

DORANTE He is a man with a ready wit; but you have not observed, madame, that Mr. Jourdain waits until you have served yourself and then eats what you leave.

DORIMENE Mr Jourdain is a man who charms me...

MR JOURDAIN If I could charm your heart, I would be...

Scene 2: Enter Mrs Jourdain

MRS JOURDAIN Aha! Look at the fine company we have here, and I can see that I was not at all expected. Thus it was for this beautiful affair, my dear husband, that you were so anxious to pack me off to your sister's for dinner. Downstairs looks like a playhouse and up here I'm interrupting what could pass for a wedding banquet. So this is how you squander your money! You send me away and then lavish fine ladies with music and entertainment.

DORANTE What do you mean, Mrs. Jourdain? Where did you get the bizarre notion that your husband is squandering his money, and that it is he who is regaling this lady? Please know that this is my affair and that your husband's role was merely to avail me of his home. I would thank you to observe things more carefully before you speak.

MR JOURDAIN Yes, you impertinent creature! It is the count who is giving all this to the lady here who is a person of quality. He has done me the honor of accepting my house and of

desiring my company .

MRS JOURDAIN Folderol! I know what I know.

DORANTE May I suggest a better pair of spectacles for you, Mrs. Jourdain.

MRS JOURDAIN I have no need of spectacles, sir, for I see things very clearly. I have you know that I am not a fool, and that I have sensed for some time now that something was going on. May I say, sir, that it is highly unworthy of a great lord like yourself to prey on the foolishness of my husband? And you, madame, please know that it ill befits a great lady like yourself to spread dissension in a household and to allow my husband to be in love with you.

DORIMENE What is the meaning of all of this? Really, Dorante! You abuse me by subjecting me to the delusions of this intemperate person.

Dorimene exits.

DORANTE (**Following Dorimene**) Madame! Hold on! Where are you running?

MR JOURDAIN Madame! My dear count! Offer her my apologies and try to bring her back.

Mr Jourdain turns to Mrs Jourdain

MR JOURDAIN Ah! Brazen creature that you are! Here's more of your fine doings. Insulting me like that in front of everyone and chasing people of quality from my house.

MRS JOURDAIN To hell with their quality!

MR JOURDAIN You wretch! I don't know what keeps me from cracking your skull with the pieces of the dinner that you came here to disturb. (**The table is removed**).

MRS JOURDAIN Who cares about that? I am defending my rights, and all womankind will back me!

MR JOURDAIN You would do well to stay clear of my temper!

Scene 3: Mrs Jourdain exits as Covielle enters in disguise

MR JOURDAIN What an unfortunate time to arrive. I felt like saying such

pretty things, and never was my wit so sharp. (Seeing Covielle but not recognizing him) But what is this I see?

COVIELLE Sir, I don't know if I have the honor of being known by you.

MR JOURDAIN No.

COVIELLE (**Lowering his hand to a foot from the ground**) I knew you when you were no taller than that.

MR JOURDAIN Me?

COVIELLE Yes, you were the most beautiful child in the world, and all the ladies would hold you in their arms and kiss you.

MR JOURDAIN They kissed me?

COVIELLE Yes. I was a very close friend of your late father.

MR JOURDAIN Of my late father?

COVIELLE Yes. He was a most respectable gentleman.

MR JOURDAIN What did you say?

COVIELLE I said he was a most respectable gentleman.

MR JOURDAIN My father?

COVIELLE Yes.

MR JOURDAIN You knew him well?

COVIELLE Certainly.

MR JOURDAIN And did you know him to be a gentleman?

COVIELLE Most assuredly.

MR JOURDAIN Who can understand this world?

COVIELLE How's that?

MR JOURDAIN There are foolish people who tell me he was a shopkeeper.

COVIELLE He, a shopkeeper? That's utter slander. He never was that. He was always considerate, always eager to be of service, and, since he was an expert in fabrics, he would go everywhere for his selections and have them brought to his place so that he might give them to his friends...for money.

MR JOURDAIN Sir, I am delighted to make the acquaintance of someone who can attest to the fact that my father was a gentleman.

COVIELLE Sir, I shall proclaim that to the entire world.

MR JOURDAIN I shall be much obliged. May I ask the purpose of your visit

COVIELLE Since my last meeting with your late father, the distinguished gentleman, I have traveled all over the world.

MR JOURDAIN All over the world!

COVIELLE Yes.

MR JOURDAIN I'd say that's quite a ways from here.

COVIELLE To be sure. I returned from these long voyages just four days ago and because of my concern for anything that might affect you, I come here to bring you the best news in the world.

MR JOURDAIN Pray what might that be?

COVIELLE Did you know that the son of the Great Turk is here?

MR JOURDAIN Me? No.

COVIELLE How's that? He has an absolutely magnificent cortege. Everyone goes to see him, and he has been received in this country as a lord of great importance.

MR JOURDAIN In faith, I did not know that.

COVIELLE What is to your advantage is the fact that he is in love with your daughter.

MR JOURDAIN The son of the Great Turk?

COVIELLE Yes, and he wants to be your son in law.

MR JOURDAIN My son in law, the son of the Great Turk?

COVIELLE The son of the Great Turk, your son in law. And since I have been to see him, and since I understand his language perfectly, we had a long conversation during which he said: "Acciam croc soler ouch alla moustaph gidelum amanahem marahini oussere carbulath?" That is to say: "Have you not seen the beautiful young person who is the daughter of Mr. Jourdain, the Parisian gentleman?"

MR JOURDAIN The son of the Great Turk said that about me?

COVIELLE Yes. When I replied that I was a special friend of yours, and that I had seen your daughter, he said: "Marababashem!" ... That is to say: "Ah! How I love her!"

MR JOURDAIN Marababashem means "Ah! How I love her!"

COVIELLE Yes.

MR JOURDAIN In faith, you did well to tell me that because I myself would have never believed that this Marababashem could have meant "Ah! How I love her!" It's an admirable language, this Turkish.

COVIELLE More admirable than you might believe. Do you know what Cacaramouchen means?

MR JOURDAIN Cacaramouchen? No.

COVIELLE That means "My dear soul."

MR JOURDAIN Cacaramouchen means "My dear soul."

COVIELLE Yes.

MR JOURDAIN That's marvelous! Cacaracamouchen, my dear soul. Who would have thought that? I find that amazing!

COVIELLE Finally, sir, to conclude my message, I must tell you that he is coming to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage and, in order that his father in law be worthy of him, he wishes to make you a Mamamouchi, which is a great dignitary in his country.

MR JOURDAIN A Mamamouchi?

COVIELLE Yes, a Mamamouchi which means in our language a paladin. Paladin! It's one of those ancient titles that...er..., you know...paladin! There is nothing more noble than that in the world, and you will rank among the greatest lords on earth.

MR JOURDAIN The son of the Great Turk does me great honor, and I beseech you to conduct me to his home so that I might thank him.

COVIELLE How's that? Why, he's at this moment on his way here.

MR JOURDAIN He's coming here?

COVIELLE Yes, and he's bringing with him all the ceremonial trappings for your investiture.

MR JOURDAIN I must say he's very prompt.

COVIELLE His love cannot tolerate any delay.

MR JOURDAIN The only problem is that my daughter is as stubborn as can be and has this fellow Cleonte on her mind and swears that she won't marry anyone but him.

COVIELLE She'll change her mind once she sees the son of the Great Turk, and then a wonderfully romantic episode will take place here. The fact is that the son of the Great Turk resembles Cleonte...well almost anyway. I have just seen him...they showed him to me, and the love that she has for one could easily be passed on to the other and...

Cleonte, disguised as the son of the Great Turk, enters with three PAGES carrying his train.

COVIELLEI hear him coming... There he is!

Scene 4: Mr. Jourdain, Covielle (in disguise), Cleonte (in disguise), 3 Pages

CLEONTE Amboushabim oqui boraf, Jordina, salamalequi.

COVIELLE **(To Mr. Jourdain)** That is to say: "Mr. Jourdain, may your heart be all year like a rose bush in bloom." This illustrates the obliging manner of speech in those countries.

MR JOURDAIN I am the most humble servant of His Turkish Highness.

COVIELLE **(To Cleonte)** Carigar camboto oustin moraf.

CLEONTE Oustin yoc catamalequi basurn base all moran.

COVIELLE He says that heaven should give you the strength of lions and the prudence of serpents.

MR JOURDAIN His Turkish Highness does me too much honor, and I wish him all kinds of prosperity.

COVIELLE Ossa binamen sadoc babally oracaf ouram.

CLEONTE Bel men.

COVIELLE He says that you are to go with him quickly to prepare yourself for the ceremony so that afterwards you might see your daughter and conclude the marriage.

MR JOURDAIN All that in two words?

COVIELLE Yes, the Turkish language is like that; it says a lot in few words. Now go with him quickly where he wishes.

Mr Jourdain exits with Cleonte and the pages, leaving Covielle alone on stage.

COVIELLE Hahaha! My God, that was funny! What a dupe! Had he learned his role by heart, he couldn't have possibly played it better. Hahaha!

Scene 5: Dorante, Covielle

Dorante enters.

COVIELLE Would you be so kind, sir, as to help us in a certain bit of business that is in progress?

DORANTE Ah! Ah! Covielle! Who would have recognized you? What an outfit!

COVIELLE You see! Hahaha!

DORANTE What are you laughing at?

COVIELLE At something that really calls for it, sir.

DORANTE How's that?

COVIELLE Sir, I could give you several tries at guessing the stratagem we are using on Mr. Jourdain to persuade him to give his daughter to my master.

DORANTE What the stratagem is I cannot guess, but I can guess that it will succeed since it is you who is behind it.

COVIELLE I see that you know me well, sir.

DORANTE Tell me what it is.

COVIELLE Let us withdraw to make room for what I see coming. You will be able to witness a part of the affair as I tell you the rest.

Dorante and Covielle withdraw as the Turkish Ceremony begins.

THE TURKISH CEREMONY

Mufti, Turks, Dervishes, Mr. Jourdain, Singers and Dancers.

Six Turks enter gravely, two by two to the sound of instruments. Each pair carries a carpet with which they dance several steps. They then raise their carpets high and the Turkish singers and musicians pass underneath. The Mufti and his company of Dervishes complete the procession. The Turks then spread the carpets on the ground and kneel on them while the Mufti and his Dervishes remain standing in the middle. As the Mufti invokes Mohammed in pantomime with contorted gestures and grimaces, the Turks prostrate themselves, singing "Alli, " and then return to a kneeling position with arms raised singing "Allah. " This switching continues until the invocation is over at which point they all rise and sing "Allah eckber" (**God is Great**), and two Dervishes escort Mr. Jourdain (**now in Turkish garb, but sans turban and sabre**).

TEXT TRANSLATION

MUFTI (To Jourdain)

Se ti sabir, ti responder If you know, you answer;

Se non sabir, If you don't know

Tazir, tazir. Quiet, quiet.

Mi star mufti. I be mufti.

Ti qui star, ti? Who be you?
Non intendir? You don't understand?
Tazir, tazir. Quiet, quiet.

Two Dervishes lead Mr. Jourdain offstage.

The Language being spoken is lingua franca, a hybrid language comprised of Italian, French, Spanish, Greek and Arabic; it was used in Mediterranean ports. The translation is provided merely for edification and is not meant to be sung.

TEXT TRANSLATION

MUFTI Dice, Turque, Tell me, Turk,
qui star quista? who be that one?
Anabista? An Anabaptist?
Anabista? An Anabaptist?
TURKS Ioc. No.
MUFTI Zuinglista? A Zuinglian?
TURKS Ioc. No.
MUFTI Coffita? A coffite?
TURKS Ioc. No.
MUFTI Hussita? Morista? A Hussite? A Moor?
Fronista? ???
TURKS Ioc ioc, ioc. No, no, no!
MUFTI Ioc, ioc, ioc! No, no, no.
Star Pagana? Is he a pagan?
TURKS Ioc. No.
MUFTI Luterana? A Lutheran?
TURKS Ioc. No.
MUFTI Puritana? A Puritan?
TURKS Ioc. No.
MUFTI Bramina? A Brahman?
TURKS Ioc, ioc, ioc. No, no, no.
MUFTI Ioc, ioc., ioc. No, no, no
Mahametana? A Mohamedan?
TURKS Hi Valla. Hi Valla. Yes, that=s it. Yes, that=s it.
MUFTI Como chamara? What=s his name?
TURKS Jordina. Jourdain.
MUFTI (Leaping at him)
Jordina? Jourdain?

TURKS Jordina. Jourdain.
MUFTI Mahameta, To Mohamed
per Jordina .for Jourdain.
Mi pregar I pray
sera e matina day and night
Voler far That he make
un paladina a paladin
De Giordina, of Jourdain,
de Giordina of Jourdain
Dar Turbanta Give him a turban
e dar scarcina and a sword
Con galera With a galley
e brigantine and brigantine
Per defenderPalestina To defend Palestine
Mahameta, To Mohamed,
per Giordina for Jourdain
Mi pregar sera e matina I pray day and night.
(To the Turks)
Star bon Turca, Giordina Is Jourdain a good Turk?
TURKS Hi Valla; Hi valla! Yes, that=s it. Yes, that=s
it.

MUFTI (Dancing and singing)
Ha la ba la chou ba la ba la ba laY

Mufti exits.

TURKS Ha la ba la chou ba la ba la ba laY

Mufti re enters wearing an oversized ceremonial turban decorated with four or five rows of lighted candles. Two Dervishes accompany him bearing the Koran and wearing pointed hats which are also set with lighted candles. The other two dervishes bring in Mr. Jourdain who is terrified by the ceremony and they make him kneel with his hands on the ground so that the Mufti might use his back as a sort of stand for the Koran. The Mufti makes a second burlesque invocation closing and opening his mouth without tittering a word; he then speaks vehemently, alternating between soft and thunderous tones, slaps his sides as if to force out the words, pounds on the Koran front time to time and turns its pages precipitously. Finally, he raises

his hands and shouts

MUFTI Hou!

During the second invocation, the Turks bow and straighten up three times singing "Hou!" each time.

MR JOURDAIN (**After they remove the Koran from his back**) Ah!

MUFTI (**To Mr. Jourdain**) Ti non star furba? You are not a knave?

TURKS No, no, no!

MUFTI Non star forfanta?

You are not an impostor?

TURKS No, no, no!

MUFTI Donar Turbanta.

Give the turban.

TURKS Ti non star furba?

No, no, no.

Non star fortanta?

No, no, no.

Donar turbanta.

The Turks put the turban on Mr. Jourdain's head singing and dancing to the music.

MUFTI (**Giving the sword to Mr. Jourdain**) Ti star nobile, non star
fabbola. You're a noble and that's no fable.

Pigliar sciabbola. Take the sword.

The Turks draw their swords, dancing about, beating Mr. Jourdain with their swords, and repeat these words:

MUFTI Dara, dara, bastonnara.

Hit him, hit him with a with a stick.

The Turks repeat the words, dancing about Mr. Jourdain and beating him with sticks.

MUFTI Non tener honta Don't be ashamed Questa star l'ultima affronta.
This is the last affront.

The Mufti begins his third invocation, leaning on the dervishes who support him reverently; the Turks then exit with the Mufti and, as they do, they sing, dance, and leap about him bringing along Mr. Jourdain in their wake.

ACT V

Scene 1: Mr. Jourdain, Mrs. Jourdain

MRS JOURDAIN Oh my God! Have mercy on me! What is this I see before me? What a figure! Are you about to play the mummer? Is it masquerade time? Speak, why don't you? What is this? Who decked you out like that?

MR JOURDAIN Listen to that brazen creature speaking like that to a mamamouchi!

MRS JOURDAIN What's that?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, you must treat me with more respect now that they made me a mamamouchi.

MRS JOURDAIN What kind of beast is that?

MR JOURDAIN Mamamouchi in our language means paladin.

MRS JOURDAIN Balleting? At your age your dancing the ballet?

MR JOURDAIN What an ignoramus! I said paladin. It's a very high dignitary, and they just now performed the ceremony making me one.

MRS JOURDAIN What ceremony?

MR JOURDAIN Mahameta per Jordina.

MRS JOURDAIN What does that mean?

MR JOURDAIN Jordina, that is to say, Jourdain.

MRS JOURDAIN What about Jourdain?

MR JOURDAIN Voler far un paladina de Jordina.

MRS JOURDAIN What?

MR JOURDAIN Dar turbanto con galera.

MRS JOURDAIN What the deuce does that mean?

MR JOURDAIN Dara, dara, bastonnara!

MRS JOURDAIN What kind of gibberish is that?

MR JOURDAIN Non tener honta, questa star l'ultima affronta.

MRS JOURDAIN What is the meaning of all this?

MR JOURDAIN **(Dancing and singing)** Hou la ba, ba la chou, ba la ba, ba la da. **(He falls to the ground)**

MRS JOURDAIN Heaven help us! My husband has gone mad!

MR JOURDAIN **(Rising)** Be still, insolent one! You must show respect to your mamamouchi.

Mr Jourdain exits.

MRS JOURDAIN Where did this madness come upon him? Quickly now, I must prevent him from going out. (**Notices Dorante and Dorimene**) Aha! That's all I need to know! I've got trouble closing in on me from all sides!

Mrs Jourdain exits.

Scene 2: Dorante and Dorimene

DORANTE Yes, madame, you're about to witness the most amusing episode conceivable. Were you to search the world over, you would not possibly find a man more mad than he; and then, madame, we must serve the cause of Cleonte's love by assisting in his little masquerade. He is a very decent lad and worthy of our concern.

DORIMENE I think very highly of him, and he is deserving of good fortune.

DORANTE Aside from that, madame, a ballet shall be performed here which we should not miss for it will be much to our liking, and I also must see if an idea of mine will succeed.

DORIMENE I have seen the magnificent preparations, and these are things, Dorante, that I can no longer endure. Yes, it is my wish finally that you put an end to these lavish expenditures on my behalf, and to see that you do, I have decided to marry you with no further delay. The true secret to all these things is that they lead ultimately to marriage.

DORANTE Ah! Madame, is it possible that you favor me with such sweet decision?

DORIMENE This is only to avoid your total impoverishment since it is obvious that at this rate you will soon be without a sou.

DORANTE How obliged am I to you, madame, for your concern over my estate!

DORIMENE I shall make good use of both; but here comes your man. What a vision of splendor!

Scene 3: Mr. Jourdain, Dorante, Dorimene

DORANTE Sir, madame and I have come to render homage to your newly bestowed dignity, and to rejoice with you over the forthcoming marriage of your daughter to the son of the Great Turk.

MR JOURDAIN **(After making three bows Turkish style)** Sir, I wish you the strength of snakes and the wisdom of lions.

DORIMENE Sir, I am extremely pleased to be among the first to congratulate you over the high degree of glory to which you have been elevated.

MR JOURDAIN Madame, I wish that your rosebush will be in bloom all year, and I am infinitely obliged to you for taking part in the honors that are happening to me, and I am very glad to see you here again so that I might apologize most humbly for the nastiness of my wife.

DORIMENE That was nothing. Such comportment is excusable on the part of a woman to whom your heart is so precious, and it is not at all strange that the possession of a man like you should inspire fits of alarm.

MR JOURDAIN The possession of my heart is a thing that you have completely acquired.

DORANTE As you see, madame, our Mr. Jourdain is not among those who allow themselves to be blinded by their own prosperity; despite his rise to glory, he still deigns to recognize his friends.

DORIMENE That is the mark of a truly generous person.

DORANTE Where is his Turkish Highness? We would like to pay him our respects as friends of yours.

MR JOURDAIN Here he comes now. I've sent for my daughter to give him her hand.

Scene 4: Cleonte (in disguise), Covielle (in disguise), Jourdain, Dorante, Dorimene

DORANTE **(To Cleonte)** Sir, we bow before your highness as friends of your father in law and extend our most respectful assurance of our very humble services.

MR JOURDAIN Where is that interpreter to tell him who you are and to have him understand what you say. You will see that he'll

answer you, and that he speaks Turkish marvelously. Hey there! Where the devil did he go? (To Cleonte) Straf, strif, strof, straf. This gentleman is a grande signora, grande signora, grande signora, and the lady is a dama, granda dama.

Cleonte pretends not to understand, and Mr. Jourdain begins pointing and making elaborate gestures.

MR JOURDAIN Oh, my... Him, sir, him French mamamouchi, and her, her French mamamouchi lady... I can't speak more clearly than that... Ah, good. Here comes the interpreter.

Scene 5: Mr. Jourdain, Cleonte, Dorante, Dorimene, Covielle

Covielle enters in disguise

MR JOURDAIN Where have you been? We can't say anything without you.
(Pointing to Cleonte) Tell him that the gentleman and lady are people of high quality and that they come to pay their respects as my friends, and to assure him of their services.
(To Dorante and Dorimene) Watch how he answers.

COVIELLE Alabala crociam acci boram alabamen.

CLEONTE Catalequi tubal ourin soter amalouchan.

MR JOURDAIN What did I tell you!

COVIELLE He said that the garden of your family should forever be sprinkled by the rain of prosperity.

MR JOURDAIN I told you he speaks Turkish!

DORANTE How remarkable.

Scene 6: Lucille, Mr. Jourdain, Dorante, Dorimene, Cleonte, Covielle

MR JOURDAIN Come join us, my daughter, and give your hand to this gentleman who is doing you the honor of asking to marry you.

LUCILLE What is this, father? What type of garb is that? Are you playing in some comedy?

MR JOURDAIN No, no, this is no comedy; it is a very serious matter. You are to be honored more greatly than anyone could possibly

wish. **(Pointing to Cleonte)** Behold, the husband that I give you.

LUCILLE To me, father?

MR JOURDAIN Yes, to you. Come now, join hands with him and be thankful to Heaven for your good fortune.

LUCILLE I do not want to get married.

MR JOURDAIN Well, I want it, and I am your father.

LUCILLE I'll do nothing of the sort.

MR JOURDAIN Enough of that! Come now, your hand.

LUCILLE No father, as I told you, there is no power on earth that can force me to have any other but Cleonte as a husband, and I will resort to the most drastic measures rather to allow myself to... **(Suddenly recognizing Cleonte beneath his disguise.)** It is true that as my father you are entitled to my complete obedience, and you may, therefore, dispose of me however you wish.

MR JOURDAIN Ah! I am delighted to see you regain your sense of duty so promptly. How pleasing it is to have an obedient daughter.

Scene 7: Lucille, Mr. Jourdain, Cleonte, Covielle, Dorante, Dorimene, Mrs. Jourdain

MRS JOURDAIN Well now, what do we have here? They tell me you're going to marry your daughter off to a mummer.

MR JOURDAIN Is there no holding that impertinent tongue of yours? You're always sticking that shrewish nose of yours into everything, and there's no way of teaching you to be sensible.

MRS JOURDAIN You're the one without a modicum of sense, and you flit from one folly to another. What is it this time? What do you plan to do with these people?

MR JOURDAIN I plan to marry our daughter to the son of the Great Turk.

MRS JOURDAIN The son of the Great Turk?

MR JOURDAIN **(Pointing to Covielle)** Yes. Pay him your compliments through the interpreter over there.

MRS JOURDAIN I don't need any interpreter; I'll tell him myself to his face that he'll not have my daughter.

MR JOURDAIN There you go again! Will you be still?

DORANTE Come now, Mrs. Jourdain, are you really turning down such an

honor? You are rejecting his Turkish Highness as a son in-law?

MRS JOURDAIN By the saints, sir, mind your own business.

DORIMENE This is a great glory that should not be refused.

MRS JOURDAIN Madame, I shall thank you also not to trouble yourself with matters that do not concern you.

DORANTE Our concern for your welfare stems only from our feelings of friendship for both of you.

MRS JOURDAIN I can do quite nicely without your friendship.

DORANTE Your daughter, however, has agreed to comply with the wishes of her father.

MRS JOURDAIN My daughter has agreed to marry a Turk?

DORANTE Most assuredly.

MRS JOURDAIN She can forget her Cleonte?

DORANTE What is there that one would not do to become a great lady?

MRS JOURDAIN If she ever did anything like that, I'd strangle her with my own hands.

MR JOURDAIN Enough of your cackling. I'm telling you that the marriage will take place.

MRS JOURDAIN And I'm telling you that it won't

MR JOURDAIN Oh, this is too much!

LUCILLE Mother!

MRS JOURDAIN Be gone, traitoress!

MR JOURDAIN What? Are you now criticizing her for obeying me?

MRS JOURDAIN She's my daughter as well as yours!

COVIELLE (**Still in disguise, To Mrs. Jourdain**) Madame!

MRS JOURDAIN And what have you got to say?

COVIELLE Just a word.

MRS JOURDAIN I've got no use for your "word."

COVIELLE (To Mr. Jourdain) Sir, if I could just have a word with her alone, I promise you that she'll comply with your wish.

MRS JOURDAIN Never!

COVIELLE Would you just listen to me?

MRS JOURDAIN No.

MR JOURDAIN Listen to him.

MRS JOURDAIN No, I don't care to.

MR JOURDAIN He'll tell you.

MRS JOURDAIN I don't want him to tell me anything.

MR JOURDAIN Did you ever see such a stubborn woman? Would it harm

you to listen to him?

COVIELLE All I ask is that you listen; you may then do as you please.

MRS JOURDAIN All right then, what is it?

COVIELLE (Aside to Mrs. Jourdain) We have been trying to catch your eye for an hour. Don't you see that all this is simply to have us conform to the foolish notions of your husband, that we are using this disguise to dupe him, and that the son of the Great Turk is none other than Cleonte himself.

MRS JOURDAIN (Aside to Covielle) Aha!

COVIELLE (Aside to Mrs. Jourdain) And that I, Covielle, am the interpreter?

MRS JOURDAIN Ah! Well, in that case, I shall yield.

COVIELLE Act as though you know nothing.

MRS JOURDAIN (Aloud) Yes, that settles it! I consent to the marriage.

MR JOURDAIN Ah! At last everyone is acting sensibly. (Aside to Mrs. Jourdain) You didn't want to listen to him, but I knew that once you did, you'd know just who it is we have here in the son of the Great Turk.

MRS JOURDAIN Yes, I see things very clearly now and I like what I see. You may send for the notary.

DORANTE Very well put. And now, Mrs. Jourdain, to complete your happiness and to remove whatever feelings of jealousy you may have had concerning your husband, I shall announce that my lady and I plan to avail ourselves of the services of the same notary.

MRS JOURDAIN I consent to that also.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside to Dorante**) That was just to fool her, wasn't it?

DORANTE (**Aside to Mr. Jourdain**) Of course. We must amuse her with this little pretense.

MR JOURDAIN (**Aside**) Good, good! (**Aloud**) Quickly now, summon the notary.

DORANTE As we await his arrival and his drawing up of the contracts, let us see our ballet which we present for the entertainment of his Turkish Highness.

MR JOURDAIN An excellent idea. Let's take our places.

MRS JOURDAIN And Nicole?

MR JOURDAIN Give her to the interpreter, and my wife to whoever will take her.

COVIELLE Sir, I thank you. (Aside) If a greater fool than this could ever

exist, all the way to Rome would I travel to announce it.

The play ends with the ballet, THE BALLET OF NATIONS. The second of the French segment, sung and danced by 3 women and 3 men in costumes from Poitiers.

Wander with me
Off to yon meadow
There to behold
A tale of love unfold

There neath the tree
Two doves intoning
Sweet sounds of love and fidelity

So glad of heart
We can also be,
If you=d love me
For all eternity.

Oh! How sweet is the world!
Oh! How bright are the days!
When two hearts are as one,
And the power,
The rapture of love
Unfolds its wondrous ways! THE END

**The Doctor
In Spite of Himself**

CHARACTERS

SGANARELLE, A Woodcutter
MARTINE, His Wife
GERONTE, An Elderly Gentleman
LUCINDE, His Daughter
LEANDRE, A Suitor
VALERE, Geronte=s Servant
LUCAS, Geronte=s Servant
JACQUELINE, Lucas= Wife & Geronte=s Wetnurse
THIBAULT, A poor Old Man
PERRIN, His Son
MR ROBERT, A Neighbor

The play takes place in the woods of France and at Geronte=s home.

ACT I

The scene represents a wooded area not far from Sganarelle's home.

Scene 1: Sganarelle, Martine

SGANARELLE No. I tell you I'll have none of that. I'm the master here and I'll say what I want.

MARTINE And I'm telling you that I want my say too, and that I didn't marry you just to put up with your pranks.

SGANARELLE Oh, what a pain it is to have a wife, and how right Aristotle was to say that a wife is worse than a demon!

MARTINE Aren't you the clever one with your stupid Aristotle!

SGANARELLE Clever indeed! I defy you to find another woodcutter who can reason as well as I, who was an apprentice to a celebrated physician for six years and who, as a mere slip of a lad, could recite his Latin primer by heart.

MARTINE Pompous idiot!

SGANARELLE Whining shrew!

MARTINE Cursed be the hour and the day when I decided to say yes.

SGANARELLE Cursed be that cuckold of a notary that made me sign my ruination.

MARTINE Oh, yes, indeed, you're the one with reason to complain. Ingrate! Should you not spend your day thanking God for having me as your wife? And did you deserve to marry a person like me?

SGANARELLE It is true that the honor you bestowed upon me was overwhelming, and that our wedding night was for me a deep source of pride...but don't force me to go into that for I shall say certain things that...

MARTINE What things?

SGANARELLE Enough. Let's drop the subject. Let it suffice that we know what we know, and that you very fortunate to have found me.

MARTINE In what way do you consider me fortunate to have found you? A man who is bringing me to the poorhouse, a debaucher, a

deceiver, who eats everything I have.

SGANARELLE You lie. I drink some of it, too.

MARTINE Who sells, piece by piece, everything in the house.

SGANARELLE I'm thrifty.

MARTINE Who even sold my bed!

SGANARELLE Now you'll get up earlier.

MARTINE So that there's not a piece of furniture left in the entire household.

SGANARELLE All the more easy to move out.

MARTINE And who does nothing but gamble and drink from morning till night.

SGANARELLE Only to avoid boredom.

MARTINE And while you play and drink, what am I to do with my family?

SGANARELLE Whatever you like.

MARTINE I've got four unfortunate children on my hands.

SGANARELLE Put them down.

MARTINE Who constantly ask to be fed.

SGANARELLE Feed them the whip, then. Come now, when I've had enough to eat and drink, I want everyone in my house to have his fill.

MARTINE And do you believe, drunkard, that this can go on forever.

SGANARELLE Easy does it, please, dear wife.

MARTINE That I should be forever subject to your insolence and debauchery?

SGANARELLE Let's not get carried away, dear wife.

MARTINE That I am beyond finding a way to have you face up to your duty?

SGANARELLE My dear wife, you know that my endurance is short, and that my arm is long.

MARTINE To hell with your threats.

SGANARELLE My little wife, my sweetheart, as usual you're itching for it.

MARTINE I'll show you that I in not afraid of you at all.

SGANARELLE My dear spouse, you feel like taking a little something from me don't you?

MARTINE Do you think your words frighten me?

SGANARELLE Sweet object of my desires. I shall box your ears.

MARTINE Drunkard that you are!

SGANARELLE I shall beat you.

MARTINES ot!
SGANARELLE I shall thrash you.
MARTINE Drunken beast!
SGANARELLE I shall throttle you.
MARTINE Traitor! Insulter! Deceiver! Coward! Rogue! Knave! Tramp!
Cad! Scoundrel! Villain! Thief!

Sganarelle takes up a stick and beats her.

SGANARELLE You really have a thirst for it, don't you?
MARTINE Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!
SGANARELLE Well, this is the best way to quench it.

Scene 2: Sganarelle, Martine, Mr. Robert

MR ROBERT Stop! Hold on! Enough! For shame! What is this? How disgraceful! A plague on the rogue who beats his wife thus!
MARTINE **(Hands on her hips, she forces Mr. Robert back as she speaks and eventually slaps him)** I want him to beat me!
MR ROBERT Oh! Well, in that case, IYerYapprove wholeheartedly.
SGANARELLE Who are you to interfere?
MR ROBERT I was wrong.
MARTINE Is it any of your business?
MR ROBERT You are right.
MARTINE The impertinence of this man who wants to prevent husbands from beating their wives!
MR ROBERT I take it all back.
MARTINE Is this any concern of yours?
MR ROBERT IIn no way.
MARTINE Then mind your own business.
MR ROBERT I shall not say another word.
MARTINE I like to get beaten.
MR ROBERT So be it.
MARTINE It's no skin off your nose.
MR ROBERT That is true.
MARTINE And you are a fool to butt into things that don't concern you!
(She slaps him)
MR ROBERT **(Turning to Sganarelle, who also forces him backwards as he speaks and who eventually beats Mr. Robert with the**

stick and drives him away) My good man, you have my most humble apologies. Go to it. Beat her; thrash her. I'll even help you if you want.

SGANARELLE I don't feel like it.

MR ROBERT Well, that's different.

SGANARELLE I want to beat her if I want to, and I don't want to beat her if I don't want to.

MR ROBERT Very good.

SGANARELLE She's my wife and not yours.

MR ROBERT Without a doubt.

SGANARELLE And it's not for you to give me orders.

MR ROBERT Certainly not...

SGANARELLE I do not need your help.

MR ROBERT That's fine with me.

SGANARELLE And you are impertinent to interfere with other people's business. To quote the immortal Cicero: "Family quarrels are for quarrelsome families.. And for no one else!"

Sganarelle begins to beat Mr. Robert and routs him from the stage, then turns to Martine and tries clasp her hand but she withdraws.

SGANARELLE Oh, come now. Let's make peace. Shake hands.

MARTINE Yes, after giving me such a beating.

SGANARELLE That's nothing. Shake.

MARTINE I don't want to.

SGANARELLE Eh?

MARTINE No!

SGANARELLE My little wife.

MARTINE Not at all!

SGANARELLE Come now, I tell you.

MARTINE! I have none of it!

SGANARELLE Come, come, come.

MARTINE No, I want to be angry.

SGANARELLE Nonsense! It was such a trivial affair. Let's go.

MARTINE Let me be!

SGANARELLE Shake hands, tell you!

MARTINE You treated me too badly.

SGANARELLE Oh, very well then, I apologize. Now let's shake hands.

MARTINE I accept your apology. (Aside) But he shall pay for it.

SGANARELLE You're so foolish to let that disturb you. These are little

things that good fellowship requires from time to time. A gentle thrashing between friends only serves to stimulate affection. Look here, I'm going off to the woods now, and I promise you today more than a hundred pieces of firewood!

Scene 3: Martine (alone)

MARTINE GoY I may smile outwardly but my resentment runs deep, and I shall not forget! The seething within me shall not stop until I find a way to get back at you. I know only too well that a wife always has the means for revenge against a husband. But this situation calls for more than the usual forms of wifely retaliation. No! For his shameful abuse of me, the rogue must pay, and pay dearly.

Scene 4: Martine, Lucas, Valere

LUCAS The devil take us both if we don't have a tough job on our hands! And I got no idea who we're gonna get for this.

VALERE What do you want to do? We have to obey our master, don't we? Besides, his daughter is our mistress and her health concerns us both. Her marriage, which her illness has delayed, would give us claim to a reward. Horace, as you know, is very generous and is quick to pay for services rendered; and although our mistress may have shown some affection for a certain Léandre, you know very well that her father has not seen fit to accept him a son in law.

MARTINE **(Musing aside)** Why can't I think up a good scheme for revenge?

LUCAS But where did our master get such a stupid notion? All them doctors we called couldn't do nothin'.

VALERE Well, sometimes, if you keep on looking, you find things that you couldn't find before...and often in very unlikely places.

MARTINE Yes, whatever the cost, I must get even. The beating he gave me still sticks in my throat!

As she muses over her revenge, she accidentally bumps into Valere and Lucas.

MARTINE Oh! I beg your pardon, gentlemen. I didn't see you. I was trying to find an answer to a difficult problem.

VALERE We all have our problems in this world, madame. We, too, are looking for something that would give us great pleasure to find.

MARTINE Might I be of service to you in your search?

VALERE It's possible. You see, we are looking for a very able man, a special type of doctor, capable of relieving the daughter of our master of a malady which has suddenly deprived her of her power of speech. Several doctors have already exhausted all their science to no avail, but sometimes you stumble upon people with amazing secrets, with unusual kinds of remedies, and these people often succeed where others fail. We are looking for just such a person.

MARTINE (**Aside, with an idea**) Oh! What a scheme for vengeance flashes through me! (**Turning back to Lucas and Valere**) Gentlemen, you could not possibly have found anyone in a better position than I to help you. It so happens we have a man here who is the most marvelous man in the world for curing hopeless cases.

VALERE And where, I beseech you, can we find him?

MARTINE You'll find him in that little clearing over there passing the time of day cutting wood.

VALERE A doctor who cuts wood?

LUCAS Who is collectin= herbs for his medicine, you mean?

MARTINE No, I mean he's cutting wood. I tell you he's truly an extraordinary gentleman..capricious, eccentric, temperamental, whom you will never take for what he is. His manner of dress is peculiar, and he sometimes assumes an air of ignorance that belies the wealth of science within him; and there is nothing he shuns more than the occasion to use his marvelous medical talents which heaven itself has bestowed upon him.

VALERE This touch of the bizarre in great men is truly fascinating. It is as though a trace of madness were mixed in with their science.

MARTINE Yes, but I'm afraid the madness in this case is greater than one might expect, for it sometimes causes the poor fellow to

prefer to be beaten rather than to acknowledge his profession; and I warn you that once the madness grips him, you will never get him to admit that he is a doctor unless each of you pick up a stick and beat the madness out of him. Only then will he confess. This is what we do here when we have need of him.

VALERE What a strange form of madness!

MARTINE That is true, but after that you will see that he will perform miracles.

VALERE And by what name does he go?

MARTINE By the name of Sganarelle; but he is easy to recognize. He has a large, black beard and wears a green and yellow suit with a ruff.

LUCAS A green and yella suit? What's he, a Parrot doctor? Ha, ha, ha.

VALERE But is he truly as good as you say he is?

MARTINE What=s that? I tell you he=s a man who performs miracles. Six months ago, a woman was given up for dead by all the other doctors, and even as preparations for her burial were being made, it was decided to summon by force the man of whom we speak. Upon seeing her, he put into her mouth a drop of some mysterious liquid, and at that very instant, she got up from her bed and began to walk about her room as if nothing had happened.

LUCAS Ah!

VALERE It must have been a drop of liquid gold!

MARTINE That may very well be. However, it was not quite three weeks later that a child of twelve fell from a steeple to the pavement below where he broke his head, arms and legs. Our man had no sooner been brought to the scene when he began to rub a certain ointment of his own concoction all over the boy=s body. The child thereupon rose to his feet and ran off to play marbles.

LUCAS By jingo! That=s the man we need all right! Let=s go get him quick!

VALERE Our thanks, madame, for the service you=ve rendered us.

MARTINE Yes, but remember the warning I gave you.

LUCAS You just leave that to us, ma=am; if it=s a beating he be lookin= for, we be only too happy to oblige.

VALERE (**As they leave Martine and go in search of Sganarelle**) How

fortunate we were to have met that woman. She has given me the greatest hope for success.

Scene 5: Valere, Lucas, Sganarelle

SGANARELLE (**Singing**) La, la, la...

VALERE (**Aside to Lucas**) I hear someone singing and cutting wood.

SGANARELLE (**Entering with a bottle in one hand and an axe in the other**) La, la, la... Whew! After all that hard work, I deserve a drink. (**He puts down the axe and takes a swig from the bottle**).

SGANARELLE That wood is as salty as the devil.

(Continues singing)

Kisses and hugs, sweet pretty bottle,
Kisses and hugs for your little glug glugs.
But how men would be jealous of me,
if wine from you would always flow, Ah!
Ah! Ah! My bottle of pleasure,
Why do you empty so?
Ah! Ah! Ah! Sweet little treasure,
Promise you'll never go.

(Stops singing)

Come now! Why all this sadness? I'll have none of that!

VALERE (**Softly to Lucas**) there he is! In the flesh!

LUCAS (**Aloud, oafishly**) By jingo! You're right! We found him!

VALERE Sssshhh! Let's get closer.

SGANARELLE (**Kissing the jug**) Ah, my wicked little darling, how I love you! (**He starts to sing again, then lowers his voice and hesitates as he realizes he's being observed by Lucas and Valere**)

But how men would be jealous of me

If wine from you would always flow

(Stops singing abruptly, spying Lucas and Valere)

Ah! Oh! Who the devil are those two after?

VALERE That's him. No doubt about it.

LUCAS There he be! The spittin' image of the lady's description!

SGANARELLE (**Aside**) They look at me as they confer. What are they up

to?

Sganarelle places the bottle on the ground Valere bows in greeting. Sganarelle, thinking Valere is reaching for the bottle, quickly snatches it up again and puts it on the other side of him. Lucas bows and Sganarelle snatches the bottle away from Lucas' reach and holds it close to his chest (comical by-play may continue.)

VALERE Sir? are you not the one who is called Sganarelle?

SGANARELLE What's that?

VALERE I am asking, sir, if it is you who goes by the name of Sganarelle?

SGANARELLE Yes and no, depending on what you want.

VALERE We only wish to pay him the highest respect within our power.

SGANARELLE Well, in that case, my name is indeed Sganarelle.

VALERE Sir, we are delighted to have found you, for we have been told that you can provide us with the help we desperately need, and we are here to implore you to do so.

SGANARELLE Well, if it has anything to do with my little business, gentlemen, I shall be only too pleased to serve you.

VALERE Sir, you are too kind. But may I ask, sir, that you put your hat on. The sun might do you harm.

LUCAS Betta cover yer head, sir.

SGANARELLE **(Aside)** My, my... These two really stand on ceremony, don't they?

VALERE Sir, you must not consider it strange that we come to you. Competent people are always in demand, and we have been advised as to your ability.

SGANARELLE Well, it is true that I'm the best woodcutter in the world...

VALERE My good man...

SGANARELLE When it comes to my work, I spare nothing. It is beyond reproach.

VALERE That is not exactly what we had in mind, sir.

SGANARELLE But, I sell at a hundred and ten sous per hundred

VALERE Let's speak no more of that, I beseech you, sir.

SGANARELLE I assure you that I could not possibly sell them for less.

VALERE We know all about it, sir.

SGANARELLE Well, if you know all about it, you must know my prices

VALERE Sir, this mockery ill becomes your

SGANARELLE I am not mocking anything, nor will I lower my price.

VALERE Let's change the subject, sir, I beg of you.

SGANARELLE You might be able to buy wood more cheaply elsewhere; after all, there are all kinds of wood, but you shall never match the quality of Y

VALERE Come now, sir, let's speak no more of this.

SGANARELLE I swear to you that you shall not match my work at double the price.

VALERE Enough, I tell you!

SGANARELLE No, I tell you sincerely, that I could not in conscience sell for less; nor could I overcharge.

VALERE Must it be, sir, that a person of your station derive pleasure from such degrading pretense...that he lower himself by speaking thus? Why should a man so knowledgeable, a famous doctor like yourself, wish to conceal from the world the nature of his wondrous talent?

SGANARELLE **(Aside)** He's mad.

VALERE We beseech you, sir, give up this pretense.

SGANARELLE What's that?

LUCAS No use tryin' ta fool us, sir. We know what we know.

SGANARELLE What on earth do you mean? Whom do you take me for?

VALERE For what you are Y a great doctor.

SGANARELLE **(Laughing)** Doctor yourself. I never was a doctor and I never will be.

VALERE **(Softly to Lucas)** His madness is taking hold. **(To Sganarelle)** Sir, we ask you most respectfully to discontinue these denials and to spare us the necessity of a more extreme form of persuasion.

SGANARELLE Spare you what?

VALERE The need to do something that would grieve us sorely.

SGANARELLE Indeed! Well, you can do whatever you like; the fact remains that I am not a doctor and that I understand none of this.

VALERE **(Softly to Lucas)** I'm afraid we'll have to administer the cure. **(To Sganarelle)** Sir, for the last time, I beg you to admit what you are.

LUCAS Oh, come on now. Quit yer dilly dallying and confess nice and simple that yer a doctor.

SGANARELLE This is too much

VALERE What is the use of denying what is already known?

LUCAS Why do you do such stoopid things? Where does it get ya?
SGANARELLE Gentlemen, if I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times: I am not a doctor!

VALERE (**Meandering about, looking for a stick**) You are not a doctor?
SGANARELLE No.

LUCAS (**Following Valere=s lead**) Yer not a docta?
SGANARELLE No, I tell you. **Valere and Lucas each pick up sticks and beat him**).

VALERE Very well, then. Since you insist, you leave us no choice.
SGANARELLE Oh! Oh! Oh! Gentlemen! All right! I'll be whatever you want!

VALERE Why do you force us to use violence, sir?
LUCAS Why do ya give us the trouble o' havin' to beat ya?
VALERE I assure you, sir, that I regret it most deeply.
LUCAS Me, too, sir. I'm terrible sorry.

SGANARELLE What the devil is this all about, gentlemen? Is this some type of joke, or has some delusion taken hold of you causing you to imagine me a docta?

VALERE What's that? You still don't give up? You still deny being a doctor?

SGANARELLE The devil take me if I am!
LUCAS Sit's not true that yer a docta?

SGANARELLE No, by all the saints! (**They begin beating him again**) Oh! OOOH! All right! All right, gentlemen! Since you insist, yes, I am a doctor, an apothecary too if you like. I'll admit to anything rather than get beaten.

VALERE Ah! Now that's more like it, sir. I am delighted to see you so reasonable.

LUCAS Ya bring joy to my heart, when ya talk like that.
VALERE I most humbly beg your forgiveness.
LUCAS Please excuse the libaty we took.

SGANARELLE (**Aside**) Good Lord! Could it be that I'm the one who is mistaken here, and that I have become a doctor without even knowing it?

VALERE Sir, you shall not regret confessing to us what you are; I assure you that your truthfulness will be rewarded.

SGANARELLE But, gentlemen, tell me, could it not be that you yourselves are mistaken? Is it absolutely certain that I am a doctor?

LUCAS Yes, by Jingo!

SGANARELLE Really and truly?

VALERE No doubt about it.

SGANARELLE The devil take me if I knew it.

VALERE How's that? Why you're the most able doctor in the world.

SGANARELLE Aha!

LUCAS A doctor who cured I dunno how many sicknesses.

SGANARELLE Indeed!

VALERE For six hours a woman had been given up for dead and just as they were about bury her, you gave her a drop of some mysterious liquid and in a flash, the woman rose and began to walk about the room.

SGANARELLE Good heavens!

LUCAS A twelve year old boy fell off a steeple and broke his head, legs and arms, and then you come along and rub some kinda ointment on him, and just like that he gets up and goes off to play marbles.

SGANARELLE Bless my soul!

VALERE Finally, sir, if you would agree to come with us, we can assure you great personal satisfaction as well as the opportunity to earn as much as your heart might desire.

SGANARELLE I= ll earn as much as I want?

VALERE Yes.

SGANARELLE Ah! Well, in that case,. I am most assuredly a doctor. I had forgotten it before, but now it all comes back to me. What is the problem? Where must we go?

VALERE We shall take you there. The problem concerns a girl who has lost her speech.

SGANARELLE Good heavens, I haven't found it. Ha ha!

VALERE **(Softly to Lucas)** He likes his little joke, that one. **(Aloud)** Let's go, sir.

SGANARELLE Without a doctor's robe?

VALERE We shall get you one.

SGANARELLE **(Handing his bottle to Valere)** You there, hold that. That's where I keep my herbs. **(To Lucas, spitting on the ground)** And, you. Walk on that. Doctor's orders.

LUCAS **(Walking as told)** By jingo! That=s what I call a docta! And I betcha he does the job >cause he=s a real clown!

Act II

Scene 1: At the home of Geronte, Valere, Lucas, Geronte, Jacqueline

VALERE Yes, sir, I believe you will be satisfied, for we have brought you the greatest doctor in the world.

LUCAS No, sir, you'll never find a better doctor than him. All them others couldn't even polish his boots.

VALERE He's a man who has brought about marvelous cures.

LUCAS Who even cured dead people.

VALERE However, as I told you, he is somewhat capricious, and there are moments when his mind seems to wander, and you would not take him for what he is.

LUCAS Yes, I'm afraid he likes his little joke, sir, and you now please don't get upset, sir, but sometimes he acts like he was a tiny bit cracked.

VALERE But fundamentally he is all science, and very often he makes statements that are quite ingenious.

LUCAS When he's got a mind for it, he talks like it was coming right out of a book.

VALERE His reputation is already widespread and he is respected by everyone.

GERONTE I am dying to meet this man. Bring him to me at once.

JACQUELINE By the saints, sir, this one won't do no better than all them others. It's just gonna be more of the same old claptrap, and I think that the best medicine you can give your daughter is a fine, handsome husband that she really has a liking for.

GERONTE Now, now, my dear wetnurse, you're quite a meddler, aren't you?

JACQUELINE I tell you all them doctors won't do no good at all. There's only one medicine that works on a girl, and that's a husband. All that there rhubarb and senna they been givin' her won't amount ta nothin'.

GERONTE What man would accept her with her present infirmity? And when I made plans for her marriage, did she not oppose me?

JACQUELINE It's no wonder. You wanted to strap her to a man she don't

love. Why didn't you choose that handsome Léandre, a man she really fancies? I'm sure she woulda obeyed you then; and I'm sure that if you wanted to give her to him, he'd take her just as she is.

GERONTE Léandre is not suitable; he's not rich like the other fellow.

JACQUELINE He's got a rich uncle who made him his heir.

GERONTE How much money he's got coming means nothing to me. It's what he's got now that counts. There is a great risk of disappointment when you rely on the money that someone else is holding for you. Death has a way of turning a deaf ear to the wishes and prayers of would be inheritors, and gray hair very often precedes the windfall of a dead benefactor.

JACQUELINE Well, anyway, I've always heard that in marriage or in anything else, happiness is more important than money. Parents have that damned habit of always askin': "What does he have?" or "What does she have?" or of sayin' things like: "Our good friend Peter married off his daughter to fat Thomas who had more vineyards to offer than young Robin." Meanwhile, it's Robin that she really fancies, and now the poor creature looks like a dried up fruit and hasn't spent a happy day since. Let that be an example for you, sir. Happiness is all we got in this here world, and a happy marriage for my daughter is more important to me than all the Gold in Bauce!

GERONTE Good grief, wetnurse, how you rattle on! Be quiet, I beg of you! You're too concerned about this, and your curdling your milk.

LUCAS (**Punctuating each sentence with a stroke of his fist on Geronte's shoulder**) By jingo, keep quiet! (**Pound**) You're a bold one, you are! (**Pound**) Our master don't need yer speeches and he knows (**Pound**) what he's got (**Pound**) to do. Stick to milkin' yer baby and stop playin' the philosopher! (**Pounds to the ground**).

GERONTE (**Laing face up**) Easy does it! Oh! Gently!

LUCAS I wanna learn her to show you more respect, sir.

GERONTE Yes, but those gestures are not necessary.

Scene 2: Valere, Lucas, Jacqueline, Geronte, Sganarelle

VALERE Sir, prepare yourself, for here is our doctor.

GERONTE Sir, I am delighted to receive you at my home, for we have great need of your services.

SGANARELLE **(Wearing a doctor's robe and a sharply pointed hat)**
Hippocrates says... that we should both be wearing our hats.

GERONTE Hippocrates says that?

SGANARELLE Yes.

GERONTE Well, if Hippocrates says it, then it must be done.

Geronte waves to Lucas to retrieve his hat.

SGANARELLE My good doctor, having learned the marvelous things.

GERONTE ErY To whom are you speaking, sir?

SGANARELLE Why, to you, sir.

GERONTE I am not a doctor?

SGANARELLE You are not a doctor?

GERONTE No, in truth.

SGANARELLE Do you mean it?

GERONTE I certainly do.

Sganarelle begins beating Geronte with a stick he's hidden under his robe.

GERONTE Oh! Oooh! Ow! Ooooh!

SGANARELLE Well, you're a doctor now, for that's all the training I ever got.

GERONTE **(Angrily, to Valere)** What the devil kind of man did you bring here?

VALERE I told you, sir, that he's a rather frivolous doctor.

GERONTE Yes, and I'll send him on his way with his frivolity.

LUCAS Don't pay no attention to him, sir, it's only to make ya laugh.

GERONTE Such buffoonery does not please me.

SGANARELLE Sir, I most humbly beg your forgiveness for the liberty that I took.

GERONTE Your servant, sir.

SGANARELLE I deeply regret...

GERONTE It was nothing.

SGANARELLE ...the beating...

GERONTE No harm done.

SGANARELLE ...that I had the honor to give you.

GERONTE Let's speak no more of it. Sir, I have a daughter with a strange affliction.

SGANARELLE I am delighted, sir, that your daughter has need of me, and I wish from the bottom of my heart that you and your entire family were also sick so that I might show you how eager I am to serve you.

GERONTE I am obliged to you for these sentiments.

SGANARELLE I assure you that I speak to you from the most noble depths of my soul.

GERONTE You do me too much honor, sir.

SGANARELLE What is your daughter's name?

GERONTE Lucinde.

SGANARELLE Lucinde! **(French pronunciation is more suitable here; it's much more beautiful)**. Ah, what a beautiful name to practice on! Lucinde!

GERONTE I'll go see what she's doing.

SGANARELLE Who is that robust woman?

GERONTE She's my child's wetnurse.

SGANARELLE **(Aside)** Mmm. Now, there's a tasty morsel if I ever saw one. **(Aloud)** Ah, wetnurse, charming wetnurse, my medicine is the most humble slave to your productive bosom. Oh, to be the fortunate child suckled by such beauty.

He places his hand on her breast, much to Lucas= displeasure.

SGANARELLE All my remedies, all my science, all my skill is at your service, andY

LUCAS By yer leave, doctor, I'll thank you to keep yer hands off my wife. **(He yanks Sganarelle away)**

SGANARELLE What's that? She's your wife?

LUCAS Yes.

SGANARELLE Ah! Truly, I did not know that and I rejoice in the love you have for each other.

He pretends a gesture of embrace toward Lucas, then slips back to the

wetnurse.

LUCAS (**Yanking him away again, positioning himself between them**)

Easy does it, if you please.

SGANARELLE I assure you that I am delighted that you are joined together; I congratulate her on having a husband like you; and I congratulate you on having a wife so beautiful, so wise, (**He yanks Lucas aside and dashes to wetnurse**) and with such formation!

LUCAS Hey there! Not so many compliments, I'm askin' ya. (**Yanks Sganarelle in turn**)

SGANARELLE Don't you want me to rejoice with you over such a beautiful assemblage?

LUCAS With me as much as you want but no more of that with my wife.

SGANARELLE I am sharing equally in the good fortune of you both, and (**continuing the same maneuver**)...if I embrace you to show you my joy; (**He slips back into the wetnurse's arms**)... I embrace her as well for the same reason.

LUCAS (**Yanking him off a third time**) By the saints, doctor, enough of this here horseplay!

Scene 3: Sganarelle, Lucas, Jacqueline, Geronte

GERONTE Sir, my daughter will be brought to you shortly.

SGANARELLE I await her, sir, with all the medicine.

GERONTE Where is it?

SGANARELLE (**Taps his forehead**) In here.

GERONTE Oh! Very good.

SGANARELLE (**Heading for Jacqueline once more**) But since I am interested in all of your family, I must test the milk of your wetnurse and examine her breasts.

Lucas pulls him away once more.

LUCAS No, no, we don't need no more o' that!

SGANARELLE But it is a doctor's function to examine the bosoms of wet nurses.

LUCAS Not with my wife ya won't.

SGANARELLE Are you so impertinent as to oppose the will of a doctor?

LUCAS To hell with you!

SGANARELLE (**Facing him squarely**) I shall give you the fever!

JACQUELINE (**Spinning Lucas around by his arm**) Off with you now.

Am I not big enough to defend myself should he do something he oughtn't? Away with you!

LUCAS Well, I don't want no more of his feelin= ya like that.

SGANARELLE Shame on the rogue who is jealous of his wife.

GERONTE Here is my daughter.

Scene 4: Geronte, Sganarelle, Jacqueline, Lucas, Valere, Lucinde

SGANARELLE Is this the patient?

GERONTE Yes, she is my daughter, and it would break my heart if she were to die.

SGANARELLE May she do no such thing! Especially without doctor's orders.

GERONTE (**To Lucas**) Bring up a chair.

SGANARELLE (**Sitting between Geronte and Lucinde**) Now there's a patient who is not at all displeasing and I maintain that a man of sound mind and body would find her highly desirable.

Lucinde giggles a bit, soundlessly.

GERONTE You have made her laugh, Sir!

SGANARELLE So much the better; when the doctor makes the patient laugh, it is the best sign in the world. (**To Lucinde**) Well, now, what is the problem?

Lucinde remains silent.

SGANARELLE What is the matter with you?... What is the nature of your sickness?

LUCINDE (**Bringing her hand to her mouth in a strange effort to communicate**) Ah! Ee! Oh!

SGANARELLE What's that?

LUCINDE Ah! Ee! Oh! Ah! Ee! Oh!

SGANARELLE What?

LUCINDE Ah! Ee! Oh!

SGANARELLE Ah, Ee, Oh? I don't understand you at all. What the devil kind of language is that?

GERONTE Sir, that is her sickness. She has become dumb, and up to now we have not been able to determine the cause, and this accident has caused her marriage to be postponed.

SGANARELLE Why is that?

GERONTE The one whom she is to marry wishes to wait until she is cured before going through with it.

SGANARELLE And who is this fool who does want his wife to be dumb? Would to God mine had that sickness. I would be the last person in the world to cure her.

GERONTE In any event, sir, we beg you to employ all your skill to relieve her of this affliction.

SGANARELLE Ah! You need not be concerned. Tell me, does this malady cause her much suffering?

GERONTE Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE So much the better.

GERONTE Eh?

SGANARELLE Does she experience great pain?

GERONTE Oh, very great pain.

SGANARELLE Excellent.

GERONTE Eh?

SGANARELLE Does she go...you know where?

GERONTE ...Yes.

SGANARELLE Copiously?

GERONTE Oh, I know nothing about that.

SGANARELLE And is the substance praiseworthy?

GERONTE I have no knowledge of these things.

SGANARELLE **(To Lucinde)** Give me your arm. **(She does; he listens for a moment and turns to Geronte)** We have here a pulse that tells me that your daughter is dumb.

GERONTE Ah, yes! Sir, that is indeed her sickness; you have discovered it right off.

SGANARELLE Aha!

JACQUELINE **(To Lucas)** Did you see how he guessed right off what ails her?

SGANARELLE We great doctors know everything right from the outset. A know nothing would have been confused, and would have said to you it is this, it is that, but as for me, I hit the mark

with very first shot, and I inform you that your daughter is dumb.

GERONTE YesYbut I would like you to tell me where that comes from.

SGANARELLE Nothing could be more simple; that comes from the fact that she has lost her powers of speech.

GERONTE Very good. But the cause, if you please, of her loss of speech.

SGANARELLE All our best authors will tell you that it is due to an obstruction of the action of the tongue.

GERONTE Yes, but what are your feelings about this obstruction of the action of the tongue?

SGANARELLE Well, Aristotle on this subject saysY some very beautiful things.

GERONTE I believe it.

SGANARELLE Ah! What a great man he was!

GERONTE Without a doubt.

SGANARELLE A truly great man. **(Raising his forearm)** A man who was greater than me I byY **(Lowering his forearm almost to the ground)**...that much. But to get back to our discussion, I maintain that this obstruction of the action of the tongue is caused by certain humors that among us scholars are referred to as peccant humors...peccant, that is to say...peccant humors; the extent to which the vapors formed by the exhalation of the influences which arise in the region of the maladies, coming...so to speak...to...um...do you understand Latin?

GERONTE No.

SGANARELLE You know no Latin at all?

GERONTE Not a syllable.

SGANARELLE **(With enthusiastic, comical gesturing)** Cabricias, arci thuram, catalamus, singulariter nominativo, haec Musa, "...the Muse..." bonus, bona, bonum, Deus sanctus, estne oratio latinas? Etiam... Yes... Quare... Why?... Quia substantivo et adjectivum, concordat in generi, numerum, et cassus!

GERONTE Ah! What have I not studied!

JACQUELINE What a smart man he is!

LUCAS Yeah, that was so beautiful that I didn't understand a single word.

SGANARELLE Now, when the vapors of which I speak pass from the left side where the liver is located to the right side where the

heart is, it happens that the lung, which we call in Latin "armyan," having communication with the brain, which in Greek we refer to as "nasmus," by means of the vena cava, which in Hebrew we call "cubile," meets on its way the aforementioned vapors which fill the ventricles of the omoplate; and because the aforementioned vapors... Please follow this train of thought, I beg of you...and because the aforementioned vapors have a certain malignity... Listen carefully to this, I beseech you.

GERONTE Yes.

SGANARELLE ... Have a certain malignity which is causedY (**Exploding**)
Be attentive, please!

GERONTE (**Cowering**) I am.

SGANARELLE... Which is caused by the acidity of the humors engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm, it happens that these vapors... Ossabandus, nequeys, nequer, potarinum quipsa milus! And there precisely is what causes your daughter to be dumb!

JACQUELINE Ah! How nice he said that!

GERONTE No doubt about it, no one could possibly reason better than that. There's only one thing that surprised me, however, and that is the location of the liver and the heart. It seems to me that you are placing them improperly. Is not the heart on the left and the liver on the right?

SGANARELLE Ahem, yes. That's the way it used to be, but we great doctors have changed all that; we now use completely new methods in the practice of medicine.

GERONTE This is something I did not know and I ask you to forgive my ignorance.

SGANARELLE No harm done; besides, you are not required to be as knowledgeable as we are.

GERONTE To be sure. But, sir, what do you believe must be done for this illness?

SGANARELLE What I believe must be done?

GERONTE Yes.

SGANARELLE My advice is that she be put back to bed and be given as a remedy a quantity of bread dipped in wine.

GERONTE Why that, sir?

SGANARELLE Because there exists in the mixture of bread and wine a

sympathetic virtue that produces speech. Have you not observed that this is the only food given to parrots and that it's by eating this that they learn to speak?

GERONTE That is true! Ah! What a great man! **(To Lucas)** Quickly, some bread and wine.

Lucas exits.

SGANARELLE I shall return this evening to check on her condition.
(Jacqueline begins to leave but Sganarelle stops her).

SGANARELLE Hold on woman. **(To Geronte)** Sir, I simply must administer some of my little cures to your wetnurse.

JACQUELINE Who? Me? I'm as healthy as a horse.

SGANARELLE So much the worse, wetnurse, so much the worse. Such great health is to be feared, and you would do well to submit to some friendly bloodletting, or, perhaps, to a soothing enema.

GERONTE But, sir, I must avow that I do not comprehend your methods. Why should one be bled when there is no ailment?

SGANARELLE That is of no importance. It is the method itself that is salutary, and, as one drinks to satisfy a future thirst, so must one be bled for future sicknesses.

JACQUELINE By the saints, I'll have none of that, and I'll not turn my body into an apothecary shop. **(She exists)**

SGANARELLE You are resistant to treatment, but we'll find a way to make you more reasonable. **(To Geronte)** Sir, I bid you good day.

GERONTE Wait a moment, please.

SGANARELLE What do you wish to do?

GERONTE **(Opening his purse)** Give you some money.

SGANARELLE **(Extending his hand behind him as he turns away)** I shall accept none of it, sir.

GERONTE Sir...

SGANARELLE None at all.

GERONTE Just a moment.

SGANARELLE In no way.

GERONTE I beseech you...

SGANARELLE You jest, sir.

GERONTE **(Putting money in Sganarelle's open palm)** There you are.

SGANARELLE I=ll do nothing of the sort.

GERONTE Eh?

SGANARELLE It is not money that motivates me.

GERONTE I believe it.

SGANARELLE **(After taking the money and hefting it in his hand)** Is this good weight?

GERONTE Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE I am not one of those mercenary doctors, you know.

GERONTE I believe it.

SGANARELLE **(After having taken the money)** Is this good weight?

GERONTE Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE I am not one of those mercenary doctors, you know.

GERONTE I know.

SGANARELLE Profit means nothing to me.

GERONTE I never thought that for a moment. **(Exits)**

SGANARELLE **(Alone, looking at the money he has received)** Good heavens, that wasn't bad at all, and providing...

Scene 5: Sganarelle, Leandre

LEANDRE Sir, I've been waiting for you for quite some time, and I've come to beg your assistance.

SGANARELLE **(Taking Leandre=s pulse)** Oh, that=s a very bad pulse.

LEANDRE I am not the least bit sick, sir, and I do not come to you for that.

SGANARELLE Well, if you are not sick, why the devil didn't you say so?

LEANDRE Well, sir, to put it briefly, my name is Leandre, and I am in love with Lucinde, the girl you have just treated. However, because of her father's ill feelings towards me, I have not even been able to approach her, and I venture to ask you to serve the cause of my love by helping me with a plan of mine by which I might relay to her a brief message that is absolutely vital to my happiness and to my life.

SGANARELLE Whom do you take me for? How dare you come to me for help in your affair of love? How dare you abuse a doctor's dignity with tactics of that nature?

LEANDRE Sir, please don't shout.

SGANARELLE I'll shout as much as I like! You are an impertinent young man!

LEANDRE Please, sir, more softly!

SGANARELLE A blunderer!

LEANDRE I beseech you!

SGANARELLE I shall teach you that I am not the man for that, and that it is the height of insolenceY

Leandre extracts a purse a purse full of money which suddenly catches Sganarelle's attention. Leandre holds the purse and jingles the coins inside.

LEANDRE Sir? (He hands Sganarelle the purse)

SGANARELLE ... To wish...to...use me... **(He pockets the purse)** I am not, of course, referring to you, sir, for you are a gentleman, and I would be delighted to be of service to you; but there are certain impertinent people in this world who shamefully misjudge character, and this, I must confess, makes me very angry.

LEANDRE I apologize, sir, for the liberty that...

SGANARELLE You jest, sir. Now, what is this all about?

LEANDRE You shall discover, sir, that the illness that you wish to cure is just a pretense. The doctors have come up with all sorts of diagnoses. Some have called it a disorder of the brain, while others blamed in turn the bowels, spleen and liver. But it is certain that love is its true cause, and that Lucinde came up with this sickness simply to avoid a marriage that was being imposed upon her. However, rather than chance being seen together, let us withdraw from here and, as we walk, I shall tell you what I would like you to doY

SGANARELLE Lead on, sir, for your words have inspired in me the deepest feelings of tenderness for your love. Benefiting as she will from my entire knowledge of medicine, our patient will most assuredly be yours...unless, of course, she dies first.

ACT III

Scene 1: Sganarelle, Leandre (in disguise) in Geronte's garden

LEANDRE It seems that I look very convincing dressed as an apothecary, and since the father has hardly seen me, it is not likely that he will recognize me with this change of clothes and wig.

SGANARELLE I agree.

LEANDRE All that I would like from you is to have you teach me five or six impressive medical terms so that when I speak, I might appear as a man of competence.

SGANARELLE Come, come now; that's not at all necessary. The costume alone will suffice. Besides, I don't know any more about medicine than you do.

LEANDRE What's that?

SGANARELLE The devil take me if I know a thing about medicine! Look, you are a gentleman and I shall confide in you as you have in me.

LEANDRE How's that? You are really not aY

SGANARELLE No, I tell you. They made me a doctor in spite of myself. I've never had any experience with anything I learned as that. I only got as far as the sixth grade in school. I have no idea how they came by such a fanciful notion. But when I saw how strongly they insisted that I be a doctor, I decided to become one at the expense of whomever it might concern. However, you will never believe how widely the error has spread and how readily everyone has believed in my competence. People from all over seek me, and if this keeps up, I believe I shall devote the rest of my life to medicine. I consider it to be the best trade of all, for regardless of whether your work is good or bad, the pay is still the same; we work as we please and we never suffer the aftermath of a bad job. Now should a cobbler spoil a piece of leather as he makes a pair of shoes, he must pay for it. But a doctor can spoil a man without having to pay a sou. There are no blunders for us;

it is always the fault of the one who dies. Finally, the beauty of this profession lies in the fact that there exists among the dead the highest level of gentility and discretion, for never has a dead man been known to complain about the doctor who killed him.

LEANDRE It is true that the dead are very considerate in that regard.

SGANARELLE (**Seeing two men approaching**) There are some people over there who look like they are coming to consult me. Go to the home of your lady and wait for me.

Scene 2: Sganarelle, Thibault, Perrin.

THIBAUT Sir, me an my son, Perrin, have been looking for you.

SGANARELLE What is it?

THIBAUT His poor mother, whose name is Perrette, has been sick in bed for six months now.

SGANARELLE (**Extending his hand, expecting money**) What do you want from me?

THIBAUT We'd like you to give us a little something to cure her.

SGANARELLE I must first learn the nature of her sickness.

THIBAUT Ah, she's got hypocrisy, sir.

SGANARELLE Hypocrisy?

THIBAUT Yes, sir, I mean she's swollen all over, and they say she got a bunch of serosities inside her, and that her liver, her stomach and her spleen, as you like to call it, instead of making blood don't make nothing but water now; and every other day she has a daily fever with lots of tiredness and pains in her leg muscles. She got so much flam in her throat that she sounds like she's about to choke. Sometimes, she gets such syncopes and fits of conversion that we think she's a goner for sure. No disrespect to you, sir, but we got an apothecary in our village who gave her a whole batch of treatments and, again no disrespect sir, it done cost me more than a dozen gold pieces on enemas, serums, infections of jacinth and on stimulizers that they made her take; but the apothecary said that all wasn't strong enough. He wanted to give her a drug called ametic wine, but to tell you the truth, sir, I didn't let him do it because they say them big doctors are killing

off I dunno how many folks with that there stuff.

SGANARELLE (**His hand still extended and gesturing for payment**)
Let=s get to the facts, my friend; let=s get to the facts.

THIBAUT Well, the fact is, sir, that we come to ask you what we ought to do.

SGANARELLE I don=t understand you at all.

PERRIN Sir, my mother is sick and here are two pieces of gold that we offer for one of your remedies.

SGANARELLE Ah! You I understand! Now there=s a lad who speaks clearly and expresses himself properly. You say that your mother is hydropic, that is to say sick with dropsy, that her entire body is swollen, that she is feverish with pains in her legs, and that she is occasionally subject to syncopes and convulsions, by that I mean fainting spells?

PERRIN Ah! Yes, sir. That=s it exactly!

SGANARELLE I understood you immediately, but I=m afraid you have a father who doesn=t know how to state his case. You are now asking me for a cure?

PERRIN Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE A cure that will cure her?

PERRIN That=s what we had in mind, sir.

SGANARELLE Here, take this. It is a form of cheese that you must make her eat.

PERRIN A piece of cheese, sir?

SGANARELLE Yes, it is a special preparation of cheese that contains gold, coral, pearls and quantities of other precious substances.

PERRIN Sir, we are very grateful to you and we shall give this to her right away.

SGANARELLE Off with you now, and if she dies, be sure to give her a nice funeral.

Scene 3: Jacqueline, Sganarelle, Lucas

SGANARELLE Ah! Here comes that beautiful wetnurse. Oh! Wetnurse of my heart, how delighted I am to see you again. The sight of you is the rhubarb, the cassis and the senna that purges all the melancholy from my soul.

JACQUELINE By the saints, doctor, you talk much too fancy for me. All that there Latin is beyond me.

SGANARELLE Get sick, wetnurse, I beg of you; get sick for my sake. Nothing would make me more happy than to be able to cure you.

JACQUELINE Thanks, but I don't want no one curing me.

SGANARELLE Of, how I pity you, beautiful wetnurse, on having such a jealous and disagreeable husband.

JACQUELINE What can I do, sir? It is the penance for my wrongdoings, and where they tie the goat, that's where she's gotta graze.

SGANARELLE Come now! An uncivilized bumpkin like that! A man who's always watching you and won't let anyone talk to you!

JACQUELINE Alas! You ain't seen nothin' yet. What you seen was just a little sample of his bad humor.

SGANARELLE Is it possible that a man could be so base of heart as to maltreat a person like you? Ah, how many men from around here do I know who would consider themselves fortunate just to kiss the tips of your cuddly little feet. Why must it be that a person so well formed should fall into such hands, and that animal, a brute, an imbecile, a fool...pardon me, wetnurse, if I speak thus of your husband.

JACQUELINE Ah, sir, you don't have to tell me how much he deserves them names.

SGANARELLE Yes, my dear, he certainly does, and he also deserves to have you plant a little something on his head as punishment for his suspicious mind.

JACQUELINE Well, if I wasn't lookin' out for him, he could, in truth, force me to do something naughty.

SGANARELLE Indeed, you would not be wrong to get back at him with someone else, for I tell you he is a man who truly deserves it; and, beautiful wetnurse, if I were so fortunate to be chosen forY

At this point, Lucas has already entered and has listened to their dialogue. They both suddenly become aware of him. Each goes off in opposite directions, the doctor in great comical fashion.

Scene 4: Geronte, Lucas

GERONTE (**Entering**) Hey there, Lucas! Did you not see the doctor hereabout?

LUCAS Oh yes, devil take him. I seen him all right, and my wife, too.

GERONTE Where on earth can he be?

LUCAS I dunno but I hope the devil carried him off.

GERONTE Go see what my daughter is doing.

Lucas exits and Sganarelle returns with Leandre (in disguise).

GERONTE Ah sir! I was just inquiring as to your whereabouts.

SGANARELLE I was in your courtyard pleasantly relieving myself of some excess drink. How is the patient?

GERONTE A little worse since your remedy.

SGANARELLE So much the better.

GERONTE Eh?

SGANARELLE That's a sign that it's working.

GERONTE Yes, but by working I'm afraid that it might kill her.

SGANARELLE Be not concerned, for I have cures that scoff at everything. In fact, I'm actually looking forward to her deaththroes.

GERONTE (**Pointing to Leandre**) Who is this man with you?

SGANARELLE (**Making pumping gestures, imitating an apothecary administering an enema**) He is...

GERONTE What?

SGANARELLE ...the one...

GERONTE Eh?

SGANARELLE ...who gives...

Suddenly it becomes clear to Geronte.

GERONTE Oh! I understand you.

SGANARELLE Your daughter will have need of him.

Scene 6: Sganarelle, Geronte, Lucinde, Jacqueline, Leandre

JACQUELINE (**Entering**) Here's your daughter, sir. She wants to talk a little.

SGANARELLE That will do her good. (**To Leandre**) Off with you, apothecary, and take her pulse so that I might confer with you on her sickness.

At this point, Sganarelle pulls Geronte off to one side and puts his arm around his shoulder, concealing Geronte=s sightline from his daughter and Leandre. Sganarelle places his hand on Geronte=s chin so that each time Geronte tries to look beyond, Sganarelle jerks the poor man=s head back.

SGANARELLE Sir, whether or not it is true that women are more easy to cure than men is one of the great and subtle questions among doctors. I beg you to listen to this, if you please. Some say no while others say yes; as for me, I say yes and no; to the extent that the incongruity of the opaque humors which are found in the natural temperament of women causes the animal in them to want to dominate always their more genteel capacities, one observes that the capriciousness of the opinions depends upon the oblique movement of the moon=s circle; and, as the sun that casts its beams on the concavity of the earth, findsY

LUCINDE **(Suddenly to Leandre)** No! I can=t possibly change the way I feel about this!

GERONTE There! My daughter speaks! Oh, admirable doctor! Oh, wonderful remedy! How indebted I am to you, sir, for this marvelous cure, and what can I do for you after such a service?

SGANARELLE **(Pacing and wiping his brow)** Whew! Now there was a tough disease to cure!

LUCINDE Yes, father, I have regained my speech but only to tell you that I will have no other husband but Leandre, and that it is useless for you to want to give me to Horace.

GERONTE ButY

LUCINDE I have made up my mind and there is nothing that could make me change it.

GERONTE What's that?

LUCINDE No use giving me practical reasons.

GERONTE IfY

LUCINDE All your speeches will do nothing.

GERONTE IY

LUCINDE On this matter I am determined.

GERONTE ButY

LUCINDE No paternal authority can force me to marry against my will.
GERONTE I have Y
LUCINDE All your efforts will be in vain.
GERONTE The Y
LUCINDE And I would rather throw myself into a convent than marry a man whom I do not love.
GERONTE But Y
LUCINDE **(In deafening tones)** No! By no means! No contracts! You're wasting your time! I'll do nothing like that! That's settled!
GERONTE Ah! Such impetuosity of language! There's no way to oppose it.
(Pleadingly to Sganarelle) Sir, I beg you to make her dumb again.
SGANARELLE I'm afraid that's impossible, sir. The best I can do is to make you deaf.
GERONTE **(Appreciatively)** Thank you.
SGANARELLE **(Bowing)** Your servant, sir.
GERONTE **(To Lucinde)** Do you think, therefore...
LUCINDE No! All your reasons will not affect my heart.
GERONTE You shall marry Horace this very evening!
LUCINDE I would marry Death!
SGANARELLE Good heavens! Stop all this, I beseech you. Allow me to remedy this affair. A sickness has taken hold of her, and I know the cure that must be administered.
GERONTE **(Amazed)** Is it possible, sir, that you can cure this sickness of mind as well?
SGANARELLE Yes, leave it to me; I have cures for everything, but for this I shall call upon the services of our apothecary. **(To Leandre)** Ahem, I would like to have a word with you... You will observe the arduous feelings that she has for this Leandre are entirely contrary to the wishes of her father, that there is no time to lose, that the humors have turned very sour, and that it is necessary to find promptly a cure for this malady lest it worsen with delay. For my part, there is only one that comes to mind, and that is a pinch of purgative flight that you will mix properly with two drams of matrimonium in pill form. She may perhaps offer resistance to this cure, but since you are very competent in your field, I'm sure that you will do your best to see that she takes the medicine. Go now, and have

her walk about the garden in order to prepare the humors, while I converse here with the father; but above all, don't waste any time. Get on with the cure; quickly now, on with the specific remedy.

Scene 7: Sganarelle, Geronte

GERONTE What drugs, sir, were those that you just prescribed? I don't believe I ever heard mention of them.

SGANARELLE They are drugs used only in dire emergencies, sir.

GERONTE Have you ever seen such insolence?

SGANARELLE Girls can be obstinate at times.

GERONTE You could never imagine how madly in love she is with that Leandre.

SGANARELLE Hotness of blood causes that in young minds.

GERONTE As for me, as soon as I discovered the fierceness of her love, I kept her constantly under lock and key.

SGANARELLE You did the wise thing.

GERONTE And I prevented any possible communication between them.

SGANARELLE Very good.

GERONTE Something very foolish would have occurred had I permitted them to see each other.

SGANARELLE Without a doubt.

GERONTE And I believe she would not have been above running off with him.

SGANARELLE What a rascal!

GERONTE But he is wasting his time.

SGANARELLE Haha!

GERONTE And I shall prevent him from ever seeing her.

SGANARELLE He shall discover that he is not dealing with a fool, and that there are many tricks to be learned from a man as clever as you.

Scene 8: Sganarelle, Geronte, Lucas

LUCAS (**In a frenzy**) Ah! Sir! Something terrible has happened! Your daughter has run off with her Leandre. It was him who was the apothecary, and our good doctor over there was the one who did this fine operation!

GERONTE What? Stab me in the back like that? **(He turns to Lucas)**
Quickly now, see that he does not leave the premises
while I get the magistrate. Ah, traitor, I shall see that you
pay for your crimes!

Geronte exits to call for the magistrate.

LUCAS By jingo. Doctor! You'll hang for this! **(As Sganarelle starts to
move off)** Stay right where you are!

Scene 9: Sganarelle, Lucas, Martine

Martine enters looking around the courtyard.

MARTINE Good heavens! How much trouble I had trying to find this
place! Could you tell me what happened to the doctor I
gave you?

LUCAS There he be; the one who's gonna hang.

MARTINE What's that? My husband hanged? Alas! And what did he do to
deserve that?

LUCAS Our master's daughter eloped, and it was all his doin's.

MARTINE Alas! My dear husband, is it really true that they are going to
hang you?

SGANARELLE See for yourself **(Sighing)** Ah!

MARTINE Must you let yourself die in the presence of so many people?

SGANARELLE What do you expect me to do?

MARTINE If only you had finished cutting our wood, that would at least
have given me some consolation.

SGANARELLE Please leave; you're breaking my heart.

MARTINE No, I'd rather stay and give you the courage you'll need to face
death, and I shall not leave until I've seen you hanged.

SGANARELLE **(Sighing)** Aaah.

Scene 10: Sganarelle, Martine, Lucas, Geronte

Geronte, still outraged, returns.

GERONTE The magistrate will soon be here, and you will be brought to a
place where I shall receive satisfaction for the wrong you

did me.

SGANARELLE (**Hat in hand**) Alas! You wouldn't settle for just having them beat me with a stick, would you?

GERONTE No, no. Justice will prevailY but what is this I see?

Leandre, leading Lucinde by the hand, returns to the courtyard.

Scene 11: Geronte, Sganarelle, Martine, Lucas, Jacqueline, Lucinde, Leandre

LEANDRE Sir, I have come to have Leandre appear before you, and to place Lucinde once more in your charge. We had originally planned to run off and get married but we ultimately decided upon another, more proper course of action. I have no intention to steal your daughter and it is only with your blessing that I would take her. What I shall say to you, sir, is that I have just received word that my uncle has died, and that I am heir to his entire fortune.

GERONTE Sir, I regard you as a man of outstanding virtue, and I give you my daughter with the greatest joy in the world.

SGANARELLE (**Aside**) Whew! That was a close call for medicine!

Hand in hand, Lucinde and Leandre are led away by an overjoyed Geronte. Lucas and Jacqueline follow, leaving Sganarelle and Martine alone in the courtyard.

MARTINE Well, now that you're not going to be hanged, don't you think you should thank me for your title as doctor? After all, it was I who procured that honor for you.

SGANARELLE Yes, and you also procured for me more beatings than I can count.

MARTINE The outcome is too wonderful for you to bear resentment, sir.

SGANARELLE So be it. In consideration of the dignity that you bestowed upon me, I forgive you for the beatings. But henceforth, you shall show me the great respect due a man of my station, and shall always keep in mind how greatly one must fear...the wrath of a doctor!

THE END

The Affected Damsels
**(LES PRECIEUSES
RIDICULES)**

CHARACTERS

MAGDELON, A Parisian Maiden

CATHOS, Her Cousin

LA GRANGE, A Suitor

DU CROISY, A Suitor

GORGIBUS, Father of Magdelon & Uncle of Cathos

MASCARILLE, La Grange=s Valet

JODELET, Du Croisy=s Valet

MAROTTE, Gorgibus= Servant

ALMANZOR, Gorgibus= Servant

TWO CHAIR CARRIERS

TWO TOUGHS

NEIGHBORS

The scene takes place in a suburb of Paris, at the home of Gorgibus.

Scene 1: LaGrange, Du Croisy

DU CROISY La Grange...

LA GRANGE What is it?

DU CROISY Look at me and give me a serious answer.

LA GRANGE Well?

DU CROISY Were you pleased with the reception we received here?

LA GRANGE Frankly, no.

DU CROISY Do you think we have grounds to be?

LA GRANGE For my part, I was outraged. Did you ever see two female bumpkins put on such airs, or two gentlemen treated in a more contemptible fashion? They could hardly bring themselves to offer us chairs. Never have I seen so many whispered exchanges, such continual yawning, such incessant demands for the time of day as they rubbed their eyes in boredom and fatigue. No matter what we asked, the reply was never more than a yes or no. We couldn't have been received more shabbily were we the lowliest creatures on earth.

DU CROISY It appears that this matter has deeply affected you.

LA GRANGE Indeed, it has, and I'll not allow such impertinence to go unavenged. I know the reason for our rejection. It seems that the blight of pretentiousness that is presently infecting Paris has spread as far as the provinces, and that those two snobbish nincompoops have succumbed to it completely. I know now what it takes to be well received here, and you and I are going to put on a little charade that will show them for the nitwits that they are.

DU CROISY How?

LA GRANGE I have a certain valet named Mascarille who can depict himself convincingly as a gentleman of elegance and wit, qualities that cater perfectly to the prevailing vogue in Paris. He's nothing but an imbecile with aristocratic pretensions. He plays the gallant, writes verses, and constantly denigrates the other valets whom he considers crude and beneath his station.

DU CROISY Well, what do you plan to do?

LA GRANGE What do I plan to do? We must...wait, let us first withdraw from here.

Scene 2: Gorgibus, Du Croisy, La Grange

GORGIBUS Well, gentlemen, how did your visit with my niece and daughter turn out?

LA GRANGE I suggest that you ask them rather than us about it. All we can do, sir, is to express our appreciation for your courtesy and tell you that we remain your most humble servants. **(He bows and exits with Du Croisy.)**

GORGIBUS Hmm, they left in quite a huff. I wonder why... I'm going to get to the bottom of this. Hey there!

Scene 3: Gorgibus, Marotte

MAROTTE What is it, sir?

GORGIBUS Where are your mistresses?

MAROTTE In their chamber.

GORGIBUS Doing what?

MAROTTE Making pomade for their lips.

GORGIBUS I'll pomade them! Tell them to come down.

Marotte exits.

GORGIBUS Those hussies with their pomades are out to bankrupt me. All I see around here are egg whites, "virgin's milk," and a thousand other concoctions that I never heard of. Since our stay here they've used up the lard of at least a dozen pigs, and I could feed four servants daily just on the lambs' feet they grind up.

Scene 4: Magdelon Cathos, Gorgibus

GORGIBUS Must you really spend so much money greasing your faces? Tell me what happened between you and those gentlemen to cause them to leave so coldly. Didn't I tell you to receive them as prospective husbands?

MAGDELON And in what esteem, my good father, would you have us

hold people of such grossly inappropriate behavior?

CATHOS And how, uncle, would you expect a girl of reason to adjust to such comportment?

GORGIBUS And what was their great fault, pray tell?

MAGDELON They are devoid of any sense of gallantry. Imagine! Starting right off with marriage proposals!

GORGIBUS And just how would you have them begin? By seducing you? Shouldn't a gesture like that make us all proud? Could anything be more honorable than that? Doesn't this sacred bond to which they aspire testify to the honesty of their intentions?

MAGDELON Oh, father, what you're saying is so outrageously bourgeois. I am ashamed to hear you speak thus, and you would do well to familiarize yourself with courtly manners.

GORGIBUS All that fancy claptrap means nothing to me. I tell you that marriage is something holy and sacred, and that's where all decent folk ought to begin.

MAGDELON God heavens! If everyone were like you, everything would be over hardly before it started. A fine thing were Cyrus to begin by marrying Mandane and if there were no obstacles in the path of Aronce's marriage to Clelie!

GORGIBUS What the deuce are you telling me?

MAGDELON Father, my cousin here will back me when I say that marriage must be the last in the series of events. A proper suitor must know how to express himself beautifully...to be gentle, tender and passionate. His courtship must proceed according to the rules. First, there is the matter of the first meeting of his love to be. This can take place at church, or at some public ceremony, or simply while taking a walk. He might also be brought fortuitously to her home by a relative or a friend, only to emerge from there in a state of ecstasy and melancholia. During his frequent initial visits, he does not reveal his feelings to his beloved, but never misses the opportunity to pose a question on courtly love that challenges the minds of those assembled. When the time comes for the declaration, it usually takes place on some secluded garden path. The lady resists this declaration with an abrupt display of anger and blushing, and banishes the

suitor from her sight. Finally, he succeeds in appeasing her, and gradually she responds to his passionate discourse. He ultimately succeeds in eliciting that avowal of love that is so fraught with pain. After that, the adventure begins; rivals who deter the course of an established love, the persecution of the fathers, unfounded bursts of jealousy, accusations, fits of despair and so forth. This is the mandatory sequence of events for those versed in the ways of courtly love. But to start right off with a proposal of marriage is to put the cart before the horse, so to speak; to the heart this constitutes the ultimate venality.

GORGIBUS What the devil kind of gobbledygook am I hearing? This is really high class talk!

CATHOS Indeed, uncle, my cousin has delved into the very essence of the matter. How else can one be expected to receive men so devoid of gallantry? I would wager that they are totally unfamiliar with the Map of Tenderness that plots the course of courtly love, with its landmarks of love letters, thoughtful little gestures, gallant expressions of love and pretty verses. Could you not perceive that in their entire demeanor, there was not the slightest indication of true worth? To come courting without a ribbon about their knees, with hats without plumes, with their hair in a disheveled state and with outfits bereft of appropriate adornment. Good heavens, what kind of suitors are they? What frugality of dress, what dryness of conversation! Utterly unbearable! Their shirt fronts were of inferior quality and their breeches were a good six inches too narrow.

GORGIBUS **(Aside)** They've gone balmy, they have, the two of them.
(Aloud) I can't understand a word of this gibberish, Cathos, and you, Magdelon...

MAGDELON Oh, I beseech you, father, to desist from calling us by those strange names.

GORGIBUS What do you mean, "strange names?" Are not these the names with which you were baptized?

MAGDELON Good heavens, how can you be so uncouth? I am truly astonished that someone like you could have produced a

daughter of such elegance and wit. Cathos and Magdelon are completely devoid of style, and won't you concede that names of that ilk could by themselves desecrate the most beautiful of literary expression?

CATHOS It is true, uncle, that our names virtually assault the sensitive ear, and the name of Polyxène that my cousin has chosen, and that of Aminte which I have given to myself possess a certain elegance that even you must acknowledge.

GORGIBUS Listen, there is only one thing I have to say: Why you have changed the names given to you by your godparents is beyond me, and as far as these gentlemen are concerned, I know their families and their financial situations, and I insist that you accept them as husbands. I'm tired of having to support you both; the responsibility of two girls is a bit much for a man of my years.

CATHOS As for me, uncle, all I can tell you is that I find the thought of marriage completely shocking.

MAGDELON Won't you please stop rushing us and allow us some exposure to the high society of Paris? Give us the chance to be courted in a manner befitting our station and sophistication.

GORGIBUS (**Aside**) No doubt about it...they're completely daft. (**Aloud**) Listen again; I'll hear no more of this nonsense. I'm the master here and I'm telling you to end all this blabbering right now. Either the two of you get married shortly or, by Jupiter, I'll make nuns of you both. On that I give you my solemn oath! (**Exits**)

Scene 5: Cathos, Magdelon

CATHOS Good heavens, my dear, there are three words to describe your father: plebeian, dull witted and insensitive.

MAGDELON What can I do, my dear? He confuses me. It's difficult to persuade myself that I'm really his daughter, and I would not be surprised to learn some day that I am the issue of a far more illustrious source.

CATHOS I am inclined to agree with you. I, too, have similar feelings.

Scene 6: Magdelon, Cathos, Marotte

MAROTTE There's a lackey outside asking if you are at home, and says that his master wishes to see you.

MAGDELON Will you ever learn to announce yourself in a less vulgar fashion, idiot! Say instead: "Here is an importunate who asks if you are amenable to a visitation."

MAROTTE By the saints! I don't know any of that there Latin... I didn't have no learnin' about that there filosofoy stuff that you see in them fancy books.

MAGDELON Such impertinence! Do you see what I have to endure? And just who is the master of this lackey?

MAROTTE He says it was the Marquis de Mascarille.

MAGDELON **(To Cathos)** Ah, my dear, a marquis. **(To Marotte)** Yes, go tell him that he may come in. **(To Cathos)** It is undoubtedly some worldly gentleman who has heard of us.

CATHOS Most assuredly, my dear.

MAGDELON We'll have to receive him here rather than in our room. Let's at least tidy up our hair and live up to our reputation. **(To Marotte)** Quickly, render us our charm counselor.

MAROTTE By the saints, I got no idea what the devil you're talkin' about. You'll have to speak more clear if you want me to understand you.

MAGDELON Fetch us the mirror, idiot that you are, and make sure you don't sully the glass with the reflection of your image.

(They exit.)

Scene 7: Mascarille, Two Porters

The Two Porters carry Mascarille its a sedan chair.

MASCARILLE Hey there, porters, gently now. Oops! Watch it! Stop bumping against the threshold. Are you two rogues planning to break me in two the way you're banging this thing against every wall and curbstone?

1ST PORTER Hell, it's a narrow doorway, and you insisted in being brought all the way in.

MASCARILLE I should say so! Would you good for nothings have me

expose the delicate state of my plumes to the inclemency of the rainy season, and that I imprint my footwear in mud? Off with you now, and bring your chair with you.

2ND PORTER We'd like to be paid now, sir.

MASCARILLE Eh?

2ND PORTER I said, sir, that we'd like you to kindly give us some money.

MASCARILLE **(Slapping him)** How's that, you rogue? How dare you ask for money of a person of my quality!

2ND PORTER Is this the way poor people are paid? And does your quality put bread on our table?

MASCARILLE Hah! I'll teach you your place. How dare this rabble trifle with me?

1ST PORTER **(Removing a pole handle front his chair, rather threateningly)** See this? Pay up, now.

MASCARILLE What's that?

1ST PORTER I said we want our money right now.

MASCARILLE That's reasonable.

1ST PORTER Quickly now.

MASCARILLE Yes, yes, of course. You have the most admirable way of expressing yourself, but I'm afraid that your partner is a rogue who doesn't know what he's talking about. **(Paying him)** There now, are you content?

1ST PORTER No, I am not content. You slapped my friend, and... **(Raising the pole)**

MASCARILLE Gently now. **(Paying more money)** Here you are. That's for the slap. One can get anything out of me if he goes about it the right way. Go now, and come back later to take me to the Louvre in time to watch the King as he prepares for bed.

Scene 8: Marotte, Mascarille

MAROTTE Sir, my mistresses will be with you in a moment.

MASCARILLE Tell them not to hurry; I am comfortably installed to await them.

MAROTTE Here they are.

Scene 9: Magdelon, Cathos, Mascarille, Almanzor

MASCARILLE (**After bowing graciously**) Ladies, the audacity of my visit most undoubtedly surprises you, but it is your reputation that is responsible for this inexcusable imposition. For you see, I am so dazzled by the allure of excellence that I would pursue it to the ends of the earth.

MAGDELON Ah, sir, your quest for excellence will be fruitless in this household.

CATHOS Whatever excellence exists here is by dint of your presence.

MASCARILLE Ah! I must protest the readiness of your wit. It is obvious that the renown you have achieved is well deserved, and the world of Paris, with all its elegance notwithstanding, will be no match for you.

MAGDELON Your graciousness is exceeded only by the lavishness of your praise, and my cousin and I would do well to be on guard against the genteel flow of your flattery.

CATHOS We must have chairs brought in, my dear.

MAGDELON Almanzor, hither!

ALMANZOR (**Arriving promptly**) Madame?

MAGDELON Quickly now, array the accoutrements of conversation.

Almanzor exit.

MASCARILLE Tell me, is it safe for me to be here?

CATHOS Of what might you be afraid?

Almanzor returns with chairs.

MASCARILLE Of the theft of my heart! Of the deprivation of my liberty! I see before me eyes of devastating charm, eyes capable of cruel and unsuspecting enslavement I have only to glance at them to sense their power to ensnare me. By my soul, I do not trust them, and I shall flee from here unless you promise they will not harm me.

MAGDELON What a scintillating personality he has, my dear!

CATHOS He possesses all the effervescence of a true Hamilcar.

MAGDELON Be not afraid, for our eyes have no wicked designs on you, and your heart may relinquish all concern as to their intention.

CATHOS But I beseech you, sir, do not be so insensitive to the feelings of

that chair which, for the past quarter hour, has been extending its arms in hope of embracing you.

MASCARILLE (**After combing his hair and adjusting his breeches**)

Well, now, ladies, what have you to say about Paris?

MAGDELON Alas, sir, what can we say? It would be the antithesis of reason not to confess that Paris is the focal point of marvels and the center of good taste, fine wit and gallantry.

MASCARILLE As for myself, I contend that beyond the gates of Paris there is no sustenance for people of discernment.

CATHOS That is an uncontested truth.

MASCARILLE The streets are somewhat muddy, but fortunately there is always the sedan.

MAGDELON It is true that the sedan provides us with a marvelous refuge against the insults of mud and inclement weather.

MASCARILLE Do you receive many visitors? What outstanding personalities are included in your guest list?

MAGDELON Alas, our reputation is not as yet sufficiently widespread, but we are making encouraging headway in this regard. We have one friend in particular who has promised to bring here all the distinguished poets who recently published a collection of their selected works.

CATHOS As well as certain other gentlemen who have been referred to us as sovereign arbiters of literary accomplishments.

MASCARILLE There is no one in a better position than I to assist you in this matter, for I am visited by all these scholarly gentlemen. In fact, there are at least a half dozen of them about me every morning when I wake up.

MAGDELON Good heavens, we would be infinitely obliged to you for such a gracious and friendly gesture; for after all, the acquaintance of these gentlemen is an indispensable stepping stone to the highest echelons of society. For it is through them that reputations are established, as you know. A single visit from any of them could suffice to attain renown; but aside from this, it is the intellectual nourishment that one derives from such visits that gives them particular value. Through them one learns the innumerable things so vital in the development of a worldly mind. They keep you abreast of the news of the

social world and of the delightful prose and verse currently being written by its constituents. You are able to recount offhand things like: "Monsieur So and So has just composed the most beautiful work in the world on such and such a topic," or "a certain lady has just matched the lyrics for a song," or "Monsieur X has composed a joyful madrigal," while some other gentleman has completed a poem bewailing infidelity, or how "last night a certain gentleman wrote a six line poem to a Mademoiselle X, only to receive her response by eight o'clock of the following morning," while various other authors are either sketching, writing or publishing their respective works. It is the knowledge of all things of this nature that promotes one's stature among the genteel and, if you are ignorant of these things, whatever intelligence you might have amounts to nothing.

CATHOS Indeed, anyone who lays claim to a modicum of wit and who does not keep apprised of the most insignificant quatrains being written each day, merely accentuates his ridiculousness, and I would be mortified were I to be shown something new with which I was not familiar.

MASCARILLE Yes, it is truly shameful not to be up on everything that is being written but, be not concerned, for I am going to establish at this residence a veritable Academy of Fine Minds. I promise you that there will not be a line of verse written in all of Paris that you will not have memorized before anyone else in Paris has even seen it. As for myself, I must confess that I, myself, dabble a bit in poetry, which is read and discussed in the more elegant Parisian circles. To date, I have written two hundred songs, an equal number of sonnets, four hundred epigrams, more than a thousand madrigals, not to mention the enigmas and profiles.

MAGDELON I must confess that I have a furious attraction for profiles; to me they are the epitome of elegance.

MASCARILLE Profiles are difficult and require a keen intellect. You shall see some of mine, which I'm sure you will not find displeasing.

CATHOS As for me, I'm terribly fond of enigmas.

MASCARILLE Yes, they really exercise the mind. As a matter of fact, I just wrote four of them this morning that I'll have you figure out.

MAGDELON Madrigals are so delightful when they are all well turned.

MASCARILLE Now that's my specialty. I am presently at work writing the entire history of Rome in madrigal form.

MAGDELON Oh! That will be the ultimate in beauty! You must reserve me a copy when you publish it.

MASCARILLE Of course. I promise each of you a copy in the finest binding. I recognize that it is somewhat beneath my station to publish in my name. I do it only to appease the money hungry booksellers who are constantly hounding me.

MAGDELON I would imagine that it must be a great pleasure to be published.

MASCARILLE Undoubtedly, but while on this subject, I simply must read to you an impromptu that I composed yesterday while visiting a duchess friend of mine, for my gift for impromptu borders on the diabolical.

CATHOS Oh! The impromptu is the veritable touchstone of wit!

MASCARILLE Listen to this...

MAGDELON We are all ears.

MASCARILLE Aha! I was caught completely off my guard. When, quite innocently, I did your face regard. Then, your sly little eye promptly stole my heart and, in the remaining void, left naught but grief. Stop, thief! Stop, thief! Stop, thief! Stop, thief!

CATHOS Ah! That is gallantry raised to its ultimate expression.

MASCARILLE Everything I do has a certain air of spontaneityY completely devoid of pedantry.

MAGDELON Nothing could be more true.

MASCARILLE Did you notice my opening? "Aha!" Now, that's really extraordinary... "Aha!" Like a man made suddenly aware of something. "Aha!" Like a surprise. "Aha!"

CATHOS Yes, I find that "Aha!" truly admirable.

MASCARILLE Oh, it's really nothing.

CATHOS How can you say such a thing? That is something beyond price.

MAGDELON No doubt about it; I would have written that "Aha!" than an entire epic poem!

MASCARILLE The plague take me if you both have not been blessed with excellent taste.

MAGDELON Well, let's say that I am not completely devoid of it.

MASCARILLE But don't you also find admirable the phrase "I was caught completely off my guard," as if to say "I was caught napping;" a rather natural form of expression, "I was caught completely off my guard." While "quite innocently," without malice afore-thought like a poor lamb being led to slaughter, "I did your face regard..." that is to say, I gazed upon you, I observed you, I contemplated you. "Your sly little eye..." Notice the rhyming meter..." sly little eye." Wasn't that cleverly chosen?

CATHOS Very cleverly.

MASCARILLE "Sly..." that is to say, sneakily like a cat that has just caught a mouse... "Sly!"

MAGDELON Nothing could have been expressed more eloquently.

MASCARILLE "Promptly stole my heartY" Absconds with it, ravishes it. "Stop, thief! Stop, thief. Stop thief! Stop, thief... Doesn't that conjure the image of a man shouting after a thief whom he wishes to have arrested? Stop, thief! Stop, thief! Stop, thief! STOP THIEF!"

MAGDELON A truly gallant and witty turn of speech.

MASCARILLE I would like you to hear the song I have written to go with that.

CATHOS You've learned music as well?

MASCARILLE I? Not a note.

CATHOS How, then, can that be?

MASCARILLE People of quality know everything without having learned a thing.

MAGDELON Most assuredly, my dear.

MASCARILLE I would like your reaction to the melody. Heh, heh, la, la, la, la, la, la, ahem. The brutality of the season has furiously outraged the delicacy of my voice. But, no matter, for it is the substance that counts. **(He sings)**

CATHOS O h! Could there ever be a more enthralling melody? It's beauty is absolutely devastating!

MAGDELON It possesses a definite chromatic quality.

MASCARILLE Did you remark how cleverly I matched thought with music? Stop, thief! and then a series of abrupt,

brehtaking shouts... Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop!
Stop, thief! And suddenly the decrescendo, like a person's
ultimate gasp for breath... Stop, thief!

MAGDELON Oh! I tell you that it is the zenith of attainment. The absolute
zenith. The zenith of zeniths Everything is superb, I
assure you, and I am overwhelmed by both music and
lyrics.

CATHOS This is my first experience with such forceful expression.

MASCARILLE Everything I do comes naturally to me. I require no mental
exertion whatsoever.

MAGDELON You are indeed the spoiled child of mother Nature, and I
marvel at the degree to which she showered her gifts
upon you.

MASCARILLE At what do you spend your time here?

CATHOS At absolutely nothing.

MAGDELON Up to now, we have been enduring a frightful dearth of
aesthetic diversion.

MASCARILLE May I offer, then, to escort you both to the theater one of
these days? There is a new play being put on, and I think
it would be delightful if we were to see it together.

MAGDELON How could we possibly refuse?

MASCARILLE However, I must ask that when you are there that you
applaud appropriately. It was only this morning that the
author himself visited me and I feel, consequently, a
certain commitment to the success of his play. You see, it
is the custom among we people of condition to have
authors read their new plays to us so that we might find
them beautiful and work toward their recognition. If,
during a performance, we acclaim a particular work, the
people in the cheaper seats wouldn't dare contradict us, as
you might imagine. As for me,. I am a man of principle,
and once I am committed to a certain work, I invariably
shout "How beautiful that is!" and that's even before the
curtain rises.

MAGDELON No need for further discussion. Paris is truly a wonderful
place. Hundreds of things take place there every day
about which we in the provinces are completely
oblivious, irrespective of whatever aesthetic sensitivities
we might possess.

CATHOS So be it; now that you have advised us, we will make it our duty to applaud appropriately whatever is being done or said on stage.

MASCARILLE I may be mistaken, but I get the distinct impression that you also have written a play.

MAGDELON Well, there might be something in what you say.

MASCARILLE Aha! Good heavens, you must show it to me. Listen, just between us, I have just written one that I plan to have staged.

CATHOS How wonderful! And by which theater group do you plan to have it produced?

MASCARILLE What a question! By the great actors of the Burgundian Theater, of course. They are the only ones capable of demonstrating the true merit of a particular work. All the others are incompetents who deliver lines as one would do in normal conversation. They know nothing about the dynamic delivery nor the well placed pauses for effect. After all, how can the audience know when to applaud if the actor does not stop to advise them?

CATHOS Indeed, there is technique involved in making the audience aware of the beauty of a particular work. And the value of a work lies solely in the way it is presented on stage.

MASCARILLE How does this little trimming strike you? Don't you find it in congruence with my ensemble?

CATHOS Utterly.

MASCARILLE The ribbon is well chosen?

MAGDELON Furiously well chosen. It is pure Paris.

MASCARILLE And what say you of my knee ruffles?

MAGDELON Strikingly chic.

MASCARILLE I take pride in the fact that they are a good thirty centimeters wider than the run of the mill variety.

MAGDELON I must avow that my eyes have never caressed such a high level of elegance in the realm of personal attire.

MASCARILLE Allow your olfactory organs to be caressed by the scent of these gloves.

MAGDELON A frightfully delicate fragrance.

CATHOS Never have I encountered anything as exquisite.

MASCARILLE Now, smell my wig.

They smell his powdered wig.

MAGDELON An essence of undeniable quality, with a delectable mind swaying effect.

MASCARILLE You haven't said a word about my plumes. How do you like them?

CATHOS Devastatingly beautiful.

MASCARILLE Would you believe that this headpiece alone cost an entire gold piece? The fact is that I'm virtually a slave to things of beauty.

MAGDELON I assure you that we are as one in this regard, for I am furiously fastidious about whatever I wear. Even my under stockings must be of impeccable quality.

MASCARILLE **(Shouting suddenly)** Ah! Oh! Oh! Gently! May God forsake me, ladies, but you're treating me unfairly. I must complain of your tactics...they are unworthy of you.

CATHOS What is it? What is wrong?

MASCARILLE How's that? Both of you against my heart simultaneously. Attacking me from the left and right. The situation is unfair; the match is unequal. I must cry "Murder!"

CATHOS I must confess that he does have a rather original form of expression.

MAGDELON A most admirable turn of phrase.

CATHOS Your fear exceeds your injury, and your heart bleeds before it's wounded.

MASCARILLE The devil take me if it's not wounded to the core.

Scene 10: Marotte, Mascarille, Magdelon, Cathos

MAROTTE Someone to see you, madame.

MAGDELON Who?

MAROTTE The Viscomte de Jodelet.

MASCARILLE The Viscomte de Jodelet?

MAROTTE Yes, sir.

CATHOS Do you know him?

MASCARILLE He's only my best Friend.

MAGDELON **(To Marotte)** Have him enter at once.

MASCARILLE It's been some time now since I've seen him, and I'm delighted by this opportunity.

CATHOS Here he is.

Scene 11: Marotte, Mascarille, Magdelon Cathos, Viscomte de Jodelet, Almanzor

MASCARILLE Viscomte **(They kiss each other on the cheek.)**

JODELET Marquis!

MASCARILLE Such a pleasure meeting you!

JODELET Such a joy seeing you here!

MASCARILLE One more kiss, I beseech you.

MAGDELON **(To Cathos)** Well, now, my dear, it seems that our reputations are becoming established. Society is now beating a path to our door.

MASCARILLE Ladies, allow me to present this gentleman. I assure you he is deserving of your acquaintance.

JODELET It is fitting that I come here to pay you the respect you so richly deserve, for your charms demand lordly dominion over people of all stations.

MAGDELON Your compliments attain the highest echelons of flattery.

CATHOS This day must be noted on our calendar as one of exceptional fortune.

MAGDELON **(To Almanzor, who is just off stage)** Come now, little boy, must everything be repeated to you? Don't you see that the supplementation of another chair is needed? Almanzor obeys.

MASCARILLE You must not be surprised to see the Viscomte in his present condition. He has just gotten over an illness which, as you see, has left him somewhat pale.

JODELET The fruit of long nights at the court and of the fatigues of war.

MASCARILLE Are you aware, ladies, that you see before you in the Viscomte one of the most valiant men of the century? The walking embodiment of courage!

JODELET My dear Marquis, where courage is concerned, we are as one. We are fully aware of your capacity in this regard.

MASCARILLE It is true that we've seen each other in combat.

JODELET And in places where it was hot, indeed.

MASCARILLE **(Looking at Magdelon and Cathos)** Yes, but not as hot as here. Ha ha ha!

JODELET We met in the army. At the time, he was the commander of a

cavalry regiment stationed on a Maltese convict ship.

MASCARILLE That is true. However, you enlisted before I did and were already commanding two thousand cavalymen, while I was merely an officer of minor rank.

JODELET War is such a beautiful thing. Unfortunately, there is little recognition at court today for men of arms of our capacity.

MASCARILLE I'm tempted to hang up my sword.

CATHOS As for myself, I must confess that I have a furious attraction for men of the sword.

MAGDELON I as well; however, I prefer that their bravery be seasoned with wit.

MASCARILLE Do you recall the siege of Arras where we overtook that fortress shaped like a half moon?

JODELET What do you mean "half moon?" that fortress was the size of a full moon, if anything.

MASCARILLE I believe you're right.

JODELET I ought to remember it, by Jupiter, for it was there that a grenade burst got me in the leg. I still bear the scars. Touch it gently and you'll realize what a wound it was.

CATHOS (**After having touched the spot**) The scar is indeed enormous.

MASCARILLE (**To Magdelon**) Give me your hand and feel this one. Right here in the back of my head. Do you feel it?

MAGDELON Yes, I feel something.

MASCARILLE It's a bullet wound I received during my last campaign.

JODELET (**Baring his chest**) And here you see where a bullet went right through me during the attack of Gravelines (*A small town near Dunkerque where the Spaniards defeated the French in 1558, about 100 years prior to the time of the alleged bullet wound of Jodelet*).

MASCARILLE (**About to drop his breeches**) Now ready yourselves for a truly frightful wound!

MAGDELON That won't be necessary; we'll take your word for it.

MASCARILLE These are marks of honor that show a man's mettle.

CATHOS We have no doubts concerning your substance.

MASCARILLE Viscomte, did you bring your carriage?

JODELET Why?

MASCARILLE We could take the ladies for a ride and refreshments.

MAGDELON But we can't go today.

MASCARILLE Well then, let's get some musicians for dancing.

JODELET By Jupiter, an excellent idea.

MAGDELON Agreed; however, don't we need more people than that?

MASCARILLE Hey there! Lackeys! Champagne! Picardy, Burgundy, Cascaret, Basque, La Verdure, Lorraine, Provence, La Violette! May the devil take all lackeys! In all of France I don't think there's a nobleman more poorly attended than I. Those lowlifes constantly abandon me!

MAGDELON Almanzor, go out and tell the marquis' men to find some violinists, and then invite some ladies and gentlemen of our quarter to dissipate the solitude of our ball.

Almanzor exits.

MASCARILLE Viscomte, what say you about those eyes?

JODELET What about you, marquis? How do they strike you?

MASCARILLE I? I say that we'll be lucky to leave this place with our freedom intact. There's a strange thumping with me, and my heart is hanging on by a thread.

MAGDELON What a natural flow of speech! Such a masterful turn of phrase!

CATHOS He certainly dispenses a furious abundance of wit.

MASCARILLE As proof of my sincerity, I'm going to compose an impromptu on that very theme. **(He meditates briefly.)**

CATHOS Ah! To hear something composed especially for us would elicit our deepest appreciation.

JODELET I would do likewise, but my poetic veins have been somewhat drained by the numerous bloodlettings I've gotten recently.

MASCARILLE What the deuce is wrong with me? The first line of verse pours out freely, but I have a devil of a time with the others. I seem unable to write under the pressure of time. However, I shall write you the most beautiful impromptu in the world...as soon as I'm not rushed.

JODELET He has the wit of a demon.

MAGDELON To say nothing of his chivalry and turn of speech.

MASCARILLE Viscomte, tell me, has it been a long time since you've seen the Countess?

JODELET More than three weeks.

MASCARILLE Do you know that the Duke visited me this morning and invited me to go deer hunting with him?

MASCARILLE Here come our friends.

Scene 12: Local neighbors, Magdelon, Cathos, Mascarille, Viscomte, Almanzor

MAGDELON My dear friends, we beg your pardon, but these gentlemen fancied providing us with the foot stirring accoutrements, and we sent for you to populate the voids of our dancing assemblage.

NEIGHBOR We are most obliged.

MASCARILLE This is merely an impromptu dance; however, one of these days we'll put on a full fledged ball with all the trappings. Have the violinists arrived?

ALMANZOR **(As Musicians enter)** Yes, sir. They are here.

CATHOS Well, then ladies, let's take our places.

MASCARILLE **(Dancing alone, providing a solo prelude)** Lalalalalalala.

MAGDELON Such elegant stature.

CATHOS And such appropriate flourishes to his dancing.

MASCARILLE **(Taking Magdelon)** You'll notice my spontaneity never conflicts with the dictates of vogue. Ugh! **(To the Musicians)** Will you watch the tempo, nincompoops? Do they expect us to dance to that? To the devil with you all! Can't you maintain the beat? Lalalala. Steady now, you gut scraping bumpkins!

JODELET **(Dancing in turn)** Not so fast, I beseech you! I'm barely out of a sick bed.

Scene 13: La Grange, Du Croisy, Jodelet, Mascarille

LA GRANGE **(Suddenly beating Mascarille with a stick)** Aha! You scoundrels! What are you doing here? We've been looking for you for three hours!

MASCARILLE Ouch! Oooh! Ouch! You didn't mention a beating like this!

JODELET **(Being beaten by Du Croisy)** Ouch! Ouch! Oooooh!

LA GRANGE **(To Mascarille)** This is the just reward for your brazen impression of a person of quality.

DU CROISY (**To Jodelet**) This will teach you your place!
MAGDELON What is the meaning of this?
JODELET It's Ya Y Ouch! wager!
CATHOS How's that? To allow yourselves to be beaten like that?
MASCARILLE Good heavens! I preferred to simply overlook the matter rather than unleash my violent temper.
MAGDELON To tolerate such an affront and, in our presence!
MASCARILLE It's really nothing, I tell you. Let's ignore it and resume the dance. We've known each other for a long time, and among friends such trifles are no cause for anger.
LA GRANGE I can promise you, rogues that you are, that you'll find little cause for laughter. You there, come in.

Two "Toughs" enter.

DU CROISY So then, ladies, you would have us endure seeing our lackeys being better received than us?... Seeing them court you and provide dancing at our expense?
MAGDELON Your lackeys?
LA GRANGE Yes, our lackeys. And it was not very decent of you to corrupt them as you did.
MAGDELON Good heavens! What insolence!
LA GRANGE But they'll no longer have our clothes to dazzle you, and if they still appeal to you, it will be for their pretty faces. Strip them instantly!
JODELET Adieu, my beautiful adornments.
MASCARILLE Sic transit gloria Marquis and Viscomte.
DU CROIS YAH! Villains! To dare to walk in our footsteps! You'll have to search elsewhere for trappings to seduce your lady friends, I assure you.
LA GRANGE It was bad enough impersonating us, but to do so with our own clothes!
MASCARILLE Ah, destiny! How fickle you are.
DU CROISY Quickly now, strip them down to their last rag.
LA GRANGE Take all those clothes outside. Now, ladies, in their present condition, you may court them to your hearts' content without running the slightest risk of our jealousy.

Du Croisy and La Grange exit.

CATHOS Ah! Such confusion!

MAGDELON I shall die of vexation!

VIOLINISTS (**To Mascarille**) What's going on here? Who's going to pay us?

MASCARILLE Ask the Viscomte.

JODELET Ask the marquis.

Scene 16: Gorgibus enters.

GORGIBUS Ah! Vixens that you are! From what those gentlemen told me on their way out, you've really created a fine state of affairs.

MAGDELON Oh, father, we have been the victims of the most cruel of tricks.

GORGIBUS Yes, it was a cruel trick, but it was brought on by your own stupidity. They were offended by the way you treated them, and now I'm the one who must bear the brunt of all this.

MAGDELON Ah! I swear to you that I shall either be avenged or die of shame. And as for you two impostors, how dare you remain here after such insolence?

MASCARILLE Imagine treating a marquis in such a fashion! So this is the level to which society has sunk. The slightest misfortune turns affection into scorn. Come, my friend, let us seek fortune elsewhere, for it is obvious that in this shrine to sham, true worth goes unrecognized, even in its most extreme state of exposure.

Mascarelle and Jodelet exit.

VIOLINISTS Sir, in view of their default of payment, insist that you compensate us for playing.

GORGIBUS (**Beating them**) Yes, yes, I'll compensate you, all right, and this is the form of currency. (To Magdelon and Cathos) And as for you two scatterbrains, I don't know what keeps me from giving you the same treatment. Your shenanigans will make us the laughingstock of the neighborhood. Go find a place to hide and never come

out! And finally, to all those destructive amusements of
idle minds, which are at the root of their folly...novels,
verses, songs, sonnets... **MAY YOU ALL BURN IN
HELL!**

THE END

The Miser
(L'AVARE)
(Regular Edition)

CHARACTERS:

HARPAGON, Father of Cleante and Elise, and in love with Mariane.

CLEANTE, Son of Harpagon, and in love with Mariane

ELISE, Daughter of Harpagon, and in love with Valere.

VALERE, Son of Anselme, and in love with Elise.

MARIANE, In love with Cleante, and courted by Harpagon.

ANSELME, Father of Valere and Mariane.

FROSINE, Adventuress.

MASTER SIMON, Usurer.

JACQUES, Harpagon=s cook and coachman.

LA FLECHE, Cleante=s valet.

CLAUDIA, Harpagon=s servant.

BRINDAVOINE, Harpagon=s first lackey.

LA MERLUCHE, Harpagon=s second lackey.

OFFICER

OFFICER=S CLERK

ACT I

Scene 1: Valere, Elise

VALERE Come now, my charming Elise, after providing such gracious assurances of your love, why are you suddenly sad? In the midst of my joy, alas, I see you sigh. Tell me, are you sorry to have made me so happy? Do you regret being compelled by my love for you to sign those papers of engagement?

ELISE No, Valere. I regret nothing that I do for you. I feel myself being swept along by a force so delectable as to melt whatever resolve I might have to change things but, to speak truthfully, I am uneasy about the outcome of all this, and I fear that I may love you more deeply than I should.

VALERE What is there to fear, Elise, in your kindness toward me?

ELISE A hundred things at once: a father's anger, a family's reproaches, the censure of society, but above all, Valere, I fear a change of heart on your part, as well as that criminal coldness with which those of your sex repay excessive displays of innocent love.

VALERE Please don't wrong me by judging me by others. You may question anything but my resolve to honor my indebtedness to you. My love for you is eternal and far too intense for me to ever fail you.

ELISE Oh, Valere, all men are alike; they all make the same speeches, and it is only through their actions that they show their differences.

VALERE Since actions alone reveal our true selves, at least give me a chance to act before you judge me. Don't allow unfounded suspicion to cause you to accuse me unjustly. Do not, I beseech you, destroy me with such harsh speculation, but allow me instead the time to prove to you the indisputable sincerity of my love.

ELISE Ah, how easily are we persuaded by those we love. Yes, Valere, I believe that it is not in you to deceive me. I feel that your love for me is true, and that you will be faithful to me. It is not my wish to doubt you; my only concern is how I might be blamed for all of this.

VALERE But why should this bother you?

ELISE I would have nothing to fear if everyone saw you as I do, for my faith in you justifies whatever I might do for you. In its defense, my heart can only proffer a belief in your goodness--a belief reinforced by a spiritual confirmation within me. My mind reverts constantly to that terrifying moment during which our destinies were joined, to the selfless heroism you displayed in risking your life to save mine from the fury of the waves, to the tenderness you showed me once we were safely ashore, to the unflinching homage of a love that neither time nor hardship has dampened, a love that compels you to deny both family and country to conceal your true social position, and to work as a domestic for my father solely for the opportunity to be near me. I am deeply moved by all of this, and I feel that it justifies my signing the engagement; however, I am concerned that others may misinterpret my actions in this matter.

VALERE Of everything you have said, it is only my love for you that is deserving of mention; and as for your qualms, I contend that your father's compartment provides whatever justification is necessary to shield you from the possible misinterpretation of others; his shameful avarice, particularly with regard to his children, would warrant conduct of a far more extravagant nature. Forgive my bluntness, charming Elise, but when I speak of your father, there is very little good that comes to mind. In any event, should God grant that I find my parents, we will have little difficulty obtaining his blessing. I am waiting impatiently for news of them, and, if word doesn't arrive soon, I shall go in search of them myself.

ELISE Do not leave, Valere, I beg of you. Remain here and concentrate on winning the blessing of my father.

VALERE Are you not aware of all my efforts in that direction? Recall, if you will, the obsequious demeanor with which I gained entrance to his service and how, in order to please him, I constantly feign agreement with his every sentiment. I am making admirable progress, for I feel that the best way to win men over is to mirror their proclivities, to abide by their maxims, to praise their shortcomings, and to applaud their every gesture. Man's susceptibility to flattery is without bounds, and there is never the danger of an overdose; for no matter how obvious your method

of praise might be, it will not fail to dupe even the cleverest of men. There is nothing so absurd that when seasoned with a little praise, can't be digested. My work here sorely compromises my sense of integrity, but this is the price I must pay, for adaptation is the sole path to his confidence. The fault here lies not with flattery, but rather with those who relish it.

ELISE Why don't you try to win the approval of my brother as well so that, should the maidservant decide to reveal our secret, we may rely on his support.

VALERE I cannot manage them both simultaneously; the divergence of temperament is so great as to render futile any ingratiating efforts on my part. You, however, are in a better position to gain your brother's support by virtue of the good relationship that exists between you. Here he comes. I must go. This would be a good time to discuss our relationship, but reveal to him only what you deem appropriate.

ELISE I don't know if I'll have the courage to tell him our secret.

Scene 2: Cleante, Elise

CLEANTE I'm so glad to find you alone, my sister, for there is a matter of extreme importance that I must discuss with you.

ELISE I am listening, my brother. What do you have to tell me?

CLEANTE Many things wrapped into one small sentence--I'm in love.

ELISE You're in love?

CLEANTE Yes, I'm in love; but before going any further, let me say that I am aware of my dependence upon my father, and how, as his son, I must submit to his will. We must not pledge our love without the consent of those to whom we owe the light of day. Heaven has given them dominion over our will and we must accept it. Unaffected by the blinding passions of youth, they are in a better position to determine what is best for us. I'm saying all this to you to forestall any reproaches you may feel inclined to voice, for I'm too much in love to heed them.

ELISE Are you and your loved one engaged, dear brother?

CLEANTE No, but I am determined that this shall come to pass, and I implore you once again not to try to dissuade me.

ELISE My dear brother, do you believe me to be so insensitive?

CLEANTE No, but you are not in love, and know nothing of the sweet

violence that tender love enkindles in our hearts, and I won't allow the wisdom of your arguments to affect the ardor I feel within me.

ELISE Alas, my dear brother, don't speak of my wisdom, for it does not exceed that of any other, and if I were to reveal to you what is in my heart, you would perhaps think me more foolish than yourself.

CLEANTE Oh, if only your heart, like mine, were torn by...

ELISE Let us first discuss your situation; tell me who it is that you love.

CLEANTE A young lady who recently moved here and whose beauty captivates all who see her. She is indeed one of Nature's most desirable creations, and I am enraptured by the mere sight of her. Her name is Mariane, and she lives under the charge of an elderly mother, who is nearly always ill, but who enjoys the unbounded affection of her charming daughter. She tends to her every need with touching devotion. Her innumerable charms are reflected in whatever she does; her appealing tenderness, her enchanting demeanor, her angelic goodness, her...ah, dear sister, if you could only see her.

ELISE I see her clearly enough in the exuberance of your description, and the fact that you love her is, in itself, proof of her worthiness.

CLEANTE I have learned secretly that they are not particularly affluent and, consequently, are having difficulty maintaining their household. Imagine, my sister, what a pleasure it would be to help my beloved out of her financial distress, to discreetly provide some small measure of assistance to a virtuous family; and now, consider my displeasure at being denied this joy as well as the means to lavish upon that beautiful creature a continuing testimony of my love--and all this because of the avarice of a father.

ELISE Yes, Cleante, I can readily understand your displeasure.

CLEANTE Ah, sister, it is greater than can be imagined, for what is there to match in cruelty the unbounded niggardliness to which we are subjected--this barren milieu where we must languish? As it stands, we have to borrow simply to survive, even to the point where, for the very clothes on our backs, we must suffer the humiliation of relying on the generosity of merchants. Finally, I wanted to ask your help in discussing this matter with our father. If he opposes me, I am determined to depart with my beloved

and enjoy whatever happiness Heaven deigns to offer. To accomplish this, I have been looking everywhere in the hope of obtaining a loan, and if your situation resembles mine, that is to say, if you are confronted with the same opposition, we shall both leave this place, thereby liberating ourselves from the tyranny of his insufferable avarice to which we have been subject for so long.

ELISE It is true that with each day that passes, he provides us with more reason to regret the death of our mother and that...

CLEANTE I hear his voice. Let us withdraw from here and continue our discussion in private; afterwards, we shall join forces to better confront the obduracy of his nature.

Scene 3: Harpagon, La Fleche

HARPAGON Off with you this instant, and not a word out of you! Get out of my house, you first-class, swindling gallows bird!

LA FLECHE **(Aside)** I have never seen anything to match the wickedness of this cursed old man. I truly feel he is possessed by the devil.

HARPAGON What are you mumbling?

LA FLECHE Why are you dismissing me?

HARPAGON You've got your nerve asking me for reasons, you scoundrel. Get out quickly before I thrash you.

LA FLECHE What have I done?

HARPAGON Enough to warrant your dismissal.

LA FLECHE My master, your son, ordered me to wait for him.

HARPAGON Wait for him in the street. I'll not have you snooping about my house, and using what you see to your advantage, nor will I tolerate a traitor whose damnable eyes scrutinize my every deed, devour my possessions, and probe every recess of my household with thieving intent.

LA FLECHE How the devil can anyone possibly steal from you? Everything you own is locked and guarded night and day.

HARPAGON What I feel should be locked, I lock; and what I feel should be guarded, I guard. Are you not just another spy who watches everything I do? **(aside)** I shudder to think he might know something about my money. **(aloud)** Are you not the sort of man who would spread rumors of my hidden wealth?

LA FLECHE You have hidden wealth?

HARPAGON No, knave that you are, I didn't say that. **(aside)** I could kick myself! **(aloud)** No, I am merely asking if there is sufficient malice in you to spread rumors to that effect.

LA FLECHE What does it matter whether you do or don't, since it doesn't affect me either way?

HARPAGON Any more of your back talk and I'll box your ears. **(He raises his hand as if to slap L.F.)** Again I say, get out of here!

LA FLECHE Very well, I'm leaving.

HARPAGON Hold on! Are you taking anything with you?

LA FLECHE What could I take from you?

HARPAGON Come here and let me see. Hold out your hands.

LA FLECHE There you are.

HARPAGON The others.

LA FLECHE The others?

HARPAGON Yes.

LA FLECHE There you are.

HARPAGON **(pointing to his breeches)** Did you put anything in there?

LA FLECHE Look for yourself.

HARPAGON **(feeling the bottoms of his breeches)** These large breeches are excellent receptacles for stolen articles, and I would love to hang the man who designed them.

LA FLECHE **(aside)** Oh, how a man like this deserves what he fears, and what a joy it would be to rob him.

HARPAGON Eh ?

LA FLECHE What?

HARPAGON What did you say about robbing?

LA FLECHE I said that you're groping everywhere to see if I robbed you.

HARPAGON That's what I want to do. **(He gropes in L.F.'s pockets)**

LA FLECHE **(aside)** A plague on greed and those who live by it.

HARPAGON How's that? What did you say?

LA FLECHE What did I say?

HARPAGON Yes. What did you say about greed?

LA FLECHE I said, "A plague on greed and those who live by it."

HARPAGON To whom do you refer?

LA FLECHE The greedy.

HARPAGON And just who are the greedy?

LA FLECHE Misers and skinflints.

HARPAGON But whom do you have in mind when you say that?

LA FLECHE Why are you so concerned?
HARPAGON I am concerned when I need to be.
LA FLECHE Do you think I'm referring to you?
HARPAGON I think what I think; but I insist that you name the party to whom you were addressing those remarks.
LA FLECHE I was speaking...I was speaking to myself.
HARPAGON Is that so? **(showing his clenched fist)** Perhaps you can use a helping hand?
LA FLECHE You forbid me to curse the greedy?
HARPAGON No, but I forbid you to continue blabbing and being insolent. Not another word out of you.
LA FLECHE I am not naming anyone.
HARPAGON I'll thrash you if you speak.
LA FLECHE If the shoe fits, wear it.
HARPAGON Will you be still?
LA FLECHE Yes, in spite of myself. **(shows Harpagon one of the pockets of his jerkin)**
HARPAGON Aha!
LA FLECHE Here's another pocket for you. Are you satisfied?
HARPAGON Come on, hand it over without my having to search you.
LA FLECHE How's that?
HARPAGON What you took from me.
LA FLECHE I haven't taken a thing from you.
HARPAGON Are you sure?
LA FLECHE I assure you.
HARPAGON Off with you then, and may the devil take you.
LA FLECHE How cordially do you dismiss me. **(Exit)**
HARPAGON May you suffer the pangs of a guilty conscience! That rogue of a valet really grates me, and I take great pleasure in the thought of never again having to see that wretched cripple!

Scene 4: Harpagon, Elise, Cleante

HARPAGON Oh, what a burden it is to keep a large sum of money in one's house, and lucky is the man who is blessed with a hiding place which is not only secure, but also accessible in times of financial need. I have no faith in strong boxes, for they are the prime target of thieves. Nevertheless, I don't know if it was wise of me to have buried in the garden the ten thousand gold

pieces that I received yesterday. Ten thousand gold pieces in one's house is a rather large...**(Elise and Cleante enter, speaking softly)** Good Heavens! My emotions loosened my tongue and I nearly betrayed myself. What is it?

CLEANTE Nothing, father.

HARPAGON Have you been there for a long time?

ELISE We just arrived.

HARPAGON Did you hear..

CLEANTE Hear what, father?

HARPAGON Come now...

ELISE How=s that?

HARPAGON What I just said.

CLEANTE No.

HARPAGON Yes you did! Yes you did!

ELISE I beg your pardon.

HARPAGON I am certain that you overheard something. The fact is that I was merely talking to myself about the difficulty of obtaining money today, and I was envying the man who can have ten thousand gold pieces in his house.

CLEANTE We were reluctant to approach you for fear of interrupting you.

HARPAGON I am anxious to clarify this so that you won't mistakenly believe that I am the one with the ten thousand gold pieces.

CLEANTE It is not for us to meddle in your affairs.

HARPAGON Oh, would to God I had those ten thousand gold pieces!

CLEANTE I don=t believe...

HARPAGON Ah, that really would be something.

ELISE These are things that...

HARPAGON I could certainly use them.

CLEANTE I think that...

HARPAGON That would indeed improve my financial status.

ELISE You are...

HARPAGON And you wouldn't hear me complain so much about these hard times.

CLEANTE Good Heavens, father, you have no grounds for complaint, for it is a known fact that you're a man of sufficient means.

HARPAGON Of sufficient means you say? Only liars and scoundrels would say that of me. Nothing could be more false.

ELISE Please don't get angry.

HARPAGON How strange it is to have my own children betray me and

become my enemies.

CLEANTE Does my reference to your money make me your enemy?

HARPAGON Yes, and if you keep talking like that and continue your spendthrift ways, one of these days someone will come here and cut my throat, thinking that my clothes are stuffed with money.

CLEANTE In what way am I a spendthrift?

HARPAGON In what way? Could anything be more scandalous than that extravagant outfit in which you parade about town? I was scolding your sister yesterday, but you are worse than she. This situation literally screams for heavenly retribution, and I could have made a profitable investment with the money I spent decking you out like that from head to toe. I've told you time and again that I find your behavior displeasing. You strut about dressed like a marquis, and it's only by robbing me that you could do so.

CLEANTE How am I robbing you?

HARPAGON Who knows? How else could you afford those fancy clothes?

CLEANTE I, father? The fact is that I gamble, and since I'm very lucky, I can afford to dress in style.

HARPAGON That's bad business. If you are lucky at gambling, you should invest in something that will yield a profitable return. Aside from everything else, I would like to know the purpose of all those ribbons you have dangling from head to toe. Would not a half dozen laces suffice to secure a pair of breeches, and is it really necessary to spend money on wigs when one's own hair would do as well? I'll wager that in wigs and ribbons alone you've squandered a veritable fortune in potential interest.

CLEANTE I agree.

HARPAGON Let's change the subject. Eh? **(aside)** I think that they're signaling each other to steal my purse. **(aloud)** What was the meaning of all that gesturing?

ELISE Both my brother and I have something to say to you, and we were trying to decide who would be the first to speak.

HARPAGON And I, too, have something to say to you.

CLEANTE We wish to speak to you of marriage, father.

HARPAGON And I'd like to speak to you on the same subject.

ELISE Ah, father!

HARPAGON Why this sudden emotion? Is it the idea or the reality that

frightens you?

CLEANTE We are concerned about any plans you might have made regarding our marriages, and how such plans might conflict with our own wishes.

HARPAGON A little patience. Do not be alarmed. I know what you both need, and neither of you will have reason to complain about my intentions. Let's begin with you, Cleante. Are you acquainted with a young lady named Mariane, who lives nearby?

CLEANTE Yes, father.

HARPAGON (to Elise) And you?

ELISE I've heard of her.

HARPAGON What are your impressions of this young lady, my son?

CLEANTE A truly charming person.

HARPAGON Her face?

CLEANTE Sincere and decidedly intelligent.

HARPAGON Her demeanor?

CLEANTE Admirable beyond a doubt.

HARPAGON Don't you feel that such a girl deserves consideration?

CLEANTE Yes, father.

HARPAGON That she would make a highly desirable partner?

CLEANTE Very desirable.

HARPAGON That she gives every indication of being a good housekeeper?

CLEANTE Undoubtedly.

HARPAGON And that a husband would be very satisfied with her?

CLEANTE Assuredly.

HARPAGON There's only one minor drawback. I fear that her financial situation leaves something to be desired.

CLEANTE Ah, father! When it comes to marrying a person of such quality, money means nothing.

HARPAGON Pardon me! But the fact remains that if the money falls short of one's expectations, one should expect other forms of compensation.

CLEANTE That's understandable.

HARPAGON I'm glad that you agree with me, for her genteel bearing and affectionate nature have captured my heart, and I have decided to marry her...providing of course that a dowry, however modest, is in the offing.

CLEANTE What's that?

HARPAGON Eh?

CLEANTE You say that you have decided...

HARPAGON To marry Mariane.

CLEANTE Who? You, you?

HARPAGON Yes, me, me, me! What do you mean by that?

CLEANTE Excuse me, but I suddenly feel a little faint, and I must withdraw from here.

HARPAGON That's nothing. Go to the kitchen and drink a large glass of water. **(Exit Cleante)** There goes another of those weak-kneed fops whose virility couldn't match that of a chicken! Well, my daughter, this is what I have planned for myself. As for your brother, I have chosen for him a certain widow I heard about this morning; and as for you, I shall give you to Lord Anselme.

ELISE To Lord Anselme?

HARPAGON Yes, a mature man, prudent and wise, who is not more than fifty, and who is reputed to be quite wealthy.

ELISE **(curtsying)** If you please, father, I do not wish to marry.

HARPAGON **(curtsying in turn)** And I, my little daughter, my dearest, I wish that you do, if you please.

ELISE I beg your pardon, father.

HARPAGON I beg your pardon, daughter.

ELISE I am the most humble servant of Lord Anselme; but, with your permission, I shall not marry him.

HARPAGON And I am your most humble valet; but with your permission, you shall marry him this very evening.

ELISE This very evening?

HARPAGON This very evening.

ELISE That will never happen, father.

HARPAGON Yes it will, daughter.

ELISE No.

HARPAGON Yes.

ELISE No, I tell you.

HARPAGON And I tell you yes.

ELISE This is something you shall not force me to do.

HARPAGON This is something I will force you to do.

ELISE I will kill myself rather than marry such a man!

HARPAGON You shall not kill yourself, and you shall marry him---brazen creature that you are! Has ever a daughter spoken thus to her father?

ELISE Has ever a father forced such a marriage on his daughter?

HARPAGON The matter is settled as far as I'm concerned, and I'll wager that my choice will be approved by everyone.

ELISE And I'll wager that no reasonable person could condone such a match.

HARPAGON Here comes Valere. Shall we seek his opinion in this matter?

ELISE Very well.

HARPAGON Will you submit to his judgment?

ELISE Yes, I'll abide by what he says.

HARPAGON So be it.

Scene 5: Valere, Harpagon, Elise

HARPAGON Over here, Valere. My daughter and I have chosen you to decide which of us is right in a certain matter.

VALERE It is you, sir, without question.

HARPAGON Do you know what we are discussing?

VALERE No, but you could never be wrong, for you are reason personified.

HARPAGON I wish to marry her off this very evening to a man who is as rich as he is wise, and the hussy has the audacity to defy me. What do you say to that?

VALERE What do I say to that?

HARPAGON Yes.

VALERE Well, er, ...

HARPAGON What?

VALERE I say that essentially I share your feelings, for it could never be that you are wrong; however, I submit that she also is not completely wrong, and...

HARPAGON How's that? Seigneur Anselme is a man of importance--a gentleman who is noble, considerate, poised, wise and very rich, and whose first marriage left him with no children. Could she possibly make a better match?

VALERE That is true; but she might feel that you are rushing things somewhat, and that she at least needs time to develop feelings for this man that concur with...

HARPAGON This is an opportunity that calls for fast action. It's not every day that such an advantageous situation presents itself and, if he agrees to take her without a dowry...

VALERE Without a dowry?

HARPAGON Yes.

VALERE Ah! There is no argument against such reasonable terms. Therefore, I have nothing more to say.

HARPAGON This will save me a lot of money.

VALERE Assuredly, there is no denying that. It is true that your daughter may claim that marriage is nothing to take lightly, that it can result in a lifetime of happiness or misery, and that a commitment unto death must only be made with great precaution.

HARPAGON Without a dowry!

VALERE You are right. That is the determining factor; but there are people who contend that in such situations, a girl's feelings should be respected, and that a great disparity of age and temperament often leads to much dissension in a marriage.

HARPAGON Without a dowry!

VALERE Ah! A truly incontestable argument. Nevertheless, there are many fathers who are more concerned with their daughters' happiness than with the amount of the dowry---fathers who wouldn't sacrifice their daughters at the altar of money---fathers who strive for marriages where both parties are suited to each other and where an atmosphere of honor, tranquillity and joy might prevail, and...

HARPAGON Without a dowry!

VALERE That's true. There's no rebuttal to that. Without a dowry! An utterly irrefutable argument.

HARPAGON (**aside, looking at the garden**) Aha! I think I hear a dog barking. Could someone be after my money? (**To Valere**) Stay right here; I'll be back in a moment. (**Exit**)

ELISE Valere, did you mean what you said to him?

VALERE What I said was meant to placate him, thereby furthering our cause; to contradict him would court disaster. With certain people, it is necessary to appear obsequious; any form of resistance, however logical and justified, would only aggravate their natural inflexibility. Therefore, when dealing with people of this nature, if you wish to achieve your ends, you must feign agreement with whatever they say, and...

ELISE But this marriage, Valere?

VALERE We'll find a way to stop it.

ELISE But how can we, since it is to take place this evening?

VALERE You must request a postponement and pretend to be ill.

ELISE But if they call the doctors, they'll discover the pretense.

VALERE You jest. What do doctors know? Come now, with them you can choose any sickness you wish and those idiots will come up with all sorts of reasons to explain its origin.

HARPAGON **(aside)** It was nothing, thank God.

VALERE In any event, we can always resort to flight, which will solve all our problems, and if your love, beautiful Elise, is sufficiently intense...**(he notices Harpagon)**. Yes, a daughter must obey her father. She must not concern herself with a husband's appearance; and when there is no dowry involved, she must accept whoever is offered.

HARPAGON Excellently put, my boy!

VALERE Sir, I most humbly beg your pardon for the liberty I took in speaking to your daughter as I did.

HARPAGON How's that? I am delighted, and it is my wish that you have absolute power over her. **(to Elise)** No use trying to run away. I bestow upon him the authority that Heaven gave me over you, and you are to comply with his every wish.

VALERE **(to Elise)** Did you hear that? Enough of your protests! **(to Harpagon)** Sir, I shall follow her constantly and continue to counsel her in this matter.

HARPAGON Yes. I shall be much obliged. Assuredly...

VALERE It's good to keep a tight rein on her.

HARPAGON That is true. One must...

VALERE Be not concerned, for I believe I shall succeed.

HARPAGON Go to it. I've some business in town, but I'll be back shortly.

VALERE **(to Elise)** Yes, money is more precious than anything in the world, and you should thank Heaven for giving you such a wonderful father. He has a flawless sense of value. When one offers to take a daughter without a dowry, it is something to accept without hesitation, for the absence of a dowry takes precedence over beauty, youth, station, honor, wisdom, and integrity.

HARPAGON Spoken like a prophet! What a fine lad! Fortunate the man with a servant like this!

ACT II

Scene 1: Cleante, La Fleche

CLEANTE Ah, you wretch! Where have you been hiding? Did I not order you to...?

LA FLECHE Yes, sir, I came here and was waiting for you faithfully when your father, ungracious man that he is, drove me out threatening to beat me.

CLEANTE What news have you of our business affair? The situation is more urgent than ever, for since our last meeting, I have learned that I have none other than my father as a rival.

LA FLECHE Your father in love?

CLEANTE Yes, and I had a devil of a time trying to conceal from him my shock at this news.

LA FLECHE Him, meddling in love? Where the deuce did he get such a notion? Is this some type of joke? Is love anything for the likes of him?

CLEANTE This passion of his must be some type of penance for my sins.

LA FLECHE But why do you conceal from him your own love?

CLEANTE I don't want to arouse his suspicions, and in order to prevent this marriage, I'd like to hold in reserve any course of action that might be needed. What answer did they give you?

LA FLECHE In faith, sir, those who borrow are truly unfortunate and, when you are in the grip of usurers, as in your case, there are some rather strange things to which you must subject yourself.

CLEANTE The deal will not go through?

LA FLECHE I beg your pardon. Master Simon, the agent they gave us, an active and zealous man, says that he has done wonders for you, and he assured me that it was your face alone that won his confidence.

CLEANTE Will I have the fifteen thousand francs I am asking for?

LA FLECHE Yes, but under certain conditions that you must accept for the deal to go through.

CLEANTE Did you speak directly to the lender?

LA FLECHE Ah, that's not the way it's done. He is even more anxious to

remain anonymous than you; in fact, the entire transaction is carried out in a manner more mysterious than you can imagine. Under no circumstance is his name ever to be mentioned; you are to meet with him in a house borrowed expressly for this purpose so that he might learn from you directly about your family and financial situation, and I do not doubt that your father's name alone will facilitate matters.

CLEANTE The inheritance of our deceased mother should also work in my favor.

LA FLECHE Here are some clauses that he dictated to our go-between that are to be shown to you as the first order of business: "Provided that the lender see all the securities of the borrower, and that the borrower be of age, and of a family whose wealth is ample, solid, secure and free of all encumbrance, a binding and precise document shall be drawn up by a notary of the highest repute, which notary shall be chosen by the lender."

CLEANTE That leaves nothing to be said.

LA FLECHE So as not to burden his conscience, the lender will loan the money at the legal rate of five and one-half percent interest.

CLEANTE Five and one-half percent? Good heavens, that's fair enough!

LA FLECHE That is true. "But since the said lender does not have at his disposal the sum in question, and since, to accommodate the borrower, he is obliged to borrow said sum from another party at the rate of twenty percent, it shall be agreed that the said first borrower shall pay this interest in addition to the rest, since it is only to oblige the first borrower, that the said lender is undertaking this loan.@

CLEANTE What usurious monster are we dealing with here? That's more than twenty-five per cent!

LA FLECHE That's true. It is something you must consider.

CLEANTE What good would that do? I need the money, and I must consent to everything.

LA FLECHE That's the answer I gave him.

CLEANTE Is there anything else?

LA FLECHE Just one small article: "Of the fifteen thousand francs in question, the borrower will only receive twelve thousand in cash; as for the remaining three thousand, the borrower must accept the equivalent in used clothing, jewelry, and various miscellaneous items which are listed in the attached

memorandum and for which the said lender has established the most moderate prices possible."

CLEANTE What does all that mean?

LA FLECHE Listen to the memorandum: "First, a four-poster bed, draped with Hungarian lace against a decorative backing of olive colored cloth, with six chairs and a matching counterpane lined with taffeta in shades of red and blue. The bed comes with a canopy of good Aumale serge in pale rose fringed in silk. All items mentioned are in very good condition."

CLEANTE And what am I to do with all that?

LA FLECHE Wait, there's more: "Plus a tapestry depicting the loves of Gombaud and Maée. Plus a large walnut table with twelve sculpted legs, which can be opened from either end and which comes with six stools.@

CLEANTE What possible use...?

LA FLECHE Be patient. "Plus three large muskets inlaid with mother-of-pearl and their accompanying rests. Plus a brick furnace equipped with two retorts and three flasks, very useful for those with a bent for distilling."

CLEANTE This is too much!

LA FLECHE Gently now. "Plus a lute from Bologne furnished with nearly all of its strings. Plus a game of troll-madame, and a checkerboard with a game of goose restored from the Greeks, very suitable for whiling away leisure time. Plus one lizard skin, three and one-half feet long, stuffed with hay--a delightful curio to hang from the ceiling. The total value of all this actually amounts to four thousand five hundred francs; but, as a gesture of consideration, the lender is reducing the value to three thousand francs.

CLEANTE May the plague choke him with his "consideration", throat-cutting scoundrel that he is! Did anyone ever hear of such usury? You would think that the outrageous interest he's charging me would satisfy him...but no; he wants to extort an additional three thousand francs from me for some junk he's accumulated! Out of all that, I'm only getting two hundred crowns, and I've got to accept his terms for the scoundrel has a dagger at my throat.

LA FLECHE Now please don't take offense, sir, but you remind me of how Panurge went bankrupt-taking money in advance, buying dear

and selling cheap and spending his money before he got it.

CLEANTE What do you expect me to do? This is the level to which young people are reduced by the accursed avarice of fathers, and after such treatment, it's no wonder that sons relish the demise of their fathers.

LA FLECHE Well, I must admit that the avarice of your father would infuriate the most complacent of men. However, unlike some of my friends, I am by nature a very cautious man and have assiduously avoided any form of financial transaction that might result in a confrontation with the hangman. But in your father's case, I am sorely tempted to ignore all precautions --for robbing him would not only be a source of personal gratification, it would also afford me the opportunity to perform an admirable service for mankind.

CLEANTE Let me have another look at that cursed document.

Scene 2: Simon, Harpagon, Cleante, La Fleche

SIMON Yes, sir, he's a man in such a financial bind that he will abide by any demands you might make of him.

HARPAGON But are you certain, Master Simon, that there are no risks involved? Can you advise me of the name, financial status and family background of this party?

SIMON No, there is nothing further I can say, for it is only by chance that I was referred to him. But he personally will answer any questions you may have, and his agent assures me that once you know him you will be satisfied. All I can tell you is that he comes from a very rich family, that he has already suffered the loss of his mother and, should you wish, he would guarantee that within eight months his father, too, will go on to his reward.

HARPAGON There is something to that, for we are bound by the dictates of charity to be of service to people whenever the occasion arises.

SIMON That goes without saying.

LA FLECHE **(softly, to Cleante)** What's the meaning of this? Our Master Simon speaking to your father?

CLEANTE **(softly, to La Fleche)** Has someone revealed to him my identity? Are you capable of such a treasonable act?

SIMON Aha! You're really rushing things, aren't you? Who told you it was to be here in this house? **(To Harpagon)** I'll have you know, sir, that it was not I who revealed your name and place of residence. But since you are both people of discretion, I don't feel there is any harm done and I don't see why the two of you can't settle this affair directly.

HARPAGON How's that?

SIMON This is the gentleman who wishes to borrow the fifteen thousand francs in question.

HARPAGON Aha! So you're the rogue given to such shameful extremes!

CLEANTE And you are the culprit responsible for these shameful demands! **(Exit Simon and La Fleche)**

HARPAGON It's you who is trying to bankrupt himself by such condemnable borrowing!

CLEANTE And it's you who enriches himself by such criminal usury!

HARPAGON How dare you show your face to me after that?

CLEANTE How dare you show your face to anyone after that?

HARPAGON Are you not ashamed to sink to such a level of irresponsibility? To rush headlong into such horrendous expenditures? And to dissipate so disgracefully the money earned by the sweat of your parents' brows?

CLEANTE Are you not disturbed by the dishonor that your business tactics heap upon you? Doesn't it bother you to see your reputation destroyed by your insatiable lust for riches, by your infamous lending conditions which would put to shame the most diabolical of usurers?

HARPAGON Away with you, rogue that you are! Be gone, I say!

CLEANTE Who is the greater rogue, I ask you -- the one who borrows out of need, or he who steals without need?

HARPAGON Withdraw from here, I tell you -- I'll hear no more of your insolence! **(Alone)** I'm rather glad this distasteful episode took place. It served as a warning to intensify my scrutiny of his every action.

Scene 3: Frosine, Harpagon

FROSINE Sir...

HARPAGON I'll be with you in a moment. **(Aside)** I must first check my money.

Scene 4: La Fleche, Frosine

LA FLECHE (**Not seeing Frosine**) This entire affair is getting more comical by the moment. Somewhere he must have a warehouse amply stocked with all kinds of bric-a-brac, for there is nothing recognizable in the memorandum we have.

FROSINE Well, well, my poor La Fleche, what on earth brings you here?

LA FLECHE Why, hello Frosine, and what, might I ask, are you doing here?

FROSINE The same as I do everywhere: namely, serving those in need of a liaison. Since my celestial endowments are unfortunately limited to those of shrewdness and a flair for intrigue, I must utilize them to their fullest in order to survive in this world where one must live by one's wits.

LA FLECHE Are you conducting some business with the proprietor here?

FROSINE Yes. It's a small affair for which I expect payment.

LA FLECHE From him? It will take whatever guile you might possess to squeeze a sou out of him: I warn you that money does not flow freely in this household.

FROSINE There are ways and there are ways.

LA FLECHE Perhaps. After all, who am I but a mere valet? But I know Harpagon, the lord of this manor, and you as yet have been denied the pleasure. I tell you that of all humans, he is the least human, of all mortals, the most hardened and tightfisted. There is no service you might render that will gain access to his purse. Should you desire praise, esteem or benevolent lip-service, he's your man -- a veritable oasis -- his cup runneth over. But mention money, and you'll find yourself on arid ground -- he'd let you die of thirst. Nothing exceeds the hollowness of his gesture of goodwill, and his aversion for the word "give" is so great that he can never say "I give you my blessing", but rather "I lend you my blessing".

FROSINE Come, come, I'm quite familiar with the art of cajoling men. I know the secret of winning their affection, of playing upon their vanity and of finding and exploiting their weaknesses.

LA FLECHE That will get you nowhere here. I defy you to wrangle a sou out of the party in question. Unflinchingly, he will watch you die rather than open his purse. In a word, he loves money more

than reputation, honor, virtue, and he is revolted by the mere sight of a would-be borrower. To separate him from his money is to tear out his entrails, to thrust a dagger through his heart; and if...but here he comes; I must go.

Scene 5: Harpagon, Frosine

HARPAGON (**Aside**) All is well. (**To Frosine**) Well, Frosine, what can I do for you?

FROSINE My, my, you look exceptionally well! A veritable picture of health.

HARPAGON Who, me?

FROSINE Never have I seen you look so hale and hearty

HARPAGON Really?

FROSINE I know some twenty-five year-olds who look older than you do.

HARPAGON Nevertheless, Frosine, I'm still a good sixty years old.

FROSINE Come now, what's sixty years? Actually, you're at the prime of life, the mellowest phase of existence.

HARPAGON That's true, but I'd still like to shave off about twenty years.

FROSINE That is hardly necessary, for with your constitution, you'll live to be a hundred.

HARPAGON You think so?

FROSINE Certainly. You have all the indications. Hold still for a moment. Yes, of course -- there it is right between your eyes, a sign of long life.

HARPAGON Is this a specialty of yours?

FROSINE Indeed it is. Show me your hand. Ah! Good heavens! What a life line!

HARPAGON How's that?

FROSINE Don't you see how far this line extends?

HARPAGON And just what does that mean, pray tell?

FROSINE A life span of a hundred years...but my feeling is that you'll reach one hundred twenty.

HARPAGON Is that possible?

FROSINE I tell you that it would take the knife of an assassin to terminate your earthly stay, and that you will have to bury not only your children, but your grandchildren as well.

HARPAGON Splendid! What news have you of our little business matter?

FROSINE Must you ask? Have you ever seen me involved in anything I did

not successfully conclude? I am particularly gifted when it comes to matchmaking. The party does not exist for whom I could not readily find a suitable partner, and I believe that if I set my mind to it, I could pair off the Grand Turk with the Duomo of Venice. In your case, however, the difficulties were minimal. Since I have dealings with both ladies, I was in a position to tell them all about you. I advised the mother of your intentions regarding Mariane, which were prompted by your chance meetings with her on the street and by her window.

HARPAGON And her answer was...

FROSINE She received the proposal with joy, and when I expressed your strong desire to have Mariane attend the signing of your daughter's marriage contract this evening, she consented willingly and asked that I make the necessary arrangements.

HARPAGON The fact is, Frosine, that I am obliged to give Anselme a dinner, and I would like to have Mariane share in the treat.

FROSINE You are right. Her plans are to visit your daughter after lunch and then go to the fair; she will then return here for the dinner.

HARPAGON Very well. I could then loan them my carriage so that they might go together.

FROSINE That would do quite nicely.

HARPAGON However, Frosine, have you discussed with the mother the matter of dowry? After all, when it comes to marrying off a daughter, she should realize her motherly obligation to impoverish herself, if necessary, to heighten her daughter's desirability.

FROSINE How's that? We are discussing here a girl who will provide you with an income of twelve thousand francs.

HARPAGON An income of twelve thousand francs!

FROSINE Yes. First of all, she was raised in a household where expenditures on food were minimal. She is accustomed to a diet of salad, milk, cheese and apples; consequently, you will be spared the expense of fancy table service, exquisite consommés, endless recipes of peeled barley, as well as all the other delicacies that many women require. This alone will result in a substantial yearly saving on your part of at least three thousand francs. In addition, her tastes are extremely modest; she has little use for fancy clothes, expensive jewelry or sumptuous furnishings -- things to which other women are

highly attracted. We have here an additional saving of more than four thousand francs. Furthermore, unlike her present-day counterpart, she has an intense dislike for gambling which enhances her virtue all the more, since I knew a woman in this town whose losses at card playing for this year alone amounted to twenty thousand francs. But let us be modest and assume that the average woman would expend one-fourth of that -- that is to say five thousand francs -- and let us determine what this means in terms of total yearly savings. First, there is the saving of three thousand francs on food, then the four thousand francs on clothes and diamonds, and finally the five thousand francs on gambling -- which comes to a grand total of twelve thousand francs!

HARPAGON That's not bad; but your accounting is rather fanciful.

FROSINE I beg your pardon, but is there nothing substantial in the acquisition through marriage of great sobriety, of the inheritance of a great love of simplicity in adornment, and of a great fund of hatred for gambling?

HARPAGON I wish you would stop insulting my intelligence by speaking of a dowry consisting of expenses she will not incur. Speak to me instead of more tangible assets.

FROSINE Good heavens, you'll have your fill of tangible assets, among which are included certain properties abroad to which you will have title.

HARPAGON I'll believe that when I see it. However, Frosine, there is still something that troubles me. As you are aware, the girl is young, and as is usually the case with people of her age, she may prefer the company of her peers. I fear that a man of my advanced years might be distasteful to her. Such a situation in my house could occasion some rather irksome repercussions.

FROSINE Ah! How little do you know of her! I realize that I have failed to advise you of still another unique facet of her personality. The young lady in question despises young people and is irresistibly attracted to the elderly.

HARPAGON She?

FROSINE Yes, she. I only wish you could hear her speak on that subject. She is revolted by the mere sight of a young man. Let her see, however, a handsome, mature gentleman with a majestic beard and her pulse quickens with delight. The older they are the

more charming she finds them, and I warn you not to try to present yourself as being younger than you are for she will consider no one who is not at least sixty. Did you know that less than four months ago she called off a marriage at the very last minute upon learning that her suitor was only fifty-six years old and could sign the marriage contract without the use of spectacles?

HARPAGON Just because of that?

FROSINE Yes. She contends that she could never be happy with a man of fifty-six, especially if he doesn't wear eye glasses.

HARPAGON I find what you say most extraordinary.

FROSINE More extraordinary than you might think. In her bedroom there are some pictures and prints, and what do you think they are? Adomises, Cephaluses, Parises and Apollos? Not at all. They are instead fine portraits of Saturn, of King Priam, of old Nestor, and of good father Anchises on the shoulders of his son.

HARPAGON That is truly admirable! Never would I have supposed such a thing, and I'm delighted to learn that she is thus inclined. Indeed, were I a young woman, I wouldn't like young men either.

FROSINE I believe it. Young men are not worthy of a woman's love. They're nothing but pretentious bumpkins who strut about with woefully exaggerated notions of their irresistibility. How any woman could derive pleasure from such company, I am at a loss to explain.

HARPAGON My sentiments exactly; and yet there are women for whom they hold a fatal attraction.

FROSINE They are either mad or devoid of common sense. How could such young fops be classified as men? How could a woman seek any form of attachment with such base creatures?

HARPAGON This is what I say every day with their girlish ways, their three strands of turned up cat whiskers they call a mustache, their cottony wigs, their droopy breeches unbuttoned at the stomach!

FROSINE How ludicrous do they appear when compared to a man like you. Your mode of dress and overall appearance would devastate any woman alive.

HARPAGON Am I really that attractive?

FROSINE Why, you're absolutely irresistible, I tell you! Just look at that

face...an artist's dream! Turn that way, if you please. Perfect! Let me see you walk. What an excellent physical specimen! Such stature, such fluidity of movement...the veritable quintessence of masculine charm.

HARPAGON Aside from my occasional fits of coughing, I do pretty well, thank you.

FROSINE Even your coughing has a certain charm about it.

HARPAGON Tell me, has Mariane seen me yet?

FROSINE No, but in the course of our discussion, I described you in great detail, and emphasized the advantages of marrying a man of your merits.

HARPAGON You did well, and I thank you for it.

FROSINE Sir, there's a small favor I'd like to ask of you. **(Harpagon frowns)** I'm involved in a lawsuit that I'm about to lose because of a shortage of funds. However, were you to be gracious enough to extend a helping hand in this matter, I could easily win the case...You can't imagine how pleased she'll be to see you. **(Harpagon smiles)** How irresistible will you appear to her, especially with that old-fashioned ruff of yours. But what will dazzle her the most are your breeches, attached as they are to your doublet with laces. One look at those laced-up breeches and she will be yours!

HARPAGON I'm delighted to hear this.

FROSINE In truth, sir, this lawsuit is of extreme importance to me. **(Harpagon frowns)** If I lose it, I shall be ruined, and all it would take to rectify matters is just a small measure of assistance, anderAh, if you could only have seen how delighted she was to hear me speak of you. **(Harpagon smiles)** When I spoke of your qualities, her eyes glowed with joy, and consequently, she is extremely impatient to marry you.

HARPAGON You have made me very happy, Frosine, and I must admit that I am most indebted to you.

FROSINE I beseech you, sir, to give me the little assistance I ask of you. **(Harpagon frowns)** It would put me back on my feet and I would be extremely grateful to you.

HARPAGON Goodbye. I've got some letters to write.

FROSINE I assure you, sir, that you could never help me out of a greater difficulty.

HARPAGON I shall order my carriage to take you to the fair.

FROSINE I would not impose upon you were I not forced to.

HARPAGON And I'll see that dinner is served early to spare you any hunger pangs.

FROSINE Please don't refuse me the favor I ask...You can't believe the pleasure...

HARPAGON I've got to go. Someone's calling me. See you later.

FROSINE **(Alone)** May the fever send you choking to Hell, wretched dog that you are! That skinflint has held firm against all my attacks, but I'll not give up that easily, for there is another course of action that will most assuredly lead to a more rewarding conclusion.

ACT III

Scene 1: Harpagon, Cleante, Elise, Valere, Dame Claudia, Jacques, Brindavoine, La Merluche

HARPAGON All right, everyone gather round for his assignment this evening. Come here, Claudia, we'll begin with you. **(Claudia is holding a broom)** Good, I see you're armed and ready. Your task is to clean everywhere, and you are to be especially careful not to rub the furniture too hard for fear of wearing it out. In addition, I'm placing you in charge of the bottles during the dinner service; if one is missing or broken, I'll hold you responsible and will deduct it from your wages.

JACQUES **(Aside)** A suitable punishment.

HARPAGON Off you go. **(Exit Claudia)** You, Brindavoine, and you, La Merluche, will be in charge of rinsing the glasses and serving the drinks, but you are to do so only when the guests are thirsty. Despite the custom of certain impertinent lackeys, I'll not have you coaxing my guests into drinking a drop more than they wish. Finally, don't serve anyone until he's asked you more than once, and make doubly sure that there's always plenty of water available.

JACQUES **(Aside)** Yes, pure wine goes to your head.

MERLUCHE Do we take off our aprons, sir?

HARPAGON Yes, when the guests arrive -- but make sure you don't spoil your clothes.

BRIND'INE You know, sir, that one of the front flaps of my doublet is covered with a big spot of lamp oil.

MERLUCHE And me, sir, I got a big hole in the backside of my breeches and, no disrespect, sir, but people can see my....

HARPAGON Enough! **(to La Merluche)** Be clever; walk so that your backside always faces the wall. **(Harpagon places his hat in front of his doublet to show Brindavoine how to conceal the oil spot)** And you, always hold your hat like this when you serve. **(To Elise)** And as for you, my daughter, you will watch as they clear the table and see that nothing is wasted. That's a

suitable task for a daughter. You will now prepare to greet my fiancée, who will be visiting you and taking you with her to the fair. Have you understood my instructions?

ELISE Yes, father.

HARPAGON And as for you, my fine fop of a son, I shall graciously forgive your behavior of a while ago, but I will not tolerate any more of those sullen looks.

CLEANTE I, father, sullen looks? And for what reason?

HARPAGON Good heavens, we all know how children feel when the father remarries, and the jaundiced eye with which they behold their stepmother; but if you want me to forget your latest offense, I strongly advise you to greet her as cordially as you can. I want smiles, not frowns.

CLEANTE To tell you the truth, father, I find it difficult to adjust to the idea of her becoming my stepmother; I would be lying if I told you otherwise. However, you have my word that I shall receive her most cordially, and that there will be a continual smile on my face.

HARPAGON I shall hold you to that.

CLEANTE You will have no grounds for complaint.

HARPAGON I'd better not. Valere, help me with this. And, oh yes, come here Jacques, I saved you for the last.

JACQUES Are you addressing me as your coachman or as your cook, sir, for both jobs are mine.

HARPAGON As both.

JACQUES But which one in particular?

HARPAGON As my cook.

JACQUES Then wait, please. **(He removes his coachman's coat and appears dressed as a cook.)**

HARPAGON What the deuce was that all about?

JACQUES I await your orders.

HARPAGON I am committed to giving a dinner this evening, Jacques.

JACQUES **(Aside)** Do my ears deceive me?

HARPAGON Tell me, will you prepare a fancy dinner?

JACQUES Yes, if you give me lots of money.

HARPAGON Blast it all! Always money! Is there nothing else to say? Money, money, money! They're always mouthing the same word...MONEY Always the same topic...MONEY! It's their protective weapon...MONEY!

VALERE Never have I heard a more impertinent response. What skill is there in preparing a fancy meal with plenty of money? Any simpleton could accomplish that. It's the ability to prepare a fancy meal with little money that determines the true measure of a cook.

JACQUES A fancy meal with little money.

VALERE Yes.

JACQUES In faith, Mr. Steward, I would be deeply obliged to you if you would tell me the secret of how that is done. Since you seem to know everything about everything, perhaps you'd like to take over my job as cook.

HARPAGON Hold your tongue! What do we need?

JACQUES You'll need your steward here, who says he can prepare a fancy meal with little money.

HARPAGON Enough I want you to answer me!

JACQUES How many will we have to feed?

HARPAGON Eight or ten; but you must count on eight, for when there is food for eight, there's food for ten.

VALERE Of course.

JACQUES Well, we'll need four large soups and five courses...Soups...entrees...

HARPAGON What the devil! You're talking as though we're feeding an entire town.

JACQUES Roasts...

HARPAGON (Covering Jacques' mouth with his hand) Ah, traitor! You're eating everything I have!

JACQUES Side dishes...

HARPAGON Still?

VALERE Are you planning to burst their stomachs? It is not our master's intent to have his guests gorge themselves to death. You really ought to familiarize yourself with the rules of good health. As any doctor will tell you, there is no greater detriment to health than the act of overeating; thus, the more frugal the meals you serve, the more friendship you display. To quote an ancient philosopher, one must eat to live, and not live to eat.

HARPAGON Beautifully put, my lad! Come here and let me hug you. Never have I heard a more beautiful sentence: "One must live to eat, and not eat to li..." No, that's not it...How does it go again?

VALERE "One must eat to live and not live to eat."

HARPAGON Yes, yes! Did you hear that? Who's the great man who said that?

VALERE The name escapes me for the moment.

HARPAGON Remember to put these words in writing, for I'm going to have them engraved in gold letters on the mantelpiece in my dining room.

VALERE Certainly, and with regard to the dinner, I shall assume full responsibility. Leave everything to me.

HARPAGON Go to it.

JACQUES That's even better -- less work for me.

HARPAGON You must select foods that are very filling, like a fatty mutton stew and a potted pie stuffed with chestnuts. That'll cut their appetites at the outset.

VALERE Rely on me.

HARPAGON Now, Jacques, you must clean my carriage.

JACQUES Wait a minute. You're now speaking to me as your coachman. **(He puts his coat on again.)** You were saying...?

HARPAGON I was saying that my carriage must be cleaned, and that my horses must be readied for the trip to the fair.

JACQUES Your horses, sir? In faith, they're hardly in any condition to walk. Mind you, I'm not saying that they're sick, it's just that you've been putting them on such severe fasts that they look more like scarecrows than horses.

HARPAGON They must be sick. They lie about doing nothing!

JACQUES Even if they do nothing, sir, they've still got to eat. It would be better for those poor beasts to have more work to do and to get fed for it. It breaks my heart to see their ribs stick out as they do, for I really like my horses. When I see them suffer, I suffer with them. Every day I feed them out of my own mouth because nice people should have pity on their fellow creatures.

HARPAGON Having them walk to the fair won't strain them that much.

JACQUES No, no. I don't have the courage to drive them there. I wouldn't have the heart to whip them in their condition. How could they drag a carriage when they can hardly drag themselves?

VALERE Sir, I shall ask our neighbor, Le Picard, to drive them there, and we could also call upon him to serve in the preparation of the dinner.

JACQUES So be it. If anyone's going to kill them, I'd rather it not be me.

VALERE Jacques is acting very reasonable.

JACQUES Our good steward is acting very indispensable.

HARPAGON Enough of this!

JACQUES Sir, if there's one thing I can't stand it's a back-scratcher. He don't fool me with all his checking on the bread, wine, wood, salt and candles. All that's just to get on your good side. He makes me mad, he does, and I also get mad when I hear the things people say about you every day. For in spite of everything, I still happen to like you...in fact, I would say that I like you more than anyone else in the world...after my horses, of course.

HARPAGON Of course, but may I ask you, Jacques, just what it is that people say of me?

JACQUES Yes, sir, if I was sure that you would not get mad at me.

HARPAGON In no way.

JACQUES I beg to differ, sir, for I know you will get mad.

HARPAGON Not at all. On the contrary, it would give me great pleasure to learn how they speak of me.

JACQUES All right, sir, since you insist. I shall tell you frankly that you are the laughingstock of the neighborhood. Everywhere I go I hear people making jokes about your stinginess. Some say that you have special almanacs printed where the days of fasting are doubled, thereby cutting down on your food bills. There are others who say that at New Year's, or at any other time for gift-giving, you always have a quarrel ready so that you can send people packing empty-handed. There is a man who says that you brought your neighbor's cat to court for having eaten the remains of a leg of lamb. Another man says that he caught you stealing oats out of the mouths of your own horses, and that your previous coachman, not recognizing you in the dark, whacked the daylights out of you. They say you don't like to talk about this incident, and I can't say that I blame you. In short, sir, you are the butt of everyone's jokes, and the only words I hear to describe you are "miser", "skinflint", "money-grubber" and "usurer".

HARPAGON (**Beating him**) And you, sir, are a fool, a rogue, a scamp and an impudent numbskull!

JACQUES Ouch! I told you that you'd get mad at the truth and that you wouldn't believe me.

HARPAGON I'll teach you to speak properly!

Scene 2: Jacques, Valere

VALERE From where I stand, Jacques, you paid dearly for your frankness.
(Laughing)

JACQUES Mind your own business! You just started work here and already you're trying to take over. Laugh at your own beatings and not mine.

VALERE Ah, Jacques, please don't be angry, I beseech you. **(trying to restrain his laughter.)**

JACQUES **(aside)** He's sweet-talking me. I'm going to act tough and if he's fool enough to fall for it, I'll give him a little beating. **(Aloud)** Have you noticed, Mr. Laughingboy, that I don't find this funny at all, and that if you make me mad enough, I'll give you something that will really make you howl. **(Jacques pushes Valere to the end of the stage in a threatening fashion.)**

VALERE Ah, gently now.

JACQUES What do you mean "gently"? You get on my nerves, you do.

VALERE I beseech you.

JACQUES And I don't like your impertinence.

VALERE Sir Jacques!

JACQUES Don't give me any of that "Asir" business. I've a good mind to pick up a stick and give you a sound thrashing.

VALERE What's that you say? A stick? **(Valere now pushes Jacques to opposite end of stage)**

JACQUES Eh? Well, I really didn't mean a stick.

VALERE I'll have you know, Sir Numbskull, that I'm quite capable of using a stick on you.

JACQUES Without a doubt.

VALERE And as far as cooks go, you are among the worst.

JACQUES I certainly am.

VALERE You still know nothing about me.

JACQUES I certainly don't

VALERE You'd thrash me, would you?

JACQUES It was only in jest.

VALERE Your manner of jest does not please me. **(Valere-starts beating Jacques with a stick)** This will teach you to do so with more finesse. **(Valere exits)**

JACQUES To hell with the truth...it hurts too much. From now on, you'll

never hear a word of it from me. What right does that high-falutin steward have to beat me? He's not my master. He'd better watch his step, for the first chance I get, I'll make him pay.

Scene 3: Frosine, Mariane, Jacques

FROSINE Is the master at home, Jacques?

JACQUES I'll say he is!!

FROSINE Please tell him that we are here.

Scene 4: Mariane, Frosine

MARIANE Ah, Frosine, I feel very strange coming here, and I shudder at what I'm about to see.

FROSINE Why? What disturbs you?

MARIANE Alas! How can you ask? Have you no understanding of the terror that precedes the moment of torture?

FROSINE I understand that Harpagon is not your preferred source of torture, and from the expression on your face, I can tell that the blond youngster of whom you spoke is definitely on your mind.

MARIANE Yes, Frosine, I'll not deny it. In the course of his respectful visits to our home, I have come to regard him tenderly.

FROSINE But do you know who he is?

MARIANE No, I don't. But there is an attractiveness about him that would make me choose him above all others, were I to have my choice. Imagine my torment, Frosine, when I compare him with the man they wish to foist upon me.

FROSINE Good heavens! I admit that those pretty boys have their charm and have a way with words; however, most of them are poor as church mice and could never provide for you as would a rich, older man. I am aware of the sensual deprivation and the other distasteful things you would have to endure with an older husband, but that would only be for a short time. Once he dies, you'll be free to choose whomever you like.

MARIANE What a strange state of affairs! Having to wait until someone dies to be happy...and since when does death always conform to our wishes?

FROSINE Are you serious? You shall marry him only on condition that you

be widowed shortly. This must definitely be stipulated in the contract. How impertinent it would be on his part not to die within three months! Here he comes in the flesh.

MARIANE Ah, Frosine! Just look at that face!

Scene 5: Harpagon, Frosine, Mariane

HARPAGON Please don't be offended, my beauty, if I appear before you wearing my spectacles. I know that your charms are so striking, so visible unto themselves that one hardly needs spectacles to perceive them; but, after all, it is with lenses that one observes the stars, and I assure you that you are indeed a star, the most beautiful of stars in the universe of stars...Frosine, she does not answer me, and she doesn't seem to be very pleased to see me.

FROSINE It's just that she's still in a state of surprise; besides, girls are always reluctant to express at first hand what they feel in their hearts.

HARPAGON You're right. There now, my pretty one. Here comes my daughter to greet you.

Scene 6: Elise, Harpagon, Mariane, Frosine

MARIANE Kindly excuse my delay in visiting you, Madame.

ELISE It is I who should ask pardon for not having visited you first.

HARPAGON See what a big girl she is; but, then again, weeds always do grow fast.

MARIANE **(Aside to Frosine)** Oh, how he revolts me!

HARPAGON What did that beauty say?

FROSINE That she finds you truly admirable.

HARPAGON You do me too much honor, my adorable morsel.

MARIANE **(Aside)** What an animal!

HARPAGON I am much obliged to you for these sentiments.

MARIANE **(Aside)** I can't stand this any longer.

HARPAGON Here, too, is my son, who comes to pay his respects.

MARIANE **(Softly to Frosine)** Ah, Frosine! There he is in the flesh! The man of whom I spoke!

FROSINE **(To Mariane)** A marvelous turn of events.

HARPAGON I see that you are astonished that my children should be so grown-up; but don't worry, I'll soon be rid of them both.

Scene 7: Cleante, Harpagon, Elise, Mariane, Frosine

CLEANTE Madam, I can assure you that this is a most unexpected encounter. I was also surprised somewhat earlier when my father advised me of his intentions.

FROSINE I share in your surprise...I was not prepared for this.

CLEANTE Truly, my father could not have made a better choice, and I am deeply pleased and honored to see you. However, I must admit that I derive little pleasure from the prospect of having you as a stepmother. It would be difficult for me to wish such a title on you. There are some who might be offended by the brutal frankness of what I am saying, but I am sure I can rely on your understanding nature. The fact is, Madame, that the very thought of this marriage repulses me. You cannot fail to realize, Madame, the destructive impact this will have upon me. Indeed, with my father's permission, I would like to say that were it up to me, this marriage would never take place.

HARPAGON Just listen to the impertinence of that compliment. What a beautiful confession, indeed, to make to her.

MARIANE And may I say, in turn, that the thought of having you as my step-son is no less repugnant to me than my being your stepmother is to you; that I would never willingly cause you the slightest distress, and that this marriage that grieves you thus would never take place were I not bound to it by an absolute power.

HARPAGON She is right... one stupid compliment deserves another. I beg your pardon, my beauty, for my son's impertinence. He's a young fool, too stupid to realize the effect of what he says.

MARIANE I found nothing offensive in what he said. On the contrary, I enjoyed hearing him express his true feelings. Were he not to have done so, my respect for him would have diminished.

HARPAGON It's so good of you to excuse his faults. He's young and foolish now, but in time he'll grow wiser.

CLEANTE No, father. It's not in me to change, and I implore Madame to believe me.

HARPAGON Listen to that crazy ranting. He gets worse and worse.

CLEANTE Would you rather have me betray my heart?

HARPAGON Enough! You'll speak no more of this.

CLEANTE Very well, since you wish that I change the subject, allow me to serve as my father's spokesman and confess that I have never known anyone as charming as you, that nothing makes me more happy than the opportunity to please you, and that the joy of being your husband would excel that of being the greatest prince on earth. Yes, Madame, to possess you would be the ultimate ecstasy, and for such a conquest there is nothing I wouldn't or couldn't do, no obstacle I could not surmount, no ...

HARPAGON Gently now, my son, if you please.

CLEANTE I'm only complimenting her on your behalf.

HARPAGON I have my own tongue to express myself, and I don't need you as an intermediary. Quickly now, **(to the servants)** some chairs.

FROSINE No. It would be preferable to leave now for the fair so that we'll return early enough for a lengthy discussion.

HARPAGON **(To the servants)** Harness the horses to the carriage. Please excuse me, my beauty, for neglecting to provide you with some refreshment before leaving.

CLEANTE That's already been arranged, father. I'm having some mandarin oranges, sweet lemons and preserves sent up on your behalf.

HARPAGON **(Aside to Valere)** Valere!

VALERE **(To Harpagon)** He's lost his senses.

CLEANTE Do you feel that I should have offered more, father? I'm sure Madame will graciously overlook my error.

MARIANE That really wasn't necessary.

CLEANTE Just look at that ring my father is wearing on his finger, Madame. Have you ever seen a diamond shine like that?

MARIANE It certainly does sparkle.

CLEANTE **(Removing it from his father's finger and giving it to Mariane)** You must look at it closely.

MARIANE Such marvelous reflections! It's truly beautiful.

CLEANTE **(Stands in front of Mariane, who tries to return it)** No, Madame, your hands form too beautiful a setting. Keep it as a gift from my father.

HARPAGON From me??

CLEANTE Is it not true, father, that you wish to give it to her as a token of your love?

HARPAGON **(Aside to Cleante)** How's that?

CLEANTE A fine question, indeed. **(To Mariane)** He's gesturing his

approval.
MARIANE I don't want to...
CLEANTE You jest, Madame. He wouldn't dream of taking it back.
HARPAGON (**Aside**) This is outrageous!
MARIANE But this would be...
CLEANTE (**Still preventing Mariane from returning the ring**) No, I tell you, you would offend him.
MARIANE Please...
CLEANTE In no way.
HARPAGON (**Aside**) May the plague...
CLEANTE Just look how you have wounded him by your refusal.
HARPAGON (**Aside to Cleante**) Ah! Traitor!
CLEANTE Now he's getting desperate.
HARPAGON (**Aside to Cleante in menacing tones**) Conniving brigand that you are!
CLEANTE It's not my fault, father. I'm doing my best to convince her to keep it, but she's very obstinate.
HARPAGON (**Aside to Cleante furiously**) Scoundrel!
CLEANTE It's because of you that my father is cross with me.
HARPAGON (**Aside to Cleante, maintaining his fury**) Rogue!
CLEANTE Resist no more, Madame, I beseech you, lest you make him ill.
FROSINE Good heavens, why such ceremony? Keep the ring and make him happy.
MARIANE Very well. Since I have no wish to upset you, I shall accept the ring, but only temporarily.

Scene 8: Harpagon, Mariane, Frosine, Cleante, Brindavoine, Elise

BRIND'INE Sir, there's a man out there who'd like to speak to you.
HARPAGON Tell him I'm busy and to come some other time.
BRIND'INE He says that he's got some money for you.
HARPAGON Excuse me. I'll be right back.

Scene 9: Harpagon, Mariane, Cleante, Elise, Frosine, La Merluche, Valere

MERLUCHE (**Enters running and topples Harpagon**) Sir...
HARPAGON Ah!. I'm dying!
CLEANTE What is it, father? Did you hurt yourself?
HARPAGON I'll wager anything that my debtors paid that traitor to make

me break my neck.

VALERE No cause for alarm.

HARPAGON What are you doing here, you assassin?

MERLUCHE I'm here to tell you that both your horses have lost their shoes.

HARPAGON Bring them to the smithy at once.

CLEANTE While they're being shod, father, I'll do the household honors for you and escort Madame to the garden, where I'll have the refreshments served.

HARPAGON Valere, see that he serves as sparingly as possible, and send back whatever you can to the food merchant.

VALERE Understood. **(Exits)**

HARPAGON **(Alone)** Impertinent son that you are Do you want to bankrupt me?

ACT IV

Scene 1: Cleante, Mariane, Elise, Frosine

CLEANTE Let us return here where we can speak freely.

ELISE Yes, Madame, my brother has spoken to me of his love for you, and I'm familiar with the anguish that such an obstacle can engender. You may be assured of my extreme interest and concern.

MARIANE How consoling it is to have the support of a person like you. I pray that I'll always have your friendship to rely on when fortune frowns upon me.

FROSINE It's unfortunate that you did not consult me before this. I could have certainly avoided this unpleasant turn of events.

CLEANTE To what end? This is my cruel destiny; but in any event, my beautiful Mariane, what have you decided?

MARIANE Alas! My state of subservience does not allow for any decision on my part. All I can do is wish.

CLEANTE Is wishing the only solace your heart can offer? No assuaging pity? No helpful kindness? No relieving affection?

MARIANE What can I say? Were you in my position, you would comprehend the futility of my situation. Advise me. Command me. I place myself in your hands, for I know that you would never suggest anything that would compromise my honor or my sense of propriety.

CLEANTE Alas! Why must I always be constrained by the dictates of honor and propriety?

MARIANE What would you have me do? Even if I were inclined to ignore the restrictions imposed upon those of my sex, I still have my mother to consider. She raised me with extreme kindness, and I could never displease her. You, however, have my permission to do your utmost to win her over. Do and say whatever you must, and should the situation demand that I reveal to her my love for you, I shall do so freely.

CLEANTE Frosine, my poor Frosine, would you help us?

FROSINE With the greatest of pleasure. When it comes to serving love's

true cause, I'm really quite sentimental. How may I be of service?

CLEANTE Think of something, I beseech you.

MARIANE Show us a way out of this.

CLEANTE Find a way to undo what you have wrought.

FROSINE This will pose quite a challenge. **(To Mariane)** Since your mother is not a totally unreasonable person, I may be able to persuade her to transfer to the son the gift she planned for the father. **(To Cleante)** However, the problem stems from the fact that your father is none other than your father.

CLEANTE I understand.

FROSINE What I mean is that to reject him is to incur his wrath, and this would hardly incline him to consent to your marriage. Therefore, we must find a way to have you appear less desirable in his eyes so that it will be he, and not you, who does the rejecting.

CLEANTE You are right.

FROSINE Yes, I know, but the problem is how to go about it. Wait! Suppose we found an older woman with a talent equivalent to mine, capable of playing the role of a lady of quality. For the sake of believability, she could engage a quickly improvised retinue and adopt some exotic title, such as Marchioness or Viscountess, and could originate from, let us say, lower Brittany...I could then easily convince your father that she is a woman of enormous wealth, hopelessly in love with him, and willing to transfer all her possessions to him in a contract of marriage. I am certain that your father would be receptive to such a proposal, for his love of money surpasses his love for you. Subsequently, after he takes the bait and provides you with the consent you seek, it matters little what he does upon learning the true worth of a "Marchioness".

CLEANTE A thoroughly ingenuous plan!

FROSINE Let me handle this. I've just thought of a friend of mine who'll make a perfect marchioness.

CLEANTE If your plan succeeds, Frosine, I'll be deeply grateful to you. However, my charming Mariane, preventing this marriage will be no small task, and you must do what you can from your end. You can begin by trying to win your mother over to our side. Make liberal use of the eloquent graciousness, the irresistibility

that Heaven has placed in your eyes and lips, and take care not to forget those harmonious words, those gentle bequests and those endearing caresses which can never be denied.

MARIANE I'll do whatever I can and shall forget nothing.

Scene 2: Harpagon, Cleante, Mariane, Elise, Frosine

HARPAGON (**Aside and still unseen**) Aha! My son kisses the hand of his future stepmother, and she does little to discourage it. Is there more to this than meets the eye?

ELISE There's my father.

HARPAGON The carriage is ready. You may leave when you wish.

CLEANTE Since you're not going, father, I'll take them myself.

HARPAGON No. You stay. They can go quite nicely by themselves; besides, I have need of you. (**The ladies exit.**)

Scene 3: Harpagon, Cleante

HARPAGON Aside from the fact that she's to be your stepmother, what have you to say of the lady?

CLEANTE What have I to say?

HARPAGON Yes, of her manner, her figure, her beauty, her intelligence.

CLEANTE They'll do, I guess.

HARPAGON Nothing more than that?

CLEANTE To speak frankly, she fell far short of my expectations. I find her demeanor blatantly coquettish, her figure ill-proportioned, her facial attributes mediocre, and her wit far from spectacular. However, you must not feel that I'm trying to downgrade her in your eyes, for as far as stepmothers go, I suppose I like this one as well as I would any other.

HARPAGON But you were just saying to her that...

CLEANTE I was speaking gallantly on your behalf merely to please you.

HARPAGON You are, therefore, not attracted to her?

CLEANTE I? In no way.

HARPAGON I'm sorry to hear that, for it spoils an idea that came to me when she was here. Looking at her, I became painfully aware of the difference in our ages, and got to thinking about what people would say about my marrying such a youngster. I was about to give up the whole idea, but since I had already pledged

my word, I decided to have her marry you instead. But now with this aversion you have for her, I don't...

CLEANTE You'd give her to me?

HARPAGON Yes, to you.

CLEANTE In marriage?

HARPAGON Yes, in marriage.

CLEANTE Hear me; while it is true that I don't find her terribly attractive, I would somehow force myself to marry her, if only to please you, my dear father.

HARPAGON No, no. I'll derive no pleasure in forcing you into this, for I'm not as unreasonable as you might think.

CLEANTE But I'd gladly make this sacrifice out of love for you.

HARPAGON No, no; without love, no marriage is happy.

CLEANTE But that's something that may come with time, for it is said that love is often a fruit of marriage.

HARPAGON No, no. From a man's standpoint, it's a risky business that could lead to much unpleasantness. If you loved her, so be it, I'd have let you marry her; but since you don't, I'll stick to my original plan and marry her myself.

CLEANTE Well, father, I am compelled by the present turn of events to inform you that I have loved Mariane at first sight, and were it not for your feelings toward her and my fear of displeasing you, I would have already asked for your consent to marry her.

HARPAGON Have you visited her?

CLEANTE Yes, father.

HARPAGON Several times?

CLEANTE Rather frequently, considering the short time I've known her.

HARPAGON Were you well received?

CLEANTE Very well; but they did not know who I was, which accounts for Mariane's surprise a moment ago.

HARPAGON Have you declared your love for her and your intention to marry her?

CLEANTE Of course, and I even broached the subject with her mother.

HARPAGON And did she listen to your intentions concerning her daughter?

CLEANTE Yes, very civilly.

HARPAGON And does the daughter love you in return?

CLEANTE Judging from appearances, I am convinced that she cares for me.

HARPAGON (**Aside**) Aha! Just what I wanted -- to worm that secret out of him. (**To Cleante**) My son, there are three things you must do: first, purge yourself of this love; second, you must discontinue the courtship of a lady whom I claim for myself; and finally, you must get married soon to a girl chosen for you.

CLEANTE So this was all a little game you were playing with me. Very well, father, since this is how things stand, I shall tell you flatly that I will never renounce my love for Mariane, that I shall stop at nothing to prevent your having her, despite the mother's consent that you possess.

HARPAGON How's that, impertinent wretch that you are, you'd dare to intrude in my domain?

CLEANTE It is you who are intruding in mine, for it is I who knew her first.

HARPAGON Am I not your father? And do you not owe me respect?

CLEANTE Love reigns supreme even over a father's authority.

HARPAGON Yes, and I'll rain some supremely fine blows on your head!

CLEANTE All your threats will be to no avail.

HARPAGON You shall give up Mariane!

CLEANTE Never!

HARPAGON (**To Jacques**) Fetch me a stick immediately!

Scene 4: Jacques, Harpagon, Cleante

JACQUES Now, now, gentlemen. What is all the commotion?

CLEANTE To hell with his stick.

JACQUES Ah, sir, gently now.

HARPAGON How dare he address me with such impudence?

JACQUES (**To Harpagon**) Ah, sir, I beseech you.

CLEANTE I will not yield an inch.

JACQUES How's that? To your father?

HARPAGON Let me at him.

JACQUES How's that? At your son?

HARPAGON Jacques, to show how right I am in this matter, I'll let you be the judge.

JACQUES I agree. (**To Cleante**) Move back a little.

HARPAGON I love a girl whom I wish to marry, and this scoundrel has the audacity to love her, too, and to seek her hand in marriage despite my orders.

JACQUES Ah, he is wrong.

HARPAGON Is it not a shameful display of disrespect for a son to compete with his father in a matter of love?

JACQUES Without a doubt. Stay here and let me speak to him. **(Crosses to Cleante)**

CLEANTE If he wants you to act as judge, so be it, for I care little whom he might choose.

JACQUES You do me too much honor, sir.

CLEANTE I am in love with a young lady who returns my affection most tenderly. My father, however, intends to destroy our affair by claiming for himself the hand of the lady in question.

JACQUES He is most assuredly wrong.

CLEANTE Should he not be ashamed at his age to think of marriage? Is it appropriate for a relic like him to be in love? Should he not leave affairs of the heart to the young?

JACQUES You are right. He can't be serious. Let me have a word with him. **(He returns to Harpagon)** Well, your son is not as strange as you say, and he is acting most reasonably. He says that he is aware of the respect he owes you, and he regrets his prior outburst of anger. He is now willing to submit to your demands, provided you treat him better than previously and provide him with a marriage partner to his liking.

HARPAGON Ah! Well, in that case, Jacques, tell him that he can expect anything from me and that, with the exception of Mariane, he can marry anyone he wants.

JACQUES Let me handle this. **(Cross to Cleante)** Well, now, your father is far less unreasonable than you make him out to be. He told me that it was your outbursts that angered him, and were it not for the way you act, he would be far more receptive to your requests. You must treat him more civilly and display the respect and submissiveness that a son owes his father.

CLEANTE Ah! Jacques, you can assure him that if he gives me Mariane, I will be the most submissive of men and would never do anything against his will.

JACQUES **(To Harpagon)** It is done. He agrees to everything you say.

HARPAGON Excellent!

JACQUES **(To Cleante)** Everything is settled. He is satisfied with your promises.

CLEANTE Heaven be praised!

JACQUES Gentlemen, your previous quarreling was due to a misunderstanding on both your parts. However, now that you are in agreement, the way is cleared for amicable discussion.

CLEANTE Jacques, all my life I will be indebted to you for this.

JACQUES Your servant, sir.

HARPAGON Jacques, you have pleased me greatly, and for that you deserve a reward. **(He reaches into his pocket, giving Jacques the impression that he is about to receive something. All that emerges, however, is a handkerchief.)** Off with you now, and be assured that I will remember this.

JACQUES I kiss your hands.

Scene 5: Cleante, Harpagon

CLEANTE I beg you to forgive my display of anger, father.

HARPAGON That was nothing.

CLEANTE I assure you that I could not regret it more deeply.

HARPAGON And as for me, I cannot express my joy at seeing you so reasonable.

CLEANTE How good of you to be so quick to forgive my transgression.

HARPAGON The faults of a repentant child are easy to forgive.

CLEANTE How's that? You don't bear me any resentment for my outburst?

HARPAGON How can I, with a son who's so submissive and respectful?

CLEANTE I promise you, father, that to my dying day I shall never forget your kindness in this affair.

HARPAGON And I promise you that there will be nothing from me you shall not obtain.

CLEANTE Ah, father, I shall ask for nothing more. What more can I ask of you after your giving me Mariane?

HARPAGON What did you say?

CLEANTE I said that you have pleased me greatly, father, and that when you granted me Mariane you granted my every wish.

HARPAGON Who said anything about granting you Mariane?

CLEANTE Why you, father.

HARPAGON I?

CLEANTE Most assuredly.

HARPAGON How's that? Why, it's you who promised to give her up.

CLEANTE I? Give her up?

HARPAGON Yes.

CLEANTE Never!
HARPAGON You have not renounced your pursuit of her?
CLEANTE On the contrary, I am more resolved than ever.
HARPAGON How's that? You gallows bird. You still persist?
CLEANTE Nothing will change what I feel.
HARPAGON I=ll fix you, you traitor!
CLEANTE Do whatever you like.
HARPAGON I forbid you to see me again.
CLEANTE How refreshing.
HARPAGON I abandon you.
CLEANTE Please do.
HARPAGON I'll disown you.
CLEANTE So be it.
HARPAGON I'll disinherit you.
CLEANTE Whatever you wish.
HARPAGON And I give you my curse.
CLEANTE I've no need of your gifts.

Scene 6: La Fleche, Cleante

LA FLECHE (**Entering from the garden, money box in hand**) Ah! Sir!
How glad I am to find you. Follow me quickly.
CLEANTE What is it?
LA FLECHE Follow me, I tell you, we're in luck.
CLEANTE How's that?
LA FLECHE This is it.
CLEANTE What?
LA FLECHE I've been guarding this all day.
CLEANTE What is it?
LA FLECHE Your father's treasure I filched it.
CLEANTE How did you do it?
LA FLECHE I'll explain everything, but I can hear him shouting. Let's withdraw.

Scene 7: Harpagon

HARPAGON (**Shouting "Stop! thief" from the garden and entering hatless**) Stop thief! Stop thief! Assassin! Murderer! Justice, just

Heaven! I am lost; I am assassinated! They've cut my throat; they've stolen my money. Who can it be? What has become of him? Where is he? Where is he hiding? How can I find him? Where shall I run? Where shall I not run? Isn't he there? Isn't he here? Who is it? Stop! **(Grabbing his own arm)** Give me back my money, you scoundrel! Oh, it's me. I'm so confused I don't even know where I am, who I am or what I'm doing. Alas, my poor money, my poor money, my dear friend, they have deprived me of you, and since they've taken you from me, I've lost my support, my consolation, my joy. All is finished for me, and there's nothing left for me to do in this world. Without you, life is impossible. It's done; I can't go on; I'm dying. I'm dead. I'm buried. Is there no one to resuscitate me by returning my dear money, or at least to tell me who took it? Eh? What's that you say?...It's no one. Whoever did this timed it craftily to coincide with that conversation I had with that traitorous son of mine. Let's go out. I shall go to the police and have the entire household put to the torture...maidservants, valets, son, daughter, and myself as well. **(To the audience)** So many people! And you all look suspicious to me. Any one of you could pass for my thief. Eh? What are you talking about there? About my robber? What's that commotion over there? Is my thief there? Please, if any of you knows who he is, I implore you to tell me. Perhaps he's hiding somewhere there among you? They all look at me and laugh. I'll wager they're all accomplices in this crime. Let's get on with it. Quickly now: policemen, archers, provosts, judges, racks, gallows and hangmen. I'll have everybody hanged, and after that, if I still don't find my money, I'll hang myself.

ACT V

Scene 1: Harpagon, the Officer, his Clerk

OFFICER Leave it to me. Thank God, I know my job. I've been solving thefts for so long that I'd like to have a thousand francs for every man I've had hanged.

HARPAGON This affair should be the concern of every magistrate, and if they don't recover my money, I'll demand justice from justice itself.

OFFICER We must proceed in the prescribed manner. Now then, how much money did you say was in the money box?

HARPAGON Ten thousand crowns in cash.

OFFICER Ten thousand crowns?

HARPAGON Ten thousand crowns.

OFFICER That's quite a theft.

HARPAGON There is no torture horrible enough to meet the enormity of this crime, and if the culprit is not punished, nothing will be safe, no matter how sacred it might be.

OFFICER The money was in what denominations?

HARPAGON In good louis d=or and pistoles of full weight.

OFFICER Whom do you suspect of the theft?

HARPAGON Everybody; and I want you to arrest the entire town and suburbs.

OFFICER In our quest for evidence we must not allow intemperance to frighten people away. We must instead pursue a course of quiet diligence leading to the recovery of your money.

Scene 2: Maitre Jacques, Harpagon, Officer, Clerk

JACQUES (**Speaking to someone offstage while entering**) I'll be right back. Have his throat cut, his feet grilled, his body immersed in boiling water, and then hang him from the rafters.

HARPAGON Who? The man who stole my money?

JACQUES No, that suckling pig your steward just sent me. I'm having it prepared for you my way.

HARPAGON We're not concerned about that. Right now there is another matter to discuss with this gentleman.

OFFICER Don't be alarmed. It is not my intent to promote scandal. All will be gentleness and discretion.

JACQUES Is the gentleman one of the dinner guests?

OFFICER My dear friend, you must not hide anything from your master.

JACQUES In faith, sir, I'll show you all I know and will treat you as well as I can.

HARPAGON That's not the point.

JACQUES If my dinner is not what I would have it be, it's the fault of the niggardly steward.

HARPAGON Traitor! We're not talking about the dinner. You must tell me what you know about the money they took from me.

JACQUES They took money from you?

HARPAGON Yes, scoundrel, and if you don't cough it up, I'll have you hanged!

OFFICER Good heavens! You must not mistreat him. I can tell by his face that he's an honest man and that he would much rather reveal what he knows than be sent to prison. Yes, my friend, if you confess, not only will you be spared any punishment, but you will also receive appropriate compensation from your master. His money was stolen today, and I'm sure you must know something about it.

JACQUES **(Aside)** This is the chance I've been waiting for to get back at that steward. He was the favorite since the day he came. His advice is the only one they heed -- and then there's that beating he just gave me.

HARPAGON What's going on in that mind of yours?

OFFICER Leave him be. He's preparing to give you satisfaction. I told you he was a gentleman.

JACQUES Sir, since it is your wish that I be forthright, I shall tell you that the guilty party in this affair is none other than your steward.

HARPAGON Valere?

JACQUES Yes.

HARPAGON The one who appeared so faithful to me?

JACQUES The very one. He's your thief, I believe.

HARPAGON On what do you base this?

JACQUES On what?

HARPAGON Yes.

JACQUES I base it on....on what I base it on.
OFFICER But you must produce evidence.
HARPAGON Did you see him loitering where I kept my money?
JACQUES Indeed I did! Er....where was your money?
HARPAGON In the garden.
JACQUES Precisely. I saw him loitering in the garden. What was the money put in?
HARPAGON In a money box.
JACQUES That's it! I saw him with a money box.
HARPAGON And this money box...describe it to me. I'll tell you in a second if it's mine.
JACQUES Describe it to you?
HARPAGON Yes.
JACQUES Well, it....er....looks like a money box.
OFFICER Most of them do. Can you give a more detailed description?
JACQUES It's a large money box.
HARPAGON The one stolen from me is small.
JACQUES Oh yes, it's small if you're talking about size; when I said "large", I was talking about the contents.
OFFICER And what color was it?
JACQUES What color?
OFFICER Yes.
JACQUES It's color was...It had a certain color...Perhaps you might help me describe it?
HARPAGON Eh?
JACQUES Wasn't it red?
HARPAGON No, gray.
JACQUES Ah, yes, grayish-red, that's exactly what I meant.
HARPAGON That's the one! No doubt about it Take down his statement, sir, word for word. Lord above, whom can I trust now? There's nothing left to believe in, and after this, I think I could be my own thief.
JACQUES Sir, here he comes now. Please don't tell him that I'm the one who revealed his guilt.

Scene 3: Valere, Harpagon, Officer, Clerk, Maitre Jacques

HARPAGON Come here! Come and confess the foulest action, the most horrible offense ever committed.

VALERE What is it, sir?

HARPAGON How is it, traitor, that you do not blush from your crime?

VALERE To what crime do you refer?

HARPAGON To what crime do I refer? You scoundrel, as if you didn't know what I was talking about! Don't put on that act with me. The truth is out and I know everything. How could you abuse my goodness, gain entry to my household solely to betray me, and do me such an evil turn?

VALERE Sir, since they've told you everything, I shall not deny the matter.

JACQUES (**Aside**) Aha! Could I have guessed right without even knowing it?

VALERE I intended to discuss it with you, but was waiting for the proper moment. However, things being what they are, I implore you to control your temper and to listen to my explanation.

HARPAGON And what possible explanation can you proffer, infamous thief that you are?

VALERE Ah, sir, I hardly deserve those names. It is true that I wronged you, but what I did was excusable.

HARPAGON Excusable? An ambush, a murder like that?

VALERE I beseech you, sir, not to get angry. When you've heard me out, you'll realize that the wrong is not as great as you're making it.

HARPAGON Not as bad as I'm making it? It's my very flesh and blood, you scoundrel!

VALERE Your blood has not fallen into bad hands, and I am in a position to preclude any irreparable injury.

HARPAGON That's exactly what I want...return what you've stolen from me!

VALERE There'll not be the slightest offense to your honor, sir.

HARPAGON This is not a matter of honor; but tell me, who made you do this?

VALERE Alas, do you really wish to know?

HARPAGON I certainly do.

VALERE A god who excuses everything done in his name...Love.

HARPAGON Love?

VALERE Yes.

HARPAGON There's a fine kind of love, indeed -- the love of my gold pieces!

VALERE You are mistaken, sir. I am neither dazzled nor tempted by your wealth, and I make no claim on any of your possessions, if only

you leave me with the one I have.

HARPAGON Never in a million years! You compound your insolence by asking to keep what you've stolen from me!

VALERE Do you call that a theft?

HARPAGON Do I call that a theft? A treasure like that?

VALERE A treasure, indeed, undoubtedly the most precious you have; but you would not lose it by giving it to me. For this treasure so endowed with charm, I plead on my knees, and you are bound by decency to acquiesce.

HARPAGON I'll do nothing of the sort. Just what do you mean?

VALERE We are bound by our promise of mutual faithfulness and by our vow never to part.

HARPAGON How admirable a vow and how pleasing a promise.

VALERE Yes, we are eternally pledged to each other.

HARPAGON I'll put a stop to that, I assure you.

VALERE Nothing but death can separate us.

HARPAGON How you lust for my money!

VALERE I have already told you, sir, that what I did was not out of self-interest. My motives were far more noble than you might imagine.

HARPAGON Next you'll be telling me that taking my money was an act of Christian charity. But I'll set things straight, brazen gallows bird; you'll have the law after you and I'll have my satisfaction.

VALERE You may do as you wish. I am prepared to suffer whatever punishment may please you. I implore you to believe, however, that if any wrong has been done, it is I who is solely responsible. Your daughter shares none of the blame.

HARPAGON I can truly believe that since it would be against her nature to be involved in such a crime. But I want back what is mine! Confess the hiding place!

VALERE What hiding place Your treasure is still in your house.

HARPAGON **(Aside)** Oh, my darling money box! **(Aloud)** Still in my house?

VALERE Yes, sir.

HARPAGON Hah! Tell me, you haven't laid your hands upon

VALERE Laid my hands upon....Ah! You wrong us both, sir. The passion burning within me is completely pure and respectful.

HARPAGON **(Aside)** A passion for my money box.

VALERE I would rather die than evoke the suggestion of offensive thought.

Too much goodness and decency are involved for that.

HARPAGON (**Aside**) My money box is too decent!

VALERE The sight of her fulfills my every desire, and nothing unwholesome has ever tarnished the tender love that those beautiful eyes have inspired within me.

HARPAGON (**Aside**) The beautiful eyes of my money box! You'd think he's speaking of a sweetheart!

VALERE Mrs Claudia knows the truth of this matter and she can verify to you...

HARPAGON How's that? My servant is an accomplice in this affair?

VALERE Yes, sir, she served as witness to our engagement. Once convinced of the sincerity of my love, it was with her persuasion that we pledged our troth to one another.

HARPAGON (**Aside**) Eh? Is his fear of the law affecting his senses? (**To Valere**) What's my daughter got to do with this?

VALERE And I say to you, sir, that, because of her sense of modesty it was not without considerable difficulty that she complied with the dictates of my heart.

HARPAGON Whose modesty?

VALERE Your daughter's! It was not until yesterday that she finally agreed to sign the engagement papers.

HARPAGON My daughter signed a promise of marriage to you?

VALERE Yes, sir, just as I to her.

HARPAGON By the saints, another disaster!

JACQUES (**To the officer**) Start writing ..sir, start writing.

HARPAGON Despair piled upon despair! Misfortune at every turn. Come sir, do your duty and draw up an indictment of him as a thief and...

VALERE I am not deserving of those names, and once my identity is known...

SCENE 4: Elise, Mariane, Frosine, Harpagon, Valere, Jacques, Officer and Clerk

HARPAGON Ah! Shameless daughter! Daughter unworthy of a father like me! So this is the result of my teachings? You fall in love with an infamous thief and pledge your troth without my consent. You're both mistaken if you think you'll get away with this. (**To Elise**) The four walls of a convent will provide the restraint you

need; **(To Valere)** and as for you, the gallows will cure your audacity!

VALERE We will not be judged by your anger. I shall be heard before being condemned.

HARPAGON Did I say "gallows"? I'll have you alive on the wheel with your bones broken!

ELISE **(On her knees)** Open your heart, father, I beseech you. Do not crush us with the weight of your paternal authority. Instead of making decisions in the heat of passion, allow yourself time to reflect upon a proper course of action. Try, at least, to better acquaint yourself with the man by whom you feel offended. You have a completely false impression of him. You will easily understand why I accepted him once you learn that were it not for him, I would have died long ago. Yes, father, it was he who, on that day of peril, rescued me from a watery grave, and it is to him, therefore, that you owe the life of the very daughter whom

HARPAGON So what? I would have him let you drown rather than do what he did to me.

ELISE Father, I call upon your love for me as my father to

HARPAGON No, no, I'll listen to none of this. Let justice take its course.

JACQUES (Aside) You'll pay me for that beating you gave me.

FROSINE Now, this is a strange kettle of fish!

SCENE 5: Anselme, Harpagon, Elise, Mariane, Frosine, Valere, M. Jacques, Officer and Clerk

ANSELME What is it, Lord Harpagon? You seem quite upset.

HARPAGON Ah! Lord Anselme! Observe before you the most pitiful of men. That contract you have come to sign is in a state of confusion and disorder. I am a dead man stripped of my wealth and honor, and there you see a traitor, a scoundrel, a violator of the most sacred rights, who wormed his way into my household posing as a domestic for the purpose of stealing my money and seducing my daughter.

VALERE Your money is no concern of mine. Why do you subject me to this tirade?

HARPAGON Yes, and they are engaged to be married. This is also an affront to you, Lord Anselme, and it therefore behoves you to prosecute to the full extent of the law at your own expense, of

course.

ANSELME I do not intend to marry a woman against her will, nor would I lay claim to a heart already promised to another. However, in this matter I am prepared to protect your interests as well as mine.

HARPAGON This is an honest officer who assures me that nothing prevails over the pursuit of his duty. **(To the officer)** Charge him for the criminal that he is, sir.

VALERE What is criminal about loving your daughter? And once my identity is known, any punishment to which you feel I am liable for having engaged your daughter...

HARPAGON Enough of this claptrap! The world today is full of these nobility thieves --these impostors who use their obscurity to assume the first illustrious name that pops into their heads.

VALERE I'll have you know, sir, that I would consider it unworthy of me to claim anything that was not mine, and that all Naples can bear witness to my station.

ANSELME Hold on, sir. Consider what you're about to say, for you are running a far greater risk than you think. You happen to be speaking to someone who is totally familiar with...someone in a position to challenge what you may say.

VALERE **(Proudly putting on his hat)** I have nothing to fear, and if, as you claim, you are thoroughly familiar with Naples, you must be acquainted with the name of Don Thomas d'Alburcy.

ANSELME I most certainly am...probably better than anyone else.

HARPAGON I don't give a hoot about Don Thomas nor of Don Martin, for that matter.

ANSELME Please allow him to speak. Let's hear what he has to say.

VALERE What I have to say is that Don Thomas d'Alburcy is my father.

ANSELME He is your ...

VALERE Yes.

ANSELME Come now, sir, you jest, of course, to exonerate yourself. You'll have to come up with a better story than that. There's no salvation in playing the impostor.

VALERE May I ask that you weigh your words more carefully, sir. I am not an impostor and can verify whatever I claim.

ANSELME How's that? You dare pretend to be the son of Don Thomas d'Alburcy?

VALERE Yes, and I can prove it.

ANSELME I marvel at your audacity. May I advise you that the gentleman of whom you speak died at sea with his wife and children at least sixteen years ago in an attempt to flee the persecution of the nobility during the Neopolitan uprising.

VALERE Yes, but I must inform you that his seven-year-old son, along with a servant, were both rescued by a Spanish ship, and it is that very son who stands before you now. The ship's captain, moved by my plight, raised me as his son. As soon as I was of age, I joined the military. I recently learned that, contrary to my long-held belief, my father was not dead. It was while passing through here in search of him that heaven ordained that I should meet the charming Elise, and her beauty completely overwhelmed me. Indeed, my love for her was so intense that I decided to have someone else continue the search for my father so that I might be free to enter the service of this household, where I enjoy her proximity and protect her from the severity of her father.

ANSELME But what evidence can you provide other than words?

VALERE The Spanish captain, a ruby signet ring once belonging to my father, an agate bracelet given to me by my mother and, finally old Pedro, the servant who, with me, was spared from the shipwreck.

MARIANE You speak the truth, and what you say convinces me that you are my brother.

VALERE You, my sister?

MARIANE Yes. I have been deeply moved by everything you have said. Our mother has spoken to me at length of our family's misfortune, and how great will be her joy in seeing you! Our lives were spared during that shipwreck, but only at the expense of our liberty. While clinging to some floating debris, your mother and I were picked up by a pirate ship, and after ten years of slavery, by a stroke of luck, we regained our liberty. Upon our return, we found that all our possessions were sold, and we were unable to locate Father. We then went to Genoa, where Mother collected the remnants of a depleted inheritance. From there, fleeing the inhumanity of her relatives, she came here to a life of continual languish.

ANSELME O Lord, how wondrous is thy power. You alone can perform such miracles! Come, my children, let us embrace and share

this moment of joy!

VALERE You are our father?

MARIANE Is it for you that my mother has grieved for so long?

ANSELME Yes, my daughter; yes, my son. I am Don Thomas d'Alburcy. Heaven decreed that I should survive that shipwreck with the money I had on my person. For sixteen years, believing both of you to be dead, I have been traveling extensively in quest of a gentle and wise woman with whom I might experience once again the joys of family life. The situation in Naples remained too hazardous for me to ever return; thus, I arranged to sell my possessions there and decided to settle here under the name of Anselme. My other name was too painful a reminder of past sorrows.

HARPAGON That is your son?

ANSELME Yes.

HARPAGON I shall, therefore, sue you for the ten thousand gold pieces he stole from me.

ANSELME He stole from you?

HARPAGON Yes, he did.

VALERE Who told you that?

HARPAGON Jacques.

VALERE **(To Jacques)** You told him that?

JACQUES You know I'd never say a thing like that.

VALERE Do you really believe me capable of such a foul act?

HARPAGON Capable or incapable, I want my money back.

SCENE 6: Cleante, Valere, Mariane, Elise, Frosine, Harpagon, Anselme, Officer, Jacques

CLEANTE Stop tormenting yourself and making such wild accusations, Father. I know about your money, and I can tell you that if you allow me to marry Mariane, you'll have your money back.

HARPAGON Where is it?

CLEANTE No need for concern. It is totally under my control. Your choice is quite simple. You either give me Mariane or lose your money box.

HARPAGON Nothing has been taken from it?

CLEANTE Nothing at all. Do you intend to agree to this marriage and add your consent to that of her mother?

MARIANE (**To Cleante**) But don't you realize now that this consent is no longer sufficient and that you must now address yourself to my father and brother, whom God has returned to me?

ANSELME Heaven has not reunited us, my children, for me to counter your wishes. Lord Harpagon, surely you must realize that a young girl would prefer the son over the father. Come now, don't force us to say what you don't need to hear, and consent with me instead to this double marriage.

HARPAGON Before I decide anything, I must first see my money box.

CLEANTE You will find it filled to the brim and in excellent health.

HARPAGON I've not the money to spend on the marriage of my children.

ANSELME You need not be concerned; I've enough for them.

HARPAGON Are you saying that you shall pay all costs for both marriages?

ANSELME Yes, I will. Does that satisfy you?

HARPAGON Yes, providing you have new clothes made for me for the wedding.

ANSELME Agreed. Now let us rejoice in the glorious events of the day.

OFFICER Hold on, gentlemen, I beg of you! Who'll pay for my depositions?

HARPAGON We don't need your depositions.

OFFICER Yes, but I do not intend to have drawn them up for nothing.

HARPAGON (**Pointing to Jacques**) As a form of payment, I offer you this man to hang.

JACQUES What is a man to do? If I tell the truth, I get beaten, and if I lie, I get hung.

ANSELME Lord Harpagon, we forgive his deception.

HARPAGON So then, you'll pay the officer?

ANSELME So be it. (**To Valere and Mariane**) Let us go quickly to your mother so that she might share our joy.

HARPAGON And I with haste, to my beloved money box.

The Miser

(L=AVARE)

(Short Edition)

CHARACTERS

HARPAGON, Father of Elise and Cleante
CLEANTE, Son of Harpagon
ELISE, Daughter of Harpagon
VALERE, Harpagon=s Steward
MARIANE, Young Lady and Lover of Cleante
FROSINE, A Matchmaker and Adventuress
LORD ANSELME, A Neighbor
LA FLECHE, Valet to Cleante
SIMON, A Usurer
JACQUES, Harpagon=s Cook and Coachman
BRINDAVOINE, LA MERLUCHE,
and CLAUDIA, Harpagon=s Servants
OFFICER and OFFICER=S CLERK

The play takes place in the Parisian countryside, at the home of Harpagon.

ACT I

Scene 1: Valere, Elise

VALERE Come now, my beloved Elise, why this sadness in the midst of my joy? Do you regret being compelled by my love for you to sign those papers of engagement?

ELISE No, Valere, but I fear that I may love you more deeply than I should.

VALERE What is there to fear?

ELISE A hundred things at once: a father's anger, a family's reproaches, the censure of society but above all, Valere, I fear a change of heart on your part, as well as that criminal coldness with which men repay displays of innocent love.

VALERE Please don't judge me by others. My love for you is eternal and far too intense to ever fail you.

ELISE Oh, Valere, all men are alike; it's not what they say but how they act that counts.

VALERE Since actions alone reveal our true selves, at least give me the chance to act before you judge me. Don't allow unfounded suspicion to cause you to accuse me unjustly. Let me prove to you the sincerity of my love.

ELISE Ah, how easily are we persuaded by those we love. Yes, Valere, I believe that it is not in you to deceive me. I feel that your love for me is true, and that you will be faithful to me. It is not my wish to doubt you; my only concern is how I might be blamed for all this.

VALERE But why should this bother you?

ELISE I would fear nothing if everyone saw you as I do. My mind reverts constantly to that terrifying moment during which our destinies were joined, to the heroism you displayed in risking your life to save mine from the fury of the waves, to the tenderness you showed me once we were safely ashore, to the unflinching homage of a love that neither time nor hardship has dampened...a love that compels you to deny both family and country, to conceal your true social position, and to work as a domestic for my father solely for the opportunity to be near me.

I am deeply moved by all of this, and I feel that it justifies my signing the engagement; however, I am concerned that others may misinterpret my actions in this matter.

VALERE Of everything you have said, it is only my love for you that is deserving of mention. Forgive my bluntness, charming Elise, but when I speak of your father, there is very little good that comes to mind. In any event, should God grant that I find my parents, we will have little difficulty obtaining his blessing. I am waiting impatiently for news of them and, if word doesn't arrive soon, I shall go forth in search of them myself.

ELISE Do not leave, Valere, I beg of you. Remain here and concentrate on winning the blessing of my father.

VALERE Are you not aware of all my efforts in that direction? Recall, if you will, the obsequious demeanor with which I gained entrance to his service and how, in order to please him, I constantly feign agreement with his every sentiment. Man's susceptibility to flattery is without bounds, and there is never the danger of an overdose. My work here sorely compromises my integrity, but this is the price I must pay.

ELISE Why don't you try to win the approval of my brother as well so that, should the maidservant decide to reveal our secret, we may rely on his support?

VALERE I cannot manage them both simultaneously... Here he comes. I must go. This would be a good time to discuss our relationship, but reveal to him only what you deem appropriate.

Scene 2: Cleante, Elise

CLEANTE I'm so glad to find you alone, my sister, for there is a matter of extreme importance that I must discuss with you.

ELISE What is it, Cleante?

CLEANTE I'm in love.

ELISE You're in love?

CLEANTE Yes, I'm in love. But, before going any further, let me say that I am aware of my dependence upon my father and how, as his son, I must submit to his will.

ELISE Are you and your loved one engaged, dear brother?

CLEANTE No, but I am determined that this shall come to pass, and I implore you once again not to try to dissuade me.

ELISE My dear brother, do you believe me to be so insensitive?

CLEANTE No, but you are not in love, and know nothing of the sweet violence that tender love enkindles in our hearts.

ELISE Let us first discuss your situation. Tell me who it is that you love.

CLEANTE A young lady who recently moved here and whose beauty captivates all who see her. She is indeed one of Nature's most desirable creations, and I am enraptured by the mere sight of her. Her name is Mariane, and she lives under the charge of her elderly mother who is nearly always ill. She tends to her every need with touching devotion. Her innumerable charms are reflected in whatever she does; her appealing tenderness, her enchanting demeanor, her angelic goodness, her...ah, dear sister, if you could only see her.

ELISE Your descriptions are clear enough and the fact that you love her is, in itself, proof of her worthiness.

CLEANTE I have learned that they are having difficulty maintaining their household. Imagine, my sister, what a pleasure it would be to help my beloved out of her financial distress, to discreetly provide some small measure of assistance to a virtuous family; and now, consider my displeasure at being denied this joy because of a father's avarice.

ELISE Yes, Cleante, I can readily understand your displeasure.

CLEANTE Ah, sister, it is greater than can be imagined, for what is there to match in cruelty the unbounded niggardliness to which we are subject this barren milieu where we must languish? As it stands, we have to borrow simply to survive, even to the point where, for the very clothes on our backs, we must suffer the humiliation of relying on the generosity of merchants. Finally, I wanted to ask you to help me in discussing this matter with our father. If he opposes me, I am determined to depart with my beloved and enjoy whatever happiness Heaven deigns to offer. To accomplish this, I have been looking everywhere in the hope of obtaining a loan, and if your situation resembles mine, that is to say, if you are confronted with the same opposition, we shall both leave this place, thereby liberating ourselves from the tyranny of his insufferable avarice to which we have been subject for so long.

ELISE It is true that with each day that passes, he provides us with more reason to regret the death of our mother and that...

CLEANTE I hear his voice. Let us withdraw from here and continue our discussion in private.

Scene 3: Harpagon, La Fleche

HARPAGON Off with you this instant, and not a word out of you! Get out of my house, you first class, swindling gallows bird!

LA FLECHE (**Aside**) I have never seen anything to match the wickedness of this cursed old man. I truly feel he is possessed by the devil.

HARPAGON What are you mumbling?

LA FLECHE Why are you dismissing me?

HARPAGON You've got your nerve asking me for reasons, you scoundrel. Get out quickly before I thrash you.

LA FLECHE Very well, I'm leaving.

HARPAGON Hold on! Are you taking anything with you?

LA FLECHE What could I take from you?

HARPAGON Come here and let me see. Hold out your hands.

LA FLECHE There you are.

HARPAGON The others.

LA FLECHE The others?

HARPAGON Yes

LA FLECHE There you are

HARPAGON (**Pointing to his breeches**) Did you put anything in there?

LA FLECHE Look for yourself

HARPAGON (**Feeling the bottoms of his breeches**) These large breeches are excellent receptacles for stolen articles, and I would love to hang the man who designed them.

LA FLECHE (**Aside**) Oh, how a man like this s deserves what he fears, and what a joy it would be to rob him... Here's another pocket for you. Are you satisfied?

HARPAGON Come on, hand it over without my having to search you.

LA FLECHE How's that?

HARPAGON What you took from me

LA FLECHE I haven't taken a thing from you.

HARPAGON Are you sure?

LA FLECHE I assure you

HARPAGON Off with you, then, and may the devil take you.

LA FLECHE How cordially you dismiss me. (**EXIT**)

Scene 4: Harpagon, Elise, Cleante

HARPAGON Oh, what a burden it is to keep a large sum of money in one's house, and lucky is the man who is blessed with a hiding place which is not only secure, but also accessible in times of financial need. I have no faith in strong boxes, for they are the prime target of thieves. Nevertheless, I don't know if it was wise of me to have buried in the garden the ten thousand gold pieces that I received yesterday. **(Elise and Cleante enter, speaking softly)** Good Heavens! I nearly betrayed myself What is it?

CLEANTE Nothing, father.

HARPAGON Have you been there for a long time?

ELISE We just arrived.

HARPAGON Did you hear...

CLEANTE Hear what, father?

HARPAGON Come now...

ELISE How's that?

HARPAGON What I just said.

CLEANTE No.

HARPAGON Yes you did! Yes you did!

ELISE I beg your pardon.

HARPAGON Oh, would to God I had those ten thousand gold pieces!

CLEANTE Good Heavens, father! You have no grounds for complaint. You're a man of sufficient means.

HARPAGON Of sufficient means, you say? Only liars and scoundrels would say that of me. Nothing could be more false.

ELISE Please don't get angry.

HARPAGON How strange it is to have my own children betray me and become my enemies.

CLEANTE Does my reference to your money make me your enemy?

HARPAGON Yes, and if you keep talking like that and continue your spendthrift ways, one of these days someone will come and cut my throat, thinking that my clothes are stuffed with money.

CLEANTE In what way am I a spendthrift?

HARPAGON In what way? Could anything be more scandalous than that extravagant outfit in which you parade about town? You strut about dressed like a marquis, and it's only by robbing me that you could do so.

CLEANTE How am I robbing you?

HARPAGON Who knows? How else could you afford those fancy clothes?

CLEANTE I, father? The fact is that I gamble, and since I'm very lucky, I can afford to dress in style.

HARPAGON Let's change the subject. Eh? **(Aside)** I think they're signaling each other to steal my purse. **(Aloud)** What was the meaning of all that gesturing?

ELISE Both my brother and I would say something to you, and we were trying to decide who would be the first to speak.

HARPAGON And, I too, have something to say to you.

CLEANTE We wish to speak to you of marriage, father.

HARPAGON And I'd like to speak to you on the same subject.

ELISE Ah, father!

HARPAGON Why this sudden emotion? Is it the idea or the reality that frightens you?

CLEANTE We are concerned about any plans you might have regarding our marriages, and how such plans might conflict with our own wishes.

HARPAGON A little patience. I know what you both need. Let's begin with you, Cleante. Are you acquainted with a young lady named Mariane, who lives nearby?

CLEANTE Yes, father.

HARPAGON **(To Elise)** And, you?

ELISE I've heard of her.

HARPAGON What are your impressions of this young lady, my son?

CLEANTE A truly charming person.

HARPAGON Her face?

CLEANTE Sincere and decidedly intelligent.

HARPAGON Her demeanor?

CLEANTE Admirable beyond a doubt.

HARPAGON Don't you feel that such a girl deserves consideration?

CLEANTE Yes, father.

HARPAGON That she would make a highly desirable partner?

CLEANTE Very desirable.

HARPAGON That she gives every indication of being a good housekeeper?

CLEANTE Undoubtedly.

HARPAGON And that a husband would be very satisfied with her?

CLEANTE Assuredly.

HARPAGON There's only one minor drawback. I fear that her financial

situation leaves something to be desired.

CLEANTE Ah, father! When it comes to marrying a person of such quality, money means nothing.

HARPAGON Pardon me! But the fact remains that if the money falls short of one's expectations, one should expect other forms of compensation.

CLEANTE That's understandable.

HARPAGON I'm glad that you agree with me, for her genteel bearing and affectionate nature have captured my heart, and I have decided to marry her...providing, of course, that a dowry, however modest, is in the offing.

CLEANTE Eh?

HARPAGON What's that?

CLEANTE You say that you have decided

HARPAGON To marry Mariane.

CLEANTE Who? You, you?

HARPAGON Yes, me, me, me. What do you mean by that?

CLEANTE Excuse me, but I suddenly feel a little faint, and I must withdraw from here. (Exit)

HARPAGON What a weak kneed fop! Well, my daughter, this is what I have planned for myself As for your brother, I have chosen for him a certain widow I heard about this morning; and as for you, I shall give you to Lord Anselme.

ELISE Lord Anselme?

HARPAGON Yes, a mature man, prudent and wise, who is not more than fifty, and who is reputed to be quite wealthy.

ELISE (**Curtsy**) If you please, father, I do not wish to marry.

HARPAGON (**Curtsy in turn**) And I, my little daughter, my dearest, I wish that you do.

ELISE I beg your pardon, father.

HARPAGON I beg your pardon, daughter.

ELISE I am the most humble servant of Lord Anselme, but, with your permission, I shall not marry him.

HARPAGON And I am your most humble valet, but with your permission, you shall marry him this very evening.

ELISE This very evening?

HARPAGON This very evening.

ELISE That will never happen, father.

HARPAGON Yes, it will, daughter.

ELISE I will kill myself rather than marry such a man.

HARPAGON You shall not kill yourself, and you shall marry him brazen creature that you are! Here comes Valere. Shall we seek his opinion in this matter?

ELISE Very well.

HARPAGON Will you submit to his judgment?

ELISE Yes, I will abide by what he says.

HARPAGON So be it.

Scene 5: Valere, Harpagon, Elise

HARPAGON Over here, Valere. My daughter and I have chosen you to decide which of us is right in a certain matter.

VALERE It is you, sir, without question.

HARPAGON Do you know what we are discussing?

VALERE No, but you could never be wrong, for you are reason personified.

HARPAGON I wish to marry her off this very evening to a man who is as rich as he is wise, and the hussy has the audacity to defy me. What do you say to that?

VALERE What do I say to that?

HARPAGON Yes.

VALERE Well, erY

HARPAGON What?

VALERE I say that essentially I share your feelings, for it could never be that you are wrong; however, I submit that she also is not completely wrong, and...

HARPAGON How's that? Lord Anselme is a man of importance a gentleman who is noble, considerate, poised, wise, and very rich, and whose first marriage left him with no children. Could she possibly make a better match?

VALERE That is true; but she might feel that you are rushing things somewhat.

HARPAGON This is an opportunity that calls for fast action. It is not every day that such an advantageous situation presents itself, and if he agrees to take her without a dowry...

VALERE Without a dowry?

HARPAGON Yes.

VALERE Ah! There is no argument against such reasonable terms. Therefore, I have nothing to say.

HARPAGON This will save me a lot of money.

VALERE True, but your daughter may claim that marriage is nothing to take lightly, that it can result in a lifetime of happiness or misery, and that a commitment unto death must only be made with great precaution.

HARPAGON Without a dowry!

VALERE You are right. But there are people who claim that a girl's feelings should be respected, and that a great disparity of age and temperament often leads to much dissension in a marriage.

HARPAGON Without a dowry!

VALERE Ah! A truly incontestable argument. Nevertheless, there are many fathers who are more concerned with their daughters' happiness than with the amount of the dowry.

HARPAGON Without a dowry!

VALERE That's true. There's no rebuttal to that. Without a dowry! An. Utterly irrefutable argument.

HARPAGON (**Aside, looking at the garden**) Aha! I think I hear a dog barking. Could someone be after my money? (**To Valere**) Stay right here; I'll be back in a moment. (EXIT)

ELISE Valere, did you mean what you said to him?

VALERE What I said was meant to placate him, thereby furthering our cause; to contradict him would could court disaster.

ELISE But this marriage, Valere?

VALERE We'll find a way to stop it.

ELISE But how can we, since it is to take place this evening?

VALERE You must request a postponement and pretend to be ill.

ELISE But if they call the doctors, they'll discover the pretense.

VALERE You jest. What do doctors know? Come now, with them you can choose any sickness you wish and those idiots will come up with all sorts of reasons to explain its origin.

Harpagon returns.

HARPAGON (**Aside**) It was nothing, thank God.

VALERE (**To Elise**) In any event, we can always resort to flight. (**Noticing Harpagon**) Yes, a daughter must obey her father, and when there is no dowry involved, she must accept whoever is offered.

HARPAGON Excellently put, my boy

VALERE Sir, I most humbly beg your pardon for the liberty I took in

speaking to your daughter as I did.

HARPAGON How's that? I am delighted, and it is my wish that you have absolute power over her. **(To Elise)** No use in trying to run away. I bestow upon him the authority that Heaven gave me over you, and you are to comply with his every wish.

VALERE **(To Elise)** Did you hear that? Enough of your protests! **(To Harpagon)** Sir, I shall follow her constantly and continue to counsel her in this matter.

HARPAGON Go to it. I've some business in town, but I'll be back shortly.

VALERE **(To Elise)** Yes, when one offers to take a daughter without a dowry, it is something to accept without hesitation, for the absence of a dowry takes precedence over beauty, youth, honor, wisdom, and integrity.

HARPAGON Spoken like a prophet! What a fine lad! Fortunate the man with a servant like this!

ACT II

Scene 1: Cleante, La Fleche

CLEANTE Ah, you wretch! Where have you been hiding?

LA FLECHE You father drove me out threatening to beat me!

CLEANTE What news have you of our business affair? The situation is more urgent than ever, for since our last meeting, I have learned that I have none other than my father as a rival!

LA FLECHE Your father? In love?

CLEANTE Yes, and I had a devil of a time trying to conceal from him my shock at this news.

LA FLECHE Is this some type of joke? Is love anything for the likes of him? Why do you conceal from him your own love?

CLEANTE What was their answer?

LA FLECHE In faith, sir, those who borrow are truly unfortunate, and when you are in the grip of usurers, as in your case, there are some rather strange things to which you must subject yourself

CLEANTE The deal will not go through?

LA FLECHE Master Simon, the agent they gave us, assured me that it was your face alone that won his confidence.

CLEANTE Will I have the fifteen thousand francs I am asking for?

LA FLECHE Yes, but under certain conditions.

CLEANTE Did you speak directly to the lender?

LA FLECHE Ah, that's not the way it's done. Under no circumstances is his name ever to be mentioned; you are to meet with him in a house borrowed expressly for this purpose so that he might learn from you directly about your family and financial situation. Here are some clauses that he dictated to our go-between that are to be shown to you as the first order of business: "Provided that the lender see all the securities of the borrower, and that the borrower be of age, and of a family whose health is ample, solid, secure, and free of all encumbrance, a binding and precise document shall be drawn up by a notary of the highest repute, which notary shall be chosen by the lender. So as not to burden his conscience, the lender will loan the money at the legal rate

of five and one half percent interest."

CLEANTE Five and a half percent! Good heavens, that's fair enough!

LA FLECHE That is true. **(Continuing to read)** "But since the said lender does not have at his disposal the sum in question, and since, to accommodate the borrower, he is obliged to borrow said sum from another party at the rate of twenty percent, it shall be agreed that the said borrower shall pay this interest in addition to the rest, since it is only to oblige the first borrower, that the said lender is undertaking this loan."

CLEANTE What usurious monster are we dealing with here? That's over twenty five percent!

LA FLECHE That's true. It is something you must consider.

CLEANTE What good would that do? I need the money, and I must consent to everything.

LA FLECHE That's the answer I gave him.

CLEANTE Is there anything else?

LA FLECHE Just one small article: "Of the fifteen thousand francs in question, the borrower will receive only twelve thousand in cash; as for the remaining three thousand, the borrower must accept the equivalent in used clothing, jewelry, and various miscellaneous items which are listed in the attached memorandum and for which the said lender has established the most moderate prices possible."

CLEANTE What does all that mean?

LA FLECHE Listen to the memorandum: "First, a four poster bed, draped with Hungarian lace against a decorative backing of olive colored cloth with six chairs and a matching counterpane lined with taffeta in shades of red and blue. The bed comes with a canopy of good Aumale serge in pale rose fringed in silk. All items mentioned are in very good condition."

CLEANTE And what am I to do with all that?

LA FLECHE Wait, there's more: "Plus a tapestry depicting the loves of Gombaud and Macee. Plus a large walnut table with twelve sculpted legs which can be opened from either end and which comes with six stools."

CLEANTE What possible use ?

LA FLECHE Be patient. "Plus three large muskets inlaid with mother of pearl and their accompanying rests. Plus a brick furnace equipped with two retorts and three flasks, very useful

for those with a bent for distilling."

CLEANTE This is too much!

LA FLECHE Gently now. "Plus a lute from Bologne furnished with nearly all of its strings. Plus a game of troll madame, and a checkerboard with a game of goose restored from the Greeks, very suitable for whiling away leisure time. Plus a lizard skin, three and one half feet long, stuffed with hay a delightful curio to hang from the ceiling. The total value of all this actually amounts to four thousand five hundred francs; but, as a gesture of consideration, the lender is reducing the value to three thousand francs.

CLEANTE What usury! He wants to extort an additional three thousand francs from me for some junk he's accumulated! Out of all that, I'm only getting twelve thousand francs, and I've got to accept his terms for the scoundrel has a dagger at my throat! I have my father's avarice to thank for him!

LA FLECHE Indeed, you have sir. Wouldn't I love to rob him! What a service to mankind it would be!

Scene 2: Simon, Harpagon, Cleante La Fleche

SIMON Yes, sir, he's a man in such a financial bind that he will abide by any demands you might make of him.

HARPAGON But are you certain, Master Simon, that there are no risks involved? Can you advise me of the name, financial status and family background of this party?

SIMON All I can tell you is that he comes from a very rich family, that he has suffered the loss of his mother and, should you wish, he would guarantee that within eight months his father, too, will go on to his reward.

LA FLECHE **(Softly to Cleante)** What's the meaning of this? Our Master Simon, speaking to your father?

CLEANTE **(Softly to La Fleche)** Has someone revealed to him my identity? Are you capable of such a treasonable act?

SIMON Aha! You're really rushing things, aren't you? Who told you it was to be here in this house? **(To Harpagon)** I'll have you know, sir that it was not I, sir, who revealed your name and place of residence. But since you are both people of discretion, I don't feel there is any harm done and I don't see why the two of you

can't settle this affair directly.

HARPAGON How's that?

SIMON This is the gentleman who wishes to borrow the fifteen thousand francs in question.

HARPAGON Aha! So you're the rogue given to such shameful extremes!

CLEANTE And you are the culprit responsible for these shameful demands!

EXIT Simon and La Fleche.

HARPAGON It's you who is trying to bankrupt himself by such condemnable borrowing!

CLEANTE And it's you who enriches himself by such criminal usury!

HARPAGON How dare you show your face to me after that!

CLEANTE How dare you show your face to anyone after that!

HARPAGON Are you not ashamed to dissipate so disgracefully the money earned by the sweat of your parents' brows?

CLEANTE Are you not disturbed by your infamous lending conditions which would put to shame the most diabolical of usurers?

HARPAGON Away with you, rogue that you are!

CLEANTE Who is the greater rogue, I ask you? The one who borrows out of need, or the one who steals without need?

HARPAGON Get out! **(Cleante EXITS) (Alone)** I see that I must scrutinize his every action.

Scene 3: Harpagon, Frosine

FROSINE SirY

HARPAGON I'll be with you in a moment. (Aside) I must first check my money.

Scene 4: La Fleche, Frosine

FROSINE Well, well, my poor La Fleche, what on earth brings you here?

LA FLECHE Why, hello, Frosine. And what, might I ask, are you doing here? Conducting some business with the proprietor here?

FROSINE Yes. It's a small affair, for which I expect payment.

LA FLECHE From him? It will take whatever guile you might possess to squeeze a sou out of him!

FROSINE There are ways, and there are ways.

LA FLECHE Perhaps. After all, who am I but a mere valet? But I know Harpagon, the lord of this manor. You, as yet, have been denied the pleasure. There is no service you might render that will gain access to his purse.

FROSINE Come, come. I'm quite familiar with the art of cajoling men.

LA FLECHE That will get you nowhere. To separate him from his money is to tear out his entrails, to thrust a dagger through his heart; and if.. But here he comes. I must go.

Scene 5: Harpagon, Frosine

HARPAGON (**Aside**) All is well. (**To Frosine**) Well, Frosine, what can I do for you?

FROSINE My, my, you look exceptionally well! A veritable picture of health!

HARPAGON Who me?

FROSINE Never have I seen you look so hale and hearty.

HARPAGON Really?

FROSINE I know some twenty five year olds who look older than you.

HARPAGON Nevertheless, Frosine, I'm still a good sixty years old.

FROSINE Come now, what's sixty years? Actually, you're at the prime of life, the mellowest phase of existence.

HARPAGON That's true, but I'd still like to shave off about twenty years.

FROSINE That is hardly necessary, for with your constitution, you'll live to be a hundred.

HARPAGON You think so?

FROSINE Certainly. You have all the indications. Hold still for a moment. Yes, of course...there, right between your eyes, a sign of long life.

HARPAGON Is this a specialty of yours?

FROSINE Indeed, it is. Show me your hand. Ah! Good heavens! What a life line!

HARPAGON How's that?

FROSINE Don't you see how far this line extends?

HARPAGON And just what does that mean, pray tell.

FROSINE A life span of a hundred years...but my feeling is that you'll reach one hundred and twenty!

HARPAGON Is that possible?

FROSINE I tell you that it would take the knife of an assassin to terminate your earthly stay, and that you will have to bury not only your children, but your grandchildren as well.

HARPAGON Splendid! What news have you of our little business matter?

FROSINE Must you ask? Have you ever seen me involved in anything I did not successfully conclude? I am particularly gifted when it comes to matchmaking. In your case, however, the difficulties were minimal since I have dealings with both ladies. I was in a position to tell them about you. I advised the mother of your intentions regarding Mariane.

HARPAGON And her answer was?

FROSINE She received the proposal with joy, and when I expressed your strong desire to have Mariane attend the signing of your daughter's marriage contract this evening, she consented willingly and asked that I make the necessary arrangements.

HARPAGON The fact is, Frosine, that I am obliged to give Anselme a dinner, and I would like to have Mariane share in the treat.

FROSINE You are right. Her plans are to visit your daughter after lunch and then go to the fair; she will then return here for the dinner.

HARPAGON Very well. I could then loan them my carriage so that they might go together.

FROSINE That would do quite nicely.

HARPAGON However, Frosine, have you discussed with the mother the matter of a dowry? After all, when it comes to marrying off a daughter, she, as her mother, should realize her obligation to impoverish herself, if necessary, to heighten her daughter's desirability.

FROSINE How's that? We are discussing here a girl who will provide you with an income of twelve thousand francs.

HARPAGON An income of twelve thousand francs!

FROSINE Yes! First of all, she was raised in a household where expenditures on food were minimal. She is accustomed to a diet of salad, milk, cheese, and apples; consequently, you will be spared the expense of fancy table service, exquisite consommés, endless recipes of peeled barley, as well as all the other delicacies that women may require. This alone will result in a substantial yearly saving on your part of at least three thousand francs. In addition, her tastes are extremely modest; she has little use for fancy clothes, expensive jewelry or

sumptuous furnishings...things to which other women are highly attracted. We have here an additional saving of more than four thousand francs. Furthermore, unlike her present day counterpart, she has an intense dislike for gambling, which enhances her virtue all the more, since I knew a woman in this town whose losses at card playing for this year alone amounted to twenty thousand francs. But let us be modest and assume that the average woman would expend one fourth of that...that is to say five thousand francs...and let us determine what this means in terms of total yearly savings. First, there is the savings of three thousand francs in food, then the four thousand francs in clothes and diamonds, and finally the five thousand francs on gambling...which comes to a grand total of twelve thousand francs!

HARPAGON That's not bad Y But your accounting is rather fanciful.

FROSINE I beg your pardon, but is nothing substantial in the acquisition through marriage of great sobriety, of the inheritance of a great love of simplicity in adornment, and of a great fund of hatred for gambling?

HARPAGON I wish you would stop insulting my intelligence by speaking of a dowry consisting of expenses she will not incur. Speak to me instead of more tangible assets.

FROSINE Good heavens! You'll have your fill of tangible assets, among which are included certain properties abroad to which you will have title.

HARPAGON I'll believe that when I see it. However, Frosine, there is still something that troubles me. As you are aware, the girl is young, and as is usually the case with people of her age, she may prefer the company of her peers. I fear that a man of my advanced years might be distasteful to her. Such a situation in my house could occasion some rather irksome repercussions.

FROSINE Ah! How little do you know of her! The young lady in question despises young people and is irresistibly attracted to the elderly.

HARPAGON She?

FROSINE She is revolted by the mere sight of a young man. Let her see, however, a handsome, mature gentleman with a majestic beard and her pulse quickens with delight.

HARPAGON That is truly admirable! I'm delighted to learn that she is thus inclined. Indeed, were I a young woman, I wouldn't like young

men either.

FROSINE I believe it. Young men are pretentious bumpkins who strut about with woefully exaggerated notions of their irresistibility.

HARPAGON My sentiments exactly; and yet there are women for whom they hold a fatal attraction.

FROSINE How could a woman seek any form of attachment with such base creatures?

HARPAGON This is what I say every day: with their girlish ways, their three strands of turned up cat whiskers that call a mustache, their cottony wigs, their droopy breeches unbuttoned at the stomach!

FROSINE How ludicrous do they appear when compared to a man like you.

HARPAGON Am I really that attractive?

FROSINE Why, you're absolutely irresistible, I tell you! Just look at that face...an artist's dream! Turn that way, if you please. Perfect! Let me see you walk. What an excellent physical specimen! Such structure, such fluidity of movement...the veritable quintessence of masculine charm!

HARPAGON Aside from my occasional fits of coughing, I do pretty well, thank you.

FROSINE Even your coughing has a certain charm about it.

HARPAGON Tell me, has Mariane seen me yet?

FROSINE No, but I described you in great detail and emphasized the advantages of marrying a man of your merits.

HARPAGON You did well, and I thank you for it.

FROSINE Sir, there's a small favor I'd like to ask of you. **(Harpagon frowns)** I'm involved in a lawsuit that I'm about to lose because of a shortage of funds. However, were you to be gracious enough to extend a helping hand in this matter, I could easily win the case. You can't imagine how pleased she'll be to see you. **(Harpagon smiles)** How irresistible you will appear to her, especially with that old fashioned ruff of yours. But what will dazzle her the most are your breeches, attached as they are to your doublet with laces. One look at those laced up breeches and she will be yours!

HARPAGON I'm delighted to hear this.

ACT III

Scene 1: Harpagon, Cleante, Elise, Valere, Claudia, Maitre Jacques, Brindavoine, La Merluche

HARPAGON All right, everyone gather round for his assignment this evening. Come here, Claudia, we'll begin with you. **(Claudia is holding a broom)** Good, I see you're armed and ready. Your task is to clean everywhere, and you are to be especially careful not to rub the furniture too hard for fear of wearing it out. In addition, I'm placing you in charge of the bottles during the dinner service; if one is missing or broken, I'll hold you responsible and will deduct it from your wages.

JACQUES **(Aside)** A suitable punishment.

HARPAGON Off you go. **(Claudia EXITS)** You, Brindavoine, and you, La Merluche, will be in charge of rinsing the glasses and serving the drinks, but you are to do so only when the guests are thirsty. Despite the custom of certain impertinent lackeys, I'll not have you coaxing my guests into drinking a drop more than they wish. Finally, don't serve anyone until he's asked you more than once, and make doubly sure that there's always plenty of water available.

JACQUES **(Aside)** Yes, pure wine goes to your head.

MERLUCHE Do we take our aprons off, sir?

HARPAGON Yes, when the guests arrive...but make sure you don't spoil your clothes.

BRIND'INE You know, sir, that one of the front flaps of my doublet is covered with a big spot of lamp oil.

MERLUCHE And me, sir, I got a big hole in the backside of my breeches, and people can see my... No disrespect, sir.

HARPAGON Enough! **(To La Merluche)** Be clever; walk so that your backside always faces the wall. **(Harpagon places his hat in front of Brindavoine's doublet to hide the lamp oil stain)** And you, always hold your hat like this when you serve. **(To Elise)** And, as for you, my daughter, you will watch as they clear the table and see that nothing is wasted. That's a suitable

task for a daughter. You will now prepare to greet my fiancée, who will be visiting you and taking you with her to the fair. Have you understood my instructions?

ELISE Yes, father.

HARPAGON (**To CLEANTE**) And, as for you, my fine fop of a son, I will not tolerate any more of your sullen looks.

CLEANTE I, father? Sullen looks? And for what reason?

HARPAGON Good heavens, we all know how children feel when their father remarries, and the jaundiced eye with which they behold their new stepmother; but if you want me to forget your latest offense, I strongly advise you to greet her as cordially as you can. I want smiles not frowns!

CLEANTE You have my word that I shall receive her most cordially, and that there will be a continual smile on my face.

HARPAGON I shall hold you to that.

CLEANTE You will have no grounds for complaint.

HARPAGON I'd better not. (**To Jacques**) Maitre Jacques, I've saved you for last.

JACQUES Are you addressing me as your coachman or as your cook, sir, for both jobs are mine.

HARPAGON As both.

JACQUES But which one in particular?

HARPAGON As my cook.

JACQUES Then wait, please. (**Jacques removes his coachman's coat and appears dressed as a cook**) I await your orders.

HARPAGON I am committed to give a dinner this evening, Jacques.

JACQUES Do my ears deceive me?

HARPAGON Tell me, will you prepare a fancy dinner?

JACQUES Yes, if you give me lots of money.

HARPAGON Blast it all! Always money!

VALERE Never have I heard a more impertinent response. What skill is there in preparing a fancy meal with plenty of money? Any simpleton could accomplish that. It's the ability to prepare a fancy meal with little money that determines the true measure of a cook.

JACQUES A fancy meal with little money?

VALERE Yes.

JACQUES In faith, Mr. Steward, I would be deeply obliged to you if you would tell me the secret of how that is done. Since you seem to

know everything about everything, perhaps you'd like to take over my job as cook.

HARPAGON Hold your tongue! What do we need?

JACQUES You'll need your steward here, who says he can prepare a fancy meal with little money.

HARPAGON Enough! I want you to answer me!

JACQUES How many will we have to feed?

HARPAGON Eight or ten, but you must count on eight, for when there is food for eight, there's food for ten.

VALERE Of course.

JACQUES Well, we need four large soups and five courses

HARPAGON What the devil! You talk as though we're feeding an entire town!

JACQUES ...Roast...

HARPAGON **(Covering Jacques' mouth with his hand)** Ah! Traitor! You're eating everything I have!

JACQUES Side dishes...

HARPAGON Still?

VALERE Are you planning to burst their stomachs? It is not our master's intent to have our guests gorge themselves to death. You really ought to familiarize yourself with the rules of good health. As any doctor will tell you, there is no greater detriment to health than the act of overeating; thus, the more frugal the meals you serve, the more friendship you display. With regard to the dinner, I shall assume full responsibility. Leave everything to me.

HARPAGON Go to it.

JACQUES That's even better! Less work for me

HARPAGON You must select foods that are very filling, like fatty mutton stew and a potted pie stuffed with chestnuts. That'll cut their appetites at the outset.

VALERE Rely on me.

HARPAGON Now, Jacques, you must clean my carriage.

JACQUES Wait a minute. You are now speaking to me as your coachman **(He puts on his coachman's coat again)** You were saying.

HARPAGON I was saying that my carriage must be cleaned, and that my horses must be readied for the trip to the fair.

JACQUES Your horses, sir? In faith, they're hardly in any condition to walk. It breaks my heart to see their ribs stick out as they do.

HARPAGON Having them walk to the fair won't strain them that much.

JACQUES How can they drag a carriage when they can hardly drag themselves.

VALERE Sir, I shall ask your neighbor, Le Picard, to drive them there and we could also call upon him to serve in the preparation of the dinner.

JACQUES So be it. If anyone's going to kill them, I'd rather it not be me.

VALERE Maitre Jacques is acting very reasonably.

JACQUES Our good steward is acting very indispensable.

HARPAGON Enough of this!

JACQUES Sir, if there's one thing I can not stand it's a back scratcher! All that's just to get on your good side. It makes me angry, and I get just as angry when I hear the things people say about you every day.

HARPAGON What is it that people say about me?

JACQUES You won't get mad at me, sirY?

HARPAGON Not at all. On the contrary, it would give me great pleasure to learn how they speak of me.

JACQUES All right, sir, since you insist. I shall tell you frankly that your stinginess is the laughing stock of the neighborhood. Some say that you have special almanacs printed where the days of fasting are doubled, thereby cutting down on your food bills. Some say you've been seen stealing the oats from the mouths of your horses, and that your previous coachman, not recognizing you in the dark, whacked the daylights out of you for it. In short, sir, you are the butt of everyone's jokes and the only words I hear to describe you are "miser," "skinflint," "money-grubber," and "usurer."

HARPAGON **(Beating him soundly)** And you, sir, are a fool, a rogue, a scamp, and an impudent numbskull!

JACQUES Ouch! I told you that you'd get mad at the truth and that you wouldn't believe me!

HARPAGON I'll teach you to speak properly!

Scene 2: Maitre Jacques, Valere

VALERE **(Laughing)** From where I stand, Jacques, you paid dearly for your frankness.

JACQUES Mind your own business! You just started working here and

already you're trying to take over. Laugh at your own beatings and not mine.

VALERE (**Trying to restrain his laughter**) Ah, Jacques, please don't be angry, I beseech you.

JACQUES (**Aside**) He's sweet talking me. I'm going to act tough and if he's fool enough to fall for it, I'll give him a little beating. (**Aloud**) Have you noticed, Mr. Laughing Boy, that I don't find this funny at all, and that if you make me mad enough, I'll give you something that will really make you howl.

Jacques pushes Valere to the end of the stage in a threatening fashion.

VALERE Ah, gently now.

JACQUES What do you mean "gently?" You get on my nerves, you do.

VALERE I beseech you.

JACQUES And I don't like your impertinence.

VALERE Sir JacquesY

JACQUES Don't give me any of that sir business. I've a good mind to pick up a stick and give you a sound thrashing.

VALERE What's that you say? A stick?

Valere now pushes Jacques to opposite end of the stage.

JACQUES Eh? Welly I really didn't mean a stick.

VALERE I'll have you know, Sir Numbskull, that I'm quite capable of using a stick on you.

JACQUES Without a doubt.

VALERE And as far as cooks go, you are among the worst.

JACQUES I certainly am.

VALERE You still know nothing about me.

JACQUES I certainly don't

VALERE You'd thrash me, would you?

JACQUES It was only a jest

VALERE Your manner of jest does not please me. (**Valere starts beating Jacques with a stick**) This will teach you to do so with more finesse!

Valere EXITS.

JACQUES To hell with the truth. It hurts too much.

Scene 3: Frosine, Mariane, Jacques

FROSINE Is the master at home, Jacques?

JACQUES I'll say he is.

FROSINE Please tell him that we are here.

Scene 4: Mariane, Frosine

MARIANE Ah, Frosine, I shudder at what I'm about to see.

FROSINE Why?

MARIANE Alas! How can you ask?

FROSINE I can tell that the blond youngster of whom you spoke is definitely on your mind.

MARIANE Yes, Frosine, I'll not deny it.

FROSINE But do you know who he is?

MARIANE No, I don't. Imagine my torment, Frosine, when I compare him with the man they wish to foist upon me.

FROSINE Good heavens! I admit that those pretty boys have their charm, but they could never provide for you as would a rich, older man. I am aware of the sensual deprivation you would have to endure with an older husband, but that would only be for a short time. Once he dies, you'll be free to choose whomever you like.

MARIANE What a strange state of affairs! Having to wait until someone dies to be happy...and since when does death always conform to our wishes?

FROSINE Are you serious? You shall marry him only on the condition that you be widowed within three months... Here he comes in the flesh.

Scene 5: Harpagon, Frosine, Mariane

HARPAGON Please don't be offended, my beauty, that I appear before you wearing my spectacles, but you are among the most beautiful and brightest stars in the universe. **(Aside)** Frosine, she doesn't seem very pleased to see me.

FROSINE Girls are always reluctant to express at first hand what they feel in their hearts.

HARPAGON You're right. **(To Mariane)** There now, my pretty one. Here

comes my daughter to greet you.

Scene 6: Elise, Mariane, Harpagon, Frosine

MARIANE (**Curtsying**) Kindly excuse my delay in visiting you, Madame.

ELISE (**Curtsying in return**) It is I who should ask pardon for not having visited you first.

HARPAGON See what a big girl she is; but, then again, weeds always do grow fast.

MARIANE (**Aside to Frosine**) Oh, how he revolts me!

HARPAGON What did that beauty say?

FROSINE That she finds you truly admirable.

HARPAGON You do me too much honor, my adorable morsel.

MARIANE (**Aside to Frosine**) I can't stand this any longer.

HARPAGON Here, too, is my son, who comes to pay his respects.

MARIANE (**Aside, softly to Frosine**) Ah, Frosine! There he is in the flesh!
The man of whom I spoke!

FROSINE (**Aside to Mariane**) A marvelous turn of events!

HARPAGON I see that you are astonished that my children should be so grown up; but don't worry, I'll soon be rid of them both.

Scene 7: Cleante, Mariane, Harpagon, Elise, Frosine

CLEANTE Madame, this is a most unexpected encounter. I was also surprised when my father advised me of his intentions.

FROSINE I share in your surprise

CLEANTE Truly, my father could not have made a better choice, and I am deeply pleased and honored to see you. However, I must admit that I derive little pleasure from the prospect of having you as a stepmother. The fact is, Madame, that the very thought of this marriage repulses me. Indeed, with my father's permission, I would like to say that, if it were up to me, this marriage would never take place.

HARPAGON Just listen to the impertinence of that compliment!

MARIANE And may I say, in turn, that the thought of having you as a step son is no less repugnant to me, and that this marriage would never take place were I not so bound to it by absolute power.

HARPAGON She is right. One stupid compliment deserves another. I beg

your pardon, my beauty, for my son's impertinence.

MARIANEI found nothing offensive in what he said. On the contrary, I enjoyed hearing his true feelings. Were he not to have done so, my respect for him would have diminished.

HARPAGONIt is so good of you to excuse his faults.

CLEANTEAllow me to serve as my father's spokesman and confess that I have never known anyone as charming as you, and that the joy of being your husband would excel that of being the greatest prince on earth.

HARPAGONGently now, my son, if you please.

CLEANTEI'm only complimenting her on your behalf

HARPAGONI have my own tongue to express myself. Quickly, some chairs.

FROSINENO. It would be preferable to leave now for the fair so that we'll return early enough for the lengthy discussion.

HARPAGON(**Calling offstage to Jacques**) Harness the horses to the carriage. (**To Mariane**) Please excuse me, my beauty, for neglecting to provide you with some refreshment before leaving.

CLEANTEThat's already been arranged, father. I'm having some mandarin oranges, sweet lemons, and preserves sent up on your behalf.

HARPAGON(**Aside to Valere**) Valere!

VALERE(**To Harpagon**) He's lost his senses!

CLEANTEDo you feel that I should have offered more, father?

MARIANEThat really wasn't necessary.

CLEANTEJust look at that ring my father is wearing on his finger, Madame. Have you ever seen a diamond shine like that?

MARIANEIt certainly does sparkle.

CLEANTE(**Removing it from his father's finger and giving to Mariane**) You must look at it closely.

MARIANESuch marvelous reflections! It's truly beautiful.

CLEANTE(**Standing in front of her as she tries to return it**) No, Madame, your hands form too beautiful a setting. Keep it as a gift from my father.

HARPAGONFrom me?!

CLEANTE Is it not true, father, that you wish to give it to her as a token of your love?

HARPAGON (**Aside to Cleante**) How's that?

CLEANTE A fine question, indeed! He's gesturing his approval.

MARIANE I don't want to
CLEANTE You jest, Madame. He wouldn't dream of taking it back.
HARPAGON (**Aside**) This is outrageous!
MARIANE But this would beY
CLEANTE (**Still preventing her from returning the ring**) No, I tell you,
you would offend him.
MARIANE Please...
CLEANTE In no way.
HARPAGON (**Aside to Cleante in menacing tones**) Conniving brigand
that you are.
CLEANTE It's not my fault, father. I'm doing my best to convince her to
keep it, but he's very obstinate.
HARPAGON (**Aside to Cleante furiously**) Scoundrel!
CLEANTE Resist no more, Madame, I beseech you, lest you make him ill.
FROSINE Good heavens, why such ceremony? Keep the ring and make
him happy.
MARIANE Very well. Since I have no wish to upset you, I shall keep the
ring, but only temporarily.

Scene 8: Harpagon, Mariane, Frosine, Cleante, Brindavoine, Elise

BRIND'INE Sir, there's a man out there who'd like to speak to you.
HARPAGON Tell him I'm busy and to come some other time.
BRIND'INE He says that he's got some money for you.
HARPAGON Excuse me. I'll be right back.

Scene 9: Harpagon, Mariane, Cleante, Elise, Frosine, La Merluche, Valere

MERLUCHE (**Enters running and topples Harpagon**) Sir...!
HARPAGON Ah, I'm dying!
CLEANTE What is it, father? Did you hurt yourself?
HARPAGON I'll wager anything that my debtors paid that traitor to make
me break my neck..
VALERE No cause for alarm.
MERLUCHE I'm here to tell you that both your horses have lost their
shoes.
HARPAGON Bring them to the smithy at once.
CLEANTE While they're being shod, father, I'll do the household honors
for you and escort madame to the garden where I'll have the

refreshments served.

HARPAGON Valere, see that he serves as sparingly as possible and send back whatever you can to the food merchant.

VALERE Understood. (EXITS)

HARPAGON **(Alone)** Impertinent son that you are! Do you want to bankrupt me?

ACT IV

Scene 1: Cleante, Mariane, Elise, Frosine

CLEANTE Let us return here where we can speak freely.

ELISE Yes, Madame, my brother has spoken to me of his love for you, and I understand.

MARIANE How consoling it is to have the support of a person like you.

FROSINE It's unfortunate that you did not consult me before this. I could have certainly avoided this unpleasant turn of events.

CLEANTE To what end? This is my cruel destiny; but in any event, my beautiful Mariane, what have you decided?

MARIANE Alas! My state of subservience does not allow for any decision on my part. All I can do is wish.

CLEANTE Is wishing the only solace your heart can offer? No assuaging pity? No helpful kindness? No relieving affection?

MARIANE What can I say? Were you in my position, you would comprehend the futility of my situation. I place myself in your hands, for I know that you would never suggest anything that would compromise my honor and propriety.

CLEANTE Alas! Why must I always be constrained by the dictates of honor and propriety?

MARIANE What would you have me do? Even if I were inclined to ignore the restrictions imposed upon those of my sex, I still have my mother to consider. She raised me with extreme kindness and I could never displease her. You, however, have my permission to do your utmost to win her over. Do and say whatever you must, and should the situation demand that I reveal to her my love for you, I shall do so freely.

CLEANTE Frosine, my poor Frosine, would you help us?

FROSINE With the greatest of pleasure. When it comes to serving love's true cause, I'm really quite sentimental. How may I be of service?

CLEANTE Think of something, I beseech you.

MARIANE Show us a way out of this.

CLEANTE Find a way to undo what you have wrought.

FROSINE This will pose quite a challenge. **(To Mariane)** Since your mother is not a totally unreasonable person, I may be able to persuade her to transfer to the son the gift she planned for the father. **(To Cleante)** However, the problem stems from the fact that the father is none other than your father.

CLEANTE I understand.

FROSINE What I mean is that to reject him is to incur his wrath, and this would hardly incline him to consent to your marriage. **(To Mariane)** Therefore, we must find a way to have you appear less desirable in his eyes so that it will be he, and not you, who does the rejecting.

CLEANTE You are right.

FROSINE Yes, I know, but the problem is how to go about it. Wait! Suppose we found an older woman with a talent equivalent to mine, capable of playing the role of a lady of quality. For the sake of believability, she could engage a quickly improvised retinue and adopt some exotic title, such as Marchioness or Viscountess, and could originate from, let us say, lower Brittany... I could then easily convince your father later that she is a woman of enormous wealth, hopelessly in love with him, and willing to transfer all her possessions to him in a contract of marriage. I am certain that your father would be receptive to such a proposal, for his love of money surpasses his love for you. Subsequently, after he takes the bait and provides you with the consent you seek, it matters little what he does upon learning of the Marchioness' true worth.

CLEANTE A thoroughly ingenious plan!

FROSINE I've just thought of a friend of mine who'll make a perfect Marchioness!

CLEANTE If your plan succeeds, Frosine, I'll be deeply grateful to you. However, my charming Mariane, preventing this marriage will be no small task, and you must do what you can from your end. You can begin by trying to win your mother over to our side. Make liberal use of the irresistibility that Heaven has placed in your eyes and lips.

MARIANE I'll do whatever I can.

Scene 2: Harpagon, Cleante, Mariane, Elise, Frosine

HARPAGON (**Aside and still unseen**) Aha! My son kisses the hand of his future stepmother, and she does little to discourage it! Is there more to this than meets the eye?

ELISE There's my father.

HARPAGON The carriage is ready. You may leave when you wish.

CLEANTE Since you're not going, father, I'll take them myself

HARPAGON No. You stay. They can go quite nicely by themselves; besides, I have need of you. **The Ladies EXIT.**

Scene 3: Harpagon, Cleante

HARPAGON Aside from the fact that she's to be your stepmother, what have you to say about the lady?

CLEANTE What have I to say?

HARPAGON Yes, of her manner, her figure, her beauty, her intelligence.

CLEANTE To speak frankly, she fell far short of my expectations. I find her demeanor blatantly coquettish, her figure ill proportioned, her facial attributes mediocre, and her wit far from spectacular. However, you must feel that I'm trying to downgrade her in your eyes, for as far as stepmothers go, I suppose I like this one as well as I would any other.

HARPAGON But you were just saying to her that

CLEANTE I was speaking gallantly on your behalf merely to please you.

HARPAGON You are, therefore, not attracted to her?

CLEANTE I? In no way.

HARPAGON I'm sorry to hear that. I got to thinking about what people would say about marrying such a youngster. I was about to give up the whole idea and have her marry you instead. But, now with this aversion you have for her, I don't

CLEANTE You'd give her to me?

HARPAGON Yes, to you.

CLEANTE In marriage?

HARPAGON Yes, in marriage.

CLEANTE Although I don't find her terribly attractive, I would somehow force myself to marry her, if only to please you, my dear father.

HARPAGON No, no! Without love, no marriage is happy.

CLEANTE But that's something that may come in time.

HARPAGON No, no... I'll stick to my original plan and marry her myself

CLEANTE Well, father, I am compelled by the present turn of events to

inform you that I have loved Mariane at first sight, and were it not for your feelings toward her and my fear of displeasing you, I would have already asked for your consent to marry her.

HARPAGON Have you visited her?

CLEANTE Yes, father.

HARPAGON Have you declared your love for her and your intention to marry her?

CLEANTE Of course, and I even broached the subject with her mother.

HARPAGON And did she listen to your intentions concerning her daughter?

CLEANTE Yes, very civilly.

HARPAGON And does the daughter love you in return?

CLEANTE Judging from appearances, I am convinced that she cares for me.

HARPAGON **(Aside)** Aha! Just what I wanted Yto worm that secret out of him. **(To Cleante)** My son, there are three things you must do: first, purge yourself of this love; second, you must discontinue the courtship of a lady whom I claim for myself, and finally, you must get married soon to a girl chosen for you.

CLEANTE So this was all a little game. I shall tell you flatly that I will never renounce my love for Mariane, that I shall stop at nothing to prevent your having her, despite the mother's consent that you possess.

HARPAGON How's that? You'd dare to intrude on my domain?

CLEANTE It is you who are intruding in mine, for it is I who knew her first.

HARPAGON Am I not your father? And do you not owe me respect?

CLEANTE Love reigns supreme even over a father's authority.

HARPAGON Yes, and I'll rain some supremely fine blows on your head!

CLEANTE All your threats are to no avail.

HARPAGON You shall give up Mariane!

CLEANTE Never!

HARPAGON **(Shouting to Jacques)** Jacques! Fetch me a stick immediately!

Scene 4: Maitre Jacques, Harpagon, Cleante

JACQUES Now, now, gentlemen. What's all the commotion?

HARPAGON Maitre Jacques, to show how right I am in this matter, I'll let

you be the judge... I love a girl whom I wish to marry, and this scoundrel has the audacity to love her, too, and to seek her hand in marriage despite my orders.

JACQUES Ah, he is wrong.

HARPAGON Is it not disrespectful of a son to compete with his father in the matter of love?

JACQUES Without a doubt.

CLEANTE I am in love with a young lady who returns my affection most tenderly. My father, however, intends to destroy our affair by claiming for himself the hand of the lady in question.

JACQUES He is most assuredly wrong.

CLEANTE Should he not leave affairs of the heart to the young?

JACQUES You are right. Let me have a word with him. **(Turns to Harpagon)** Your son is now ready to submit to your demands, provided you treat him better than previously and provide him with a marriage partner to his liking.

HARPAGON Tell him he can expect to marry whomever he wants with the exception of Mariane.

JACQUES Let me handle this. **(To Cleante)** You must treat him more civilly and display the respect and submissiveness that a son owes to his father.

CLEANTE Ah! Maitre Jacques, if he gives me Mariane, I will be the most submissive of men and would never do anything against his will.

JACQUES **(To Harpagon)** It is done. He agrees to everything you say.

HARPAGON Excellent!

JACQUES **(To Cleante)** Everything is settled. He is satisfied with your promises.

CLEANTE Heaven be praised!

JACQUES Gentlemen, the way is cleared for amicable discussion.

CLEANTE Maitre Jacques, all my life I will be indebted to you for this.

JACQUES Your servant, air.

HARPAGON Maitre Jacques, you have pleased me greatly, and for that you deserve a reward. **(He reaches into his pocket, giving Jacques the impression that he is about to receive something. All that emerges, however, is a handkerchief which Harpagon uses to blow his nose.)**

HARPAGON Off with you now, and be assured that I will remember this.

JACQUES I kiss your hands **(But he doesn't and EXITS)**

Scene 5: Cleante, Harpagon

CLEANTE I promise you, father, that to my dying day I shall never forget your kindness in this affair. Ali, father, what more can I ask of you after your giving me Mariane?

HARPAGON What did you say?

CLEANTE I said that when you granted me Mariane you granted my every wish.

HARPAGON Who said anything about granting you Mariane?

CLEANTE Why you, father.

HARPAGON I?

CLEANTE Most assuredly.

HARPAGON How's that? Why, it's you who promised to give her up.

CLEANTE I? Give her up?

HARPAGON Yes.

CLEANTE Never!

HARPAGON I'll fix you, you traitor!

CLEANTE Do whatever you like.

HARPAGON I forbid you to ever see me again.

CLEANTE How refreshing.

HARPAGON I=ll disinherit you!

CLEANTE Whatever you wish.

HARPAGON And I give you my curse!

CLEANTE I've no need of your gifts!

Scene 6: La Fleche, Cleante

LA FLECHE (**Entering from the garden, money box in hand**) Ah! Sir!
Follow me quickly.

CLEANTE What is it?

LA FLECHE Follow me. I tell you we're in luck.

CLEANTE How's that?

LA FLECHE This is it.

CLEANTE What?

LA FLECHE I've been guarding it all day.

CLEANTE What is it?

LA FLECHE Your father's treasure I filched it!

CLEANTE How did you do it?

LA FLECHE I'll explain everything, but I can hear him shouting. Let's withdraw.

HARPAGON (**Shouting "Stop! Thief! "front the garden and entering hatless**) Stop! Thief! Assassin! Murderer! Justice! Just Heaven! I am lost! I am assassinated! They've cut my throat! They've stolen my money! Who can it be? Where is he hiding? How can I find him? Where shall I run? (**To the Audience**) You all look suspicious to me! Any one of you could pass for a thief! Please, if any of you knows who he is, I implore you to tell me... Quickly now: policemen, archers, provosts, judges, racks, gallows, and hangmen. I'll have everybody hanged, and after that, if I still don't find my money, I'll hang myself!

ACT V

Scene 1: Harpagon, the Officer, Officer's Clerk

OFFICER Leave it to me. I know my job. Now, then, how much money did you say was in the box?

HARPAGON Ten thousand crowns in cash.

OFFICER en thousand crowns?

HARPAGON Ten thousand crowns.

OFFICER That's quite a theft.

HARPAGON There's no torture horrible enough to meet the enormity of this crime.

OFFICER Whom do you suspect of the theft?

HARPAGON Everybody. And I want you to arrest the town and suburbs.

OFFICER We must instead, pursue a course of quiet diligence leading to the recovery of your money.

Scene 2: Maitre Jacques, Harpagon, Officer, Officer's Clerk

JACQUES (**Speaking to someone offstage while entering**) I'll be right back. Have his throat cut, his feet grilled, his body immersed in boiling water, and then hang him from the rafters.

HARPAGON Who? The man who stole my money?

JACQUES No, that suckling pig your steward just sent to me.

HARPAGON Right now there is another matter to discuss with this gentleman.

OFFICER Don't be alarmed. It is not my intent to promote scandal. All will be gentleness and discretion.

JACQUES Is the gentleman one of your dinner guests?

OFFICER My dear friend you must not hide anything from your master.

JACQUES In faith, sir, I'll show you all I know and will treat you as well as I can.

HARPAGON That's not the point!

JACQUES If my dinner is not what I would have it to be, it's the fault of the niggardly steward.

HARPAGON Traitor! We're not talking about the dinner! You must tell me

what you know about the money they took from me!

JACQUES They took money from you?

HARPAGON Yes, scoundrel! And if you don't cough it up, I'll have you hanged!

OFFICER Good heavens! I can tell by his face that he's an honest man. Yes, my friend, if you confess, not only will you be spared of any punishment, but you will also receive an appropriate reward from your master. His money was stolen today, and I'm sure you must know something about it.

JACQUES **(Aside)** This is the chance I've been waiting for to get back at that steward for the beating he gave me. **(To Officer)** Sir, since it is your wish that I be forthright, I shall tell you that the guilty party in this affair is none other than the steward.

HARPAGON Valere?

JACQUES Yes.

HARPAGON The one who appeared so faithful to me?

JACQUES The very one. He's your thief, I believe.

HARPAGON On what do you base this?

JACQUES On what?

HARPAGON Yes.

JACQUES I base it on Yer Yon what I base it on.

OFFICER But you must produce evidence.

HARPAGON Did you see him loitering where I kept my money?

JACQUES Indeed, I did. Er Y where was your money?

HARPAGON In the garden.

JACQUES Precisely! I saw him loitering in the garden, What was the money put in?

HARPAGON In a money box.

JACQUES That's it! I saw him with a money box!

HARPAGON And this money box...describe it to me. I'll tell you in a second if it's mine.

JACQUES Describe it to you?

HARPAGON Yes.

JACQUES Well, it was Yer Y it looked like Yer Ya money box.

HARPAGON Most of them do. Can you give a more detailed description?

JACQUES It's a large money box

HARPAGON The one stolen from me is small.

JACQUES Oh, yes...it's small if you're talking about size. When I said "large," I was talking about its contents.

OFFICER And what color was it?

JACQUES Color?

OFFICER Yes.

JACQUES It's color was... It had a certain color... Perhaps, you might help me describe it?

HARPAGON Eh?

JACQUES Was it red?

HARPAGON No. Gray.

JACQUES Ah! Yes! Grayish red! That's exactly what I meant!

HARPAGON That's the one! No doubt about it!

JACQUES Sir, here he comes now. Please don't tell him that I'm the one who revealed his guilt.

Scene 3: Valere, Harpagon, Maitre Jacques, Officer, Officer's Clerk

HARPAGON Come here! Come and confess the foulest offense ever committed.

VALERE To what offense do you refer?

HARPAGON Don't put on that act with me! The truth is out and I know everything. How could you abuse my goodness and gain entry to my household solely to betray me?

VALERE Sir, since they've told you everything, I shall not deny the matter.

JACQUES **(Aside)** Aha! Could I have guessed right without even knowing it?

VALERE I intended to discuss it with you but was waiting for the proper moment. I implore you to control your temper and to listen to my explanation

HARPAGON And what possible explanation can you proffer, infamous thief that you are?

VALERE It is true that I wronged you, but what I did was excusable.

HARPAGON Excusable? An ambush? A murder like that?

VALERE When you've heard me out, you'll realize that the wrong is not as great as you're making it.

HARPAGON Not as bad as I'm making it? It's my very flesh and blood, you scoundrel!

VALERE Your blood has not fallen into bad hands.

HARPAGON Who made you do this?

VALERE A god who excuses everything done in his nameY Love.

HARPAGON Love?

VALERE Yes.

HARPAGON There's a fine kind of love, indeed! The love of my gold pieces!

VALERE You are mistaken, sir. I am neither dazzled nor tempted by your wealth, and I make no claim on any of your possessions if only you leave me with the love I have.

HARPAGON Never in a million years!

VALERE Nothing but death can separate us.

HARPAGON How you lust for my money!

VALERE I have already told you, sir, my motives were far more noble than you might imagine.

HARPAGON Next you'll be telling me that taking my money was an act of Christian charity! You'll have the law to answer to and I'll have my satisfaction!

VALERE You may do as you wish, but I implore you to believe, however, that if any wrong has been done, it is I who is solely responsible. Your daughter shares none of the blame.

HARPAGON What's my daughter got to do with this?

VALERE And I say to you, sir, that because of her sense of modesty, it was not without considerable difficulty that she complied with the dictates of my heart.

HARPAGON Whose modesty?

VALERE Your daughter has signed a promise of marriage to me.

HARPAGON By the saints! Another disaster!

JACQUES **(To the Officer's Clerk)** Start writing, sir. Start writing.

HARPAGON Misfortune at every turn... Come, sir, do your duty and draw up an indictment of him as a thief and...

VALERE I am not deserving of those names, and once my identity is known...

Scene 4: Elise, Mariane, Frosine, Harpagon, Valere, Maitre Jacques, Officer, Officer's Clerk

HARPAGON Ah! Shameless daughter! So, you would pledge your troth without my consent! You're both mistaken if you think you'll get away with this! **(To Elise)** The four walls of a convent will provide the restraint you need. **(To Valere)** And, as for you, the gallows will cure your audacity!

VALERE I shall be heard before being condemned.

HARPAGON Did I say "gallows?" I'll have you alive on the wheel with your bones broken

ELISE (**On her knees**) Open your heart, father. You have a completely false impression of him. It was he who rescued me from a watery grave, and it is to him, therefore, that you owe the life of the very daughter whom Y

HARPAGON So what? Better he let you drown rather than rob me.

ELISE Father! I call upon your love for me as my father to...

HARPAGON No. I'll listen to none of this. Let justice take its course.

JACQUES (**Aside**) He'll pay for that beating he gave me.

FROSINE Now, this is a strange kettle of fish.

Scene 5: Seigneur Anselme, Harpagon, Elise, Mariane, Frosine, Valere, Maitre Jacques, Officer, Officer's Clerk

ANSELME What is it, Lord Harpagon? You seem quite upset.

HARPAGON Ah! Lord Anselme! Observe before you a scoundrel who wormed his way into my household posing as a domestic for the purpose of stealing my money and seducing my daughter.

VALERE Your money is of no concern to me.

HARPAGON Yes, and they are engaged to be married. This is also an affront to you, Lord Anselme, and it therefore behooves you to prosecute to the full extent of the law...at your own expense, of course.

ANSELME I do not intend to marry a woman against her will, nor would I lay claim to a heart already promised to another.

HARPAGON Charge him for the criminal he is!

VALERE What is criminal about loving your daughter? And once my identity is revealedY

HARPAGON Enough of that claptrap! The world today is full of these impostors.

VALERE I'll have you know, sir, that I would consider it unworthy of me to claim anything that was not mine, and that all Naples can bear witness to my station.

ANSELME Hold on, sir. You happen to be speaking to someone who is totally familiar with... Someone who is in a position to challenge what you may say.

VALERE (**Proudly putting on his hat**) I have nothing to fear, and if as you claim, you are thoroughly familiar with Naples, you must be

acquainted with the name of Don Thomas d'Alburcy.

ANSELME I most certainly am Y probably better than anyone else.

HARPAGON I don't give a hoot about Don Thomas nor of Don Martin, for that matter.

ANSELME Let's hear what he has to say.

VALERE What I have to say is that Don Thomas d'Alburcy is my father.

ANSELME He is your Y

VALERE Yes.

ANSELME Come now, sir, you jest, of course. There's no salvation in playing the impostor.

VALERE May I ask that you weigh your words more carefully, sir? I am not an impostor and can verify whatever I claim.

ANSELME How's that? You dare pretend to be the son of Don Thomas d'Alburcy?

VALERE Yes. And I can prove it!

ANSELME I marvel at your audacity. May I advise you that the gentleman of whom you speak died at sea with his wife and children at least sixteen years ago in an attempt to flee the persecution of the nobility during the Neapolitan Uprising?

VALERE Yes, but I must inform you that his seven year old son, along with a servant, were both rescued by a Spanish ship. And it is that very son who stands before you now. The ship's captain, moved by my plight, raised me as his son. As soon as I was of age, I joined the military. I recently learned that, contrary to my long held belief, my father was not dead. It was while passing through here in search of him that heaven ordained that I should meet the charming Elise. My love for her was so intense that I decided to have someone else continue my search for my father so that I might be free to enter the service of this household, where I enjoy her proximity and protect her from the severity of her father.

ANSELME But what evidence can you provide other than words?

VALERE The Spanish captain, a ruby signet ring once belonging to my father, an agate bracelet given to me by my mother, and finally old Pedro, the servant who, with me, was spared from the shipwreck.

MARIANE You speak the truth, and what you say convinces me that you are my brother.

VALERE You? My sister?

MARIANE Yes. I have been deeply moved by everything you have said. Our mother has spoken to me at length of our family's misfortune, and how great will be her joy in seeing you! Our lives were spared during that shipwreck, but only at the expense of our liberty. While clinging to some floating debris, our mother and I were picked up by a pirate ship, and after ten years of slavery, by a stroke of luck, we regained our liberty. Upon our return, we found that all our possessions were sold, and we were unable to locate father. We then went to Genoa, where our mother collected the remnants of a depleted inheritance. From there, fleeing the inhumanity of her relatives, she came here to a life of continual languish.

ANSELME Oh, Lord, how wondrous is thy power! Come, my children, let us embrace and share this moment of joy!

VALERE You are our father?

ANSELME Yes, my daughter; yes, my son. I am Don Thomas d'Alburcy. I survived that shipwreck and believed both of you to be dead, along with your mother. After sixteen years, I have been searching for a gentle and wise woman with whom I could experience once again the joys of family life. Naples remained too hazardous for me to ever return so I sold my possessions there and settled here under the name of Anselme. My other name was too painful a reminder of the past.

HARPAGON If he is your son, I shall sue you for the ten thousand gold pieces he stole from me.

VALERE Who told you that?

HARPAGON Maitre Jacques.

VALERE You told him that?

JACQUES You know I would never say anything like that,

VALERE **(To Harpagon)** Do you really believe me capable of such a foul act?

Scene 6: Cleante, Valere, Mariane, Elise, Anselme, Jacques, Frosine, Harpagon, Officer, Officer's Clerk

CLEANTE Stop making such wild accusations, father. If you allow me to marry Mariane, you'll have your money back.

HARPAGON Where is it?

CLEANTE You either give me Mariane or lose the money box.

HARPAGON Nothing has been taken from it?

CLEANTE Nothing at all. Do you agree to this marriage?

MARIANE Don't you realize that his consent is no longer sufficient and that you must now address yourself to my father and brother?

ANSELME God has not reunited us, my children, for me to counter your wishes. Lord Harpagon, surely you must realize that a young girl would prefer the son over the father. Consent with me to this double marriage.

HARPAGON Before I decide anything, I must first see my money box.

CLEANTE You will find it in excellent health.

HARPAGON I don't have the money to spend on marriages for my children

ANSELME Be not concerned for it would be my pleasure to pay.

HARPAGON Are you saying that you'll pay all the costs for both marriages?

ANSELME Yes, I will. Does that satisfy you?

HARPAGON Yes! Providing you have new clothes made for me for the wedding.

ANSELME Agreed. Let us rejoice now in the glorious events of the day

OFFICER Hold on, gentlemen. Who'll pay for my depositions?

HARPAGON We don't need your depositions.

OFFICER Yes, but I do not intend to have drawn them up for nothing.

HARPAGON **(Pointing to Jacques)** As a form of payment, I offer this man to hang.

JACQUES What is a man to do? If I tell the truth, I get beaten. If I lie, I get hung.

ANSELME Lord Harpagon, we forgive his deception.

HARPAGON So then, you'll pay the officer?

ANSELME So be it. **(To Valere and Mariane)** Let us go quickly to your mother so that she might share our joy.

HARPAGON And I with haste, to my beloved money box.

BERSERKER

BOOKS

