

The Physician in Spite of Himself

Moliere

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Géronte, *father to Lucinde.*

Léandre, *Lucinde's lover.*

Sganarelle, *husband to Martine.*

M. Robert, *Sganarelle's neighbour.*

Lucas, *husband to Jacqueline.*

Valère, *Géronte's servant.*

Thibaut, *peasants*

Perrin, *his son, peasants,*

Lucinde, *Géronte's daughter.*

Martine, *Sganarelle's wife.*

Jacqueline, *nurse at Géronte's, and Lucas' wife.*

The Scene represents a Forest.

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ACT I

Scene I.—Sganarelle, Martine (*appearing on the stage, quarrelling*).

Sganarelle. No; I tell you that I will do nothing of the kind, and that it is for me to speak, and to be master.

Martine. And I tell you that I will have you live as I like, and that I am not married to you to put up with your vagaries.

Sganarelle. Oh! what a nuisance it is to have a wife! and Aristotle is perfectly right in saying that a woman is worse than a demon.

Martine. Look at Master Clever, with his silly Aristotle!

Sganarelle. Yes, Master Clever. Find me another faggot—binder who can argue upon things as I can, who has served a famous physician for six years, and who, when only a boy, knew his grammar by heart!

Martine. Plague on the arrant fool.

Sganarelle. Plague on the slut!

Martine. Cursed be the hour and the day when I took it into my head to say yes.

Sganarelle. Cursed be the cuckold of a notary that made me sign my own ruination.

Martine. Certainly it well becomes you to complain on that score. Ought you not rather to thank Heaven every minute of the day that you have me for a wife? and did you deserve to marry a woman like me?

Sganarelle. It is true you did me too much honour, and I had great occasion to be satisfied with my wedding—night. Zounds! do not make me open my mouth too wide: I might say certain things —

Martine. What? What could you say?

Sganarelle. Enough; let us drop the subject. It is enough that we know what we know, and that you were very glad to meet with me.

Martine. What do you call very glad to meet with you? A fellow who will drive me to the hospital—a debauched, deceitful wretch, who gobbles up every farthing I have got!

Sganarelle. That is a lie: for I drink part of it.

Martine. Who sells piecemeal every stick of furniture in the house.

Sganarelle. That is living upon one's means.

Martine. Who has taken the very bed from under me!

Sganarelle. You will get up all the earlier.

Martine. In short, who does not leave me a stick in the whole house!

Sganarelle. There will be less trouble in moving.

Martine. And who from morning to night does nothing but gamble and drink!

Sganarelle. That is done in order not to get in the dumps.

Martine. And what am I to do all the while with my family?

Sganarelle. Whatever you like.

Martine. I have got four poor children on my hands.

Sganarelle. Put them down.

Martine.—Who keep asking me every moment for bread.

Sganarelle. Whip them. When I have had enough to eat and to drink, every one in the house ought to be satisfied.

Martine. And do you mean to tell me, you sot, that things can always go on so?

Sganarelle. Wife, let us proceed gently, if you please.

Martine. That I am to bear forever with your insolence and your debauchery?

Sganarelle. Do not let us get into a passion, wife.

Martine. And that I do not know the way to bring you back to your duty?

Sganarelle. Wife, you know that I am not very patient, and that my arm is somewhat heavy.

Martine. I laugh at your threats.

Sganarelle. My sweet wife, my pet, your skin is itching as usual.

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Martine. I will let you see that I am not afraid of you.

Sganarelle. My dearest rib, you have set your heart upon a thrashing.

Martine. Do you think that I am frightened at your talk?

Sganarelle. Sweet object of my affections, I shall box your ears for you.

Martine. Sot that you are!

Sganarelle. I shall thrash you.

Martine. Walking wine-cask!

Sganarelle. I shall pummel you.

Martine. Infamous wretch!

Sganarelle. I shall curry your skin for you.

Martine. Wretch! villain! deceiver! cur! scoundrel! gallows-bird! churl! rogue! scamp! thief! —

Sganarelle. You will have it, will you? (*Takes a stick and beats her.*)

Martine (shrieking). Help! help! help! help!

Sganarelle. That is the real way of quieting you.

Scene II.—M. Robert, Sganarelle, Martine.

M. Robert. Hulloo, hulloo, hulloo! Fie! What is this? What a disgraceful thing! Plague take the scamp to beat his wife so.

Martine (her arms akimbo, speaks to M. Robert, and makes him draw back; at last she gives him a slap on the face). And I like him to beat me, I do.

M. Robert. If that is the case, I consent with all my heart.

Martine. What are you interfering with?

M. Robert. I am wrong.

Martine. Is it any of your business?

M. Robert. You are right.

Martine. Just look at this jackanapes, who wishes to hinder husbands from beating their wives!

M. Robert. I apologize.

Martine. What have you got to say to it?

M. Robert. Nothing.

Martine. Is it for you to poke your nose into it?

M. Robert. No.

Martine. Mind your own business.

M. Robert. I shall not say another word.

Martine. It pleases me to be beaten.

M. Robert. Agreed.

Martine. It does not hurt you.

M. Robert. That is true.

Martine. And you are an ass to interfere with what does not concern you.

M. Robert. Neighbour, I ask your pardon with all my heart. Go on, thrash and beat your wife as much as you like; I shall help you, if you wish it. (*He goes towards Sganarelle, who also speaks to him, makes him draw back, beats him with the stick he has been using, and puts him to flight.*)

Sganarelle. I do not wish it.

M. Robert. Ah! that is a different thing.

Sganarelle. I will beat her if I like; and I will not beat her if I do not like.

M. Robert. Very good.

Sganarelle. She is my wife, and not yours.

M. Robert. Undoubtedly.

Sganarelle. It is not for you to order me about.

M. Robert. Just so.

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Sganarelle. I do not want your help.

M. Robert. Exactly so.

Sganarelle. And it is like your impertinence to meddle with other people's business. Remember that Cicero says that between the tree and the finger you should not put the bark. (*He drives him away, then comes back to his wife, and says to her, squeezing her hand :*)

Scene III.—Sganarelle, Martine.

Sganarelle. Come, let us make it up. Shake hands.

Martine. Yes, after having beaten me thus!

Sganarelle. Never mind that. Shake hands.

Martine. I will not.

Sganarelle. Eh?

Martine. No.

Sganarelle. Come, wife!

Martine. I shall not.

Sganarelle. Come, I tell you.

Martine. I will do nothing of the kind.

Sganarelle. Come, come, come.

Martine. No; I will be angry.

Sganarelle. Bah! it is a trifle. Do.

Martine. Leave me alone.

Sganarelle. Shake hands, I tell you.

Martine. You have treated me too ill.

Sganarelle. Well! I beg your pardon; put your hand there.

Martine. I forgive you (*aside, softly*); but I shall make you pay for it.

Sganarelle. You are silly to take notice of it; these are trifles that are necessary now and then to keep up good feeling; and five or six strokes of a cudgel between people who love each other, only brighten the affections. There now! I am going to the wood, and I promise you that you shall have more than a hundred faggots to-day.

Scene IV.—Martine, *alone.*

Go, my lad, whatever look I may put on, I shall not forget to pay you out; and I am dying to hit upon something to punish you for the blows you gave me. I know well enough that a wife has always the means of being revenged upon her husband; but that is too delicate a punishment for my gallows-bird; I want a revenge that shall strike home a little more, or it will not be satisfaction for the insult which I have received.

Scene V.—Valère, Lucas, Martine.

Lucas (to Valère, without seeing Martine). I'facks we have undertaken a curious errand; and I do not know, for my part, what we shall get by it.

Valère (to Lucas, without seeing Martine). What is the use of grumbling, good foster-father? We are bound to do as our master tells us; and, besides, we have both of us some interest in the health of his daughter, our mistress; for her marriage, which is put off through her illness, will no doubt bring us in something. Horace, who is generous, is the most likely to succeed among her suitors; and although she has shown some inclination for a certain Léandre, you know well enough that her father would never consent to receive him for his son-in-law.

Martine (musing on one side, thinking herself alone). Can I not find out some way of revenging myself?

Lucas (to Valère). But what an idea has he taken into his head, since the doctors are quite at a loss.

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Valère (to Lucas). You may sometimes find by dint of seeking, what cannot be found at once; and often in the most unlikely spots you may —

Martine (still thinking herself alone). Yes; I must pay him out, no matter at what cost. Those cudgel blows lie heavy on my stomach; I cannot digest them; and — (*She is saying all this musingly, and as she moves, she comes in contact with the two men*). Ah, gentlemen, I beg your pardon, I did not notice you, and was puzzling my brain about something that perplexes me.

Valère. Every one has his troubles in this world, and we also are looking for something that we should be very glad to find.

Martine. Is it something in which I can assist you?

Valère. Perhaps. We are endeavouring to meet with some clever man, some special physician, who could give some relief to our master's daughter, seized with an illness which has at once deprived her of the use of her tongue. Several physicians have already exhausted all their knowledge on her behalf; but sometimes one may find people with wonderful secrets, and certain peculiar remedies, who very often succeed where others have failed; and that is the sort of man we are looking for.

Martine (softly and aside). Ah! This is an inspiration from Heaven to revenge myself on my rascal. (*Aloud*). You could never have addressed yourself to any one more able to find what you want; and we have a man here, the most wonderful fellow in the world for desperate maladies.

Valère. Ah! for mercy's sake, where can we meet with him?

Martine. You will find him just now in that little spot yonder, where he is amusing himself in cutting wood.

Lucas. A doctor who cuts wood!

Valère. Who is amusing himself in gathering some simples, you mean to say?

Martine. No; he is a strange fellow who takes a delight in this; a fantastic, eccentric, whimsical man, whom you would never take to be what he really is. He goes about dressed in a most extraordinary fashion, pretends sometimes to be very ignorant, keeps his knowledge to himself, and dislikes nothing so much every day as using the marvellous talents which God has given him for the healing art.

Valère. It is a wonderful thing that all these great men have always some whim, some slight grain of madness mixed with their learning.

Martine. The madness of this man is greater than can be imagined, for sometimes he has to be beaten before he will own his ability; and I warn you beforehand that you will not succeed, that he will never own that he is a physician, unless you take each a stick, and compel him, by dint of blows, to admit at last what he will conceal at first. It is thus that we act when we have need of him.

Valère. What a strange delusion!

Martine. That is true; but, after that, you shall see that he works wonders.

Valère. What is his name?

Martine. His name is Sganarelle. But it is very easy to recognise him. He is a man with a large black beard, and wears a ruff, and a yellow and green coat.

Lucas. A yellow and green coat! He is then a parrot-doctor?

Valère. But is it really true that he is as clever as you say?

Martine. As clever. He is a man who works miracles. About six months ago, a woman was given up by all the other physicians; she was considered dead at least six hours, and they were going to bury her, when they dragged by force the man we are speaking of to her bedside. Having seen her, he poured a small drop of something into her mouth; and at that very instant she rose from her bed, and began immediately to walk in her room as if nothing had happened.

Lucas. Ah!

Valère. It must have been a drop of liquid gold.

Martine. Possibly so. Not more than three weeks ago, a young child, twelve years old, fell from the top of the belfry, and smashed his head, arms, and legs on the stones. No sooner took they our man to it, than he rubbed the whole body with a certain ointment, which he knows how to prepare; and the child immediately rose on its legs, and ran away to play at chuck-farthing.

Lucas. Hah!

Valère. This man must have the universal cure—all.

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Martine. Who doubts it?

Lucas. Odds—bobs! that is the very man we want. Let us go quickly and fetch him.

Valère. We thank you for the service you have rendered us.

Martine. But do not fail to remember the warning I have given you.

Lucas. Hey! Zooks! leave it to us. If he wants nothing but a thrashing, we will gain our point.

Valère (to Lucas). We are very glad to have met with this woman; and I conceive the best hopes in the world from it.

Scene VI.—Sganarelle, Valère, Lucas.

Sganarelle (singing behind the Scene). La, la, la —

Valère. I hear some one singing and cutting wood.

Sganarelle (coming on, with a bottle in his hand, without perceiving Valère or Lucas). La, la, la. — Really I have done enough to deserve a drink. Let us take a little breath. *(He drinks).* This wood is as salt as the very devil. *(Sings).* for the liberty I have taken.

Sganarelle (aside). Bless my soul! Am I perhaps myself mistaken, and have I become a physician without being aware of it?

Valère. You shall not regret, Sir, having shown us what you are; and you shall certainly be satisfied.

Sganarelle. But, tell me, gentlemen, may you not be yourselves mistaken? Is it quite certain that I am a physician?

Lucas. Yes, upon my word!

Sganarelle. Really and truly.

Valère. Undoubtedly.

Sganarelle. The devil take me if I knew it!

Valère. Nonsense! You are the cleverest physician in the world.

Sganarelle. Ha, ha!

Lucas. A physician who has cured I do not know how many complaints.

Sganarelle. The dickens I have!

Valère. A woman was thought dead for six hours; she was ready to be buried when you, with a drop of something, brought her to again, and made her walk at once about the room.

Sganarelle. The deuce I did!

Lucas. A child of twelve fell from the top of the belfry, by which he had his head, his legs, and his arms smashed; and you, with I do not know what ointment, made him immediately get up on his feet, and off he ran to play chuck—farthing.

Sganarelle. The devil I did!

Valère. In short, Sir, you will be satisfied with us, and you shall earn whatever you like, if you allow us to take you where we intend.

Sganarelle. I shall earn whatever I like?

Valère. Yes.

Sganarelle. In that case I am a physician: there is no doubt of it. I had forgotten it; but I recollect it now. What is the matter? Where am I to go?

Valère. We will conduct you. The matter is to see a girl who has lost her speech.

Sganarelle. Indeed! I have not found it.

Valère (softly to Lucas). How he loves his joke! *(To Sganarelle).* Come along, Sir!

Sganarelle. Without a physician's gown!

Valère. We will get one.

Sganarelle (presenting his bottle to Valère). You carry this: I put my juleps in there *(turning round to Lucas and spitting on the ground).* And you, stamp on this, by order of the physician.

Lucas. Odds sniggers! this is a physician I like. I think he will do, for he is a comical fellow.

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ACT II

(The scene represents a room in G ronste's house.)

Scene I.—G ronste, Val re, Lucas, Jacqueline.

Val re. Yes, sir, I think you will be satisfied; we have brought the greatest physician in the world with us.

Lucas. Oh! Zooks! this one beats everything; all the others are not worthy to hold the candle to him.

Val re. He is a man who has performed some marvellous cures.

Lucas. Who has put dead people on their legs again.

Val re. He is somewhat whimsical, as I have told you; and at times there are moments when his senses wander, and he does not seem what he really is.

Lucas. Yes, he loves a joke, and one would say sometimes that he has got a screw loose somewhere.

Val re. But in reality he is quite scientific; and very often he says things quite beyond any one's comprehension.

Lucas. When he sets about it, he talks as finely as if he were reading a book.

Val re. He has already a great reputation hereabout, and everybody comes to consult him.

G ronste. I am very anxious to see him; send him to me quickly.

Val re. I am going to fetch him.

Scene II.—G ronste, Jacqueline, Lucas.

Jacqueline. Upon my word, Sir, this one will do just the same as all the rest. I think it will be six of the one and half-a-dozen of the others; and the best medicine to give to your daughter would, in my opinion, be a handsome strapping husband, for whom she could have some love.

G ronste. Lord bless my soul, nurse dear, you are meddling with many things!

Lucas. Hold your tongue, mother Jacqueline; it is not for you to poke your nose there.

Jacqueline. I tell you, and a dozen more of you, that all these physicians do her no good; that your daughter wants something else than rhubarb and senna, and that a husband is a plaster which cures all girls' complaints.

G ronste. Would any one have her in her present state, with that affliction on her? and when I intended her to marry, has she not opposed my wishes?

Jacqueline. No wonder. You wished to give her a man whom she does not like. Why did you not give her to Monsieur L andre, who takes her fancy? She would have been very obedient, and I vouch for it that he will take her as she is, if you but give her to him.

G ronste. L andre is not the man we want; he has not got a fortune like the other.

Jacqueline. He has got an uncle who is so rich, and he is the heir.

G ronste. All these expectations seem to me but moonshine. Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better; and we run a great risk in waiting for dead men's shoes. Death is not always at the beck and call of gentlemen heirs; and while the grass grows, the cow starves.

Jacqueline. That is all well and good, but I have always heard that in marriage, as in everything else, happiness excels riches. Fathers and mothers have this cursed habit of asking always, "How much has he got?" and "How much has she got?" And gaffer Peter has married his Simonette to that lout Thomas, because he has got a few more vineyards than young Robin, for whom the girl had a fancy; and now the poor creature is as yellow as a guinea, and has not looked like herself ever since. That is a good example for you, Sir. After all, folks have but their pleasure in this world; and I would sooner give my daughter a husband whom she likes than have all the riches in the country.

G ronste. Bless me, nurse, how you chatter! Hold your tongue, let me beg of you; you take too much upon yourself, and you will spoil your milk.

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Lucas. (slapping G ronste's shoulder at every word). Indeed, be silent; you are too saucy. The master does not want your speeches, and he knows what he is about. All you have got to do is to suckle your baby, without arguing so much. Our master is the girl's father, and he is good and clever enough to know what she wants.

G ronste. Gently, gently.

Lucas (still slapping G ronste's shoulder). I wish to show her her place, and teach her the respect due to you, Sir.

G ronste. Very well. But it does not need all this gesticulating.

Scene III.—Val re, Sganarelle, G ronste, Lucas, Jacqueline.

Val re. Look out, Sir, here is our physician coming.

G ronste (to Sganarelle). I am delighted to see you, Sir, at my house, and we have very great need of you.

Sganarelle (in a physician's gown with a very pointed cap). Hippocrates says — that we should both put our hats on.

G ronste. Hippocrates says that?

Sganarelle. Yes.

G ronste. In which chapter, if you please?

Sganarelle. In his chapter — on hats.

G ronste. Since Hippocrates says so, we must obey.

Sganarelle. Doctor, having heard of the marvellous things —

G ronste. To whom are you speaking, pray?

Sganarelle. To you.

G ronste. I am not a physician.

Sganarelle. You are not a physician?

G ronste. Indeed I am not.

Sganarelle. Really?

G ronste. Really. (*Sganarelle takes a stick and thrashes G ronste.*) Oh! Oh! Oh!

Sganarelle. Now you are a physician, I have never taken any other degree.

G ronste (to Val re). What a devil of a fellow you have brought me here!

Val re. Did I not tell you that he was a funny sort of a physician?

G ronste. Yes; but I shall send him about his business with his fun.

Lucas. Do not take any notice of it, Sir. It is only his joking.

G ronste. The joking does not suit me.

Sganarelle. Sir; I beg your pardon for the liberty I have taken.

G ronste. I am your humble servant, Sir.

Sganarelle. I am sorry —

G ronste. It is nothing.

Sganarelle. For the cudgelling I —

G ronste. There is no harm done.

Sganarelle. Which I have had the honour to give you.

G ronste. Do not say any more about it, Sir. I have a daughter who is suffering from a strange complaint.

Sganarelle. I am delighted, Sir, that your daughter has need of my skill; and I wish, with all my heart, that you stood in the same need of it, you and all your family, in order to show you my wish to serve you.

G ronste. I am obliged to you for these kind feelings.

Sganarelle. I assure you that I am speaking from my very heart.

G ronste. You really do me too much honour.

Sganarelle. What is your daughter's name?

G ronste. Lucinde.

Sganarelle. Lucinde! Ah! a pretty name to physic! Lucinde!

G ronste. I will just see what she is doing.

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Sganarelle. Who is that tall woman?

Géronte. She is my baby's nurse.

Scene IV.—Sganarelle, Jacqueline, Lucas.

Sganarelle (aside). The deuce! that is a fine piece of household furniture. (*Aloud.*) Ah, nurse! Charming nurse! my physic is the very humble slave of your nurseship, and I should like to be the fortunate little nursling to suck the milk of your good graces.

(*He puts his hand on her bosom.*) All my nostrums, all my skill, all my cleverness, is at your service; and —

Lucas. By your leave, M. Doctor; leave my wife alone, I pray you.

Sganarelle. What! is she your wife?

Lucas. Yes.

Sganarelle. Oh! indeed! I did not know that, but I am very glad of it for the love of both. (*He pretends to embrace Lucas, but embraces the nurse.*)

Lucas. (*pulling Sganarelle away, and placing himself between him and his wife.*) Gently, if you please.

Sganarelle. I assure you that I am delighted that you should be united together. I congratulate her upon having such a husband as you; and I congratulate you upon having a wife so handsome, so discreet, and so well-shaped as she is. (*He pretends once more to embrace Lucas, who holds out his arms, he slips under them and embraces the nurse.*)

Lucas (*pulling him away again*). Do not pay so many compliments, I beg of you.

Sganarelle. Shall I not rejoice with you about such a lovely harmony?

Lucas. With me as much as you like; but a truce to compliments with my wife.

Sganarelle. I have both your happiness equally at heart; and if I embrace you to show my delight in you, I embrace her to show my delight in her. (*Same by-play*).

Lucas (*pulling him away for the third time*). Odds boddikins, Doctor, what capers you cut!

Scene V.—Géronte, Sganarelle, Lucas, Jacqueline.

Géronte. My daughter will be here directly, Sir.

Sganarelle. I am awaiting her, Sir, with all my physic.

Géronte. Where is it?

Sganarelle (*touching his forehead*). In there.

Géronte. That is good.

Sganarelle. But as I feel much interested in your family, I should like to test the milk of your nurse, and examine her breasts. (*He draws close to Jacqueline*).

Lucas (*pulling him away, and swinging him round*). Nothing of the sort, nothing of the sort. I do not wish it.

Sganarelle. It is the physician's duty to see the breasts of the nurse.

Lucas. Duty or no duty, I will not have it.

Sganarelle. Have you the audacity to contradict a physician? Out with you.

Lucas. I do not care a straw about a physician.

Sganarelle (*looking askance at him*). I will give you a fever.

Jacqueline (*taking Lucas by the arm, and swinging him round also*). Get out of the way. Am I not big enough to take my own part, if he does anything to me which he ought not to do?

Lucas. I will not have him touch you, I will not.

Sganarelle. For shame you rascal, to be jealous of your wife.

Géronte. Here comes my daughter.

Scene VI.—Lucinde, Gérard, Sganarelle, Valère, Lucas, Jacqueline.

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Sganarelle. Is this the patient?

Géronte. Yes, I have but one daughter; and I would never get over it if she were to die.

Sganarelle. Do not let her do anything of the kind. She must not die without a prescription of the physician.

Géronte. A chair here!

Sganarelle (*seated between Gérard and Lucinde*). This is not at all an unpleasant patient, and I am of the opinion that she would not be at all amiss for a man in very good health.

Géronte. You have made her laugh, Sir.

Sganarelle. So much the better. It is the best sign in the world when a physician makes the patient laugh. (*To Lucinde.*) Well, what is the matter? What ails you? What is it you feel?

Lucinde (*replies by motions, by putting her hand to her mouth, her head, and under her chin*). Ha, hi, ho, ha!

Sganarelle. What do you say?

Lucinde (*continues the same motions*). Ha, hi, ho, ha, ha, hi, ho!

Sganarelle. What is that?

Lucinde. Ha, hi, ho!

Sganarelle (*imitating her*). Ha, hi, ho, ha, ha! I do not understand you. What sort of language do you call that?

Géronte. That is just where her complaint lies, Sir. She has become dumb, without our having been able till now to discover the cause. This accident has obliged us to postpone her marriage.

Sganarelle. And why so?

Géronte. He whom she is going to marry wishes to wait for her recovery to conclude the marriage.

Sganarelle. And who is this fool that does not want his wife to be dumb? Would to Heaven that mine had that complaint! I should take particular care not to have her cured.

Géronte. To the point, Sir. We beseech you to use all your skill to cure her of this affliction.

Sganarelle. Do not make yourself uneasy. But tell me, does this pain oppress her much?

Géronte. Yes, Sir.

Sganarelle. So much the better. Is the suffering very acute?

Géronte. Very acute.

Sganarelle. That is right. Does she go to — you know where?

Géronte. Yes.

Sganarelle. Freely?

Géronte. That I know nothing about.

Sganarelle. Is the matter healthy?

Géronte. I do not understand these things.

Sganarelle (*turning to the patient*). Give me your hand. (*To Gérard.*) The pulse tells me that your daughter is dumb.

Géronte. Sir, that is what is the matter with her; ah! yes, you have found it out at the first touch.

Sganarelle. Of course!

Jacqueline. See how he has guessed her complaint.

Sganarelle. We great physicians, we know matters at once. An ignoramus would have been nonplussed, and would have told you: it is this, that, or the other; but I hit the nail on the head from the very first, and I tell you that your daughter is dumb.

Géronte. Yes; but I should like you to tell me whence it arises.

Sganarelle. Nothing is easier; it arises from loss of speech.

Géronte. Very good. But the reason of her having lost her speech, pray?

Sganarelle. Our best authorities will tell you that it is because there is an impediment in the action of her tongue.

Géronte. But, once more, your opinion upon this impediment in the action of her tongue.

Sganarelle. Aristotle on this subject says — a great many clever things.

Géronte. I dare say.

Sganarelle. Ah! He was a great man!

Géronte. No doubt.

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Sganarelle. Yes, a very great man. (*Holding out his arm, and putting a finger of the other hand in the bend*). A man who was, by this, much greater than I. But to come back to our argument: I hold that this impediment in the action of her tongue is caused by certain humours, which among us learned men, we call peccant humours; peccant—that is to say — peccant humours; inasmuch as the vapours formed by the exhalations of the influences which rise in the very region of diseases, coming, — as we may say to.— Do you understand Latin?

Géronte. Not in the least.

Sganarelle (*suddenly rising*). You do not understand Latin?

Géronte. No.

Sganarelle (*assuming various comic attitudes*). *Cabricias arci thuram, catalamus, singulariter, nominativo, hæc musa*, the muse, *bonus, bona, bonum. Deus sanctus, estne oratio latinus? Etiam*, Yes. *Quare?* Why. *Quia substantivo et adjectivum, concordat in generi, numerum, et casus*.

Géronte. Ah! Why did I not study?

Jacqueline. What a clever man!

Lucas. Yes, it is so beautiful that I do not understand a word of it.

Sganarelle. Thus these vapours which I speak of, passing from the left side, where the liver is, to the right side, where we find the heart, it so happens that the lungs, which in Latin we call *armyan*, having communication with the brain, which in Greek we style *nasmus*, by means of the *vena cava*, which in Hebrew, is termed *cubile*, meet in their course the said vapours, which fill the ventricles of the omoplata; and because the said vapours — now understand well this argument, pray — and because these said vapours are endowed with a certain malignity — listen well to this, I beseech you.

Géronte. Yes.

Sganarelle. Are endowed with a certain malignity which is caused — pay attention here, if you please.

Géronte. I do.

Sganarelle. Which is caused by the acridity of these humours engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm, it happens that these vapours.— *Ossabandus, nequeis, nequer, potarinum, puipsa milus*. That is exactly the reason that your daughter is dumb.

Jacqueline. Ah! How well this gentleman explains all this.

Lucas. Why does not my tongue wag as well as his?

Géronte. It is undoubtedly impossible to argue better. There is but one thing that I cannot exactly make out: that is the whereabouts of the liver and the heart. It appears to me that you place them differently from what they are; that the heart is on the left side, and the liver on the right.

Sganarelle. Yes; this was so formerly; but we have changed all that, and we now—a—days practise the medical art on an entirely new system.

Géronte. I did not know that, and I pray you pardon my ignorance.

Sganarelle. There is no harm done; and you are not obliged to be so clever as we are.

Géronte. Certainly not. But what think you, Sir, ought to be done for this complaint?

Sganarelle. What do I think ought to be done?

Géronte. Yes.

Sganarelle. My advice is to put her to bed again, and make her, as a remedy, take plenty of bread soaked in wine.

Géronte. Why so, sir?

Sganarelle. Because there is in bread and wine mixed together a sympathetic virtue which produces speech. Do you not see that they give nothing else to parrots, and that, by eating it, they learn to speak?

Géronte. That is true. Oh! the great man! Quick, plenty of bread and wine.

Sganarelle. I shall come back to—night to see how the patient is getting on.

Scene VII.—Géronte, Sganarelle, Jacqueline.

Sganarelle (*to Jacqueline*). Stop a little you. (*To Gérard*.) Sir, I must give some medicine to your nurse.

Jacqueline. To me, Sir? I am as well as can be.

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Sganarelle. So much the worse, nurse, so much the worse. This excess of health is dangerous, and it would not be amiss to bleed you a little gently, and to administer some little soothing injection.

Géronte. But, my dear Sir, that is a method which I cannot understand. Why bleed folks when they are not ill?

Sganarelle. It does not matter, the method is salutary; and as we drink for the thirst to come, so must we bleed for the disease to come.

Jacqueline (going). I do not care a fig for all this, and I will not have my body made an apothecary's shop.

Sganarelle. You object to my remedies; but we shall know how to bring you to reason.

Scene VIII.—Géronte, Sganarelle.

Sganarelle. I wish you good day.

Géronte. Stay a moment, if you please.

Sganarelle. What are you going to do?

Géronte. Give you your fee, sir.

Sganarelle (putting his hands behind him, from under his gown, while Gérard opens his purse). I shall not accept it, Sir.

Géronte. Sir.

Sganarelle. Not at all.

Géronte. One moment.

Sganarelle. On no consideration.

Géronte. Pray!

Sganarelle. You are jesting.

Géronte. That is settled.

Sganarelle. I shall do nothing of the kind.

Géronte. What!

Sganarelle. I do not practise for money's sake.

Géronte. I am convinced of that.

Sganarelle (after having taken the money). Are they good weight?

Géronte. Yes, Sir.

Sganarelle. I am not a mercenary physician.

Géronte. I am well aware of it.

Sganarelle. I am not actuated by interest.

Géronte. I do not for a moment think so.

Sganarelle (alone, looking at the money he has received). Upon my word, this does not promise badly; and provided —

Scene IX.—Léandre, Sganarelle.

Léandre. I have been waiting some time for you, Sir, and I have come to beg your assistance.

Sganarelle (feeling his pulse). That is a very bad pulse.

Léandre. I am not ill, Sir; and it is not for that I am come to you.

Sganarelle. If you are not ill, why the devil do you not tell me so?

Léandre. No. To tell you the matter in a few words, my name is Léandre. I am in love with Lucinde to whom you have just paid a visit; and as all access to her is denied to me, through the ill-temper of her father, I venture to beseech you to serve me in my love affair, and to assist me in a stratagem that I have invented, so as to say a few words to her, on which my whole life and happiness absolutely depend.

Sganarelle (in apparent anger). Whom do you take me for? How dare you address yourself to me to assist you in your love affair, and to wish me to lower the dignity of a physician by an affair of that kind!

Léandre. Do not make a noise, Sir!

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Sganarelle (driving him back). I will make a noise. You are an impertinent fellow.

Léandre. Ah! gently, Sir.

Sganarelle. An ill-mannered jackanapes.

Léandre. Pray!

Sganarelle. I will teach you that I am not the kind of man you take me for, and that it is the greatest insolence

—
Léandre (taking out a purse). Sir —

Sganarelle. To wish to employ me — (*taking the purse*). I am not speaking about you, for you are a gentleman; and I should be delighted to be of any use to you; but there are certain impertinent people in this world who take folks for what they are not; and I tell you candidly that this puts me in a passion.

Léandre. I ask your pardon, Sir, for the liberty I have —

Sganarelle. You are jesting. What is the affair in question?

Léandre. You must know then, Sir, that this disease which you wish to cure is a feigned complaint. The physicians have argued about it, as they ought to do, and they have not failed to give it as their opinion,—this one, that it arose from the brain; that one, from the intestines; another, from the spleen; another, again, from the liver; but the fact is that love is its real cause, and that Lucinde has only invented this illness in order to free herself from a marriage with which she has been harassed. But for fear that we may be seen together, let us retire; and I will tell you as we go along, what I wish you to do.

Sganarelle. Come along, then, Sir. You have inspired me with an inconceivable interest in your love; and if all my medical science does not fail me, the patient shall either die or be yours.

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ACT III

(The scene represents a spot near G eronte's house.)

Scene I.—L andre, Sganarelle.

L andre. I think that I am not at all badly got up for an apothecary; and as her father has scarcely ever seen me, this change of dress and wig is likely enough, I think, to disguise me.

Sganarelle. There is no doubt of it.

L andre. Only I should like to know five or six big medical words to leaven my conversation with, and to give me the air of a learned man.

Sganarelle. Go along, go along; it is not at all necessary. The dress is sufficient; and I know no more about it than you do.

L andre. How is that!

Sganarelle. The devil take me if I understand anything about medicine! You are a gentleman, and I do not mind confiding in you, as you have confided in me.

L andre. What! Then you are not really —

Sganarelle. No, I tell you. They have made me a physician in the teeth of my protests. I have never attempted to be so learned as that; and all my studies did not go farther than the lowest class at school. I do not know how the idea has come to them; but when I saw that in spite of everything they would have it that I was a physician, I made up my mind to be so at somebody's expense. You would not believe, however, how this error has spread, and how everyone is possessed, and believes me to a learned man. They come seeking me on all sides; and if things go on in this way, I am resolved to stick to the profession all my life. I find that it is the best trade of all; for, whether we manage well or ill, we are paid just the same. Bad workmanship never recoils on us; and we cut the material we have to work with pretty much as we like. A shoemaker, in making a pair of shoes, cannot spoil a scrap of leather without having to bear the loss; but in our business we may spoil a man without its costing us a farthing. The blunders are never put down to us, and it is always the fault of the fellow who dies. The best of this profession is, that there is the greatest honesty and discretion among the dead; for you never find them complain of the physician who has killed them.

L andre. It is true that the dead are very honourable in that respect.

Sganarelle (seeing some people advancing towards him). There come some people, who seem anxious to consult me. *(To L andre).* Go and wait for me near the house of your lady—love.

Scene II.—Thibaut, Perrin, Sganarelle.

Thibaut. Sir, we come to look for you, my son Perrin and myself.

Sganarelle. What is the matter?

Thibaut. His poor mother, whose name is Perrette, has been on a bed of sickness for the last six months.

Sganarelle (holding out his hand as if to receive money). What would you have me do to her?

Thibaut. I would like you to give me some little doctor's stuff to cure her.

Sganarelle. We must first see what is the matter with her.

Thibaut. She is ill with the hypocrisy, Sir.

Sganarelle. With the hypocrisy?

Thibaut. Yes; I mean she is swollen everywhere. They say that there is a lot of seriousness in her inside, and that her liver, her belly, or her spleen, as you would call it, instead of making blood makes nothing but water. She has, every other day, the quotiguan fever, with lassitude and pains in the muscles of her legs. We can hear in her throat phlegms that are ready to choke her, and she is often taken with syncoles and conversions, so that we think she is going off the hooks. We have got in our village an apothecary—with respect be it said—who has given her,

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I do not know how much stuff; and it has cost me more than a dozen good crowns in clysters, saving your presence, in apostumes which he has made her swallow, in infections of hyacinth, and in cordial potions. But all this, as people say, was nothing but an ointment of fiddle-faddle. He wanted to give her a certain drug called amelite wine; but I was downright afraid that this would send her to the other world altogether; because they tell me that those big physicians kill, I do not know how many, with that new-fangled notion.

Sganarelle (still holding out his hand, and moving it about to show that he wants money). Let us come to the point, friend, let us come to the point.

Thibaut. The point is, Sir, that we have come to beg of you to tell us what we must do.

Sganarelle. I do not understand you at all.

Perrin. My mother is ill, Sir, and here are two crowns which we have brought you to give us some stuff.

Sganarelle. Ah! you I do understand. There is a lad who speaks clearly, and explains himself as he should. You say that your mother is ill with the dropsy; that she is swollen all over her body; that she has a fever, with pains in the legs; that she sometimes is taken with syncopes and convulsions, that is to say with fainting fits.

Perrin. Indeed, Sir! that is just it.

Sganarelle. I understand you at once. Your father does not know what he says. And now you ask me for a remedy?

Perrin. Yes, sir.

Sganarelle. A remedy to cure her?

Perrin. That is just what I mean.

Sganarelle. Take this then. It is a piece of cheese which you must make her take.

Perrin. A piece of cheese, Sir?

Sganarelle. Yes; it is a kind of prepared cheese, in which there is gold, coral, and pearls, and a great many other precious things.

Perrin. I am very much obliged to you, Sir, and I shall go and make her take it directly.

Sganarelle. Go, and if she dies, do not fail to bury her in the best style you can.

Scene III.—(*The Scene changes, and represents, as in the Second Act, a room in Géronte's house*)—*Jacqueline, Sganarelle, Lucas, at the far end of the stage.*

Sganarelle. Here is the pretty nurse. Ah! you darling nurse, I am delighted at this meeting; and the sight of you is like rhubarb, cassia, and senna to me, which purges all melancholy from my mind.

Jacqueline. Upon my word, M. Physician, it is no good talking to me in that style, and I do not understand your Latin at all.

Sganarelle. Get ill, nurse, I beg of you; get ill for my sake. I shall have all the pleasure in the world of curing you.

Jacqueline. I am your humble servant; I would much rather not be cured.

Sganarelle. How I grieve for you, beautiful nurse, in having such a jealous and troublesome husband.

Jacqueline. What am I to do, Sir? It is a penance for my sins; and where the goat is tied down she must browse.

Sganarelle. What! Such a clod-hopper as that! a fellow who is always watching you, and will let no one speak to you!

Jacqueline. Alas! you have seen nothing yet; and that is only a small sample of his bad temper.

Sganarelle. Is it possible? and can a man have so mean a spirit as to ill-use a woman like you? Ah! I know some, sweet nurse, and who are not very far off, who would only be too glad to kiss your little feet! Why should such a handsome woman have fallen into such hands! and a mere animal, a brute, a stupid, a fool.— Excuse me, nurse, for speaking in that way of your husband.

Jacqueline. Oh! Sir, I know full well that he deserves all these names.

Sganarelle. Undoubtedly, nurse, he deserves them; and he also deserves that you should plant something on his head to punish him for his suspicions.

Jacqueline. It is true enough that if I had not his interest so much at heart, he would drive me to do some

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strange things.

Sganarelle. Indeed it would just serve him right if you were to revenge yourself upon him with some one. The fellow richly deserves it all, I tell you, and if I were fortunate enough, fair nurse, to be chosen by you —

(While Sganarelle is holding out his arms to embrace Jacqueline, Lucas passes his head under them, and comes between the two. Sganarelle and Jacqueline stare at Lucas, and depart on opposite sides, but the doctor does so in a very comic manner .)

Scene IV.—Géronte, Lucas.

Géronte. I say, Lucas, have not you seen our physician here?

Lucas. Indeed I have seen him, by all the devils, and my wife, too.

Géronte. Where can he be?

Lucas. I do not know; but I wish he were with the devil.

Géronte. Just go and see what my daughter is doing.

Scene V.—Sganarelle, Léandre, Géronte.

Géronte. I was just inquiring after you, Sir.

Sganarelle. I have just been amusing myself in your court with expelling the superfluity of drink. How is the patient?

Géronte. Somewhat worse since your remedy.

Sganarelle. So much the better; it shows that it takes effect.

Géronte. Yes; but while it is taking effect, I am afraid it will choke her.

Sganarelle. Do not make yourself uneasy; I have some remedies that will make it all right! and I will wait until she is at death's door.

Géronte (pointing to Léandre). Who is this man that is with you?

Sganarelle (intimates by motions of his hands that it is an apothecary). It is.—

Géronte. What?

Sganarelle. He who —

Géronte. Oh!

Sganarelle. Who —

Géronte. I understand.

Sganarelle. Your daughter will want him.

Scene VI.—Lucinde, Géronte, Léandre, Jacqueline, Sganarelle.

Jacqueline. Here is your daughter, Sir, who wishes to stretch her limbs a little.

Sganarelle. That will do her good. Go to her, M. Apothecary, and feel her pulse, so that I may consult with you presently about her complaint. *(At this point he draws Géronte to one end of the stage, and putting one arm upon his shoulder, he places his hand under his chin, with which he makes him turn towards him, each time that Géronte wants to look at what is passing between his daughter and the apothecary, while he holds the following discourse with him.)* Sir, it is a great and subtle question among physicians to know whether women or men are more easily cured. I pray you to listen to this, if you please. Some say "no," others say "yes": I say both "yes" and "no"; inasmuch as the incongruity of the opaque humours, which are found in the natural temperament of women, causes the brutal part to struggle for the mastery over the sensitive, we find that the conflict of their opinion depends on the oblique motion of the circle of the moon; and as the sun, which darts its beams on the concavity of the earth, meets —

Lucinde (to Léandre). No; I am not at all likely to change my feelings.

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Géronte. Hark! my daughter speaks! O great virtue of the remedy! O excellent physician! How deeply am I obliged to you, Sir, for this marvellous cure! And what can I do for you after such a service?

Sganarelle (*strutting about the stage, fanning himself with his hat*). This case has given me some trouble.

Lucinde. Yes, father, I have recovered my speech; but I have recovered it to tell you that I will never have any other husband than Léandre, and that it is in vain for you to wish to give me to Horace.

Géronte. But --

Lucinde. Nothing will shake the resolution I have taken.

Géronte. What --

Lucinde. All your fine arguments will be in vain.

Géronte. If --

Lucinde. All your talking will be of no use.

Géronte. I --

Lucinde. I have made up my mind about the matter.

Géronte. But --

Lucinde. No paternal authority can compel me to marry against my will.

Géronte. I have --

Lucinde. You may try as much as you like.

Géronte. It --

Lucinde. My heart cannot submit to this tyranny.

Géronte. The --

Lucinde. And I will sooner go into a convent than marry a man I do not love.

Géronte. But --

Lucinde (*in a loud voice*). No. By no means. It is of no use. You waste your time. I shall do nothing of the kind. I am fully determined.

Géronte. Ah! what a torrent of words! One cannot hold out against it. (*To Sganarelle*). I beseech you, Sir, to make her dumb again.

Sganarelle. That is impossible. All that I can do in your behalf is to make you deaf, if you like.

Géronte. I thank you. (*To Lucinde*). Do you think --

Lucinde. No; all your reasoning will not have the slightest effect upon me.

Géronte. You shall marry Horace this very evening.

Lucinde. I would sooner marry death itself.

Sganarelle (*to Gérard*). Stop, for Heaven's sake! stop. Let me doctor this matter; it is a disease that has got hold of her, and I know the remedy to apply to it.

Géronte. Is it possible, indeed, Sir, that you can cure this disease of the mind also?

Sganarelle. Yes; let me manage it. I have remedies for everything; and our apothecary will serve us capitally for this cure. (*To Léandre*.) A word with you. You perceive that the passion she has for this Léandre is altogether against the wishes of the father; that there is no time to lose; that the humours are very acrimonious; and that it becomes necessary to find speedily a remedy for this complaint, which may get worse by delay. As for myself, I see but one, which is a dose of purgative flight, mixed, as it should be, with two drachms of matrimonium, made up into pills. She may, perhaps, make some difficulty about taking this remedy; but as you are a clever man in your profession, you must induce her to consent to it, and make her swallow the thing as best you can. Go and take a little turn in the garden with her to prepare the humours, while I converse here with her father; but, above all, lose not a moment. Apply the remedy quick! apply the specific!

Scene VII.--Géronte, Sganarelle.

Géronte. What drugs are those you have just mentioned, Sir? It seems to me that I never heard of them before.

Sganarelle. They are drugs which are used only in urgent cases.

Géronte. Did you ever see such insolence as hers?

Sganarelle. Daughters are a little headstrong at times.

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Géronte. You would not believe how she is infatuated with this Léandre.

Sganarelle. The heat of the blood produces those things in young people.

Géronte. As for me, the moment I discovered the violence of this passion, I took care to keep my daughter under lock and key.

Sganarelle. You have acted wisely.

Géronte. And I have prevented the slightest communication between them.

Sganarelle. Just so.

Géronte. They would have committed some folly, if they had been permitted to see each other.

Sganarelle. Undoubtedly.

Géronte. And I think she would have been the girl to run away with him.

Sganarelle. You have argued very prudently.

Géronte. I was informed, that he tried every means to get speech of her.

Sganarelle. The rascal!

Géronte. But he will waste his time.

Sganarelle. Aye! Aye!

Géronte. And I will effectually prevent him from seeing her.

Sganarelle. He has no fool to deal with, and you know some tricks of which he is ignorant. One must get up very early to catch you asleep.

Scene VIII.—Lucas, Gérard, Sganarelle.

Lucas. Odds—bobs! Sir, here is a pretty to do. Your daughter has fled with her Léandre. It was he that played the apothecary, and this is the physician who has performed this nice operation.

Géronte. What! to murder me in this manner! Quick, fetch a magistrate, and take care that he does not get away. Ah villain! I will have you punished by the law.

Lucas. I am afraid, Master Doctor, that you will be hanged. Do not stir a step, I tell you.

Scene IX.—Martine, Sganarelle, Lucas.

Martine (to Lucas). Good gracious! what a difficulty I have had to find this place! Just tell me what has become of the physician I recommended to you?

Lucas. Here he is; just going to be hanged.

Martine. What! my husband hanged! Alas, and for what?

Lucas. He has helped some one to run away with master's daughter.

Martine. Alas, my dear husband, is it true that you are going to be hanged?

Sganarelle. Judge for yourself. Ah!

Martine. And must you be made an end of in the presence of such a crowd.

Sganarelle. What am I to do?

Martine. If you had only finished cutting our wood, I should be somewhat consoled.

Sganarelle. Leave me, you break my heart.

Martine. No, I will remain to encourage you to die; and I will not leave you until I have seen you hanged.

Sganarelle. Ah!

Scene X.—Géronte, Sganarelle, Martine.

Géronte (to Sganarelle). The magistrate will be here directly, and we shall put you in a place of safety where they will be answerable for you.

Sganarelle (on his knees, hat in hand). Alas! will not a few strokes with a cudgel do instead?

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Géronte. No; no; the law shall decide. But what do I see?

Scene XI.—*Géronte, Léandre, Lucinde, Sganarelle, Lucas, Martine.*

Léandre. Sir, I appear before you as Léandre, and am come to restore Lucinde to your authority. We intended to run away, and get married; but this design has given away to a more honourable proceeding. I will not presume to steal away your daughter, and it is from your hands alone that I will obtain her. I must at the same time acquaint you, that I have just now received some letters informing me of the death of my uncle, and that he has left me heir to all his property.

Géronte. Really, Sir, your virtue is worthy of my utmost consideration, and I give you my daughter with the greatest pleasure in the world.

Sganarelle (aside). The physician has had a narrow escape!

Martine. Since you are not going to be hanged, you may thank me for being a physician; for I have procured you this honour.

Sganarelle. Yes, it is you who procured me, I do not know how many thwacks with a cudgel.

Léandre (to Sganarelle). The result has proved too happy to harbour any resentment.

Sganarelle. Be it so. (*To Martine.*) I forgive you the blows on account of the dignity to which you have elevated me; but prepare yourself henceforth to behave with great respect towards a man of my consequence; and consider that the anger of a physician is more to be dreaded than people imagine.