THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

By Molière

Translated by Brett B. Bodemer
2011

CHARACTERS

SGANARELLE, *husband of Martine*
MARTINE, *wife of Sganarelle*
M. ROBERT, *neighbor of Sganarelle*
VALERE, *servant of Geronte*
LUCAS, *husband of Jacqueline*
JACQUELINE, *wet-nurse in Geronte's household, wife of Lucas*
LUCINDE, *daughter of Geronte*
LEANDRE, *lover of Lucinde*
THIBAUT, *a peasant, father of Perrin*
PERRIN, *son of Thibaut*

Act I takes place in the countryside. Acts II and III are set in a room of Geronte's house.

ACT I

SCENE 1
Sganarelle, Martine, *entering while quarrelling*.

SGANARELLE
No, I tell you I won't have anything to do with it – and not only that, but it's my voice that counts here, and I'm the boss.

MARTINE
Oh, yeah? Well, I'm telling you - yes, *I* am telling *you* - that you will live how I say, and that I didn't marry you just to put up with your nonsense.

SGANARELLE
God, how tiresome being married! Aristotle was so right when he said that a wife is worse than a devil!

MARTINE
Oh, yes, you're such a clever man, trotting out that old dunce Aristotle!

SGANARELLE
Yes, I am a clever man. Find me another wood-gatherer who can reason about things the way I do, who served a famous doctor for six years, and who memorized the basics of medicine at such an early age.

MARTINE
Oh, what a marvel you are!

SGANARELLE
It kills you to know that I am!

MARTINE
I curse the day and hour when I said "yes"!

SGANARELLE
And I curse the squint-eyed notary who watched me sign my life away!

MARTINE
So you think it's your place to complain, do you? Shouldn't you really be thanking the heavens for me with every breath you take? Do you really think you deserved to marry a woman like me?

SGANARELLE
Oh, yes, it's true that you stooped very low and that I had great cause to praise myself the first night of our honeymoon! Ha! But don't let me go there, for I could say certain things …

MARTINE
What? What would you say?

SGANARELLE
Enough! Let's leave it alone. It's enough that we know what we know, and that you were so very fortunate to find me.

MARTINE
Fortunate? Finding you? A man who's practically driven me to the poorhouse? A carouser, a traitor, a man who's eaten everything I own!

SGANARELLE
That's not exactly true. I drank some of it.

MARTINE
Who's been selling everything in my house?

SGANARELLE
That's called solvency.

MARTINE
Who's even sold my bed?

SGANARELLE
Now you can get up earlier.

MARTINE
Until there's not a stick of furniture left?

SGANARELLE
It'll be easier to move next time.

MARTINE
Fortunate to find a man who does nothing but gamble and drink from dawn to dawn?

SGANARELLE
It staves off my boredom.

MARTINE
And while you're not being bored, what am I supposed to do with my family?

SGANARELLE
Whatever you like.

MARTINE
I have four little children on my hands.

SGANARELLE
Try putting them down.

MARTINE
Clamoring for food at all hours.

SGANARELLE
Try whipping them. After I've eaten and drunk my fill the whole world should be drunk in my house.

MARTINE
And do you think, you drunken moron, that things can just go on this way?

SGANARELLE
Please, my wife, try to be more pleasant.

MARTINE
What, always pleasant, so I can put up with your insults and binges forever?

SGANARELLE
No reason to get worked up, my dear.

MARTINE
Why not? So I can't find a way to get you to do what you should?

SGANARELLE
My wife, you do know that I'm short-tempered, don't you, and that I have a strong right arm.

MARTINE
Hah!

SGANARELLE
My little wife, my pumpkin, as usual you're itching for a fight.

MARTINE
I'm not afraid of you.

SGANARELLE
My better half, you're pushing me too far.

MARTINE
You think your empty words scare me?

SGANARELLE
Tender object of my vows, I'll pull you by the ears.

MARTINE
Drunk as you are! Ha! Try!

SGANARELLE
I'll smack you!

MARTINE
Sack of wine!

SGANARELLE
Slap you!

MARTINE
Slap away!

SGANARELLE
Beat you!

MARTINE
Traitor, liar, loser, leech, beggar, bastard, thief!

SGANARELLE
(He picks up a stick and starts beating her.)
Ah! So you want some of this!?

MARTINE, *crying*.
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

SGANARELLE
That's the way to satisfy you!

SCENE 2
M. Robert, Sganarelle, Martine

M. ROBERT
Hey! Hey! Hey! You can't do that! What are you doing, beating your wife like that!?

MARTINE, *hands on her sides, talking to him while backing him down, and finally giving him a slap*.
But I want him to beat me.

M. ROBERT
Fine, you have my blessing.

MARTINE
Why are you squawking about it anyway?

M. ROBERT
I was out of order.

MARTINE
Is it any business of yours?

M. ROBERT
You're so right.

MARTINE
You have a lot of nerve, wanting to jump in and stop husbands from beating their wives.

M. ROBERT
I see now how wrong I was.

MARTINE
What's it to you?

M. ROBERT
Nothing.

MARTINE
Should you be sticking your nose where it doesn't belong?

M. ROBERT
No, certainly not.

MARTINE
Mind your own business.

M. ROBERT
Not another word.

MARTINE
I like to be beaten.

M. ROBERT
Of course.

MARTINE
It's no skin off your nose.

M. ROBERT
True.

MARTINE
What gall messing around in other people's lives!

M. ROBERT
(*He moves toward the husband, who, also speaking to him while backing him down, eventually strikes him with the same stick and puts him to flight.*)

Friend, I beg your pardon with all my heart. Go ahead, slap your wife around, beat her up, I think you should; I'll even help you if you like.

SGANARELLE
No, I would not like.

M. ROBERT
Oh, so that's another thing altogether!

SGANARELLE
I will beat her, if I like; and I will not beat her if I don't like.

M. ROBERT
Understood.

SGANARELLE
She's my wife, not yours.

M. ROBERT
That's true.

SGANARELLE
You've got no business telling me what to do.

M. ROBERT
No doubt.

SGANARELLE
If I needed your help…

M. ROBERT
I would give it.

SGANARELLE
And where do you get off in the first place, meddling like that? You should have learned from Cicero, not to put the rock and the hard place between your fingers.

(*He beats M. Robert and chases him. Next he returns to his wife, and says to her, presenting his hand*:)
Now then, it's time for the two of us to make peace. Put it there.

MARTINE
Oh, yes, after the stick action you just gave me!

SGANARELLE
That's nothing, shake.

MARTINE
I don't want to.

SGANARELLE
Eh!

MARTINE
No.

SGANARELLE
My little wife!

MARTINE
No way.

SGANARELLE
Come on, I say.

MARTINE
Not for anything.

SGANARELLE
Come on, come on.

MARTINE
No, I want to be mad.

SGANARELLE
Oh, come on, it's no big deal.

MARTINE
Leave me alone.

SGANARELLE
Come on, shake.

MARTINE
You've just gone too far this time.

SGANARELLE
Well, all right. I'll ask your pardon. Put it there.

MARTINE
I forgive you; (*then, under her breath*) but you'll pay for it, I swear.

SGANARELLE
You're silly to let it bother you so much. Such trifles are necessary from time to time in a friendship; and five or six whacks with a stick between people who love each other just add relish to the feelings! Go on then, and I will go to the woods, and I promise you today more than a hundred bundles.

SCENE 3
Martine, *alone.*

MARTINE
Go on, but however I act, I won't forget how I feel. I'm smoking and burning to get back at you for these bruises. Of course I know a wife always has a way to get her revenge on a husband; but that punishment is too subtle for me; I want a revenge that really makes itself felt; besides, that would never make us even for what he's just dished out.

SCENE 4
Valere, Lucas, Martine

LUCAS
Well, that's great! We've taken a hopeless job, and I don't know about you, but I have no idea what we think we're going to find here.

VALERE
What do you want to do, run back to your nurse? We must obey our master. And we both have an interest in the health of our mistress, his daughter. No doubt her marriage, put off because of her illness, would be worth some kind of reward, for Horace, who is known to be generous, has good claims to her hand. It is true she has shown a liking for a certain Leandre, but we both know that her father would never take him as a son-in-law.

MARTINE (*Musing to herself.)*
There must be some way to get back at him.

LUCAS
But what whim has taken him, seeing that all the doctors here have lost their Latin?

VALERE
Sometimes by continuing to search you find what you did not find at first; and often, in simple places …

MARTINE
Yes, I must get my revenge, no matter the cost: these bruises are consuming me, I cannot stomach the insult and … (*She says all this in a way that, not noticing the two men, she bumps into them while quickly turning around, and says to them*:) Oh, Sirs, I beg your pardon; I did not see you as I was racking my brains about something that's been eating at me.

VALERE
In this world no one is without cares, and we too are looking for something we are desperate to find.

MARTINE
Perhaps I can help?

VALERE
Anything's possible. We're supposed to find a very gifted man, a special doctor to treat our master's daughter, now stricken by an illness which has robbed her of her speech. Several doctors have already exhausted all their knowledge without helping her; but we hear there are men to be found, men with amazing secrets and special remedies, who can often perform what the others cannot, and it is one of these that we seek.

MARTINE (*She says the first words very low.*)
Ah! Heaven has just inspired me with a novel way to get back at my lesser half! (*Aloud.*) You could not have come to a better place to find what you seek; for we have here a doctor who is the most marvelous in the world when it comes to desperate cases.

VALERE
Excellent! And can you tell us where we will find him?

MARTINE
You will find him in a little spot just over there, where he likes to amuse himself by cutting wood.

LUCAS
A doctor who cuts wood!

VALERE
He amuses himself by gathering herbal remedies, you mean.

MARTINE
No, I don't. He's extraordinary in this whim – though I admit it is fantastic, bizarre, and eccentric. And what's more he never wants you to take him for what he is. He goes through the woods dressed in absurd clothes, often pretends to be totally stupid, and takes great pains to hide his knowledge. Every day he flies from nothing so much as the demands to exercise the marvelous medical talents with which he is blessed.

VALERE
It's an amazing thing, that all great men always have some quirk, some little seed of insanity mixed up with their knowledge.

MARTINE
This one's even crazier than you might think, because he will even let himself be beaten while denying who he is, and I advise you not to ask him ask him point blank, because he will never admit he is a doctor, so great is his eccentricity, unless you take a stick and reduce him by repeated blows to admit to you at last what he denied before. That's how we go about it when we need his services.

VALERE
How strange!

MARTINE
True, true. But afterwards, you will see what wonders he can work.

VALERE
What's his name?

MARTINE
His name is Sganarelle; and he's easy to recognize: he has a large black beard, and wears a double-collar with a bright yellow and green tunic.

LUCAS
A yellow and green tunic? What is he, a parakeet doctor?

VALERE
And can he really be as gifted as you say?

MARTINE
And how! He's a miracle-worker! Six months ago a woman had been abandoned by all the doctors as hopeless, and after she'd already been dead for six hours, and they were getting ready to bury her, suddenly this great man we are talking about arrived. After seeing her, he put a small drop of something in her mouth, and, at that very moment, she rose from her bed, and instantly began walking around the room as if nothing had happened.

LUCAS
Ah!

VALERE
It must have been a drop of liquid gold.

MARTINE
Might well have been. And then, not three weeks ago, a twelve year-old boy fell from the top of a bell-tower and broke his arms and his legs and his skull on the paving stones. They rushed him to our man, who rubbed him all over with a special ointment that he knows how to make; and the child rose to his feet then and there, and ran outside to play kick-ball.

LUCAS
Ah!

VALERE
He must possess the universal medicine.

MARTINE
Who can doubt it?

LUCAS
Yes! That's just the man we need. Let's go find him.

VALERE
We thank you for the joy you have given us.

MARTINE
But don't forget my warning.

LUCAS
Oh, don't worry! Leave it to us: if all he needs is a beating, the pig's already in the poke.

VALERE, *to Lucas.*

I can't believe how lucky we were to have met her. And I already feel, I do, that this is going to work out.

SCENE 5
Sganarelle, Valere, Lucas

SGANARELLE, *enters the stage, singing and brandishing a bottle*.
La, la, la.

VALERE
I hear someone singing and the sound of wood-chopping.

SGANARELLE
La, la, la … Ah, well, that's plenty of work for one go. Time for a little breather. (*He drinks, and says after swallowing*:) Ah, cutting this wood has made me thirsty as the devil.

They're so delicious
My darling bottle
They're so delicious
Your sweet little sipses!
And I would be the envy of the world
My darling bottle, if you were always full.
Ah! My darling bottle, apple of my eye,
Why, oh why, must you always run dry?
Oh, enough! No point in going all maudlin.

VALERE, *quietly to Lucas*.
That's got to be him.

LUCAS
I think you're right, and he's practically under our noses.

VALERE
Let's get a closer look.

SGANARELLE, *seeing them, looking at them alternately, turning towards one and then the other, and lowering his voice, speaks while hugging his bottle*.
Ah, my little darling! How I love you my little cork! (*He sings*.)
… I would be … the envy … of the world …if …
What the hell do these guys want!?

VALERE, *to Lucas*.
That's him for sure.

LUCAS, *to Valere*.
The spitting image of what she said.

SGANARELLE, aside.
(*He puts his bottle on the ground, and as Valere bows to greet him, he places it to the other side. Then, as Lucas bows to greet him, Sganarelle lifts the bottle again and holds it to his stomach with various gestures.*)
They're whispering while watching me. What's up their sleeve?

VALERE
Sir, are you not the man they call Sganarelle?

SGANARELLE
Eh, what?

VALERE
I asked if you are not the man named Sganarelle.

SGANARELLE, *turning towards Valere, then towards Lucas*.
Yes, and no, depending on what you want.

VALERE
We only wish to render you the entire honor that we can.

SGANARELLE
In that case, yes, I am Sganarelle.

VALERE
Sir, we are ecstatic to see you. We've been asked to appeal to you for what we are seeking; and we beg your help, which we need to the greatest degree.

SGANARELLE
If it's something, my good friends, that depends on my little trade, I'll be glad to help you.

VALERE
Sir, that is as gracious as it is kind of you. But please, cover yourself, the sun might do you some harm.

LUCAS
Sir, stand under this.

SGANARELLE, *low.*
Here are men full of ceremony.

VALERE
Sir, you must not find it strange that we have come to you: gifted men are always in demand, and we know of your abilities.

SGANARELLE
It is true, sirs, that I am the best in the world for gathering and binding bundles.

VALERE
Oh, sir …

SGANARELLE
I don't spare anything, and make them perfectly and rapidly as if there were no tomorrow.

VALERE
Sir, that is not what is in question.

SGANARELLE
What's more, I sell them at a hundred and ten *sous* the hundred.

VALERE
Please let's not speak of that.

SGANARELLE
I promise I would not know how to sell them for less.

VALERE
Sir, we know all this.

SGANARELLE
If you know all this, then you know that's the price.

VALERE
Sir, you are joking …

SGANARELLE
No, not at all. I cannot lower the price.

VALERE
Speak in some other way, I beg you.

SGANARELLE
You can find another kind for less: there are bundles and bundles; but for the ones that I make …

VALERE
Ah, sir! Let that subject be.

SGANARELLE
I swear to you that you will not have them for a *sou* less.

VALERE
Eh! Come on!

SGANARELLE
No, in good conscience, that's the price you will pay. I tell you quite sincerely, I am not a man to overcharge.

VALERE
Is it necessary, Sir, for an estimable person such as yourself to indulge in such base deceptions? Must you demean yourself by speaking in this way? That a man so versed in knowledge, a famous doctor such as you are, should disguise himself to the world, and keep his stupendous talents so buried?

SGANARELLE, *aside*.
What's he been drinking?

VALERE
Please, Sir, pretend no longer.

SGANARELLE
What?

LUCAS
All this fooling around does no good. We know what we know.

SGANARELLE
What then? What do you mean to say? Who do you take me for?

VALERE
For who you are, a great doctor.

SGANARELLE
Doctor yourself. I'm no such thing, and never have been.

VALERE, *low*.
There you see, his mania's got him. (*Loud*.) Sir, please stop trying to deny these things any more; and I fear, if you please, that persistence in this way will only lead to extreme measures.

SGANARELLE
Such as?

VALERE
Certain actions that we would greatly regret.

SGANARELLE
A-ha! Come on then, do your best, for I am no doctor, and have no idea what you want me to say.

VALERE, *low.*
I see that we must resort to the remedy. (*Loud*.) Sir, once more, I beg you to confess who you are.

LUCAS
Come on! Stop hesitating and admit that you're a doctor.

SGANARELLE, *aside*.
I'm getting mad.

VALERE
What purpose does it serve to deny what we know?

LUCAS
Why all these evasions? How could they possibly help you?

SGANARELLE
Sirs, in one word as well as two thousand, I tell you that I am no doctor.

VALERE
You're no doctor?

SGANARELLE
No.

LUCAS
You're not a doctor?

SGANARELLE
No, I tell you.

VALERE
Since you insist on having it this way, then, we must convince you.
(*They each take a stick and beat him*.)

SGANARELLE
Ah! Ah! Ah! Sirs, I will be what you please.

VALERE
Why, Sir, did you push us to this violence?

LUCAS
What purpose is there in having us beat you?

VALERE
I assure you that it gives me all the regret in the world.

LUCAS
Really, it makes me sick, it does.

SGANARELLE
What's the matter with you two? Please tell me, is it a joke, or are you both sharing some delirium in wanting me to be a doctor?

VALERE
What? You still deny being a doctor?

SGANARELLE
The devil if I am!

LUCAS
It's not true that you're a doctor?

SGANARELLE
No, plague take me! (*They begin beating him again*.) Ah! Ah! Well, Sirs, now that you're putting it this way, and since you so desire it, I am a doctor, I am a doctor. And an apothecary, too, if it suits you. I will admit to anything rather than have you beat me.

VALERE
Ah! That's better, Sir. I'm delighted to see you come to your senses.

LUCAS
When I hear you speak like this, you bring joy to my heart.

VALERE
I beg your pardon with all my soul.

LUCAS
Please forgive the liberty that we have taken.

SGANARELLE, *aside*.
Eh? Am I the one who's mistaken, and did I become a doctor without my knowing it?

LUCAS
Sir, you will not repent of revealing to us who you are; and you will see – I am sure - that you will be satisfied with it.

SGANARELLE
But, Sirs, tell me, are you not mistaken yourselves? Are you quite sure that I am a doctor?

LUCAS
Yes, dead certain!

SGANARELLE
Really?

VALERE
No doubt.

SGANARELLE
I never knew!

VALERE
What? You are the must skilled doctor in the world.

SGANARELLE
Ah!

LUCAS
A doctor who has cured I don't know how many ailments!

SGANARELLE
You say!

VALERE
A woman was thought to be dead for six hours; she was all set to be buried, when, with a single drop of something-or-rather, you brought her back and made her walk around her bedroom.

SGANARELLE
Hmmm.

LUCAS
A twelve year-old boy fell from a bell-tower, smashing his legs, head and arms; and you, with your ointment, made him instantly jump to his feet, and run away to play kick-ball.

SGANARELLE
Hah!

VALERE
In sum, Sir, you will find great happiness with us; and you will earn what you want, in letting us conduct you where we wish to take you.

SGANARELLE
I will earn what I want?

VALERE
Of course.

SGANARELLE
Ah! No doubt I am a doctor. I had forgotten … but now I remember. So what shall we do? And where do we go?

VALERE
We will take you there. We're going to see a girl who has lost her voice.

SGANARELLE
Ah! That's something I've never seen!

VALERE, *low, to Lucas*.
He likes to laugh. (*To Sganarelle*.) Onward, Sir.

SGANARELLE
Without a doctor's gown?

VALERE
We'll get one on the way.

SGANARELLE, *presenting his bottle to Valere*.
Here, take this. It's where I put my tonics. (*Then turning towards Lucas while spitting*.) You there, walk behind us, it's doctor's orders.

LUCAS
Well, well, well! Here's a doctor to my liking. And I'm sure he'll succeed, because he's quite the buffoon!

ACT II

SCENE 1
Geronte, Valere, Lucas, Jacqueline

VALERE
Yes, Sir, I think you'll be pleased, for we have brought you the greatest doctor in the world.

LUCAS
Oh! Yes! They'll have to yank up the ladder up after this one, for the rest of them aren't good enough to take off his shoes.

VALERE
He's a man who's worked wondrous cures.

LUCAS
Who has cured dead men.

VALERE
He's is, though, as I've told you, a little odd, and there are moments where his mind wanders and he no longer appears to be what he is.

LUCAS
Yes, he loves to play the jester; and one might say – if I might be so bold, Sir – that there's a small screw loose somewhere.

VALERE
But when you get down to it, he's all knowledge, and sometimes says the most inspired things.

LUCAS
When he gets to the point, he speaks as finely as though he were reading right out of a book.

VALERE
His reputation is already widespread here, and everyone goes to him when they're sick.

GERONTE
I'm dying to meet him; have him come quickly.

VALERE
I'll go have him brought.

JACQUELINE
Well, well, well. Sir, this one will be just like the others. It's just another big waste of time, and the best medicine you could give your daughter, if you take my advice, would be a fine, handsome husband, one that she even likes.

GERONTE
Really? Nurse, my darling, you should mind your own business.

LUCAS
Be quiet, housemaid Jacqueline. It's no place to go sticking your snout in.

JACQUELINE
I tell you, Sir, and you two as well, that all the doctors in the world will make nothing here but hot air, and your daughter needs something other than rhubarb and cassia, and that a husband is a plaster that cures all the ills of girls.

GERONTE
Do you think she's in any state for that now, with her affliction? And when I had arranged for her to marry, didn't she oppose my wishes?

JACQUELINE
Oh, indeed, I do believe it. After all, you were going to give her to a man she didn't love in the least. Why could you not contract with Mister Leandre, who touches her heart? She would have been very obedient; and I'd bet that he'd take her – even as is – if you arranged to give her to him.

GERONTE
This Leandre does not have what it takes. He lacks the means of the other.

JACQUELINE
Yet he has a very rich uncle, and is the only heir.

GERONTE
These stories of goods to come are wisps of smoke to me. There's nothing like what you can hold; and we might end up quite surprised when counting on goods held in the care of another. The ears of death are not always open to the pleas and prayers of anxious young inheritors, and one can grow long in the tooth, while one waits, to live, for the passing of another.

JACQUELINE
But I've heard it said that in marriage, as elsewhere, happiness trumps wealth. Mothers and fathers have this cursed way of always asking "What does he have?" and "What does she have?" and Pierre married his daughter Simone to fat Thomas for the extra patch of

vineyards he had that young Robin, who the girl loved very much, had not: and there you have it, the poor creature became yellow as a coin, and has never recovered. Let this be an example for you, Sir. One only has pleasure in this world, and I would rather give my daughter a good husband who pleased her than all the rents of La Beauce.

GERONTE
Enough! Dame Nurse, how you prattle! Stifle yourself, please, you're running on far too long, and if you're not careful you'll boil your milk.

LUCAS, *striking Geronte's chest as he speaks.*
Shut it, upstart! Sir does not need your advice, and knows what he must do. Go suckle the child, and stop playing advisor. Sir is the father of his daughter, and is good enough and wise enough to see what she needs.

GERONTE
Please, more gently!

LUCAS, *now striking Geronte on the shoulder*.
Sir, I would like to beat her, and teach her the respect she owes you.

GERONTE
Yes, but these blows are hardly necessary.

SCENE 2
Valere, Sganarelle, Geronte, Lucas, Jacqueline

VALERE
Sir, brace yourself. Here comes our doctor now.

Geronte, *to Sganarelle*.
Sir, I am delighted to see that you have come, for we have great need of you.

SGANARELLE *(In a doctor's gown, with a very pointy hat*.)
Hippocrates says … that we should both cover ourselves.

GERONTE
Hippocrates said that?

SGANARELLE
Indeed.

GERONTE
In what chapter, if you please?

SGANARELLE
In the chapter on hats.

GERONTE
Since Hippocrates said it, we must do it.

SGANARELLE
My dear doctor, having learned wondrous things …

GERONTE
Excuse me, but to whom are you speaking?

SGANARELLE
To you.

GERONTE
I'm not a doctor.

SGANARELLE
You're not a doctor?

GERONTE
No, really.

SGANARELLE
(*Here he takes a stick and beats him as he was beaten*.)
Are you sure?

GERONTE
Yes, quite sure. Ah! Ah! Ah!

SGANARELLE
Well, you're a doctor now. I certainly never had any other diploma.

GERONTE
What kind of maniac have you brought here?

VALERE
I told you he's a jovial doctor.

GERONTE
Yes, but I would rather send his joviality packing.

LUCAS
Don't be bothered by it, Sir. It's only for a laugh.

GERONTE
It's not my sense of humor.

SGANARELLE
Sir, I beg your pardon for the liberties I've taken.

GERONTE
Sir, I am your servant.

SGANARELLE
I am sorry, and apologize …

GERONTE
It's nothing.

SGANARELLE
For the blows with my stick …

GERONTE
No harm done.

SGANARELLE
That I have had the honor to give you.

GERONTE
Let's speak no more of this, Sir. I have a daughter who has been taken with a strange illness.

SGANARELLE
I am delighted, Sir, that your daughter needs me; and I wish with all my heart that you needed me too, you and all your family, so I could demonstrate my great wish to serve you.

GERONTE
I give thanks you for your wishes.

SGANARELLE
I assure you that I am speaking to you from the bottom of my heart.

GERONTE
You honor me too much.

SGANARELLE
What's your daughter's name?

GERONTE
Lucinde.

SGANARELLE
Lucinde! Yes, that's a good name to medicate! Lucinde!

GERONTE
I'll go see what she is doing.

SGANARELLE
Who is that tall woman?

GERONTE
She's the wet-nurse of my little one.

SGANARELLE, *aside*.
Well, this is a pretty household! (*Aloud.*) Ah! Wet-nurse, charming Wet-nurse, my doctoring is the very humble slave of your nursery, and I would gladly be the lucky little baby to suckle the milk (*He puts a hand on her breast)* of your good graces. All my remedies, all my knowledge, all my skills, are at your service, and …

LUCAS
Begging your permission, Sir Doctor, but let my wife alone, I beg you.

SGANARELLE
What? Your wife?

LUCAS
Yes.

SGANARELLE
(*He pretends to approach Lucas for a hug, but turning to the Nurse, hugs her instead*.)
Really? I had no idea, but I do rejoice for it out of love for both one and the other.

LUCAS, *pulling him away*.
A little less, if you please.

SGANARELLE
I assure you I am delighted that you are man and wife. I congratulate her for having gained (*he again pretends to hug Lucas, and passing beyond his arms, throws himself onto the neck of his wife*) a husband like you; and I congratulate you as well, for having a wife so beautiful, so smart, and so shapely.

LUCAS, *pulling him away again*.
Ah … again! No such compliments, I beg you.

SGANARELLE
Don't you want me to share your joy as a witness to this happy union?

LUCAS
With me, share as much as you like. But with my wife, drop the ceremony.

SGANARELLE
But I'm just as happy for both of you; and (*he continues the same game*) if I hug you to express my joy, I hug her in the same way for the same reason.

LUCAS, *pulling him away yet again*.
Ah! Sir Doctor, enough of these testimonials!

SCENE 3
Sganarelle, Geronte, Lucas, Jacqueline

GERONTE
Sir, any moment now they will bring my daughter to you.

SGANARELLE
I await her, Sir, with all my medicines.

GERONTE
But where are they?

SGANARELLE, *touching his forehead*.
Here.

GERONTE
Ah, excellent.

SGANARELLE, *trying to grope the breasts of the Wet-Nurse*.
But as I confess I am interested in your entire family, I must try a little of your nurse's milk and furthermore must examine her mammaries.

LUCAS, *pulling him away and sending him into a pirouette*.
No, you don't. I will have none of this.

SGANARELLE
But it's the calling of a doctor to examine the breasts of nurses.

LUCAS
Though I place myself at your service, this duty is denied.

SGANARELLE
You dare defy the doctor! Out with you! Out! Now!

LUCAS
You're going to make me leave?

SGANARELLE, *giving him a sideways look*.
I'll give you a fever!

JACQUELINE, *taking Lucas by the arm and sending him into a pirouette*.
Do as he says. Don't you think I'm strong enough to defend myself if he tries something on the sly?

LUCAS
I don't want him giving you a breast exam.

SGANARELLE
Ugh, what a peasant, jealous of his wife!

GERONTE
Ah, here's my daughter now.

SCENE 4
Lucinde, Valere, Geronte, Lucas, Sganarelle, Jacqueline.

SGANARELLE
So this is the patient?

GERONTE
Yes, I have only the one daughter; and I would have every regret in the world were she to die.

SGANARELLE
Let her be extra careful, then! For no one is allowed to die without the doctor's orders.

GERONTE
Come along, let's be seated here.

SGANARELLE, *seated between Geronte and Lucinde*.
This patient's not too terribly repulsive, and I think a good healthy man might well improve her condition.

GERONTE
You've made her laugh, Sir.

SGANARELLE
Excellent. When a doctor makes a patient laugh, it's the best sign in the world. (*To Lucinde*.) All right then, what's going on? What's the problem? Where does it hurt?

LUCINDE *responds by signs, pointing at her mouth, head and below her chin*.
Han, hi, hom, han.

SGANARELLE
Eh! What's that?

LUCINDE *continues the same gestures*.
Han, hi, hom, han, han, hi, hom.

SGANARELLE
Huh?

LUCINDE
Han, hi, hom.

SGANARELLE, *imitating her*.
Han, hi, hom, han, ha. I don't understand a word. What kind of language is this?

GERONTE
Sir, that's precisely her illness. She's turned mute, and no one yet has figured out why. What's more, it's caused the indefinite delay of her marriage.

SGANARELLE
But why?

GERONTE
The groom wants to wait for her cure before going through with it.

SGANARELLE
But what kind of an idiot wouldn't want a mute wife? Would to God that mine had this disease! And I'd certainly keep myself from wanting to cure her.

GERONTE
That aside, Sir, we beg you to employ your skills in curing Lucinde of this ailment.

SGANARELLE
Oh, don't worry about that. So tell me, does this ailment cause her great distress?

GERONTE
Indeed, Sir.

SGANARELLE
Excellent. Does she feel excruciating pain?

GERONTE
She does.

SGANARELLE
Oh, that's really very good. Does she go, uh … you know where?

GERONTE
Uh, Yes.

SGANARELLE
Copiously?

GERONTE
I wouldn't know.

SGANARELLE
And her product, is it praiseworthy?

GERONTE
Again, I try not to know too much.

SGANARELLE, *turning to the patient*.
Give me your arm. (*To Geronte*.) Aha! The pulse that indicates that your daughter is mute.

GERONTE
But yes, Sir, that's what ails her; and you've found it at the first go.

SGANARELLE
Ah! ah!

JACQUELINE
See how he has guessed her illness!

SGANARELLE
We great doctors, we know these things right away. An ignorant doctor would have been hard put, and would have said to you "It might be this, it might be that." But I, I hit the target with the first arrow, a bulls-eye, and so can tell you that your daughter is mute.

GERONTE
Yes, but I would like you to tell us its origin.

SGANARELLE
Nothing is easier. It comes from having lost her speech.

GERONTE
All right, but the cause, if you please. What has caused her to lose her speech?

SGANARELLE
All the best authors will swear that it stems from impediments to the action of her tongue.

GERONTE
But again, your thoughts on these impediments to the action of her tongue?

SGANARELLE
Aristotle says on this subject … some very good things.

GERONTE
I believe it.

SGANARELLE
Ah! He was a great man!

GERONTE
No doubt.

SGANARELLE, *lifting his arm from the elbow.*
A great man from head to toe: a man, in fact, surpassing me in everything. But to return to our explanation, I can tell you that this impediment to the action of the tongue is caused by certain humors, that we who are wisest among the doctors call piquant humors; piquant, which is to say … humors that are piquant; all the more because the vapors formed by the exhalations of the influences emanating from the region of disease, coming … as one can say … from … do you understand Latin?

GERONTE
Not a word.

SGANARELLE, *standing up in astonishment.*
You don't know Latin!

GERONTE
No.

SGANARELLE, *while making various absurd gestures.*
Cabricias arci thuram, catalamus, singulariter, nominative haec Musa la Muse, *bonus, bona, bonum. Deus sanctus, estne oratio Latinas? Etiam*, oui. *Quare*, pourquoi ? *Quia substantio et adjectivum concordat in generi, numerum, et casus*.

GERONTE
Ah, why didn't I ever study it?

JACQUELINE
Such a learned man!

LUCAS
Yes, he holds so much water that I can barely swallow a drop.

SGANARELLE
Now, these vapors that I was telling you about, passing from the left side, where the liver resides, to the right side, where the heart dwells, we find the lungs, which we call in latin *armyan*, having communication with the brain, which we call in Greek *nasmus*, by the way of the *venus cava*, which in Hebrew we call the *cubile*, meeting in its path the said vapors, which fill the ventricles of the *omoplatus*; and because of the said vapors … and its very important that you grasp this part; because the said vapors are especially malignant … Listen carefully, I beg of you.

GERONTE
Yes.

SGANARELLE
Have a special malignancy, which is caused … Be attentive, please.

GERONTE
I'm trying to follow.

SGANARELLE
Which is caused by the acridity of the humors engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm, it happens that these vapors … *Ossabandus, anorexia, mausoleum, amo, amas, amamus, candida albicians, tyranasaurus rex, potarium, invertabratum, quipsa milus*. This is precisely what has rendered your daughter mute.

JACQUELINE
Oh, how finely you have said that, my good man!

LUCAS
Why couldn't I have such a wondrous gift for words?

GERONTE
One can not possibly reason any better than this. There is only one thing that surprises me. It is where you have placed the liver and the heart. It seems that you have placed them otherwise than where they are; because the heart is on the left side, and the liver on the right.

SGANARELLE
Yes, that used to be true; but we've changed all that, and we practice medicine now according to a whole new method.

GERONTE
I'm sorry, I had no idea, and beg pardon for my ignorance.

SGANARELLE
No problem, for you are not obliged to be as current as we are.

GERONTE
Yes, surely. But, Sir, what do you believe we should do for this ailment?

SGANARELLE
What do I believe we should do?

GERONTE
Yes.

SGANARELLE
In my opinion, we should send her back to bed, and as a remedy administer large doses of bread dipped in wine.

GERONTE
Why this remedy, Sir?

SGANARELLE
Because there is something in wine and bread, when mixed together, a sympathetic virtue, that produces speech. Have you never observed that in giving parakeets nothing else than this, that you can teach them to speak?

GERONTE
Ah! So true. What a great man! Quick, lots of bread and wine!

SGANARELLE
I will return this evening to see how she is doing. (*To the nurse*.) Not so fast, you. (*To Geronte*.) Sir, I'm afraid that you have a nurse here who is in absolute need of some of my little remedies.

JACQUELINE
Who? Me? I feel fit as a fiddle.

SGANARELLE
So much the worse, Nurse, so much the worse. Great health is to be feared, and it would not be amiss to bleed you just a small, friendly bit, and what's more, to administer a sweetening enema.

GERONTE
But, Sir Doctor, I don't understand this method at all. Why bleed someone when they're healthy?

SGANARELLE
Don't worry, the method is salutary; and just as one drinks to stave off future thirst, so we should also let blood to forestall illnesses to come.

JACQUELINE, *in leaving*.
Not a chance! It's a joke, and I'm not letting my body be turned into an apothecary shop.

SGANARELLE
You resist these remedies; but we know how to make you submit to reason. (*Speaking to Geronte*.) I now say good day.

GERONTE
Wait a little, if you please.

SGANARELLE
What would you have?

GERONTE
I would give you money, Sir.

SGANARELLE, *holding his hand behind, below his robe, while Geronte opens his purse*.
I could not take it, Sir.

GERONTE
Sir …

SGANARELLE
No. Not at all.

GERONTE
A little.

SGANARELLE
I will have none of it.

GERONTE
Please!

SGANARELLE
You're joking.

GERONTE
There – it's done.

SGANARELLE
I will have no part of it.

GERONTE
Eh!

SGANARELLE
I do not act for money.

GERONTE
Yes, I know.

SGANARELLE, *after having taken the money*.
Is it true weight?

GERONTE
Yes, Sir.

SGANARELLE
I am not a mercenary doctor.

GERONTE
Yes, I understand.

SGANARELLE
Self-interest is never my motive.

GERONTE
Indeed, that never crossed my mind.

SCENE 5
Sganarelle, Leandre

SGANARELLE, *looking at his money*.
Hey, hey! This isn't half-bad; and if only ….

LEANDRE
Sir, I have waited a long time for you, and I am here to implore your aid.

SGANARELLE, *taking him by the wrist*.
Oh! Your pulse is most dismal and ghastly!

LEANDRE
I am not sick, Sir. That is not why I've come to you.

SGANARELLE
If you're not sick, why not say so in the first place?

LEANDRE
Forgive me. But to tell you my plea in two words: my name is Leandre and I am in love with Lucinde, the patient you have just visited. Her father's bad humor has closed all my access to her, so I have dared to ask you to serve in the interests of my love, to help me execute a stratagem that I have discovered, so I can hear her say the two words on which depend both my happiness and my life.

SGANARELLE, *overtly angry*.
What do you take me for? How dare you come ask me to serve you in your love interests, and soil the dignity of a doctor by involving him in such affairs!

LEANDRE
Please, more quietly.

SGANARELLE, *in making him recoil*.
I will take no part in it. You have some nerve.

LEANDRE
Please, Sir, softly.

SGANARELLE
Ignorant, inconsiderate …

LEANDRE
Please!

SGANARELLE
I will teach you that I'm no pimp, and that it is an extreme insolence …

LEANDRE, *pulling out a purse and offering it*.
Sir …

SGANARELLE, *taking the purse*.
To wish to employ me. … I do not speak of you, of course, for you are an honorable man, and I would be delighted to do you some service. But there are some other impertinents in the world who would take men to be something other than they are; and I swear to you that this is what got me so riled up.

LEANDRE
I beg your pardon, Sir, of the liberty that …

SGANARELLE
Don't give it another thought. So what needs to be done?

LEANDRE
You will know then, Sir, that this illness that you would cure is a feigned illness. The doctors have reasoned about it as necessary; and they did not fail to say that it proceeded from the brain, from the intestines, from the spleen, from the liver; but it is certain that love is the true cause of it, and that Lucinde did not come by this disease except as a way to escape from an unwanted marriage. But, out of fear that someone sees us together, let's retire from here, and I will tell you as we walk what I wish you to do.

SGANARELLE
Let's go then, Sir, for you have given me for your love a tenderness that is beyond conceiving, and I will here expend all my art and the patient will either die or be yours.

ACT III

SCENE 1
Sganarelle, Leandre

LEANDRE
It seems to me that I wouldn't make a bad apothecary; and as her father has barely ever seen me, these clothes and this wig should be enough, I think, to disguise me.

SGANARELLE
Very nice.

LEANDRE
I will only need to learn five or six impressive medical words, to deck out my speech and give me the air of a knowledgeable man.

SGANARELLE
No, no, that's not necessary; the gown suffices, and I don't know any more than you do.

LEANDRE
What?

SGANARELLE
I'll be damned if I know the first thing about medicine! You are a trustworthy man, and I don't mind confiding in you, just as you have confided in me.

LEANDRE
What? You're not really …

SGANARELLE
No, not at all. They've made me a doctor against my will. I never had anything like so much learning; and all my studies ended with grammar school. I don't know how this idea came to them; but when I saw that they would stop at nothing to have me be a doctor, I resolved to become one, at no matter whose expense. You wouldn't believe how the error spread, and in what way each person was bound and determined to believe that I was a gifted man. They sought me out from every direction; and if things always went like this, I believe I would become a doctor for the rest of my life. This is the best craft of all; for whether you cure or make worse, you always get paid. We never have to bear the burden of bad work, and we cut, as we please, from the material that presents itself. A cobbler, in making shoes, cannot mis-cut a bit of leather without eating the cost; but here one can mishandle a patient without a loss. Botched results are nothing to us; for they're always the fault of the patient that dies. And lastly, the best of this profession is that there is an honor among the dead, a discretion, that ranks as the greatest in the world; for no patient yet has carried a complaint against the doctor that's killed him.

LEANDRE
It's true, the dead are very discrete in this matter.

SGANARELLE, *seeing some men coming towards him*.
Here come some men whose faces portend that they're here to consult me. (*To Leandre*.) Go now and wait for me near the house of your mistress.

SCENE 2
Thibaut, Perrin, Sganarelle

THIBAUT
Sir, we comes to find you, my boy, Perrin, and me.

SGANARELLE
What's the matter with him?

THIBAUT
His poor mother, Parette, has been in bed, ailing, for six months.

SGANARELLE, *extending his hand as though to receive money*.
What would you have me do?

THIBAUT
We was hoping, Sir, that you'd give us some little drop what would cure her.

SGANARELLE
But first we must know the ailment.

THIBAUT
She's got the hypocrisy, Sir.

SGANARELLE
Hypocrisy?

THIBAUT
Yes, that's to say that she's swolled-up everywhere; and one says that it's a bunch of seriosities that she's got in the body, and her liver, her stomach, or her spleen, as you'd call it, don't make nothing but water. One day out of two she's got the quottidian fever, with lapses and pains all up and down her legs. In her throat we hear flemosities which seem like to choke her; and sometimes she's taken with fits and invulsions so bad we think she's a goner for sure. We have a village apothecary, begging your pardon, who has given her all kinds of stuff; and he's cost me more than a dozen écus in unguents, begging your pardon, and in pills that he's made her take, in concoctions of hyacinthe and cordial potions. But all that, said the other one, were so-so treatments that didn't do much one way or the other. He wanted to give her a special new drug called wine *amctial;* but I was afraid, point blank, that it would really finish her off, and they say that these great doctors have killed scores of people with this invention.

SGANARELLE
Still extending his hand and turning it, to indicate that he wishes money.
Come to the point, my friend, come to the point.

THIBAUT
The point is, Sir, that I have come to beg you to tell us what we should do.

SGANARELLE
I don't understand you at all.

PERRIN
Sir, my mother is sick, and here are two écus that I've brought you so that you can give us a remedy.

SGANARELLE
Now I understand! Here's a boy who speaks clearly and explains things as he should. You say your mother is suffering from hydropsia, is swollen everywhere, and has a fever, with pains in the legs, and sometime she is taken with fits and convulsions, that is to say, with fainting?

PERRIN
Well, yes, Sir, that's it exactly.

SGANARELLE
I knew right away from your words. Your father, on the other hand, doesn't know what he's saying. And now you want a remedy?

PERRIN
Yes, Sir.

SGANARELLE
One that will cure her?

PERRIN
That's what I'd hoped.

SGANARELLE
Here, take this. It's a piece of cheese that you must make her eat.

PERRIN
Cheese, Sir?

SGANARELLE
Yes, it's a specially prepared cheese, made with tinctures of gold, coral, pearls, and other precious materials.

PERRIN
Sir, I am very obliged to you; and we'll go have her take it right away.

SGANARELLE
Yes, go now. And if she dies, don't fail to bury her in the best way you can.

SCENE 3.
Jacqueline, Sganarelle, Lucas, *at the rear of the stage*.

SGANARELLE
There's the lovely Nurse! Ah, Nurse of my heart, I am delighted at this meeting; for the sight of you is the rhubarb, the cassia, and the hemlock that serve as purgatives for all the melancholy of my soul.

JACQUELINE
La, la! Sir Doctor, it is too well said for me. I don't understand a word of your Latin.

SGANARELLE
Become sick, Nurse, I beg of you; become sick, for love of me. It would give me all the joy in the world to cure you.

JACQUELINE
I am your servant, but I would prefer not to be cured.

SGANARELLE
How I lament, lovely Nurse, that you are bound to a husband as jealous and irritable as yours!

JACQUELLINE
What would you, Sir? It is for the penitence of my faults, and where the goat is tied, there it must graze.

SGANARELLE
What? Him? A peasant like that? A man who's always spying on you, and doesn't want anyone talking to you?

JACQUELINE
Oh, you've seen nothing yet; that was just a whisper of his bad mood.

SGANARELLE
Is it possible that a man of so base a soul can mistreat a person like you? Ah, what I know, dear Nurse, is that there is one, and he not far from here, who would be happy only to kiss the little tips of your breasts. Why, oh why, was it necessary that a woman so well-made should fall into such hands, and that an animal, a brute, an ignoramus, a moron … Excuse me, Nurse, if I speak thus about your husband.

JACQUELINE
Sir, I know that he merits all these names.

SGANARELLE
Yes, no doubt, Nurse, he does; and what he deserves even more is that you knock something across his head, to punish his suspicions.

JACQUELINE
It's quite true that if I didn't have only his interest before my eyes, I might be obliged to do something strange.

SGANARELLE
Yes! You would not be doing a bad thing to revenge yourself with someone else. He's a man, I tell you, who deserves it. And if I were to be fortunate enough, lovely Nurse, to be chosen for …

(*At this point, both see Lucas who was behind them listening to their conversation. Each retires to one side, but the doctor in a more humorous manner*.)

SCENE 4
Geronte, Lucas

GERONTE
Ho! Lucas, have you seen doctor anywhere?

LUCAS
Ah, yes by all the devils, I've seen him, and my wife too.

GERONTE
Where is he then?

LUCAS
I don't know; but I wish was roasting in hellfire.

GERONTE
Go now, and see what my daughter is doing.

SCENE 5
Sganarelle, Leandre, Geronte

GERONTE
Ah, Sir, I was wondering where you were.

SGANARELLE
I was amusing myself in your courtyard by expelling a superfluity of drink. How is the patient doing?

GERONTE
A little worse since your treatment.

SGANARELLE
Excellent; that's a sure sign that it's working.

GERONTE
Yes, but in its working, I fear she may die.

SGANARELLE
Don't worry; I have remedies that scoff at every ailment; and right now I'm just hoping for the agony to arrive.

GERONTE, *showing Leandre*.
What sort of man have you brought us?

SGANARELLE, *making signs with his hands that it is an apothecary*.
It's …

GERONTE
What?

SGANARELLE
He …

GERONTE
Huh?

SGANARELLE
Who …

GERONTE
I understand you.

SGANARELLE
Your daughter has need of him.

SCENE 6
Jacqueline, Lucinde, Geronte, Leandre, Sganarelle

JACQUELINE
Sir, here's your daughter who wished to walk just a bit.

SGANARELLE
That will do her good. (*To Leandre*.) Go on then, Mister Apothecary, take her pulse, so that I can confer with you about her illness.

(*At this point, he pulls Geronte to one end of the stage, and putting an arm on his shoulders, he puts his free hand under his chin, which he directs towards himself, as Geronte would rather gain a glimpse of what his daughter and the apothecary are doing. In so doing, Sganarelle delivers the following distracting discourse.*)

Sir, it is a great and subtle question among the instructed to know if women are easier to cure than men. I pray that you listen to this, if you please. Some say no, and others say yes; and I, I say yes and no; all the more because the incongruity of the opaque humors which meet in the natural temperament of women being the reason that the brutal part would always hold empire over the sensitive part, one sees that the inequality of their

opinions depend on the oblique ellipse of the moon; and like the sun, which shoots its rays on the concavity of the earth, finds …

LUCINDE, *to Leandre*.
No, I am not at all capable of changing my feelings.

GERONTE
Look! My daughter's talking! O great glorious remedy! O admirable doctor! How can I ever thank you for this amazing cure! And what could I ever do for you after such a service!

SGANARELLE, *walking on the stage and wiping his forehead*.
This was a case that really put me to the test!

LUCINDE
Yes, father, I've recovered my speech; but I have recovered it in order to tell you that I will have no other husband than Leandre, and that it is useless for you to force Horace on me.

GERONTE
But …

LUCINDE
Nothing will shake my resolution.

GERONTE
What …?

LUCINDE
Your good reasons will oppose me in vain.

GERONTE
If …

LUCINDE
All your speeches will do no good.

GERONTE
I …

LUCINDE
It is a decision to which I am committed.

GERONTE
But …

LUCINDE
There is no paternal power that can oblige me to marry against my will.

GERONTE
I have …

LUCINDE
Your efforts are futile.

GERONTE
He …

LUCINDE
My heart will not submit to such tyranny.

GERONTE
There …

LUCINDE
And I would rather throw myself into a nunnery than marry a man I do not love at all.

GERONTE
But …

LUCINDE, *speaking in a deafening tone of voice*.
No. In no way, shape or form. I will have no part of it. You're wasting your time. I won't do it. And that's final.

GERONTE
Ah, what a torrent of words! There's no way to stop it. (*To Sganarelle*.) Sir, I beg you: make her mute again.

SGANARELLE
That is the one thing that is beyond my powers. But I could make her deaf, if you wish.

GERONTE
I would be most grateful. (*To Lucinde*.) Do you think, then …

LUCINDE
No. All your reasons will fail to win me over.

GERONTE
You will marry Horace, this very evening.

LUCINDE
I would rather marry death.

SGANARELLE, *to Geronte*.
My God, leave off, and allow me to treat this matter. It is a disease that's got hold of her, and I know the exact remedy for this case.

GERONTE
Is it possible, Sir, that you also cure diseases of the mind?

SGANARELLE
Yes, just leave it to me, I have a remedy for everything, and our apothecary will do you some service in this cure. (*He calls the Apothecary and speaks to him*.) One word. You see that the love she has for this Leandre is totally contrary to the wishes of her father, and that there's no time to lose, that her humors are strongly agitated, and that it is necessary to promptly find a remedy for this evil, which can be conquered through retardation. For myself, I only see one way to do it, which is the taking of a purgative flight, that you will mix as you must with two grams of matrimonium and administer in pills. Perhaps it will be difficult to make this medicine; but as you are a man fully versed in your art, it is for you to resolve, and to make her swallow the thing as best you can. Go now, lead her on a small tour of the garden, to the end of preparing her humors, while I stay here and speak with her father; but above all, lose no time. To the remedy, quickly, to the specific remedy!

SCENE 7
Geronte, Sganarelle

GERONTE
What drugs, Sir, are those that you just mentioned? I don't believe I've ever heard them named before.

SGANARELLE
These special drugs are only used in urgent cases.

GERONTE
Have you ever witnessed insolence like hers?

SGANARELLE
Girls can sometimes be a little stubborn.

GERONTE
You wouldn't believe how enamored she is of this Leandre.

SGANARELLE
The heat of the blood has this effect on the young.

GERONTE
For myself, as soon as I discovered the violence of this love, I tried to keep my daughter under lock and key.

SGANARELLE
Very wise of you.

GERONTE
And I have succeeded in keeping them from communicating.

SGANARELLE
Well done.

GERONTE
Something foolish would have transpired if I had suffered to let them see each other.

SGANARELLE
No doubt.

GERONTE
And I believe she would have been just the girl to run off with him.

SGANARELLE
That is well-reasoned.

GERONTE
They warned me that he'd tried everything to talk to her.

SGANARELLE
How futile.

GERONTE
But he only wasted his time.

SGANARELLE
Ah! Yes.

GERONTE
And I stopped him from ever seeing her.

SGANARELLE
It's no matter for a fool, to be sure, and you know some tricks that he doesn't. It's a good thing you're not dense.

SCENE 8
Lucas, Geronte, Sganarelle

LUCAS
Ah! Tragedy, Sir! Here's some news you won't like. Your daughter has fled with Leandre. Leandre, it turns out, was the Apothecary, and here's Sir Doctor who arranged this whole lovely operation.

GERONTE
What! Kill me in this way! Immediately, get me a Commissioner! And bar him from leaving! Traitor! I will have you punished by the letter of the law!

LUCAS
Yes! Sir Doctor, you will hang. Don't budge from the spot.

SCENE 9
Martine, Sganarelle, Lucas

MARTINE, *to Lucas*.
Good God! What a lot of trouble I've had in finding my way to this house. Tell me, how well has the doctor I referred to you performed?

LUCAS
Behold! He's going to hang.

MARTINE
What? My husband, hang? Ah! What's he done to deserve that?

LUCAS
He arranged the elopement of our master's daughter.

MARTINE
My dear husband! Is it true they're going to hang you?

SGANARELLE
You can see for yourself.

MARTINE
Must you let yourself die in front of so many people?

SGANARELLE
What would you have me do?

MARTINE
If you had finished cutting our wood, I might have taken some consolation.

SGANARELLE
Remove yourself, please, it's too much.

MARTINE
No, I want to stay so I can encourage you to die, and I won't leave until I've seen you hung.

SGANARELLE
Ah!

SCENE 10
Geronte, Sganarelle, Martine, Lucas

GERONTE, *to Sganarelle*.
The Commissioner will be here shortly, and he will surely make you answer for your injuries to me.

SGANARELLE, *hat in his hand*.
Alas! Couldn't this just be settled with a few whacks from a stick?

GERONTE
No, not at all … justice demands it … But what's this?

SCENE 11, THE LAST
Leandre, Lucinde, Jacqueline, Lucas, Geronte, Sganarelle, Martine.

LEANDRE
Sir, I come here to place Leandre in front of your eyes, and to restore Lucinde to your power. We planned to take flight, and be married; but this scheme yielded to a more honest path. I would not steal your daughter, and it is only from your hand that I wish to receive her. What I would say to you, Sir, is that I've just received some letters telling me that my uncle has died, and that I am the sole heir to all his goods.

GERONTE
Sir, your virtue is beyond reproach, and I give you my daughter with the greatest joy in the world.

SGANARELLE
The doctor has just escaped!

MARTINE
Since you will not be hung today, at least do me the courtesy of being a doctor, since you have me to thank for procuring you this honor.

SGANARELLE
Yes, you have procured me countless thumps with a stick.

LEANDRE
But the happy ending is too sweet to let us harbor resentment.

SGANARELLE
So be it. (*To Martine*.) I forgive you the blows on the back in light of the dignity to which you have raised me. But prepare from now on to live in high state with a man of consequence, and know that the anger of a doctor is more to be feared than the anger of a mere wood-chopper.