

You had disloyally agreed to hide.  
I don't know just what charges may be pressed,  
But there's a warrant out for your arrest;  
Tartuffe has been instructed, furthermore,  
To guide the arresting officer to your door.  
CLÉANTE.

He's clearly done this to facilitate  
His seizure of your house and your estate.  
ORGON.

That man, I must say, is a vicious beast!  
VALÈRE.

Quick, Sir; you mustn't tarry in the least.  
My carriage is outside, to take you hence;  
This thousand louis should cover all expense.  
Let's lose no time, or you shall be undone;  
The sole defense, in this case, is to run.  
I shall go with you all the way, and place you  
In a safe refuge to which they'll never trace you.  
ORGON.

Alas, dear boy, I wish that I could show you  
My gratitude for everything I owe you.  
But now is not the time; I pray the Lord  
That I may live to give you your reward.  
Farewell, my dears; be careful...  
CLÉANTE.

Brother, hurry.  
We shall take care of things; you needn't worry.

## SCENE SEVEN

*THE OFFICER, TARTUFFE, VALÈRE, ORGON,  
ELMIRE, MARIANE, MADAME PERNELLE,  
DORINE, CLÉANTE, DAMIS*

TARTUFFE.

Gendy, Sir, gently; stay right where you are.  
No need for haste; your lodging isn't far.  
You're off to prison, by order of the Prince.

ORGON.

This is the crowning blow, you wretch; and since  
It means my total ruin and defeat,  
Your villainy is now at last complete.

TARTUFFE.

You needn't try to provoke me; it's no use.  
Those who serve Heaven must expect abuse.

CLÉANTE.

You are indeed most patient, sweet, and blameless.

DAMIS.

How he exploits the name of Heaven! It's shameless.

TARTUFFE.

Your taunts and mockeries are all for naught;  
To do my duty is my only thought.

MARIANE.

Your love of duty is most meritorious,  
And what you've done is little short of glorious.

TARTUFFE.

All deeds are glorious, Madam, which obey  
The sovereign prince who sent me here today.

ORGON.

I rescued you when you were destitute;  
Have you forgotten that, you thankless brute?

TARTUFFE.

No, no, I well remember everything;  
But my first duty is to serve my King.  
That obligation is so paramount  
That other claims, beside it, do not count;  
And for it I would sacrifice my wife,  
My family, my friend, or my own life.

ELMIRE.

Hypocrite!

DORINE.

All that we most revere, he uses  
To cloak his plots and camouflage his ruses.  
CLÉANTE.

If it is true that you are animated  
By pure and loyal zeal, as you have stated,  
Why was this zeal not roused until you'd sought  
To make Orgon a cuckold, and been caught?  
Why weren't you moved to give your evidence  
Until your outraged host had driven you hence?  
I shan't say that the gift of all his treasure  
Ought to have damped your zeal in any measure;  
But if he is a traitor, as you declare,  
How could you condescend to be his heir?

TARTUFFE. *(To the Officer.)*

Sir, spare me all this clamor; it's growing shrill.  
Please carry out your orders, if you will.

OFFICER.

Yes, I've delayed too long, Sir. Thank you kindly.  
You're just the proper person to remind me.  
Come, you are off to join the other boarders  
In the King's prison, according to his orders.

TARTUFFE.

Who? I, Sir?

OFFICER.

Yes.

TARTUFFE.

To prison? This can't be true!

OFFICER.

I owe an explanation, but not to you.

*(To Orgon.)*

Sir, all is well; rest easy, and be grateful.  
We serve a Prince to whom all sham is hateful,  
A Prince who sees into our inmost hearts,  
And can't be fooled by any trickster's arts.  
His royal soul, though generous and human,  
Views all things with discernment and acumen;  
His sovereign reason is not lightly swayed,  
And all his judgments are discreetly weighed.  
He honors righteous men of every kind,  
And yet his zeal for virtue is not blind,  
Nor does his love of piety numb his wits  
And make him tolerant of hypocrites.  
'Twas hardly likely that this man could cozen  
A King who's foiled such liars by the dozen.  
With one keen glance, the King perceived the whole  
Perverseness and corruption of his soul,  
And thus high Heaven's justice was displayed:  
Betraying you, the rogue stood self-betrayed.  
The King soon recognized Tartuffe as one  
Notorious by another name, who'd done  
So many vicious crimes that one could fill  
Ten volumes with them, and be writing still.  
But to be brief: our sovereign was appalled  
By this man's treachery toward you, which he called  
The last, worst villainy of a vile career,  
And bade me follow the imposter here  
To see how gross his impudence could be,  
And force him to restore your property.  
Your private papers, by the King's command,

I hereby seize and give into your hand.  
The King, by royal order, invalidates  
The deed which gave this rascal your estates,  
And pardons, furthermore, your grave offense  
In harboring an exile's documents.  
By these decrees, our Prince rewards you for  
Your loyal deeds in the late civil war,  
And shows how heartfelt is his satisfaction  
In recompensing any worthy action,  
How much he prizes merit, and how he makes  
More of men's virtues than of their mistakes.

DORINE.

Heaven be praised!

MADAME PERNELLE.

I breathe again, at last.

ELMIRE.

We're safe.

MARIANE.

I can't believe the danger's past.

ORGON. (*To Tartuffe.*)

Well, traitor, now you see...

CLÉANTE.

Ah, Brother, please,

Let's not descend to such indignities.  
Leave the poor wretch to his unhappy fate,  
And don't say anything to aggravate  
His present woes; but rather hope that he  
Will soon embrace an honest piety,  
And mend his ways, and by a true repentance  
Move our just King to moderate his sentence.  
Meanwhile, go kneel before your sovereign's throne  
And thank him for the mercies he has shown.

ORGON.

Well said: let's go at once and, gladly kneeling,  
Express the gratitude which all are feeling.  
Then, when that first great duty has been done,

We'll turn with pleasure to a second one,  
And give Valère, whose love has proven so true,  
The wedded happiness which is his due.