

ORGON.

Tartuffe is no young dandy,

But, still, his person...

DORINE. *(Aside.)*

Is as sweet as candy.

ORGON.

Is such that, even if you shouldn't care

For his other merits...

(He turns and stands facing Dorine, arms crossed.)

DORINE. *(Aside.)*

They'll make a lovely pair.

If I were she, no man would marry me

Against my inclination, and go scot-free.

He'd learn, before the wedding-day was over,

How readily a wife can find a lover.

ORGON.

(To Dorine.)

It seems you treat my orders as a joke.

DORINE.

Why, what's the matter? 'Twas not to you I spoke.

ORGON.

What ~~were~~ you doing?

DORINE.

Talking to myself, that's all.

ORGON.

Ah!

(Aside.)

One more bit of impudence and gall,

And I shall give her a good slap in the face.

(He puts himself in position to slap her; Dorine, whenever he glances at her, stands immobile and silent.)

Daughter, you shall accept, and with good grace,

The husband I've selected... Your wedding-day...

(To Dorine.)

Why don't you talk to yourself?

DORINE.

I've nothing to say.

ORGON.

Come, just one word.

DORINE.

No thank you, Sir. I pass.

ORGON.

Come, speak; I'm waiting.

DORINE.

I'd not be such an ass.

ORGON. *(Turning to Mariane.)*

In short, dear Daughter, I mean to be obeyed,

And you must bow to the sound choice I've made.

DORINE. *(Moving away.)*

I'd not wed such a monster, even in jest.

(Orgon attempts to slap her, but misses.)

ORGON.

Daughter, that maid of yours is a thorough pest;

She makes me sinfully annoyed and nettled.

I can't speak further; my nerves are too unsettled.

She's so upset me by her insolent talk,

I'll calm myself by going for a walk.

SCENE THREE

DORINE, MARIANE

DORINE. *(Returning.)*

Well, have you lost your tongue, girl? Must I play

Your part, and say the lines you ought to say?

Faced with a fate so hideous and absurd,

Can you not utter one dissenting word?

MARIANE.

What good would it do? A father's power is great.

DORINE.

Resist him now, or it will be too late.

MARIANE.

But...

DORINE.

Tell him one cannot love at a father's whim;
That you shall marry for yourself, not him;
That since it's you who are to be the bride,
It's you, not he, who must be satisfied;
And that if his Tartuffe is so sublime,
He's free to marry him at any time.

MARIANE.

I've bowed so long to Father's strict control,
I couldn't oppose him now, to save my soul.

DORINE.

Come, come, Mariane. Do listen to reason, won't you?
Valere has asked your hand. Do you love him, or don't you?

MARIANE.

Oh, how unjust of you! What can you mean
By asking such a question, dear Dorine?
You know the depth of my affection for him;
I've told you a hundred times how I adore him.

DORINE.

I don't believe in everything I hear;
Who knows if your professions were sincere?

MARIANE.

They were, Dorine, and you do me wrong to doubt it;
Heaven knows that I've been all too frank about it.

DORINE.

You love him, then?

MARIANE.

Oh, more than I can express.

DORINE.

And he, I take it, cares for you no less?

MARIANE.

I think so.

DORINE.

And you both, with equal fire,
Burn to be married?

MARIANE.

That is our one desire.

DORINE.

What of Tartuffe, then? What of your father's plan?

MARIANE.

I'll kill myself, if I'm forced to wed that man.

DORINE.

I hadn't thought of that recourse. How splendid!
Just die, and all your troubles will be ended!

A fine solution. Oh, it maddens me
To hear you talk in that self-pitying key.

MARIANE.

Dorine, how harsh you are! It's most unfair.
You have no sympathy for my despair.

DORINE.

I've none at all for people who talk drivell
And, faced with difficulties, whine and snivel.

MARIANE.

No doubt I'm timid, but it would be wrong...

DORINE.

True love requires a heart that's firm and strong.

MARIANE.

I'm strong in my affection for Valère,
But coping with my father is his affair.

DORINE.

But if your father's brain has grown so cracked
Over his dear Tartuffe that he can retract
His blessing, though your wedding-day was named,
It's surely not Valère who's to be blamed.

MARIANE.

If I defied my father, as you suggest,
Would it not seem unmaidenly, at best?
Shall I defend my love at the expense
Of brazenness and disobedience?
Shall I parade my heart's desires, and flaunt...

DORINE.

No, I ask nothing of you. Clearly you want
To be Madame Tartuffe, and I feel bound
Not to oppose a wish so very sound.
What right have I to criticize the match?
Indeed, my dear, the man's a brilliant catch.
Monsieur Tartuffe! Now, there's a man of weight!
Yes, yes, Monsieur Tartuffe, I'm bound to state,
Is quite a person; that's not to be denied;
'Twill be no little thing to be his bride.
The world already rings with his renown;
He's a great noble—in his native town;
His ears are red, he has a pink complexion,
And all in all, he'll suit you to perfection.

MARIANE.

Dear God!

DORINE.

Oh, how triumphant you will feel

At having caught a husband so ideal!

MARIANE.

Oh, do stop teasing, and use your cleverness
To get me out of this appalling mess.
Advise me, and I'll do whatever you say.

DORINE.

Ah no, a dutiful daughter must obey
Her father, even if he weds her to an ape.
You've a bright future; why struggle to escape?
Tartuffe will take you back where his family lives,
To a small town aswarm with relatives—
Uncles and cousins whom you'll be charmed to meet.
You'll be received at once by the elite,
Calling upon the bailiff's wife, no less—
Even, perhaps, upon the mayoress,
Who'll sit you down in the *best* kitchen chair.
Then, once a year, you'll dance at the village fair

To the drone of bagpipes—two of them, in fact—
And see a puppet-show, or an animal act.
Your husband...

MARIANE.

Oh, you turn my blood to ice!

Stop torturing me, and give me your advice.

DORINE. (*Threatening to go.*)

Your servant, Madam.

MARIANE.

Dorine, I beg of you...

DORINE.

No, you deserve it; this marriage must go through.

MARIANE.

Dorine!

DORINE.

No.

MARIANE.

Not Tartuffe! You know I think him...

DORINE.

Tartuffe's your cup of tea, and you shall drink him.

MARIANE.

I've always told you everything, and relied...

DORINE.

No. You deserve to be tartuffified.

MARIANE.

Well, since you mock me and refuse to care,
I'll henceforth seek my solace in despair:
Despair shall be my counsellor and friend,
And help me bring my sorrows to an end.

(*She starts to leave.*)

DORINE.

There now, come back; my anger has subsided.
You do deserve some pity, I've decided.

MARIANE.

Dorine, if Father makes me undergo
This dreadful martyrdom, I'll die, I know.

DORINE.

Don't fret; it won't be difficult to discover
Some plan of action...But here's Valère, your lover.

SCENE FOUR

VALÈRE, MARIANE, DORINE

VALÈRE.

Madam, I've just received some wondrous news
Regarding which I'd like to hear your views.

MARIANE.

What news?

VALÈRE.

You're marrying Tartuffe.

MARIANE.

I find

That Father ~~does~~ have such a match in mind.

VALÈRE.

Your father, Madam...

MARIANE.

...has just this minute said

That it's Tartuffe he wishes me to wed.

VALÈRE.

Can he be serious?

MARIANE.

Oh, indeed he can;

He's clearly set his heart upon the plan.

VALÈRE.

And what position do you propose to take,
Madam?

MARIANE.

Why—I don't know.

VALÈRE.

For heaven's sake—

You don't know?

MARIANE.

No.

VALÈRE.

Well, well!

MARIANE.

Advise me, do.

VALÈRE.

Marry the man. That's my advice to you.

MARIANE.

That's your advice?

VALÈRE.

Yes.

MARIANE.

Truly?

VALÈRE.

Oh, absolutely.

You couldn't choose more wisely, more astutely.

MARIANE.

Thanks for this counsel; I'll follow it, of course.

VALÈRE.

Do, do; I'm sure 'twill cost you no remorse.

MARIANE.

To give it didn't cause your heart to break.

VALÈRE.

I gave it, Madam, only for your sake.

MARIANE.

And it's for your sake that I take it, Sir.

DORINE. (*Withdrawing to the rear of the stage.*)

Let's see which fool will prove the stubborn.

VALÈRE.

So! I am nothing to you, and it was flat

Deception when you...