

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...

MARIANE.

Please, enough of that.  
You've told me plainly that I should agree  
To wed the man my father's chosen for me,  
And since you've deigned to counsel me so wisely,  
I promise, Sir, to do as you advise me.

VALÈRE.

Ah, no, 'twas not by me that you were swayed.  
No, your decision was already made;  
Though now, to save appearances, you protest  
That you're betraying me at my behest.

MARIANE.

Just as you say.

VALÈRE.

Quite so. And I now see  
That you were never truly in love with me.

MARIANE.

Alas, you're free to think so if you choose.

VALÈRE.

I choose to think so, and here's a bit of news:  
You've spurned my hand, but I know where to turn  
For kinder treatment, as you shall quickly learn.

MARIANE.

I'm sure you do. Your noble qualities  
Inspire affection...

VALÈRE.

Forget my qualities, please.  
They don't inspire you overmuch, I find.  
But there's another lady I have in mind  
Whose sweet and generous nature will not scorn  
To compensate me for the loss I've borne.

MARIANE.

I'm no great loss, and I'm sure that you'll transfer  
Your heart quite painlessly from me to her.

VALÈRE.

I'll do my best to take it in my stride.

The pain I feel at being cast aside  
Time and forgetfulness may put an end to.  
Or if I can't forget, I shall pretend to.  
No self-respecting person is expected  
To go on loving once he's been rejected.

MARIANE.

Now, that's a fine, high-minded sentiment.

VALÈRE.

One to which any sane man would assent.  
Would you prefer it if I pined away  
In hopeless passion till my dying day?  
Am I to yield you to a rival's arms  
And not console myself with other charms?

MARIANE.

Go then: console yourself; don't hesitate.  
I wish you to; indeed, I cannot wait.

VALÈRE.

You wish me to?

MARIANE.

Yes.

VALÈRE.

That's the final straw.  
Madam, farewell. Your wish shall be my law.  
*(He starts to leave, and then returns: this repeatedly.)*

MARIANE.

Splendid.

VALÈRE. *(Coming back again.)*

This breach, remember, is of your making;  
It's you who've driven me to the step I'm taking.

MARIANE.

Of course.

VALÈRE. *(Coming back again.)*

Remember, too, that I am merely  
Following your example.

MARIANE.

I see that clearly.



VALÈRE.

Enough. I'll go and do your bidding, then.

MARIANE.

Good.

VALÈRE. *(Coming back again.)*

You shall never see my face again.

MARIANE.

Excellent.

VALÈRE. *(Walking to the door, then turning about.)*

Yes?

MARIANE.

What?

VALÈRE.

What's that? What did you say?

MARIANE.

Nothing. You're dreaming.

VALÈRE.

Ah. Well, I'm on my way.

Farewell, *Madame.*

*(He moves slowly away.)*

MARIANE.

Farewell.

DORINE. *(To Mariane.)*

If you ask me,

Both of you are as mad as mad can be.

Do stop this nonsense, now. I've only let you

Squabble so long to see where it would get you.

Whoa there, Monsieur Valère!

*(She goes and seizes Valère by the arm; he makes a great show of resistance.)*

VALÈRE.

What's this, Dorine?

DORINE.

Come here.

VALÈRE.

No, no, my heart's too full of spleen.

Don't hold me back; her wish must be obeyed.

DORINE.

Stop!

VALÈRE.

It's too late now; my decision's made.

DORINE.

Oh, pooh!

MARIANE. *(Aside.)*

He hates the sight of me, that's plain.

I'll go, and so deliver him from pain.

DORINE. *(Leaving Valère, running after Mariane.)*

And now you run away! Come back.

MARIANE.

No, no.

Nothing you say will keep me here. Let go!

VALÈRE. *(Aside.)*

She cannot bear my presence, I perceive.

To spare her further torment, I shall leave.

DORINE. *(Leaving Mariane, running after Valère.)*

Again! You'll not escape, Sir; don't you try it.

Come here, you two. Stop fussing, and be quiet.

*(She takes Valère by the hand, then Mariane, and draws them together.)*

VALÈRE. *(To Dorine.)*

What do you want of me?

MARIANE. *(To Dorine.)*

What is the point of this?

DORINE.

We're going to have a little armistice.

*(To Valère.)*

Now, weren't you silly to get so overheated?

VALÈRE.

Didn't you see how badly I was treated?

DORINE. *(To Mariane.)*

Aren't you a simpleton, to have lost your head?

MARIANE.

Didn't you hear the hateful things he said?

DORINE. *(To Valère.)*

You're both great fools. Her sole desire, Valère,  
Is to be yours in marriage. To that I'll swear.

*(To Mariane.)*

He loves you only, and he wants no wife  
But you, Mariane. On that I'll stake my life.

MARIANE. *(To Valère.)*

Then why you advised me so, I cannot see.

VALÈRE. *(To Mariane.)*

On such a question, why ask advice of me?

DORINE. Oh, you're impossible. Give me your hands, you  
two.

*(To Valère.)*

Yours first.

VALÈRE. *(Giving Dorine his hand.)*

But why?

DORINE. *(To Mariane.)*

And now a hand from you.

MARIANE. *(Also giving Dorine her hand.)*

What are you doing?

DORINE.

There: a perfect fit.

You suit each other better than you'll admit.

*(Valère and Mariane hold hands for some time without looking at each other.)*

VALÈRE. *(Turning toward Mariane.)*

Ah, come, don't be so haughty. Give a man  
A look of kindness, won't you, Mariane?

*(Mariane turns toward Valère and smiles.)*

DORINE.

I tell you, lovers are completely mad!

VALÈRE. *(To Mariane.)*

Now come, confess that you were very bad

To hurt my feelings as you did just now.

I have a just complaint, you must allow.

MARIANE.

You must allow that you were most unpleasant...

DORINE.

Let's table that discussion for the present;

Your father has a plan which must be stopped.

MARIANE.

Advise us, then; what means must we adopt?

DORINE.

We'll use all manner of means, and all at once.

*(To Mariane.)*

Your father's addled; he's acting like a dunce.

Therefore you'd better humor the old fossil.

Pretend to yield to him, be sweet and docile,

And then postpone, as often as necessary,

The day on which you have agreed to marry.

You'll thus gain time, and time will turn the trick.

Sometimes, for instance, you'll be taken sick,

And that will seem good reason for delay;

Or some bad omen will make you change the day—

You'll dream of muddy water, or you'll pass

A dead man's hearse, or break a looking-glass.

If all else fails, no man can marry you

Unless you take his ring and say "I do."

But now, let's separate. If they should find

Us talking here, our plot might be divined.

*(To Valère.)*

Go to your friends, and tell them what's occurred,

And have them urge her father to keep his word.

Meanwhile, we'll stir her brother into action,

And get Elmire, as well, to join our faction.

Good-bye.

VALÈRE. *(To Mariane.)*

Though each of us will do his best,

It's your true heart on which my hopes shall rest.

MARIANE. *(To Valère.)*

Regardless of what Father may decide,

None but Valère shall claim me as his bride.

VALÈRE.

Oh, how those words content me! Come what will..

DORINE. Oh, lovers, lovers! Their tongues are never still.  
Be off, now.

VALÈRE. *(Turning to go, then turning back.)*  
One last word...

DORINE.

No time to chat:

*You leave by this door; and you leave by that.*

*(Dorine pushes them, by the shoulders, toward opposing doors.)*

## ACT III SCENE ONE

DAMIS, DORINE

DAMIS.

May lightning strike me even as I speak,  
May all men call me cowardly and weak,  
If any fear or scruple holds me back  
From settling things, at once, with that great quack!

DORINE.

Now, don't give way to violent emotion.  
Your father's merely talked about this notion,  
And words and deeds are far from being one.  
Much that is talked about is left undone.

DAMIS.

No, I must stop that scoundrel's machinations;  
I'll go and tell him off; I'm out of patience.

DORINE.

Do calm down and be practical. I had rather  
My mistress dealt with him—and with your father.  
She has some influence with Tartuffe, I've noted.  
He hangs upon her words, seems most devoted,  
And may, indeed, be smitten by her charm.  
Pray Heaven it's true! 'Twould do our cause no harm.  
She sent for him, just now, to sound him out  
On this affair you're so incensed about;  
She'll find out where he stands, and tell him, too,  
What dreadful strife and trouble will ensue  
If he lends countenance to your father's plan.