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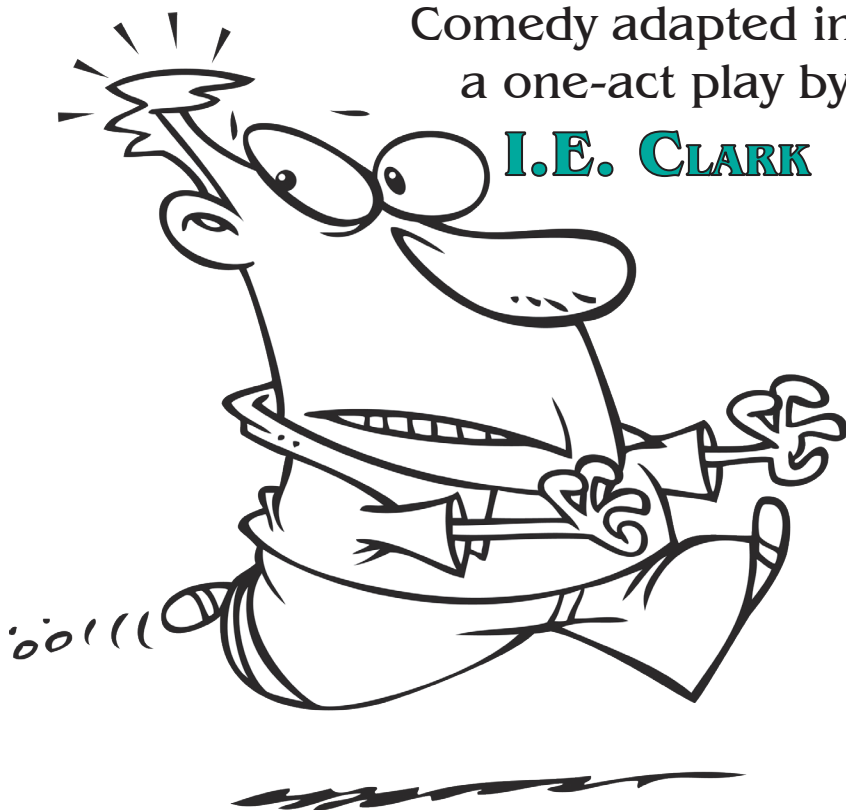
Family Plays

MOLIÈRE'S

THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

Comedy adapted into
a one-act play by

I.E. CLARK



THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF



“Beautiful play ... great contest material ... perfectly delightful ... kids loved it ... beautiful adaptation.” (Tivoli, Texas)

“A marvelous way to introduce students to Molière ... an ambitious and exciting production, probably the most discussed play of the whole weekend ... A great success.” (Comments about Christine Jones’ highly acclaimed production of *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* at the Trumbauer Drama Festival, Ala.)

Comedy. Adapted by I.E. Clark from the story by Molière. Cast: 6m., 3w. Sganarelle, a ne’er-do-well woodcutter, beats his wife. For revenge, she tells strangers that he is a great doctor who hates to make house calls—and that he must be beaten into admitting his identity. The strangers beat him until he agrees to treat a rich man’s daughter who has lost her voice. *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* is a mad escapade adding up to one act of sheer fun—a contest favorite. For all groups, junior high to adult. *Simple set. Place: France in 1660 or modern interpretation. A director’s script is available containing drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging, and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Approximate running time: 30 to 35 minutes. Code: DD7.*

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Title

Molière's

The Doctor in Spite of Himself

[Le Médecin Malgré Lui]

Translated and Adapted

Into a One-Act Play

By

I. E. Clark

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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ABOUT THE PLAY

The most obviously farcical of Molière's major comedies, *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* revolves around a carefree clown, Sganarelle, who makes his living as a woodcutter. A quarrel leads Sganarelle to beat his wife, Martine. A neighbor, rushing in to stop the fight, receives a beating in turn from Martine, who tells him to mind his own business. Nevertheless, Martine intends to get revenge on her husband.

After Sganarelle leaves to chop kindling, two strangers arrive seeking a doctor to cure the apparently incurable daughter of their master. Seeing her opportunity for revenge, Martine tells them that they will find an eccentric doctor in the forest chopping wood. Although he has performed miraculous cures, she says, he detests house calls and has to be beaten before he will admit he's a doctor. The servants follow her instructions and beat the unsuspecting Sganarelle until he is willing to admit anything. They take him to Geronte's house where he finds the patient, Lucinde; a delectable nurse, Jacqueline; and an unwelcome suitor, Leandre. The farce continues to grow in madness as the "Doctor" treats his patient.

This new translation and adaptation by I. E. Clark turns one of the world's most delightful three-act comedies into a one-act play for contests, assemblies, nights of plays, and other situations where the full version cannot be used.

CAST

This script was first presented at an assembly in the Schulenburg High School Theatre on May 14, 1969, with the following cast of drama students:

SGANARELLE.....Danny Vornsand
MARTINE, *his wife*.....Amparo Montes
MONSIEUR ROBERT.....Gary Getschmann
LUCAS.....Gary Gassmann
VALERE.....Wayne Holub
GERONTE.....Gerald Hafer
JACQUELINE.....Brenda Michalec
LUCINDE.....Shirley Hranicky
LEANDRE.....Tim Patrick

SCENE: A province in France, 1666
(May be played as taking place today)



NOTE: Accents on Valère, G ronte, and L andre have been dropped in this script in the belief that the French markings (which have nothing to do with stress) are more confusing than helpful to most Americans.

THE DIRECTOR'S PRODUCTION SCRIPT

The Director's Production Script (prompt book) available for this play contains numerous aids designed to save the director hours and hours of valuable time.

Included in the Director's Production Script are drawings of costumes, along with detailed suggestions for color, material, and other aspects of making or finding the costumes. You will also find floor plans drawn to scale; scale drawings of scenery, with suggestions for making or acquiring unusual set pieces, and suggestions for making or finding unusual props.

Also included is information on lighting, make-up, music, special effects, or whatever technicalities the play calls for.

The full text of the play is included, with detailed stage directions which show where each actor should be and what he should do all the while he is on stage. Experienced directors have used our blocking as a time-saving foundation upon which to mold their own creative ideas. Inexperienced directors have found our stage directions to be a priceless aid in solving problems of movement, picturization, focus, balance, and other aspects of staging. For the beginning director, using one of our Production Scripts is almost like having a professional director sitting beside you at rehearsals.

The Director's Production Script also contains a detailed discussion of characterization, with suggestions for helping each performer understand the role.

In the case of our one-act classics, the Director's Production Script saves the director even more time by providing well-researched information on the background, history, and significance of the play and its author.

Our Director's Production Scripts have become an indispensable tool for many theatres.

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Molière's

The Doctor in Spite of Himself

Adapted by I. E. Clark

[*The right half of the stage represents Sganarelle's house; the only piece of furniture is a stool. The left half of the stage is the edge of a forest, with perhaps a lonely pine tree and a rustic bench. At Up Center is a large screen placed far enough from the backdrop to permit easy passage behind it. AT RISE, SGANARELLE is sitting on the stool. He has paused in the process of sharpening his ax to speak to MARTINE, who is sweeping at his left.*]

SGANARELLE. No, no, no! I tell you I won't do it. And what I say goes because I'm the master of this house!

MARTINE. And I tell you that you'll do what I say.

SGAN. Oh, what a pain in the neck is a wife. Aristotle was right when he said a wife is worse than a devil!

MAR. Mm—get the smart fellow, with his silly Aristotle.

SGAN. Yes. A smart fellow. Show me another woodcutter who knows how to argue like me, who assisted a famous doctor for six years [*MARTINE pantomimes that his "assistance" was doing menial chores*] ...who even looked in a Latin book once...

MAR. A plague on the smart-aleck fool!

SGAN.. A plague on the hag!

MAR. Curses on the day I married you.

SGAN. You were lucky to find me.

MAR. Lucky! To have a husband who drags me to the poorhouse, a playboy, a traitor, who eats up everything I have—

SGAN. That's a lie. I drink part of it.

MAR. Who sells, little by little, everything in the house... [*She surveys the bare room.*]

SGAN. That's shrewd management.

MAR. Who's even sold my bed!

SGAN. You won't sleep so late.

MAR. Soon there won't be a stick of furniture in the house...

SGAN. So it'll be easy to move.

MAR. And who, from morning to night, does nothing but gamble and drink...

SGAN. So I won't get bored.

MAR. And while you're playing, what am I supposed to do with my family?

SGAN. You name it.

MAR. I have four little babies on my hands...

SGAN. Put them on the ground.

MAR. Who constantly beg for bread.

SGAN. Give them a whipping. When I am well fed, nobody in the house should complain of hunger.

MAR. You drunkard! Do you think things can go on like this forever?

SGAN. Dear wife, don't get so excited.

MAR. ...That I can stand your foolishness till the end of my days?

SGAN. Don't lose your temper, dear wife.

MAR. ...And that I can't find a way to tame you?

SGAN. Dear wife, you know that I have a weak temper and a strong arm.

MAR. I spit on your strong arm.

SGAN. [*Waving the ax*] My little wife, love of my life, you're itching for trouble.

MAR. Sot!

SGAN. I'm going to hit you.

MAR. Wine barrel!

SGAN. I'm going to smash you.

MAR. Scum!

SGAN. I'm going to slice you into ribbons.

MAR. Traitor! Boor! Coward! Dog! Liar! Thief!

SGAN. [*Beats her with ax handle*] I warned you.

MAR. [*Crying*] Oh! oh! oh! oh!

MONSIEUR ROBERT. [*Enters, surveys the scene, and runs to the battling couple.*] Hey! Shame on you—beating your wife that way!

MAR. [*To M. Robert*] Hey! Hey! I want him to beat me.

M. ROBERT. Oh! Then I approve, with all my heart.

MAR. Why are you butting in?

M. ROBERT. I was wrong.

MAR. Is it any of your business?

M. ROBERT. Of course not.

MAR. Look at this meddler, who wants to keep husbands from beating their wives.

M. ROBERT. I take it back!

MAR. Why do you poke your nose in our affairs?

M. ROBERT. I won't say another word.

MAR. I like to be beaten.

M. ROBERT. Wonderful.

MAR. It wasn't hurting you.

M. ROBERT. That's the truth.

MAR. And you were a fool to butt into something that's none of your business.

M. ROBERT. [*He backs into Sganarelle*] Dear friend, I beg your pardon with all my heart. Go on, beat your wife, smash her; I'll help if you say so.

SGAN. I do not say so.

M. ROBERT. All right then.

SGAN. I want to beat her if I want to; and I don't want to beat her if I don't want to.

M. ROBERT. Certainly.

SGAN. She's my wife, not yours.

M. ROBERT. Without doubt.

SGAN. I don't need your help.

M. ROBERT. Why should you?

SGAN. And you're very rude to interfere in other people's affairs. Learn what Cicero says: "Never put your bark between the tree and the finger." [*Drives M. ROBERT off*]

stage. Turns to MARTINE.] Well now, let's make up and shake hands.

MAR. Sure—after beating me like that.

SGAN. That was nothing. Shake.

MAR. No, I want to be angry.

SGAN. Ah—that was a mere trifle. Come on, come on, give me your hand.

MAR. Well, all right. [*She smiles at him but says aside*] But you'll pay for it.

SGAN. You're silly to get upset. Five or six good wallops are necessary now and then for a happy marriage. Now to the woods—and I promise you more than a hundred pieces of kindling. [*Exit*]

MAR. So. Behind this smile is a heart full of resentment. I'm boiling to find some way to get revenge for that beating you gave me... [*Sits, thinking deeply.*]

[*LUCAS and VALERE enter.*]

LUCAS. By durn! We got ourselves one devil of a job, ain't it.

VALERE. Well, we have to obey our master. Besides, we both want to help his daughter get well, don't we? We're sure to get some presents at her wedding, but she can't get married while she's sick, can she?

MAR. [*Aside*] What kind of scheme can I think up to get revenge?

LUCAS. But what kind of goofy idea has the master got now, now that all them doctors has used up all their Latin?

VALERE. One sometimes finds what he's looking for in unusual, out-of-the-way places.

MAR. [*Aside*] Yes, I'll get my revenge. [*She rises and begins pacing. LUCAS and VALERE indicate that they are in deep thought and they, too, begin pacing. All three meet with an audible bump.*] Oh! Gentlemen, I beg your pardon. I didn't see you. I was trying to find the answer to a problem.

VAL. Everyone has problems. We also are trying to answer one.

MAR. Would it be anything I could help you with?

VAL. We're hunting a special kind of doctor—one who might help our master's daughter. Some strange disease has made her lose the use of her tongue. Our master believes that somewhere there is a doctor with wonderful secrets who can help her. That's what we're looking for.

MAR. [*Aside*] Heaven inspires me with a great idea to get revenge on my rogue of a husband! [*Aloud*] You couldn't have come to a better place. We have a man here, the most marvelous man in the world for desperate illnesses.

VAL. Where can we find him?

MAR. In that forest. He's amusing himself by chopping wood.

LUCAS. A doctor choppin' wood?

VAL. Amusing himself by collecting medicinal herbs, you mean.

MAR. No. He is a very unusual man—you'd never guess he's what he is. He wears unbelievable clothes, he pretends to be stupid, and he will do almost anything to keep from practicing his marvelous talent for medicine. Above all else, he hates to make house calls.

VAL. It's strange that all great men have some little grain of folly...

MAR. The folly of this one is greater than you'd believe. Why sometimes he has to be beaten before he will admit who he really is. If he's in that mood today, you'll both have to take a stick and flog him hard before he'll admit he's a doctor.

VAL. [*To Lucas*] Now *there* is a strange folly. [*To MARTINE*] What's his name?

MAR. His name is Sganarelle, but he's easy to recognize. He wears a long black mustache, a ruff, and a green and yellow suit.

LUCAS. I thought doctors wore black. Green and yellow? Does he have parrots for patients?

VAL. But is he really a skillful physician?

MAR. Listen, he works miracles. Six months ago a wo-

man was given up for dead by all the other doctors. They were ready to bury her when somebody forced this man to make a house call. He looked her over and put a little drop of I-don't-know-what in her mouth. That very instant she jumped out of bed and walked around her room as if nothing had happened.

LUCAS. No!

MAR. Not three weeks ago a twelve-year-old boy tumbled off the top of the steeple and hit the pavement, breaking his head, his arms, and his legs. As soon as they brought our man, he rubbed a certain ointment all over the body and the little boy hopped to his feet and ran out to play marbles.

LUCAS. No!

VAL. He can cure anything.

MAR. Who doubts it?

LUCAS. By golly, that there's just the man we want. Let's go find him.

VAL. We thank you kindly for the good news you've given us.

MAR. Don't forget what I've told you to do.

LUCAS. By durn, you can depend on us. If it's a beating he needs, that's our bag of milk. [*All exit*]

SGAN. [*Enters Left humming the tune of "Little Brown Jug" (see Production Script for music.) He is carrying a jug.*] La, la, la. Phew, that much work deserves a little drink. [*Drinks*] Man that forest is salty! [*Sings to his jug as he sits on bench.*] La, la, la, little brown jug, how I love your glug, glug, glug.

[*LUCAS and VALERE enter.*]

VAL. There he is.

LUCAS. I think you're telling the truth. I think.

SGAN. [*Embracing his jug; he does not see men*] Ah, my little rascal! How I love my sweet little bottle. La, la, la...little...brown...jug...how...I... What are they looking at?

VAL. Sir, are you named Sganarelle?

SGAN. Yes and no. It depends on what you want.

VAL. All we want is to show him how much we respect him.

SGAN. In that case, my name is Sganarelle.

VAL. Sir, we come to you because we need your services badly.

SGAN. If it concerns my small business, Sir, I'll be happy to serve you.

VAL. Talented persons are always sought after, and we have been told of your great ability.

SGAN. It's true, gentlemen, that I am the world's best kindling cutter.

VAL. Oh, Sir!

SGAN. I spare nothing to make the best kindling available.

VAL. Sir, that point is not in question.

SGAN. But I sell it for 110 sous a bundle.

VAL. We're not talking about that...

SGAN. I promise you I won't sell it for less.

VAL. Sir, we know that...

SGAN. If you know that, you know that's how I sell it.

VAL. Sir, you're joking...

SGAN. I am not joking. I won't take a cent less.

VAL. Let's change the subject.

SGAN. You may find it cheaper somewhere else. There is kindling, and there is kindling. But my kindling...

VAL. Sir! Sir! Let's drop this discussion.

SGAN. I swear that you can't have it for a penny less.

VAL. Why, Sir, would a famous doctor like you disguise himself before the world and bury his wonderful talents!

SGAN. [*Aside*] He's crazy.

VAL. Please, Sir, don't pretend with us.

SGAN. What?

LUCAS. Yeh! We ain't stupid!

SGAN. What's this all about? What do you take me for?

VAL. For what you are—a great doctor.

SGAN. Doctor yourself! I'm not a doctor! I've never been a doctor in my whole life.

VAL. [*Aside, to Lucas*] I can see we're going to have to use the remedy. [*Aloud*] Sir, I beg you to admit that you're a doctor.

LUCAS. Yeh!

SGAN. [*Aside*] I'm going to be angry.

VAL. Why deny what everyone knows?

LUCAS. Yeh!

SGAN. Gentlemen, in one word or two thousand, I tell you I'm not a doctor.

VAL. You're not a doctor?

SGAN. No.

LUCAS. You ain't a doctor?

SGAN. No, no, and—no.

VAL. Well, you asked for it. [*They beat him*]

SGAN. [*Jumping up*] Oh! Oh! I am whatever you say I am.

VAL. Then why did you force us to this violence?

LUCAS. Yeh!

VAL. I assure you that we did it with the greatest regret.

LUCAS. Yeh!

SGAN. What the devil is this all about? Is it a joke, or are you crazy?

VAL. What! You still deny that you're a doctor?

SGAN. The devil take me if I am.

LUCAS. You say you ain't, eh?

SGAN. No, by— [*They begin beating him again*] Oh! oh! wait—yes—I'm a doctor! I'm a doctor! I'm a druggist, too, if you say so. I'd rather consent to anything than get beaten to death.

VAL. Thank you, Sir, for being reasonable.

LUCAS. It makes my heart jiggle to hear you talk that way.

SGAN. [*Aside*] Say, could it be that I'm the one who's mistaken? Could I have become a doctor without noticing it?

VAL. I beg your forgiveness with all my soul.

LUCAS. I beg to excuse you for all I have done.

SGAN. You're absolutely sure I'm a doctor.

LUCAS. Yep.

SGAN. You're positive.

VAL. Without a doubt.

SGAN. By damn, I never knew it.

VAL. What are you saying? You're the best doctor in the world.

SGAN. Mmmm.

LUCAS. You can cure people that nobody can cure.

SGAN. What do you know!

VAL. A woman was about to be buried, but you gave her a little drop of something and she jumped up and walked around her room.

SGAN. Imagine that!

LUCAS. A little bitty boy fell off of the top of a steeple all the way to the ground and busted his little head and his little neck and his little back and his little arms and his little legs and you took a little bitty ointment and cured him and he hopped up and lost his marbles.

SGAN. A miracle!

VAL. In short, Sir, we assure you that you will be most respectfully treated and most handsomely paid if you will come with us.

SGAN. Handsomely paid?

VAL. Yes, Sir.

SGAN. Ah! Of course I'm a doctor. It slipped my mind for a moment... What's your problem, old man?

VAL. A young lady has lost her voice.

SGAN. Well I don't have it!

VAL. [*To Lucas*] He likes to joke. [*To Sganarelle*] Shall we go, Sir?

SGAN. Without a doctor's robe?

VAL. We'll find one.

SGAN. [*Giving his jug to Valere*] Take this, fellow. That's where I keep my medicine. [*To Lucas, sharply*] You there, walk in front. Doctor's orders.

LUCAS. By golly, that's the kind of doctor I like. He's gonna do real well because he's funny!

[They march, circling behind UC screen. LUCAS and VAL-ERE emerge from screen without Sganarelle. They circle stage again, passing behind screen. As they emerge this time, SGANARELLE is again in position between them, but now dressed in a long black robe. The three circle the stage again. As they emerge from behind the screen this time, they are followed by a stagehand. All exit. As stagehand exits, he picks up the tree and carries it offstage with him. (See Production Script for suggestions for using music with the march.) With the same rhythm as the exit, a new procession enters the stage in this order: GERONTE, VAL-ERE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE. They are now in Geronte's house. Sganarelle is not with them.]

VAL. *[To Geronte]* Sir, we have brought you the greatest doctor on earth.

LUCAS. Yeh. There's not another doctor could empty his shoes.

VAL. He has performed miraculous cures.

LUCAS. He's even cured people who was already dead.

VAL. He's a trifle eccentric, however.

LUCAS. Yeh. He likes to be funny—and—I excuse you for saying so—he acts like he was hit over the head with an ax.

GERONTE. I can't wait to meet him. Bring him to me, quickly.

VAL. I'll get him. *[Exit]*

JACQUELINE. Holy saints, Sir, this man'll flop just like all them others. If you ask me, the best medicine for your daughter'd be a good lovin' husband of her own choosin'.

GERONTE. Well, Nurse, you're full of suggestions.

LUCAS. Shut up, Jacqueline. Keep your nose out of this.

JAC. Anyway, a husband's the medicine that cures all a young girl's troubles.