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# The Imaginary Invalid

by  
MOLIÈRE

Arranged and Adapted  
by  
Kenneth Weston Turner

The First Play to Be Approved by the Committee  
for the Revision of Old Plays for the High School  
Stage, a Sub-committee of the Coördinating Committee  
on the Teaching of Drama in Secondary Schools,  
of the American Educational Theatre Association



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(THE IMAGINARY INVALID)

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# Foreword

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It is the earnest desire of the editor of this adaptation, that the young non-professionals who use it will derive as much pleasure in acting it as the various casts of the past few years have had in preparing it. It has been the aim of the editor to keep alive the rollicking spirit of Molière's original productions.

First and last, Molière was a great entertainer. His plays were written to be acted and not to gather dust in the archives of libraries and museums.

This acting version is based on one of the earliest and best translations into the English. In 1739, Henry Baker and James Miller translated "Le Malade Imaginaire," calling it "The Hypochondriack." This play was reprinted in 1751 by Robert Urie and was sold by John Gilmour, a Glasgow bookseller. The present acting edition is based on this 1739 translation.

KENNETH W. TURNER.

*Whiting, Indiana.*  
*January, 1939.*



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# The Imaginary Invalid

*A Comedy in Three Acts*

FOR EIGHT MEN AND FOUR WOMEN

OR

FIVE MEN AND FIVE WOMEN\*

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As produced by the *Whiting High School Theatre Board*, *Whiting, Indiana*, July 22, 1938, and September 14, 1938, under the direction of *Kenneth W. Turner*, with the following cast:

ARGAN, <i>the imaginary invalid</i> .....	Harry Hood
TOINETTE, <i>a servant</i> .....	Marjorie Jane Walker
ANGÉLIQUE, <i>Argan's elder daughter</i> .....	Caroline Johnson
MONSIEUR FLEURANT, <i>an apothecary</i> .....	Paul Wagner
BÉLINE, <i>Argan's second wife</i> .....	{ Jean Greig Margaret Hutira
MONSIEUR DE BONNEFOI, <i>a notary</i> .....	{ John Crist George Marlowe
CLÉANTE, <i>in love with Angélique</i> .....	Kenneth Dalton
MONSIEUR DIAFOIRUS, <i>a physician</i> .....	William Rutledge
THOMAS DIAFOIRUS, <i>his son</i> .....	James Morrison
LOUISON, <i>Argan's younger daughter</i> .....	Lorraine McClelland
BÉRALDE, <i>Argan's brother</i> .....	Charles Mills
MONSIEUR PURGON, <i>a physician</i> .....	{ Charles Salmon Horace Kerr

PLACE: *The private sitting-room in Argan's suite. Paris, France.*

TIME: 1673.

## SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *The private sitting-room in Argan's suite. Afternoon.*

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\*The play may be produced easily by an all-women cast. On the other hand, if more women are desired, to make a better

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ACT TWO: *The same. Next morning.*

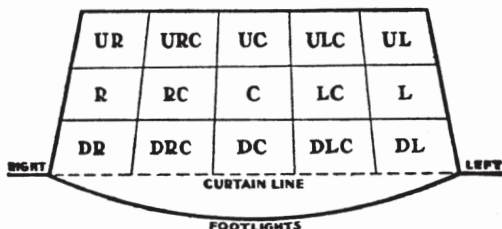
ACT THREE: *The same. Next evening.*

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balance between male and female parts, such rôles as *Monsieur Fleurant*, *Monsieur de Bonnefoi*, and *Thomas Diafoirus* may be played by women. For a smaller cast, the following rôles may be doubled: *Monsieur de Bonnefoi* may play *Béralde*, *Monsieur Fleurant* may play *Thomas Diafoirus*, and *Monsieur Diafoirus* may play *Monsieur Purgon*. The rôle of *Monsieur Purgon* may be omitted entirely.

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



### STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

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NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves considerable time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

A diagram of the stage setting will be found in the "Director's Manual" at the end of the play. Included, also, in the "Director's Manual" are helpful hints on play production in general as well as specific suggestions for producing "The Imaginary Invalid," notes on characters and costumes, property and lighting plots, etc.





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## Act One

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**SCENE:** *The private sitting-room in Argan's suite. It is a richly-furnished room suggestive of the 17th century. The doorways and windows are richly draped. Tapestries hang on the walls. In the R wall, downstage, is a fireplace with the usual accessories. A tapestry piece hangs above it. Upstage of the fireplace, in the R wall, there is a casement window with a canopy-draped effect. A door to the outside is in an alcove just right of center in the rear wall, U R C. There are a small platform and two steps leading down from the alcove to the floor level. There is an arched doorway U C, leading into the hall. Behind this is a large window. Trees and shrubs are seen beyond this window. Left of center in the rear wall, and somewhat downstage, is a door, U L C, leading to Argan's library. There are French doors, leading to the garden, in the L wall, downstage. There is a comfortable looking couch D R, close to the fireplace, and placed at an angle up- and down-stage. This must be a plain couch with no back. On it are half a dozen pillows, a robe, and a couch cover. Slightly to the right of the upstage end of the couch, at R C, is a large upholstered armchair. Two high-backed chairs stand in front of the panels to the left and right of the U C archway. A large desk and chair are L C, at an angle facing D R. There is another chair below the French doors D L. There is a hanging chandelier in the center of the room, which is raised and lowered from the pinrail. A small mirror hangs on the wall left of the French doors. There is a small stool U L. Argan's desk, L C, is covered with papers, ledgers, medicine containers, bottles, spoons, hand mirror, small hand bell, quill pen, inkwell, tray, cane, mixing bowl, and a couple of low candleholders with candles in them. There are candles in holders on*

*the mantel, while outside the arch U C is a lantern. On either side of the archway U C are candleholders.]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: ARGAN is seated at his desk L C. He is holding a hand mirror up to his face and looking at his tongue. He coughs rather feebly. TOINETTE is peeking around at him from the U C arch and mimicking his gestures, but keeping well out of his line of vision. She carries a feather duster. ARGAN is about fifty-five and in good health, in spite of the ministrations of his physicians. He regards everything in relation to his own personal well-being, with little or no thought to the comfort or happiness of others. He is a tyrannical egotist, very gullible, and has an extreme dread and fear of death. TOINETTE is about twenty-four, pretty, and intelligent. Her disposition is impish. After one or two grunts and groans, ARGAN puts the hand mirror down. Then he begins to count the bottles and containers on the desk.]

ARGAN. So there, this month I have taken one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight medicines and twelve other remedies. [*He looks through the pile of bills.*] Last month there were twelve medicines and twenty remedies. [*He looks at his tongue in the hand mirror and speaks sourly.*] No wonder I am not so well this month as last. [*Calling toward the arch.*] Here, take away these things.

[TOINETTE disappears U C.]

ARGAN [*looking around, greatly enraged*]. Toinette! Ah! There's nobody there. [*Ringing the hand bell.*] I'm always left alone. [*Ringing the bell more fiercely.*] They don't hear; my bell's not loud enough. [*He holds the bell close to his ear and listens carefully as he rings it again.*] No! They are deaf! [*Rising, with his cane, and crossing to the door U L C, opening it, and calling.*] Toinette!

[TOINETTE appears U C.]

TOINETTE [*softly, at U C*]. Hoo-hoo.

[TOINETTE ducks quickly out of sight as ARGAN whirls about to face the entrance U C. He crosses suspiciously to the entrance U C just as TOINETTE appears in the doorway U L C.]

ARGAN [as he crosses U C]. Toinette! [Louder still.] Toinette!  
TOINETTE [softly, at U L C]. Yes—Monsieur.

[ARGAN whirls abruptly to face U L C, but TOINETTE has disappeared before he has a chance to see her. ARGAN starts toward the door U L C again; just then TOINETTE appears in the arch U C.]

ARGAN [beside himself, as he crosses U L C]. Just as though I hadn't rung at all. [He looks out U L C.]

[TOINETTE, U C, is laughing silently. ARGAN whirls abruptly again, but TOINETTE is too quick for him and disappears from the arch. ARGAN hurries U C again and looks out. As he does so, TOINETTE appears in the doorway U L C.]

ARGAN [bellowing]. Toinette!  
TOINETTE [softly, at U L C]. Here—Monsieur.

[ARGAN quickly turns to face U L C. TOINETTE disappears from U L C. By now, ARGAN is dizzy from whirling about so much. He fumes savagely as he rings the hand bell wildly.]

ARGAN. I'm going mad! Ting-a-ling-a-ling! [Shaking the hand bell wildly.] To leave a poor sick creature . . . [He returns to his desk and sits as if exhausted.]

[TOINETTE appears in the arch U C, giggling silently. ARGAN continues to fume.]

ARGAN. They'll let me die here. Toinette! [His voice is very hoarse by this time. When he opens his mouth to shriek again only air comes out, for he has lost his voice for the moment.] Toinette! [This last call is just a loud whisper.]

[TOINETTE stealthily approaches the desk as ARGAN calls toward the French doors D L.]

ARGAN [*his voice regained, bellowing*]. Toinette!

TOINETTE [*poking into his ear with the feather duster as she speaks*]. Boo!

[ARGAN *nearly jumps out of his chair*. TOINETTE, *shaking with suppressed laughter, steps aside and curtsies demurely*.]

TOINETTE. Here I am. [*She tries to seem innocent and hide her inward laughter*.]

ARGAN [*grabbing his cane, rising and wielding it over his head*]. You jade! [*Explosively*]. Oh!

[TOINETTE *hastens behind the couch R C as ARGAN approaches her*.]

TOINETTE. The deuce take your impatience, you hurried me so much that I——[*She thinks rapidly; then she puts her hands to her head and cries violently, pretending to have hurt it*]. I've cracked my head against the window-shutter.

ARGAN [*advancing with upraised cane and following TOINETTE around the couch as he speaks*]. Oh! Baggage——

TOINETTE [*running around the couch to the left side of it*]. Oh! [*She pretends to cry loudly*].

ARGAN [*following her*]. 'Tis an hour——

[TOINETTE, *still crying loudly, retreats to the upstage end of the couch*.]

TOINETTE. Oh!

[*As ARGAN follows her, TOINETTE comes downstage to the right end of the couch*.]

ARGAN. You have left me——

TOINETTE [*crying for all she's worth*]. Oh!

ARGAN. Hold your tongue, you baggage, so that I can scold you.

TOINETTE. I like that, after what I've done to myself. [*She cries louder than ever*.]

ARGAN [*coming down to the left end of the couch*]. You have made me bawl my throat sore, gipsy.

TOINETTE. And you have made me break my head; one's as good as the other. [*She cries loudly.*]

ARGAN. Hussy! [*He raises his cane as if to strike TOINETTE, who is on the other side of the couch.*]

TOINETTE. If you scold, I'll cry.

ARGAN. To leave me, you jade——

[*TOINETTE bursts into loud wails again.*]

TOINETTE. Oh-h-h-h-h!

ARGAN. Impudence! You would——

TOINETTE. Oh-h-h-h-h-h-h!

[*Still crying loudly, TOINETTE keeps her eye on ARGAN for his next move. Raising his cane high above his head, ARGAN brings it down as he leans over the couch toward TOINETTE. She screams as she sees it is coming, ducks the blow, and runs around the downstage end of the couch to C as ARGAN loses his balance and falls prone across the couch, hitting the floor on the right side of the couch with his cane. The cane falls from his hand. He groaningly recovers himself as he sits on the left side of the couch. TOINETTE, laughing merrily, stands at C.*]

ARGAN. What! Must I even forgo the pleasure of scolding you?

TOINETTE [*crossing to the couch and aiding ARGAN to rise and cross to C*]. Have your pennyworth of scolding.

ARGAN. Hussy!

[*ARGAN jerks away from TOINETTE and crosses to the desk. He sits.*]

ARGAN. You hinder me from scolding by interrupting me at every turn.

TOINETTE [*following him over, standing right of the desk*]. If you have the pleasure of scolding, I must, on my part, have the pleasure of crying. Oh-h-h-h-h! [*She starts to wail loudly again.*]

ARGAN [*holding up his hands as he rises from his chair*]. Come,



come! [*Indicating the things on the desk.*] Take these things away, you minx, take them away. [*He sits again.*]

TOINETTE. Yes, Monsieur. [*She begins to gather the bottles, books, and papers together and put them on the tray.*]

ARGAN. Be sure to have some broth ready for the medicine.

[*TOINETTE, crossing behind ARGAN's chair to left of the desk, continues to put things on the tray.*]

TOINETTE [*contemptuously*]. This Monsieur Fleurant and Monsieur Purgon have a fine time with that carcass of yours; they make a rare milk-cow out of you.

ARGAN [*fuming at her impertinence*]. But—but——

[*TOINETTE continues uninterrupted.*]

TOINETTE. I'd like to ask them what sickness you have that requires so many remedies.

ARGAN. Hold your tongue, ignorance!

[*TOINETTE picks up her tray and makes a face at him as she starts out U C, behind his chair.*]

ARGAN. Send my daughter Angélique to me. I have something to tell her.

[*TOINETTE continues U C and starts to go out. She returns as she sees ANGÉLIQUE coming.*]

TOINETTE. Here she comes now. [*She puts the tray down on the chair right of the arch and remains to listen. She pretends to be busy arranging things on the tray as she lingers.*]

[*ANGÉLIQUE enters U C. She is about twenty, a typical ingenue. Seemingly, she lives for love. She is pretty in a fragile way.*]

ARGAN [*indicating the chair D L*]. Come here, Angélique, I have something to tell you.

[*ANGÉLIQUE comes C, crosses to the chair D L, and sits.*]

ANGÉLIQUE. Yes, Monsieur.

[Before ARGAN has time to continue there is a loud knocking at the door U L C. MONSIEUR FLEURANT looks into the room. He is about forty and quite inclined to be sober in mien. He takes himself very seriously, as do all "men of science." He carries aloft a goblet, supposedly containing medicine. Without a word, but with a dark and sinister look, he comes down to left of the desk and beckons with a sinister, expansive gesture toward the arch U C. ARGAN wilts and prepares to rise. FLEURANT crosses back of ARGAN'S chair to U C, awaiting him at the arch.]

TOINETTE [imitating FLEURANT'S voice and gesture]. Your apothecary is here, Monsieur. It is time to take your medicine.

[TOINETTE fairly takes the words out of FLEURANT'S mouth. He gives her a foreboding glance.]

ARGAN. Wait. [He looks about for his cane.] Give me my cane.

[TOINETTE goes D R C and picks it up where he dropped it earlier. She crosses to ARGAN and holds it out to him. As ARGAN puts his hand out for the cane, TOINETTE jerks it back, and ARGAN, in a rage, starts R, around the room after her. She manages to stay just out of reach, teasing him to come on all the while by holding out the cane. ANGÉLIQUE rises, amused. TOINETTE pulls the chair left of the couch in his path, then pulls the couch so that it blocks his path. She then crosses to the desk with ARGAN after her. They go around the desk once; on the second time, ARGAN attempts to crawl over it to get TOINETTE, who is left of the desk. She pokes the cane in his ribs and tickles him. He laughs in spite of himself and goes around the desk once more with TOINETTE after him. TOINETTE stops right of the desk when FLEURANT coughs with displeasure; she drops the cane on the desk. ARGAN picks up his cane from the desk, where TOINETTE has left it, and crosses U C, to FLEURANT.]

TOINETTE. Go quickly, Monsieur; go! Monsieur Fleurant mustn't be kept waiting.



[TOINETTE'S *sarcastic tone* causes FLEURANT to turn and glare at her darkly. ARGAN roars with rage and goes out U C, followed by FLEURANT.]

ANGÉLIQUE [*running to the door U C, listening for a moment, and then coming down to TOINETTE*]. Toinette!

TOINETTE [*knowing full well what is on ANGÉLIQUE'S mind*]. Well? [*She smiles sympathetically at her.*]

ANGÉLIQUE. Look at me, Toinette.

TOINETTE [*teasing her*]. Well, what would you have with Toinette?

ANGÉLIQUE [*fairly seething with suppressed excitement*]. Don't you guess?

[TOINETTE brings ANGÉLIQUE over to the chair left of the couch; she straightens it around into place for ANGÉLIQUE. ANGÉLIQUE sits.]

TOINETTE. Yes, I can guess. It's about that young lover of yours again. Hasn't he been the entire topic of our conversation for the past six days? You're not well unless you're talking about him. [*During this speech she sets the couch back in position and stands behind it, looking down at ANGÉLIQUE.*]

ANGÉLIQUE. Since you know that, why don't you begin and spare me embarrassment?

TOINETTE. You don't give me time to do it.

ANGÉLIQUE. I know, I'm never weary of talking about him to you. But tell me, Toinette, do you blame me for loving him?

TOINETTE. Far from it.

ANGÉLIQUE. Toinette, don't you perceive something of providence, something of destiny in our first adventurous meeting?

TOINETTE. Yes.

ANGÉLIQUE [*rapturously*]. Don't you think that his engaging in my defense without knowing me was most gallant?

TOINETTE. Certainly.

ANGÉLIQUE [*gazing ahead of her soulfully*]. And hasn't he the noble bearing of an aristocrat?

TOINETTE. That's sure.

ANGÉLIQUE. And there's nothing more vexatious than the restraint that keeps us apart.

TOINETTE. You're right.

ANGÉLIQUE [*rising, crossing nearer to TOINETTE*]. But, my dear Toinette, do you think that he loves me as much as he tells me he does?

TOINETTE [*thoughtfully*]. Hum—that is hard to tell. The show of love is very much like the reality. I have seen notable actors play the part of lovers.

ANGÉLIQUE [*disappointed*]. Oh, Toinette! He wouldn't lie to me?

TOINETTE. We'll see shortly. The letter that he wrote you yesterday, stating that he was about to ask for you in marriage, will prove him out.

ANGÉLIQUE. If he deceives me, I'll never believe a man again as long as I live. [*She starts to cry.*]

TOINETTE [*glancing U C*]. There is your father again!

[ANGÉLIQUE crosses L C and draws ARGAN'S desk chair over to right of the desk. ARGAN enters U C, coming down to the chair ANGÉLIQUE has moved. ANGÉLIQUE helps ARGAN into the chair. TOINETTE busies herself, industriously arranging the couch spread.]

ARGAN [*as he sits*]. So, daughter! I have a piece of news which may surprise you. A young man has asked me for your hand in marriage. [*Laughing.*] How's this? You smile.

[ANGÉLIQUE, standing right of ARGAN, curtsies slightly, a smile on her face.]

ARGAN. That's pleasant enough, eh? [*He gives her a poke in the ribs with his cane.*] That word marriage. [*He laughs.*] I can see, my child, that you have no objections to marriage.

[ARGAN laughs heartily, pleased with himself.]

ANGÉLIQUE [*obediently*]. It is my duty, Father, to do whatever you please to command. [*She curtsies.*]

ARGAN. I'm glad to have such a dutiful daughter. The thing is fixed then; you are promised in marriage.

ANGÉLIQUE [*obediently*]. Yes, Monsieur.

ARGAN. Your stepmother wants to make a nun of you and your little sister, Louison.

TOINETTE. The sly fox has her reasons.

[*ARGAN makes an explosive sound at TOINETTE to silence her.*]

ARGAN. She wouldn't consent to the marriage, but I have given my word to your future husband.

ANGÉLIQUE. Father, I'm deeply grateful for your goodness.

ARGAN. I have not seen the young man as yet, but they tell me that I shall be well-pleased with him.

ANGÉLIQUE. Most certainly, Father.

ARGAN. How now, have you seen him?

[*TOINETTE comes forward and tries to warn ANGÉLIQUE. ANGÉLIQUE is too engrossed to notice her.*]

ANGÉLIQUE. Yes, Father dear; chance brought us together about six days ago. The request that he has made of you is the result of love at first sight.

ARGAN. I wasn't told of that. [*He pauses for a moment to reflect.*] 'Tis just as well, however. They say that he's a jolly young fellow, and handsome.

ANGÉLIQUE [*smiling*]. Very.

ARGAN. Agreeable!

ANGÉLIQUE. Most certainly.

ARGAN. Discreet and well-born.

ANGÉLIQUE. Perfectly!

ARGAN. Genteel.

ANGÉLIQUE [*hands clasped in front of her, speaking lovingly*]. The most genteel in the world.

ARGAN. Speaks Latin and Greek well.

[TOINETTE starts violently.]

ANGÉLIQUE [*coming out of her reverie*]. He didn't tell me that.

[ANGÉLIQUE gives TOINETTE a startled look. TOINETTE, in turn, looks worried.]

ARGAN. And will be admitted as a doctor of medicine in three days.

ANGÉLIQUE. He, Father?

ARGAN. Yes, hasn't he told you?

ANGÉLIQUE. No, indeed. Who told you?

ARGAN. Monsieur Purgon.

ANGÉLIQUE [*with slight disgust*]. Does Monsieur Purgon know him?

ARGAN. A fine question. Certainly he knows his own nephew!

ANGÉLIQUE. Cléante—Monsieur Purgon's nephew?

ARGAN [*angrily*]. What Cléante? We are speaking of the young man who has asked for your hand in marriage.

ANGÉLIQUE. Oh! [*She crosses to TOINETTE and takes her hand apprehensively.*]

ARGAN [*greatly disturbed by the turn things have taken, rising from his chair*]. He is the son of the physician, Monsieur Diafoirus. His name is Thomas Diafoirus, not Cléante. He is to come here with his father tomorrow morning. [*With rising irritation.*] What's the matter? You look surprised.

ANGÉLIQUE. You have been speaking of one person and I of quite another.

TOINETTE [*crossing to c*]. Monsieur! What an absurd idea! With all your wealth, to marry your daughter to a doctor! Bah!

[ANGÉLIQUE sits on the couch and weeps softly.]

ARGAN. Mind your own business, you hussy. Your impudence—[*He raises his cane, as if to strike TOINETTE.*]

TOINETTE [*speaking softly, as she pushes the cane aside*]. Come now, Monsieur, softly. Can't we quarrel more quietly? [*She*

*suddenly yells the next.*] Tell me, Monsieur, what is your reason for this marriage?

ARGAN [*startled by the sudden loudness*]. My reason? I'm sick. I'm an infirm old man and I want a son-in-law and relatives that are physicians. I want to have at hand all the sources of remedies that I may need, and to be present at consultations.

TOINETTE. Well, at any rate, that's a reason. [*With great glee.*] Now, Monsieur, in all truth, *are you really sick?* [*She uses a staccato effect on these words, bringing each word out sharply and clearly.*]

ARGAN [*towering in rage, forgetting all about his ailments, pounding the floor with his cane*]. You jade! Am I sick? Am I sick? Such impudence!

TOINETTE [*holding her hands up in a hypnotic gesture and coming toward him, looking at him searchingly*]. Yes, yes, *you are sick*; let's have no quarrel about that. Yes, you are very sick, sicker than you think.

[*ARGAN has seated himself in the chair right of the desk, weakly, during this speech. Now, he quickly picks up his mirror from the desk to look at his tongue again. TOINETTE turns away and speaks to ANGÉLIQUE.*]

TOINETTE. Well, that's over. [*Turning back to ARGAN.*] Now, Monsieur, your daughter is to marry a husband for herself and since she isn't sick, it isn't necessary to give her a doctor.

ARGAN. But it's for my sake that I'm giving her a doctor, and any girl should be glad to marry for the benefit of her father's health.

TOINETTE. Monsieur, let me give you a piece of friendly advice.

ARGAN [*grumpily*]. What advice?

TOINETTE. Don't think of this foolish marriage again.

ARGAN. And why not, pray?

TOINETTE. Your daughter won't consent to it.

[*ANGÉLIQUE rises distractedly as ARGAN continues.*]

ARGAN. She won't consent to it?

TOINETTE. No! She'll tell you that she will have nothing to do with doctors, nor with Monsieur Diafoirus, nor with his son, Thomas Diafoirus, nor with all of the Diafoiruses in the world. [*Each one of the above phrases is emphasized a little more as she proceeds, and the tempo is faster each time.*]

ARGAN [*angrily, pounding his cane on the floor*]. But I have something to do with them! Besides, Thomas is his father's only heir, and, moreover, Monsieur Purgon, who has no wife nor children, will leave everything to Thomas in favor of this marriage, and Monsieur Purgon has eight thousand livres a year.

TOINETTE. He must have *killed* a great many people to have become so rich.

[*ARGAN looks a little startled at this.*]

ARGAN. Eight thousand livres a year is something to be reckoned with, not counting the father's estate.

TOINETTE. That's all very fine, but I still insist that your daughter is not made to be Madame Diafoirus.

[*NOTE: The tempo should gradually be picked up from here to the end of the scene.*]

ARGAN [*on the spoken cue, "—to be Madame Diafoirus."*]. But I wish it to be so.

TOINETTE. I wouldn't say that.

ARGAN. Why shouldn't I say so?

TOINETTE. They'll say that you don't know what you're talking about.

ARGAN. They may say what they please, but she must do as I have promised.

TOINETTE. She won't do it, I tell you.

ARGAN. She shall do it or I'll put her in a convent!

TOINETTE. You? [*She ridicules the idea with a contemptuous laugh.*]

ARGAN. I!

TOINETTE. Good!



ARGAN. How good?

TOINETTE. You won't put her into a convent.

ARGAN. I won't?

TOINETTE. No!

ARGAN. Who is going to stop me?

TOINETTE. Yourself!

ARGAN. Myself?

TOINETTE. Fatherly tenderness will hinder you.

ARGAN. It will not prevent me.

TOINETTE. Yes, you wouldn't have the heart. [*Coming around back of ARGAN's chair and putting her arms around his neck, she speaks with mock tenderness.*] A tear or two, her arms thrown about your neck, a dear "papa" pronounced very tenderly, will be enough to move you.

[ARGAN pulls TOINETTE's hands away.]

ARGAN. All that will have no effect.

TOINETTE [*laughing*]. I know you; you're good-natured!

[*Removing ARGAN's nightcap, TOINETTE proceeds to curl his hair with one finger. This greatly irritates ARGAN.*]

ARGAN. I'm not good-natured. [*Grabbing his nightcap, he pulls it vigorously down over his head at a ridiculous angle.*] I'm ill-natured when I please to be.

TOINETTE [*coming around to right of him*]. Softly, Monsieur, don't forget that you are sick.

ARGAN. She'll marry the husband I pick out for her.

TOINETTE [*just as firmly*]. And I forbid her to do it.

ARGAN. What boldness! You jade, to dare to speak to your master in this way.

[ARGAN raises his cane, but TOINETTE grabs it.]

TOINETTE. Ah-ah-ah! When a master does not consider what he is doing, a sensible servant is in the right to correct him.

ARGAN. Insolent baggage! I'll knock you down.

[ARGAN rises and runs after TOINETTE, who crosses toward the couch. ARGAN hits her before she can get away.]

TOINETTE. 'Tis my duty to keep you from disgracing yourself.

[TOINETTE runs around to the right side of the couch, ARGAN after her. She removes the couch cover as she goes, and as ARGAN raises his cane again, TOINETTE throws the couch cover over his head. He struggles out from under the couch cover and throws it on the couch.]

ARGAN [pursuing TOINETTE across C to the desk]. Come here! I'll teach you!

[ARGAN again catches up with TOINETTE, close enough to hit her with the end of his cane.]

TOINETTE [running around to the left side of the desk]. I'll not have her marry your Thomas Diafoirus.

ARGAN. Baggage!

[ARGAN is right of the desk as TOINETTE circles around back of the desk.]

TOINETTE. She'll obey me sooner than she will you.

ARGAN [puffing from exhaustion]. Angélique, won't you catch her for me? If you don't—[Thinking fast.]—I'll refuse you my blessing.

ANGÉLIQUE [crossing to ARGAN]. Oh! Father, you'll make yourself sick.

TOINETTE [mocking his manner of speaking]. And I'll disinheret her, if she does obey you.

ARGAN [sinking into the chair right of the desk, moaning]. I can't stand this any longer. This is enough to kill me! Oh! Oh! [He groans loudly.]

[TOINETTE glances D L, evidently sees someone coming, and rushes ANGÉLIQUE off U C. BÉLINE enters from the garden D L. She is about twenty-eight. She humors ARGAN and sets



*him against his own daughters. She is self-centered and scheming.*]

BÉLINE [*as she enters*]. My poor husband, what's the matter?

ARGAN [*groaning*]. Come here, my dear wife. Help me. They've put me in a rage.

BÉLINE [*crossing to behind his chair, speaking in mock sympathy*]. My poor love. [*She adjusts his nightcap.*]

ARGAN. Your vixen, Toinette, has grown more insolent than ever.

BÉLINE [*patting his shoulder*]. Quiet, my love.

ARGAN. She had the impudence to tell me that I'm not sick.

BÉLINE [*with a disgusted look at ARGAN*]. She's an impertinent gipsy.

ARGAN. My love, that baggage will be the death of me.

BÉLINE. Don't fret yourself so much.

ARGAN. I've told you many times to get rid of her.

BÉLINE. But, my dear, there are no servants without faults. One endures their faults because of their virtues. Toinette is diligent and above all, honest, and you know it is necessary to be very careful whom we hire. [*She crosses to the arch U C and calls.*] Come here, Toinette.

[TOINETTE enters U C. *She wears a very meek, innocent expression.*]

TOINETTE [*curtsying to BÉLINE demurely*]. Yes, Madame?

BÉLINE. Why have you put Monsieur into such a temper?

TOINETTE [*with innocent politeness*]. I, Madame? I don't know what you mean. I always seek to please my master in everything. [*She curtsies.*]

ARGAN [*leaning forward in his anger*]. You—traitor!

TOINETTE. He told us that he wanted his daughter to marry the son of Monsieur Diafoirus, and I merely answered that I thought the marriage would be beneficial to her; but believe that it would be better if he put her into a convent instead.

BÉLINE [*smiling knowingly at TOINETTE*]. There isn't any harm in that, and I think Toinette's right.

ARGAN [*groaning in rage*]. Oh! My dear wife, do you believe her? She's a wicked minx and she—[*He points his cane at TOINETTE*.]—said a hundred things to upset me.

BÉLINE [*to ARGAN*]. Very well, I believe you, my love. [*Tolerantly, to TOINETTE*.] Listen, Toinette, if you ever vex my husband again, I'll turn you out-of-doors. Come now, give me his robe.

[*TOINETTE goes to the couch for ARGAN's robe, rushes over to BÉLINE, and gives it to her.*]

BÉLINE. And some pillows to make him more comfortable.

[*TOINETTE goes to the couch, collects five pillows, and gives four of them to BÉLINE, who adjusts them around ARGAN. TOINETTE holds the remaining pillow behind her as she stands right of ARGAN.*]

BÉLINE. Pull your nightcap over your ears, for there's nothing that gives people so much trouble as letting air into their ears. [*She pulls the nightcap down over his ears and turns up the collar of his robe. Then she continues to arrange the pillows about him.*]

ARGAN [*with self-pity*]. My dear, you are so good to a poor sick man.

BÉLINE. Raise up so that I can put this one under you.

[*ARGAN nearly falls forward on his head as he raises himself up. BÉLINE yanks him back roughly.*]

BÉLINE [*arranging the pillows as she talks*]. There, and this one at your side and one at your back and head. There. [*She crosses toward the door U L C.*]

TOINETTE. And this to keep you from the damp.

[*TOINETTE claps her pillow hard over ARGAN's head and face and runs out U C. BÉLINE turns at the commotion.*]

ARGAN. Oh! You smother me!

[ARGAN rises in anger and follows TOINETTE U C, taking the pillow with him and throwing it out U C and L.]

ARGAN. You jade! [He fairly jumps up and down in his anger; finally he returns to his chair and sits weakly, groaning loudly.]

BÉLINE [who has turned at the commotion]. What's the matter now? [She comes down to left of the desk.]

ARGAN [weakly, gasping for breath]. I can't stand it any longer.

BÉLINE. Why do you fly into such a rage? She meant no harm.

ARGAN. You don't know, my love. [Becoming angry again, shouting.] Oh! She puts me beside myself. [Weakly again.]

I'll have to take eight medicines and twelve treatments to recover from all this.

BÉLINE. Quiet, my dear. [She crosses to behind his chair.]

ARGAN. My darling, you are my only comfort.

BÉLINE [patting him on the head]. Poor little child.

ARGAN. Have you spoken to Monsieur de Bonnefoi, the notary, about my will?

[BÉLINE, standing slightly back of ARGAN's chair, is obviously delighted, but changes her expression as she speaks about it.]

BÉLINE [speaking as if the thought hurt her]. Don't talk of that now. I can't bear the thought of it. [She eyes him keenly to see if he has changed his mood. Then she speaks eagerly.] He's in the arbor. [Hesitantly.] I brought him with me.

ARGAN. Ask him to come in, my love.

BÉLINE [dramatically]. When one loves one's husband so much, one is hardly able to think of all this.

[BÉLINE hastily and eagerly goes out through the French doors D L and re-appears almost immediately with MONSIEUR DE BONNEFOI. He is tall and impressive looking. His age is about fifty. He wears a dark gray Vandyke beard and his hair is gray. He carries a cane and a legal portfolio.]

ARGAN. Come in, Monsieur de Bonnefoi, come in. Please take a chair.

[BÉLINE comes around back of ARGAN, slightly to the left of his chair. BONNEFOI draws the chair D L to left of the desk at L C and seats himself.]

ARGAN. My wife has spoken to you about drawing up my will?  
BÉLINE [*turning away toward L in mock distress*]. I can't bear to talk of these matters.

BONNEFOI [*looking disgustedly at BÉLINE*]. Madame has told me of your desire, but I regret to inform you that you cannot give your wife anything by a will.

[BÉLINE is startled and turns back. ARGAN half rises from his chair in surprise.]

ARGAN. But, why——

BONNEFOI. Custom is against it. In Paris such a will would not be legal. A husband may, however, make a gift to his wife during his lifetime.

[BÉLINE looks relieved and pleased.]

ARGAN [*aroused*]. That's a most impertinent custom! I'll consult my lawyers about this. [*He starts to rise and then subsides.*]

[TOINETTE has appeared U C and remains there unobserved, listening. She carries a broom.]

BONNEFOI. You mustn't speak to your lawyers about this, for they consider it a great crime to dispose of anything contrary to law.

[BÉLINE looks startled. ARGAN half rises from his chair in his surprise; then he leans across his desk and motions BONNEFOI to come closer. BONNEFOI moves his chair a bit closer to the desk. BÉLINE leans forward over the desk, so that the three heads form a triangle.]

ARGAN. My wife has told me that you are a skillful and an honest man. [*He reaches out and puts BÉLINE'S hand in his.*]

How, then, can I give my estate to my wife and not to my children?

[ARGAN looks around craftily to see if anyone is in sight. TOINETTE dodges back just in time, but remains within sight of the audience.]

BONNEFOI. You must secretly choose some intimate friend of your wife's to whom you may will much of your estate. This friend can afterwards give it up to your wife. You may also give her such ready money as you care to during your lifetime.

BÉLINE [*putting her arms about ARGAN'S shoulders*]. You mustn't trouble yourself about such things. If I should lose you—[*She walks slightly to right of ARGAN'S chair and breaks into artificial sobs.*]

ARGAN. My dear wife. [*He starts to cry, too.*]

BÉLINE.—life would no longer mean anything to me. [*She puts her arms around ARGAN'S shoulders.*]

ARGAN [*in tears*]. My wife, you break my heart; be comforted, I beg of you.

BONNEFOI [*disgusted at this display of false emotion*]. Come, come, these tears are unseasonable. Things have not yet come to that pass.

[BONNEFOI emphasizes the words "that pass," and the emphasis makes ARGAN wince.]

BÉLINE. Monsieur, you don't know what it is to have such a husband. [*She dries her tears with a handkerchief.*]

ARGAN [*turning to BÉLINE*]. I must make my will then as Monsieur de Bonnefoi suggests. I'll put into your hands twenty thousand livres in gold, which I have in the ceiling of my alcove, and two notes payable to the bearer, which are due to me.

BÉLINE. No, no, don't speak of it! [*Turning away dramatically toward the couch R C, so that ARGAN cannot see her pleased facial expression.*] Oh! [*Her voice becomes hard, practical,*

*as she turns to him.*] How much did you say that you had hidden in your alcove?

ARGAN [*unsuspectingly*]. Twenty thousand livres, my love.

BÉLINE. Don't speak of money to me—[*She sits in the chair left of the couch, her voice hard and practical again.*] How much are the two notes worth?

ARGAN. One of them is for four thousand and the other one for six.

[BÉLINE *begins to count up her future prospects, oblivious of either ARGAN or BONNEFOI.*]

BONNEFOI [*rising*]. Shall we proceed with the will?

ARGAN. Yes, Monsieur, come into my study here, where we won't be disturbed. [*He rises weakly.*] Help me, my love.

[BÉLINE *is startled into attention, rises quickly, and comes to help ARGAN.*]

BÉLINE [*banding him his cane, aiding him toward the door U L C*]. Come, my poor darling.

[BÉLINE and ARGAN *go out U L C, followed by BONNEFOI. TOINETTE enters U C. She cautiously sweeps her way in with the broom, nearly dropping the broom, but recovering it in time. She crosses to the door U L C and listens; then she peeks through the keyhole. ANGÉLIQUE enters U C and comes C, surprised at not finding anyone. As she turns toward the desk she sees TOINETTE and smiles.*]

ANGÉLIQUE [*in a loud whisper*]. Toinette!

[TOINETTE *jumps guiltily, but relaxes as she sees ANGÉLIQUE. TOINETTE draws ANGÉLIQUE over to the couch with an air of mystery. ANGÉLIQUE sits.*]

TOINETTE [*speaking softly*]. They're in there with a notary. I heard them talking about a will. Your stepmother isn't asleep, either; she's looking out for herself all right.

ANGÉLIQUE [*distraught*]. Let him dispose of his estate, pro-



vided he doesn't dispose of my heart. Toinette! Don't desert me now. I need your help. [*She clings to TOINETTE.*]

TOINETTE [*staunchly*]. Desert you? I'd die sooner! Your step-mother has tried to get my help before, but I couldn't stomach her. Now I shall pretend to be her friend and see what will come of it. [*Laughing, she walks toward C, nodding her head slyly toward the door U L C.*]

ANGÉLIQUE. Please tell Cléante about this awful marriage. [*Rising, she comes to TOINETTE at C.*]

BÉLINE [*offstage U L C*]. Toinette!

TOINETTE [*with both hands on ANGÉLIQUE'S shoulders*]. She's calling me. Go now! [*She urges ANGÉLIQUE toward U C.*]  
You can rely on me.

[ANGÉLIQUE goes out U C. Turning toward the audience, TOINETTE comes down to the couch with her hands on her hips, looking very thoughtful and determined. BÉLINE opens the door U L C and stands in the doorway.]

BÉLINE. Toinette!

[TOINETTE jumps in surprise, but recovers immediately and curtsies low.]

TOINETTE [*expectantly and sweetly*]. Yes, Madame?

BÉLINE [*taking a step into the room, softly and confidentially*].

Toinette! Will you do something for me?

TOINETTE [*curtsying and smiling sweetly*]. Yes, Madame.

[BÉLINE motions for TOINETTE to follow her. Then she goes out U L C.]

TOINETTE [*placing her hands on her hips as she comes over to C, looking toward U L C*]. Yes, Madame. [*Mockingly, but with some spirit.*] I'll do something to you!

[TOINETTE makes a face as she starts toward the door U L C.]

CURTAIN