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Dramatic Publishing



The Love Knot

Farce by
Michael McFaden

The Love Knot

For sheer entertainment and fun, this play is hard to beat, even by the merry farces of Molière, who obviously has influenced this American writer, a young Hollywood native who can't remember when he was not enthralled with the theatre. "Upon entering high school," McFaden says, "I was introduced to the works of Molière. I took such a liking to his plays and his style of writing that I became known as the 'Molière Freak' of the high school." *The Love Knot*, a 20th century reincarnation of Molière's style, is the fruit of that fascination.

"We presented *The Love Knot* at the DoDDS Far East Speech and Drama Festival in Seoul, Korea. We are happy to report that the play won first place in the contest." (Fay F. McGraw, Yokoto, Japan)

"One of the performances was done for judges in a statewide competition. *The Love Knot* won one of the seven prizes awarded. It's an excellent play for high school. It's well put together, very funny and a perfect subject for high school." (Ralph Emerson, Woodrow Wilson High School, Tacoma, Wash.)

Farce. By Michael McFaden. Cast: 3m., 2w., extras. *The Love Knot* is a farce in the Molière manner. For sheer delight, with characters that sparkle with that tinkling kind of gaiety that keeps the audience laughing, you can't find a better one-act play. A 17th century analyst, bored with his success, decides to give the wrong advice to his next patient, a pompous aristocrat who can't imagine why his love, Aminta, doesn't adore him. The analyst recommends that he shower his attention on Lucille, a sleazy, boorish barmaid. Lucille is thrilled, but her lover, the equally boorish Picard, is not—until the analyst points Picard at the fashionable Aminta. The merry mix-up keeps the characters jousting and the audience laughing, while reminding us that it is better not to pretend to be something we are not. For junior-high, high-school, college and community drama. Excellent contest play. Set: a public place in Paris. Costumes: 17th century French. Approximate running time: 30 to 35 minutes. Code: LK1.

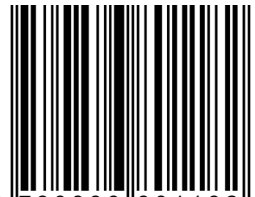
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The Love Knot

THE LOVE KNOT

A One-Act Comedy

by

MICHAEL McFADEN

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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MICHAEL MCFADEN

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(THE LOVE KNOT)

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THE LOVE KNOT

“The Love Knot” was first produced on May 30 and 31, 1974, at Muskegon High School, Muskegon, Michigan, with the following cast:

Cleante	John Langlois
D’Analyseur	Dave Fischer
Gros Rene	Tim Wood
D’Eblouissant	Roger Carlson
Picard	Mark Soderstrom
Lucille	Teresa Griffen
Aminta	Jerri Brouillet

Dramatis Personae

Monsier d’Analyseur
The Marquis d’Eblouissant, *an aristocrat*
Aminta, *a lady*
Picard, *a commoner*
Lucille, *a barmaid*
Cleante, *a client*
Gros Rene, *a servant*

Setting: A public place in Paris

Time: The latter half of the 17th century

ABOUT THE PLAY

If you think the theatre should entertain, you'll decide to do this play the minute you read it. For sheer delight, for characters that sparkle with that tinkling kind of gaiety that keeps the audience laughing, you can't find a better one-act play.

It's a French farce in the Moliere manner. A seventeenth century analyst (if there was such a thing) gets bored with his success and so decides to add a little zest to his life by giving the wrong advice to the next client who comes to him for help. The next client happens to be the Marquis d'Eblouis-sant, a pompous aristocrat who assumes that everyone adores him. But it seems that his lady love, Aminta, does not adore him. He cannot understand why. The analyst recommends that the Marquis turn his affections elsewhere—and points to Lucille, a sleazy, boorish barmaid, as the elsewhere.

Lucille is thrilled with the attentions of a nobleman; but her erstwhile sweetheart, the equally boorish Picard, resents the Marquis's intrusion . . . until the analyst directs Picard to the beautiful, fashionable Aminta.

It's a merry mix-up which keeps the characters jousting and the audience laughing . . . while reminding us that it is better not to pretend to be something we are not.

This is the first published play of a young Hollywood native who can't remember when he was not enthralled with the theatre.

"Upon entering high school," he says, "I was introduced to the works of Moliere. I took such a liking to his plays and his style of writing that I became known as the 'Moliere Freak' of the high school."

"The Love Knot," a twentieth century reincarnation of Moliere's style, is the fruit of that fascination.

THE LOVE KNOT

[The setting is a street in a secluded part of Paris. At Up Center is the facade of a house with a door opening onto the street and an upstairs window with practical shutters. At Right Center is a small bench, with another just like it at Left Center. No other scenery is needed, although small trees or shrubs may be added to suggest a public garden or park.]

[Enter CLEANTE from house followed by D'ANALYSEUR]

CLEANTE. I thank you, monsieur, for the kind service you have rendered me. If it were not for you, I would still be at a loss at how to make amends with my dear Marianne. Monsieur, you are truly an aid which no one with any problem can afford to do without.

D'ANALYSEUR. Do not flatter me, monsieur, I pray you. You put too much emphasis on my help. I am sure that in time you would have solved your problem.

CLEANTE. Oh, no, monsieur. I could never have done it without you.

D'ANALYSEUR. Well, I am glad to have been of service to you.

CLEANTE. And I thank you once again for all the assistance you have given me. Now I must take my leave of you for I can wait no longer to put your advice to work and once again win the heart of my lovely Marianne.

D'ANALYSEUR. Well, be on your way then before someone else is caught by the charms of your lover.

CLEANTE. I will, monsieur. Farewell. *[Exit]*

D'ANALYSEUR. Farewell. Well, d'Analyseur, you have just solved another problem, and how do you feel about it?

The same as I did after I solved the last problem someone brought me—bored. Everyone comes to me with their problems, and I always find solutions to them, but what do I get for my efforts? An ear full of information which many a gossiping woman would pay dearly for, but what am I to do with it? It is not that I do not enjoy helping people with their problems, but it does get to be very monotonous at times. There must be something I can do to spice up this dull brew. Let me think on it for a moment. Hmm. It seems that I can solve everyone's problems except my own.

[Enter GROS RENE.]

GROS RENE. Monsieur d'Analyseur! Monsieur d'Analyseur!

D'ANALYSEUR. Yes. What is it?

GROS RENE. *[While eating]* My master, the Marquis d'Eblouissant, wishes to speak with you.

D'ANALYSEUR. Did you not ever learn that you are not to speak with food in your mouth? I cannot understand a word you are saying.

GROS RENE. I said, monsieur, that my master, the Marquis d'Eblouissant, wishes to speak with you.

D'ANALYSEUR. Well don't just stand there stuffing yourself. Go and bring him hither immediately.

GROS RENE. Yes, monsieur. I go.

[Exit GROS RENE.]

D'ANALYSEUR. Well, so my old friend the Marquis wishes to see me. I am very much surprised, for he has always been a man who prides himself on his ability to make his own decisions. But then, he also prides himself on his dress, his flamboyant manners, his ability to please the ladies, and many other things too numerous to mention. It would be a great pleasure to bring him down a notch or two. Wait one moment. This may well be the very opportunity I am seeking to make my life more interesting. Indeed, I say it is, and I

know exactly what I am going to do. When the Marquis presents me with his problem, whatever it may be, I will give him the wrong solution. It will be a source of great enjoyment to me to see him do the wrong things and, what is more, it should serve to . . . but wait, I see him approaching.

[Enter D'EBLOUISSANT.]

EBLOUISSANT. Ah, Monsieur d'Analyseur.

D'ANALYSEUR. Ah, Marquis.

[They embrace.]

EBLOUISSANT. How happy I am to see you once again.

D'ANALYSEUR. And how happy I am to have you visit me.

EBLOUISSANT. I am very pleased to be here.

D'ANALYSEUR. Well, my dear friend, how have things been with you?

EBLOUISSANT. I am so glad you asked me that for I have so much I want to tell you.

D'ANALYSEUR. Oh, no.

EBLOUISSANT. What? Did you say something?

D'ANALYSEUR. No. I was just clearing my throat.

EBLOUISSANT. Well, then, I shall proceed to tell you all that has been happening. Did you know that the Duke had a mistress and that he kept her in the west wing of his chateau?

D'ANALYSEUR. Really?

EBLOUISSANT. Yes, really. She was a pretty little thing too, and the Duke visited her often. Well, last week, during the course of one of his visits, his wife discovered them.

D'ANALYSEUR. Good for her.

EBLOUISSANT. Please let me finish! The Duke was paralyzed with fright because, as everyone knows, the Duchess is a woman of immense proportions, and she has always been the dominant force in the house. Do you know what she did when she discovered them?

D'ANALYSEUR. No.

EBLOUISSANT. Well, she, in a fit of rage, picked up her husband and his mistress and threw them both out the window.

D'ANALYSEUR. You don't say.

EBLOUISSANT. Oh, but I do say. The Marchioness and I observed them come flying out the window from outside in the garden. Luckily, the hedge broke their fall, but the Duke broke an arm and a rib, and his mistress, poor thing, got her face scratched up so terribly that I am afraid she will never be beautiful again.

D'ANALYSEUR. Such a pity.

EBLOUISSANT. Yes, it is. Now I must tell you what happened at court yesterday. Well, the Vicomte and I were...

D'ANALYSEUR. Really, Marquis. I do think you should tell me what is troubling you now and save the small talk for later.

EBLOUISSANT. Small talk! Small talk! How dare you call it small talk! In all France there is nothing more important than what the nobility do, and you have the audacity to call it small talk. Indeed.

D'ANALYSEUR. I do apologize, Marquis, for my mistake, but I am a man with little time to spare, and little of it can be taken up to listen to the affairs of the day.

EBLOUISSANT. I understand, and therefore forgive you, and will overlook your ghastly error.

D'ANALYSEUR. Thank you, Marquis. You are too kind. But now I must insist that you tell me the problem that sent you to me.

EBLOUISSANT. What problem? Oh, my problem. It is . . . dear me. I seem to have forgotten it. Let me think a moment. Hmm. Ah ha! Now I remember. It is about my dear, sweet, beautiful Aminta.

D'ANALYSEUR. What about her.

EBLOUISSANT. Well, you know I adore her, and we intend to be married soon, but lately she has acted very aloof.

She pays little attention to me, and she appears to be bored when I am with her. I am sure that I am upsetting myself over a mere trifle, but it has me worried just the same.

D'ANALYSEUR. I see. And just how long has this been going on?

EBLOUISSANT. I would say approximately three weeks.

D'ANALYSEUR. Well, it is all very obvious to me. You, my good man, have been left in the lurch.

EBLOUISSANT. Left in the lurch? What, pray tell, do you mean by left in the lurch?

D'ANALYSEUR. I mean that your Aminta loves you no more and now carries her affections somewhere else.

EBLOUISSANT. Oh, no. It cannot be so!

D'ANALYSEUR. But, I am afraid that it is so.

EBLOUISSANT. Oh, for shame, for shame, Aminta. What an unfaithful creature you are. I gave you everything: jewels, fine clothes, silks, laces, even myself; and what do you do? You cast me aside like an old shoe and carry elsewhere what you once gave me alone. Well, you go your way and do not trouble your pretty little head with thoughts of me ever again. I can get along fine without you. There are other women in this world who will appreciate me even if you will not.

D'ANALYSEUR. Bravo. Well said.

EBLOUISSANT. But I feel the loss of her down deep inside. Oh, my dear friend, what am I to do?

D'ANALYSEUR. The answer to that question is simple enough. Merely go out and find another woman to love.

EBLOUISSANT. But who? How? Where?

[Enter PICARD and LUCILLE.]

D'ANALYSEUR. You yourself said that there are plenty of other women in this world. Why, yonder is a good example of the species now.

EBLOUISSANT. Who, her? Why she is no more than a common girl; and, besides, she seems to have a lover already.

D'ANALYSEUR. Are you going to let a trivial matter, such as another man, stand in the way of you and your heart's desire? Go, and speak to her.

EBLOUISSANT. But, monsieur, she is such a lowly creature.

D'ANALYSEUR. The lower they are, the more fun you will have. To talk of love to a noble lady is like talking to a brick wall, whereas when you talk of love to a common girl you get results. Go on now. Speak to her.

EBLOUISSANT. But . . .

D'ANALYSEUR. Cease with the buts. [*Shoves d'Eblouissant towards Picard and Lucille*] Go on, before it is too late.

EBLOUISSANT. [*Approaching Picard and Lucille*] Good afternoon, mademoiselle. It is most certainly a fine day, is it not?

PICARD. Just who do you think you are, monsieur?

EBLOUISSANT. I am the Marquis d'Eblouissant, though it is no concern of yours. Kindly step aside, you rogue, for I was not addressing you, I was addressing the young lady. [*To Lucille*] May I inquire as to what your name is?

LUCILLE. It is Lucille, monsieur.

EBLOUISSANT. Lucille. What a beautiful name. I could very well make an impromptu on that name, and indeed I shall. Let me think on it a moment. Ah, yes. I think I have one.

Lucille. Lucille.

You make me feel,

So completely unreal.

You fill me with zeal,

And therefore I kneel,

And kiss the hand of my lovely Lucille.

LUCILLE. My, he is the fancy one, isn't he.

PICARD. [*Laughing*] I've never heard anything so funny in all my life. "Oh, Lucille, Lucille. Your zeal makes me feel so unreal." That is too much.

LUCILLE. Hush, Picard. I like what he says. It's so witty and gallant.

PICARD. It's ridiculous; that's what it is.

D'ANALYSEUR. *[Aside]* This is turning out to be most interesting.

EBLOUISSANT. *[To Picard]* Are you mocking me, monsieur?

PICARD. Oh, no, monsieur. I am not mocking you. I'm just mocking that garbage that's coming out of your mouth.

EBLOUISSANT. Garbage! Egad, I have been insulted. Prepare yourself for a duel, monsieur. *[Draws sword]* En garde.

PICARD. *[Backing up]* But, monsieur, I have no sword with which to defend myself. Why don't we fight without weapons? I am sure a gentleman, like yourself, would not want to have an unfair advantage over me.

EBLOUISSANT. Very well then. We shall fight without weapons. Let it never be said, even by the likes of you, that the Marquis d'Eblouissant fights unfairly. *[Handing Lucille his sword and coat]* Would you be kind enough to hold these for me, my dear?

LUCILLE. Nothing would please me more.

EBLOUISSANT. Now, monsieur we are evenly matched. Prepare yourself.

[D'EBLOUISSANT and PICARD start to fight. D'EBLOUISSANT swings at Picard with his handkerchief. PICARD ducks so D'EBLOUISSANT misses. PICARD then knocks D'EBLOUISSANT down. They continue fighting.]

D'ANALYSEUR. *[Aside]* I am afraid this has gone far enough. The Marquis may be an expert with the sword, but he is terrible with his fists. I had better put an end to this before he gets seriously injured. *[Places himself between d'Eblouissant and Picard]* Stop it now, both of you. Someone might get hurt.

PICARD. That is the general idea.

EBLOUISSANT. That rogue has not only insulted me, but he has soiled my clothes as well.

PICARD. And he has attempted to steal from me what rightfully belongs to me.

D'ANALYSEUR. And what did he attempt to steal from you?

PICARD. Her.

D'ANALYSEUR. Her?

PICARD. Yes, her.

LUCILLE. Who, me?

D'ANALYSEUR. That is what he said.

LUCILLE. Oh he did, did he? [*T• Picard*] Well, I'll have you know, Picard, that I am no possession of yours. You do not own me. I am as free as a bird and may do as I please; and right now it pleases me to be alone with this gentleman who treats me like a lady and not like a possession. Good-bye! Come along, Marquis. It's getting crowded around here.

[Exit D'EBLOUISSANT and LUCILLE.]

PICARD. Well, I never . . . she never acted like that before, but if she feels that way about it, then let her go her own way. I'll not chase after her. She isn't worth troubling myself over.

D'ANALYSEUR. You are so right, monsieur. There are many other women in the world who would be glad to have you as their lover.

PICARD. It is but too true.

D'ANALYSEUR. I personally know of a young lady, and a noble lady at that, who would leap at the chance of having you for a lover. And besides being a lady of breeding, she is acclaimed to be one of the most beautiful women in all Paris.

PICARD. Oh, who is she?

D'ANALYSEUR. Her name is Aminta, and she lives just off the Boulevard Saint Michel, near the Luxembourg Gardens.

PICARD. But wouldn't she be just a little too refined for me? I mean, she's a lady, and I'm but a poor common man.

D'ANALYSEUR. Bah! It is a known fact that opposites attract, and, believe me, you two are extremely opposite.

PICARD. Well, if you say we are right for each other, then we probably are. I will go and seek her immediately. Thank you for your advice, monsieur. Good-bye.

[Exit PICARD.]

D'ANALYSEUR. Good-bye. *[Alone]* This is going very well indeed, in fact, even better than I had hoped it would. All that **remains** now is to convince Aminta that she is the **perfect match** for Picard. Oh, what fun this is turning out to be. I **shall** go inside and observe everything from my window. I cannot wait to see what is going to happen next.

[Exit D'ANALYSEUR. Enter GROS RENE.]

GROS RENE. *[Looks around]* No one is here any more, monsieur.

[Enter D'EBLOUISSANT and LUCILLE.]

EBLOUISSANT. Very good. Now be off with you. *[Exit GROS RENE.]* My dear Lucille, you wonder why I return to this spot, do you not?

LUCILLE. I most certainly do. Anyone who would want to return to the spot where he was very recently beaten in a fight must have something wrong with his head.

EBLOUISSANT. There is nothing wrong with my head, nor was I beaten in that fight.

LUCILLE. But you would have been, had not that gentleman interfered and put an end to it.

EBLOUISSANT. That is beside the point. The point is that I was not beaten. I neither won, nor lost.

LUCILLE. If you say so.

EBLOUISSANT. And I do say so. Everything I say means something. I never say anything unimportant. I always have a reason for saying something, and what I say should not be

taken lightly. But, I shall not waste my valuable time talking about such trivial matters. I wish to return to my original question.

LUCILLE. And what was that? By now I have quite forgotten it.

EBLOUISSANT. I asked you if you wondered why I returned to this spot.

LUCILLE. And I said yes.

EBLOUISSANT. So now I shall tell you why.

LUCILLE. Please do.

EBLOUISSANT. Well, it is because this place lies in a very secluded part of Paris. Not many people travel this way, unless they wish to visit Monsieur d'Analyseur. I could not bring you to my dwelling place because it is near the palace and there are always crowds of people around. If anyone should see me with you, they would wonder what had happened to Aminta, my ex-love. It would be but a matter of a day or two before all of Paris would know that I had a new love, and I do not wish anyone to know just yet. I wish to make the announcement myself after a sufficient length of time.

LUCILLE. I understand.

EBLOUISSANT. Oh, how it pleases me immensely to hear you talk in that manner. I am overjoyed that I have found such an understanding lover. You are nothing at all like Aminta.

LUCILLE. This Aminta, what is she like?

EBLOUISSANT. Do you really want to know?

LUCILLE. Yes, very much.

EBLOUISSANT. Very well then. I shall tell you about the fair Aminta. She is extremely beautiful and very well bred. She moves with the grace of a gentle breeze, and her voice is as clear as a silver bell. She is the center of attention at all the balls and is sought after by all the single men, as well as some of the married men; but she has one major flaw.

LUCILLE. What can that be? You have described a goddess.

EBLOUISSANT. In all outward appearances, yes; but inside she is as cold as ice. She is not at all understanding, like you. She just uses me. Why, just today I found out that she had found someone else for a lover and had cast me aside.

LUCILLE. Oh, you poor thing.

EBLOUISSANT. Yes I am, aren't I. Oh, the shame of it all. How could she possibly put me out of her mind so hastily? I, who may be reckoned handsome; I, who am the absolute touchstone of wit and gallantry; I, who am one of the most sought after men in all Paris. How could she do it? But I ought not to trouble myself with thoughts of her when I have you to praise me, you to love me, you to do anything in the world for me, you to . . .

LUCILLE. Wait just one moment. I may agree to love you, but as far as praising you or doing anything for you—absolutely not.

EBLOUISSANT. But all that comes under the category of love.

LUCILLE. No, Marquis. That comes under the category of slavery.

EBLOUISSANT. Oh, how can you say that? To do those things for me is to show your love for me.

LUCILLE. I am not about to change my mind.

EBLOUISSANT. Very well then. I suppose I must resign myself to living without praise and flattery. It will be a hard struggle; but with my strong will power, I am positive that I will be able to do it.

LUCILLE. Oh, I am sure you will.

EBLOUISSANT. But now that I have told you about Aminta, I would like to find out a little more about you.

LUCILLE. No, I really don't think you would.

EBLOUISSANT. Oh, but of course I would.

LUCILLE. Really?

EBLOUISSANT. Really.