

THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

A Humorous Reading

by
Moliere



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From the play.

On the day fixed for her marriage, Lucinde, daughter of M. Geronte, suddenly becomes dumb. Valere, M. Geronte's attendant, and Lucas, the nurse, are scouring the country in search of a doctor skillful enough to restore her speech, when they fall in with Martine, the wife of Sganarelle, a bibulous faggot-binder. Sganarelle, who has served a famous doctor for ten years, has just been beating his wife, and she, in revenge, recommends her husband to them. She tells them he is an eccentric doctor who has performed almost incredible cures, but who disclaims his profession, and will never practice it until he has been well cudgelled. Lucas and Valere go in quest of Sganarelle and--thanks to the use of the persuasion recommended by Martine--he is induced to undertake the cure of Mlle. Lucinde.

They arrive at the home of M. Geronte.

SGANARELLE: Is this the patient?

GERONTE: Yes. I have but one daughter; I should feel inexpressible grief were she to die.

SGAN: Don't let her do anything of the kind. She must not die without a doctor's prescription.

GER: You have made her laugh, monsieur.

SGAN: It is the best symptom in the world when the doctor makes his patient laugh. What sort of pain do you feel?

LUCINDE: (Replies by signs, putting her hand to her mouth, to her head, and under her chin.) Ha, hi, ho, ha!

SGAN: (Imitating her) Ha, hi, ho, ha! I don't understand you.

GER: That is what her complaint is, monsieur. She became dumb, without our being able to find out the cause. It is this accident which has made us put off the marriage. The man she is going to marry wishes to wait till she gets better.

SGAN: Who is the fool that does not want his wife to be dumb? Would to heaven that mine had that complaint! I would take good care she did not recover her speech. (To the patient) Let me feel your pulse. (Feels pulse) This tells me your daughter is dumb.

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