

**THE SOLDIER LOVER**  
(or)  
**MRS. MALAPROP**

by  
**Richard B. Sheridan**



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A humorous reading from the play “The Rivals.”

Capt. Jack Absolute has lost his heart to Lydia Languish, the charming niece of the rich and ambitious, but somewhat ignorant Mrs. Malaprop. Lydia, however, is not aware that he is son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute. To her he is simply Ensign Beverly, with whom she would gladly elope and forfeit her fortune.

Then, too, there is a rival, Bob Acres; a suitor highly acceptable to Mrs. Malaprop but definitely scorned by the capricious Lydia.

Sir Anthony Absolute, Jack’s father, returns to Bath rather unexpectedly and we discover him immediately following an interview with Mrs. Malaprop in which he has proposed a marriage between his son and the lady’s niece. The offer has been most graciously received and the two plotters enter the room in which Lydia is confined as a punishment for writing and receiving notes from the “odious Ensign Beverly.”

MRS. MALAPROP: There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

LYDIA: Madam, I thought--

MRS. M.: I don’t know any business you have to think at all. Thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is this, that you will promise to forget this Ensign Beverly--to illiterate him, I say, from your memory.

LYDIA: Ah, madam, it is not so easy to forget.

MRS. M.: But I say it is, miss. There is nothing so easy as to forget if a person chooses to set about it. But tell me, will you promise to do as you are bid? Will you take a husband of your friends’ choosing?

LYDIA: Madam, I must tell you plainly that had I no preference for anyone else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---