

THE RIVALS

A Play in One Act
A One Act Adaptation of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's Play

by
Luella E. McMahon



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106

www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com

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CHARACTERS: LYDIA LANGUISH: A beautiful young girl.
 LUCY: Lydia's young and pretty maid.
 CAPTAIN JACK ABSOLUTE: Who poses as Ensign Beverley.
 FAG: Jack's young valet.
 MRS. DELIA MALAPROP: Lydia's aunt and guardian. (50)
 SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE: Jack's father. (50)
 SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER: Interested in Lydia. (45-50)
 BOB ACRES: Also interested in Lydia. (45-50)
 GIRL OR BOY: To handle signs instead of Lucy and Fag. (Optional)

If desired, to increase the cast still further, a group of scene shifters may be added. This can be great fun by adding a lively dance routine.

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES:

This play may be done either in costume of the late 18th century or in modern costumes with quaint touches.

The original production, succeeded nicely by having the boys sew bright colored corduroy over the lapels of their own coats, wear jabots, with matching bows on their shoes, wearing loafer-type footwear where possible. They wore long trousers since these, as well as knee-length, were in vogue during the period. Those who had them, wore colorful corduroy trousers and matched accessories with them. They carried three-cornered paper hats--painted on sideburns--and added whatever other touches their imagination suggested, as lace at the wrists, etc.

The girls will have no trouble fitting up formals with fluffy shoulder coverings pinned after the manner of the period; the maid's costume may be any plain dress over which an apron is worn. Shoes are ballerina slippers with ribbon crisscrossed around the ankles. Be sure that the dresses, though near floor-length, are short enough to allow free action.

Sir Anthony Absolute and Mrs. Malaprop wear white wigs, George and Mary Washington style.

Sir Lucius O'Trigger is richly dressed, though with some off colors, probably a red wig to advertise his Irish.

Bob Acres tries to stay young; so he dresses a bit ridiculously--with various bows, etc. in his wig. Wig may be off-auburn, or white.

Captain Absolute and Fag may wear wigs--in their own color hair--or not, as the director chooses.

PROPERTIES

General:

A light but sturdy easel on which signs are to be placed to indicate location of scene being played. Signs must be large enough to be read by audience and are as follows:

1. Street in Bath.
2. Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings.

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3. Captain Absolute's Lodgings.
4. Bob Acres' Lodgings.
5. The North Parade.
6. King's Mead-Fields.
7. End of Scene.
8. End of Play. (Optional)

Note: Some signs are used more than once.

A screen low enough to peek over. On one side, a picture to indicate "Outdoors." On the other side "Indoors."

A small table or desk.

Two or three small chairs.

A small settee.

Some fancy pillows.

Personal:

Lucy--Books, letters, notebook.

Mrs. Malaprop--Fan.

Captain Absolute--Small picture, dueling sword.

Lucius O'Trigger--Pistol, long dueling sword.

Bob Acres--Long dueling sword.

Sir Anthony--Cane.

Lydia--Small picture.

Note: All dueling swords to be made of wood with dull ends. Pistol of wood with no working parts.

SETTINGS:

Start with bare stage. Have needed pieces of furniture and signs handily placed. Have record of "Pop Goes the Weasel" (or something similar) located so it can be heard throughout audience. This tune becomes the theme song for the swiftly moving play.

Just before the play starts, Fag comes out jauntily with easel. He may be whistling "Pop Goes the Weasel" or the record may be playing. He places the easel far down right and places the first sign on it. He then moves off with continued jauntiness and the scene starts.

Play now moves rapidly, with end of each scene being indicated by sign "End of Scene" which is brought on by Fag, Lucy, or an extra, always with the same peppy swing and mood.

At end of scene, characters freeze; then, as new sign is brought center, everyone in scene moves quickly, in full view, with definitely worked-out pattern of semi-dance to tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel" to set stage for next scene. The new sign is placed and "Away we go."

The handling of this part of the play is very important and makes for liveliness and "differentness."

Scene I: A STREET IN BATH

(Record starts. As Fag leaves, Lydia comes on up R. with her maid, Lucy. They are evidently disagreeing. Lucy is carrying some books. Lydia is speaking.)

LYDIA: All I want you to do is take the books and go home.

LUCY: But, Miss Lydia, if your Aunt Malaprop were to learn that you were on the public street--
alone--

LYDIA: (Peering off R.) I'm doing no harm.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---