

[Act Two • Scene One]

MARIANE

Of *whom*, Sir, must I say  
That I am fond of him, and would rejoice  
In being his wife, if that should be your choice?

ORGON

Why, of Tartuffe.

MARIANE

But, Father, that's false, you know.  
Why would you have me say what isn't so?

ORGON

Because I am resolved it shall be true.  
That it's my wish should be enough for you.

MARIANE

You can't mean, Father . . .

ORGON

Yes, Tartuffe shall be  
Allied by marriage to this family,  
And he's to be your husband, is that clear?  
It's a father's privilege . . .

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SCENE TWO

DORINE, ORGON, MARIANE

ORGON (*To Dorine:*)

What are you doing in here?  
Is curiosity so fierce a passion  
With you, that you must eavesdrop in this fashion?

DORINE

There's lately been a rumor going about—  
Based on some hunch or chance remark, no doubt—  
That you mean Mariane to wed Tartuffe.  
I've laughed it off, of course, as just a spoof.

ORGON

You find it so incredible?

DORINE

Yes, I do.  
I won't accept that story, even from you.

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ORGON

Well, you'll believe it when the thing is done.

DORINE

Yes, yes, of course. Go on and have your fun.

ORGON

I've never been more serious in my life.

DORINE

Ha!

ORGON

Daughter, I mean it; you're to be his wife.

DORINE

No, don't believe your father; it's all a hoax.

ORGON

See here, young woman . . .

DORINE

Come, Sir, no more jokes;

You can't fool us.

[Act Two · Scene Two]

ORGON

How dare you talk that way?

DORINE

All right, then: we believe you, sad to say.  
But how a man like you, who looks so wise  
And wears a moustache of such splendid size,  
Can be so foolish as to . . .

ORGON

Silence, please!

My girl, you take too many liberties.  
I'm master here, as you must not forget.

DORINE

Do let's discuss this calmly; don't be upset.  
You can't be serious, Sir, about this plan.  
What should that bigot want with Mariane?  
Praying and fasting ought to keep him busy.  
And then, in terms of wealth and rank, what is he?  
Why should a man of property like you  
Pick out a beggar son-in-law?

ORGON

That will do.

Speak of his poverty with reverence.  
His is a pure and saintly indigence

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Which far transcends all worldly pride and pelf.  
He lost his fortune, as he says himself,  
Because he cared for Heaven alone, and so  
Was careless of his interests here below.  
I mean to get him out of his present straits  
And help him to recover his estates—  
Which, in his part of the world, have no small fame.  
Poor though he is, he's a gentleman just the same.

DORINE

Yes, so he tells us; and, Sir, it seems to me  
Such pride goes very ill with piety.  
A man whose spirit spurns this dungy earth  
Ought not to brag of lands and noble birth;  
Such worldly arrogance will hardly square  
With meek devotion and the life of prayer.  
... But this approach, I see, has drawn a blank;  
Let's speak, then, of his person, not his rank.  
Doesn't it seem to you a trifle grim  
To give a girl like her to a man like him?  
When two are so ill-suited, can't you see  
What the sad consequence is bound to be?  
A young girl's virtue is imperilled, Sir,  
When such a marriage is imposed on her;  
For if one's bridegroom isn't to one's taste,  
It's hardly an inducement to be chaste,  
And many a man with horns upon his brow  
Has made his wife the thing that she is now.  
It's hard to be a faithful wife, in short,  
To certain husbands of a certain sort,

[Act Two • Scene Two]

And he who gives his daughter to a man she hates  
Must answer for her sins at Heaven's gates.  
Think, Sir, before you play so risky a role.

ORGON

This servant-girl presumes to save my soul!

DORINE

You would do well to ponder what I've said.

ORGON

Daughter, we'll disregard this dunderhead.  
Just trust your father's judgment. Oh, I'm aware  
That I once promised you to young Valère;  
But now I hear he gambles, which greatly shocks me;  
What's more, I've doubts about his orthodoxy.  
His visits to church, I note, are very few.

DORINE

Would you have him go at the same hours as you,  
And kneel nearby, to be sure of being seen?

ORGON

I can dispense with such remarks, Dorine.

(To Mariane:)

Tartuffe, however, is sure of Heaven's blessing,  
And that's the only treasure worth possessing.

[Act Two • Scene Two]

This match will bring you joys beyond all measure;  
Your cup will overflow with every pleasure;  
You two will interchange your faithful loves  
Like two sweet cherubs, or two turtle-doves.  
No harsh word shall be heard, no frown be seen,  
And he shall make you happy as a queen.

DORINE

And she'll make him a cuckold, just wait and see.

ORGON

What language!

DORINE

Oh, he's a man of destiny;  
He's *made* for horns, and what the stars demand  
Your daughter's virtue surely can't withstand.

ORGON

Don't interrupt me further. Why can't you learn  
That certain things are none of your concern?

DORINE

It's for your own sake that I interfere.

*(She repeatedly interrupts Orgon just as he is turning to speak to his daughter:)*

[Act Two • Scene Two]

ORGON

Most kind of you. Now, hold your tongue, d'you hear?

DORINE

If I didn't love you . . .

ORGON

Spare me your affection.

DORINE

I'll love you, Sir, in spite of your objection.

ORGON

Blast!

DORINE

I can't bear, Sir, for your honor's sake,  
To let you make this ludicrous mistake.

ORGON

You mean to go on talking?

DORINE

If I didn't protest  
This sinful marriage, my conscience couldn't rest.

[Act Two • Scene Two]

ORGON

If you don't hold your tongue, you little shrew . . .

DORINE

What, lost your temper? A pious man like you?

ORGON

Yes! Yes! You talk and talk. I'm maddened by it.  
Once and for all, I tell you to be quiet.

DORINE

Well, I'll be quiet. But I'll be thinking hard.

ORGON

Think all you like, but you had better guard  
That saucy tongue of yours, or I'll . . .

*(Turning back to Mariane:)*

Now, child,

I've weighed this matter fully.

DORINE *(Aside:)*

It drives me wild

That I can't speak.

*(Orgon turns his head, and she is silent.)*

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ORGON

Tartuffe is no young dandy,  
But, still, his person . . .

DORINE *(Aside:)*

Is as sweet as candy.

ORGON

Is such that, even if you shouldn't care  
For his other merits . . .

*(He turns and stands facing Dorine, arms crossed.)*

DORINE *(Aside:)*

They'll make a lovely pair.

If I were she, no man would marry me  
Against my inclination, and go scot-free.  
He'd learn, before the wedding-day was over,  
How readily a wife can find a lover.

ORGON *(To Dorine:)*

It seems you treat my orders as a joke.

DORINE

Why, what's the matter? 'Twas not to you I spoke.

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[Act Two · Scene Two]

ORGON

What *were* you doing?

DORINE

Talking to myself, that's all.

ORGON

Ah! (*Aside:*) One more bit of impudence and gall,  
And I shall give her a good slap in the face.

(*He puts himself in position to slap her; Dorine,  
whenever he glances at her, stands immobile and  
silent:*)

Daughter, you shall accept, and with good grace,  
The husband I've selected . . . Your wedding-day . . .

(*To Dorine:*)

Why don't you talk to yourself?

DORINE

I've nothing to say.

ORGON

Come, just one word.

DORINE

No thank you, Sir. I pass.

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[Act Two · Scene Two]

ORGON

Come, speak; I'm waiting.

DORINE

I'd not be such an ass.

ORGON (*Turning to Mariane:*)

In short, dear Daughter, I mean to be obeyed,  
And you must bow to the sound choice I've made.

DORINE (*Moving away:*)

I'd not wed such a monster, even in jest.  
(*Orgon attempts to slap her, but misses.*)

ORGON

Daughter, that maid of yours is a thorough pest;  
She makes me sinfully annoyed and nettled.  
I can't speak further; my nerves are too unsettled.  
She's so upset me by her insolent talk,  
I'll calm myself by going for a walk.

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