

The Flying Doctor

Moliere



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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Gorgibus, *father to* Lucile.

Valère, *in love with* Lucile.

Sganarelle, *servant to* Valère.

Gros-René, *valet to* Gorgibus.

A Lawyer.

Lucile.

Sabine, *cousin to* Lucile.

THE FLYING DOCTOR.

SCENE I.——VALÈRE, SABINE.

Val. Well, Sabine, what do you advise me to do?

Sab. I have really much to tell you. My uncle is bent upon marrying my cousin to Villebrequin, and things have gone so far, that I believe the wedding would have taken place to-day if you were not loved by her. However, as my cousin told me the secret of all the love she feels for you, and as we were almost driven to desperation through the avarice of our niggardly uncle, we thought of a capital device to prevent the marriage: at the present moment my cousin affects to be ill, and the foolish old man, who is easily deceived, has just sent me to fetch a doctor. Could you not find one, some friend of

yours, who would be on our side, and order the invalid to go into the country for a change of air? The old man will be sure to send my cousin to live in the pavilion, which is at the bottom of our garden. In that way you will be able to see her, unknown to our uncle, and marry her; then let him and Villebrequin curse as much as they please.

Val. But what means have I of finding so suddenly the doctor I want, and who would risk so much to serve me? I tell you frankly I know of none.

Sab. Now I think of it, why don't you have your servant dressed up as a doctor? There is no one more easy to dupe than the old fellow.

Val. But Sganarelle is a blockhead who will spoil everything. However, as we have nobody else, we must make use of him. But where shall we find him?—Ah! here he is in the very nick of time. (*Exit Sabine.*)

SCENE II—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE.

Val. Ah! my poor Sganarelle, how glad I am to see you! I want your help in a most important business, but as I do not know what you can do ...

Sgan. What I can do, sir? Only make use of me in your more important business, in things of consequence: for instance, send me to see what time it is by the clock; send me to the market to ask the price of butter; send me to water a horse; it is then that you will be able to judge of my talents.

Val. I ask for none of these things, I want you to play the part of a doctor.

Sgan. I, a doctor, sir! I am ready to do all you please, but as for being a doctor, I say no; I am your servant, I will be nothing of the kind. I ask

you how I should set about it; goodness me, sir, you are only laughing at me.

Val. If you will try, I will give you ten pistoles.

Sgan. Ah! ten pistoles; well, I won't say I am no doctor, for you see, sir, I am not so scrupulous as to tell you the whole truth. But supposing I am a doctor, where shall I go?

Val. To the old man Gorgibus, to see his daughter who is ill; but you are a blockhead who, instead of doing what we want, might ...

Sgan. Ah! sir, don't be anxious; I'll answer for it that I can kill anybody as well as any doctor in the town. The proverb usually is, "after death comes the doctor," but you will see that if I have anything to do with it, it will be, "after the doctor comes death!" But now, while I think of it, it must be difficult to play the doctor; and if I do nothing right...?

Val. There will be nothing difficult to do in this case. Gorgibus is a simpleton, a boor, who will readily believe everything you say, provided you speak to him of Hippocrates, of Galen, and that you have brass enough.

Sgan. You mean that I shall have to speak of philosophy and mathematics. Leave that to me; if he is a man as easily deceived as you say, I answer for everything. You have only to find me a doctor's gown, tell me what you expect from me, and give me my diploma, that is, my ten pistoles. (*Exeunt Valère and Sganarelle.*)

SCENE III.—GORGIBUS, GROS-RENÉ.

Gor. Go quickly and fetch the doctor for my daughter who is very ill; make haste!

Gr.-Re. Why the deuce do you think of giving your daughter in marriage to an old man?

Don't you see that it is the longing she has for a young one that makes her ill? See the attraction there is, &c. [1](#)

Gor. Go quickly! I am greatly afraid that the wedding will have to be put off on account of this illness.

Gr.-Re. That is what vexes me, for I was looking forward to a good round bellyfull, and now I have to do without it. [2](#) Yes, yes, I'll go to fetch the doctor, but it is as much for my own sake as for your daughter's. I am dreadfully disappointed. (*Exit Gros-René.*)

SCENE IV.—SABINE, GORGIBUS,
SGANARELLE (*as doctor*).

Sab. I am glad to meet you, uncle, to tell you of a good piece of news: I bring the cleverest doctor in the world, a man who comes from for-

eign lands, who knows the most important secrets, and who will no doubt cure my cousin. He was fortunately shown to me, and I bring him to you. He is so clever, that I heartily wish I were ill, so that he might cure me.

Gor. Where is he?

Sab. Close at hand; here he is.

Gor. Doctor, I am your very humble servant. I sent for you, to come and see my daughter who is ill; I put all my hopes in you.

Sgan. Hippocrates says, and Galen too, with strong reasoning argues, that a person does not feel well when he is ill. You are right to put all your hopes in me, for I am the greatest, the cleverest, the wisest doctor in the vegetable, animal, and mineral faculty.

Gor. I am delighted to hear it.

Sgan. Do not imagine that I am an ordinary doctor, a common doctor. All other doctors compared to me are abortions. I possess wonderful talents; I am master of many secrets. *Salamalec, salamalec.* "Hast thou courage, Rodrigo?"³ *Signor, si; signor, non. Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.* Still, let us see a little. (*Feels Gorgibus's pulse.*)

Sab. Eh! He is not the patient; it is his daughter who is ill.

Sgan. It does not matter: the blood of the father and that of the daughter are the same; and by the deterioration of the blood of the father, I can know the illness of the daughter.

Gor. Ah! doctor, I am greatly afraid that my daughter will die.

Sgan. S'death! she must not! she must not indeed have the pleasure of dying before she has

the doctor's prescription. But, Mr. Gorgibus, can I see your daughter?

Sab. She is up; I will bring her if you like.

SCENE V.—SABINE, GORGIBUS,
SGANARELLE (*as doctor*), LUCILE.

Sgan. Well, young lady, so you are ill?

Luc. Yes, sir.

Sgan. So much the worse; it is a proof that you are not quite well. Do you feel great pains in your head and back?

Luc. Yes, sir.

Sgan. I thought so. Yes, the great doctor I spoke of, in the chapter he made on the nature of animals, said ... a hundred fine things; and how the humours which have connexion, have

much relation to each other; for instance, as melancholy is the enemy to joy, and as the bile in going through our body makes us become yellow, and as nothing is more contrary to good health than illness; so we can say with that great man that your daughter is very ill. I must give her a prescription.

Gor. Quick! a table, paper and ink!

Sgan. Is there anybody here who can write?

Gor. What! do you not know how to write?

Sgan. Ah! I was forgetting; I have so many things to think of, that I forget the half.... I think it is quite necessary for your daughter to have a change of air and that she should go and enjoy herself somewhere in the country.

Gor. We have a very fine garden, and some rooms attached to it; if you think it will do, I will send her there.

Sgan. Let us go and see the place. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI.—THE LAWYER.

Law. I have heard that the daughter of Mr. Gorgibus is ill; I must go and inquire after her health, and offer my services, as the friend of the whole family. (*Knocks.*) Is Mr. Gorgibus at home? (*Enter Gorgibus.*) Having heard of your daughter's illness, I come to tell you of my entire sympathy, and to put myself at your disposal for all that may be wanted of me.

Gor. I have just left the cleverest man in the world.

Law. Would it not be possible to speak with him for a few moments? (*Gorgibus fetches Sganarelle.*)

SCENE VII.—GORGIBUS, LAWYER,
SGANARELLE (*as doctor*).

Gor. Sir, here is a friend of mine, a very clever man, who would be glad to speak with you.

Sgan. I have no leisure, Mr. Gorgibus; I must go and see my patients. I will not presume to take your place of honour, sir.

Law. Sir, from what Mr. Gorgibus has told me of your merit and talents, I had the greatest longing in the world to be introduced to you, and I have taken the liberty of addressing you on that account. I hope you will not think it too bold. One must acknowledge that those who excel in any great science are worthy of high praise; particularly those whose calling is that of doctor, as much on account of its utility, as because it is the source of several other sciences. Hence it is a difficult one to know perfectly, and Hippocrates therefore says truly in

his first treatise: *Vita brevis, ars verò longa, occasio autem praeceps, experimentum periculosum, iudicium, difficile.*

Sgan. (to Gorgibus). *Ficile tantina pota baril cambustibus.*

Law. You are not one of those doctors who only study the medicine called rational or dogmatic, and I believe that you practise it every day with great success,——*experientia magistra rerum.* The first men who practised medicine were held in such consideration because of that wonderful science, that they were numbered among the gods on account of the marvellous cures they performed every day. Not that any one should despise a doctor who has not given back health to his patient, since health does not altogether depend on his remedies or his knowledge: *interdum docta plus valet arte malum.* Sir, I am afraid I am importunate; I must leave you, with the hope that next time we meet I shall have the

honour of conversing with you at greater length. Your time is precious. (*Exit Lawyer.*)

Gor. What do you think of that man?

Sgan. He has some trifling knowledge of things. Had he stopped a moment longer I would have made him converse upon a lofty and sublime subject. But now I must leave you (*Gorgibus offers him money*). Ha! what are you about?

Gor. I know that I am indebted to you.

Sgan. You are laughing, Mr. Gorgibus! I never take any money, I am not a mercenary man (*takes the money*). Your very humble servant.

(*Exit Sganarelle; Gorgibus goes into his own house.*)

SCENE VIII.——VALÈRE (*alone*).

I wonder what Sganarelle has done; I have no news from him; I wish I knew where to meet him (*Sganarelle returns in his usual dress*). Ah! here he is. Well! Sganarelle, and what have you done since I saw you?

SCENE IX.——VALÈRE, SGANARELLE.

Sgan. Worked wonders upon wonders! I have done so well, that Gorgibus really believes me to be a clever doctor. I went to his house, I ordered him to send his daughter to breathe fresh air, and she is now in an apartment at the bottom of their garden, so far from the old man, that you can go and see her without fear of being disturbed.

Val. Ah! how happy you make me; I shall go at once to see her, without losing any more time. (*Exit.*)

Sgan. That old fellow Gorgibus must be a downright fool to allow himself to be deceived in that fashion (*seeing Gorgibus*). Ah! goodness, all is lost! well, here's a pretty upset for my doctorship! But I must try and take him in once more.

SCENE X.—SGANARELLE, GOR-
GIBUS.

Gor. Good morning, sir.

Sgan. Sir, your servant. You see in me a poor fellow driven to despair. Do you know a doctor who has only lately come to this town, and who performs wonderful cures?

Gor. Yes, I know him; he has just left my house.

Sgan. I am his brother, sir; we are twins, and we resemble each other like two peas, and are often taken the one for the other.

Gor. Dev— ... deuce take me,⁴ if I did not make the mistake myself; and what is your name?

Sgan. Narcissus, sir, at your service. You must know that while in his study I upset two bottles full of essence, which were on the edge of his table. Will you believe that he was so furious with me, that he actually drove me out of the house, and said he would never see me again; so that here I am a poor destitute fellow, without friends, without help, without anything at all.

Gor. Don't distress yourself; I will make your peace with your brother. I am his friend, and I promise you that he shall forgive you. I will speak to him the first time I meet him.

Sgan. I shall be much obliged to you, Mr. Gorgibus. (*Exit Sganarelle.*)

SCENE XI.—SGANARELLE (*dressed as a doctor*), GORGIBUS.

Sgan. One must say, that when patients will not follow the advice of the doctor, but give themselves up to excesses ...

Gor. Sir, your very humble servant. I have a favour to ask of you.

Sgan. What is it, sir? Can I be of service to you?

Gor. Sir, I have just met your brother, who is extremely sorry to ...

Sgan. He is a scoundrel, Mr. Gorgibus.

Gor. I assure you that he is so distressed to have put you in a passion, that ...

Sgan. He is a drunkard, Mr. Gorgibus.

Gor. Eh! sir, do you wish to drive the poor fellow to despair?

Sgan. Do not speak to me of him. Just fancy that scoundrel's impudence to go and ask you to make his peace for him. I beg of you not to speak of him to me.

Gor. In Heaven's name, sir, do it for my sake! If it is in my power to do anything to oblige you in return, I will do it with all my heart. I gave him my word, and ...

Sgan. You entreat me so much, that although I swore I would never forgive him, here, shake hands, I forgive him. I assure you that I impose a great restraint upon myself, and that I must have great regard for you. Farewell, Mr. Gorgibus.

(Gorgibus goes into his house; exit Sganarelle.)

SCENE XII.—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE.

Val. I am forced to acknowledge that I should never have thought that Sganarelle could have done so well. (*Sganarelle returns in his servant's dress*) Ah! my dear fellow, under what obligation I am to you! how happy I am! and how ...

Sgan. Yes, this is all very well, but Gorgibus met me, and if it had not been for a trick I thought of on the spur of the moment, all would have been discovered, (*seeing Gorgibus*) Run away; here he is. (*Exit Valère.*)

SCENE XIII.—GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE.

Gor. I was looking for you everywhere to tell you that I have spoken to your brother. He has

promised me that he will forgive you, but in order that I may be more sure of it, I want him to embrace you in my presence; step into my house, I will go and fetch him.

Sgan. But, Mr. Gorgibus, I don't think you could find him now; besides, I should not like to stop in your house; I dread his anger too much.

Gor. Indeed! you will stay there, for I shall lock you in. I am going now to fetch your brother; fear nothing; I assure you that he is no longer angry. (*Exit Gorgibus.*)

Sgan. (*at the window*). Well! I am caught this time. I see no way of escape. The clouds are very dark, and I greatly fear that, if they break, they will rain hard blows on my back; or that by a prescription stronger even than that of all the doctors, they will apply a royal cautery⁵ to my shoulders. But why should I despair? Since I have done so much, I must go on to the end.

Yes, yes; I must get clear of all this, and show that Sganarelle is the king of rogues. (Sganarelle *jumps out of the window and runs away.*)

SCENE XIV.—GROS-RENÉ, GORGIBUS, SGARANELLE.

Gr.-Re. Upon my word this is funny! How people jump out of the windows in this place! I must just stop here and see what comes of it. (*Hides.*)

Gor. I cannot find the doctor; I wonder where he went to hide himself. (*seeing Sganarelle returning with his doctor's gown*) Ah! here he is. It is not sufficient, sir, to have forgiven your brother, I beg you to give me the satisfaction of seeing you embrace him. He is in my house; I was looking everywhere for you, to ask you to make your peace with him in my presence.

Sgan. You are joking, Mr. Gorgibus; is it not sufficient that I should have forgiven him? I will never see him again.

Gor. Do it for my sake, sir, I pray.

Sgan. I can refuse you nothing: tell him to come down (*while Gorgibus goes into the house by the door, Sganarelle goes in by the window*).

Gor. (*at the window*). Here is your brother waiting for you yonder; he has promised me that he will do all you like.

Sgan. (*at the window*). Mr. Gorgibus, I beg of you to make him come here; let me see him, and ask him, in private, to forgive me, for no doubt he would treat me roughly, and would shame me before everybody. (*Gorgibus comes out of his house by the door; Sganarelle by the window.*)

Gor. Very well, I will tell him. Sir, he says that he is thoroughly ashamed, and he begs you to come in, so that he may ask you in private to forgive him. Here is the key, you may come in. I beg of you not to refuse me, but give me this satisfaction.

Sgan. There is nothing I can refuse you. You will hear how I will speak to him. (*within the house*) Ah! so you are here, scoundrel!—My brother, I beg your pardon, I assure you it was not my fault.—Profligate wretch! I will teach you to dare importune Mr. Gorgibus, and plague him with your absurdities!—Ah! my brother ... —Hold your tongue, I tell you.—I would not disoblige ... — ... Be silent, rascal.—

Gr.-Re. (*coming forward*). Who do you think is in your house at present?

Gor. Why! it is the Doctor with his brother Narcissus; they have had a quarrel, but they are making it up.

Gr.-Re. Deuce take it, if they are more than one!

Sgan. (*within the house*) Drunkard that you are! I will teach you how to behave.—He may well look down! He feels he has done wrong, the good-for-nothing scoundrel! Ah, the hypocrite, how he pretends to be good!

Gr.-Re. (*to Gorgibus*). Sir, do ask him, just for fun, to make his brother show himself at the window.

Gor. Very well. Sir, pray make your brother show himself at the window.

Sgan. (*from the window*). He is unworthy of being seen by honourable people; and, besides, I could not bear to have him by the side of me.

Gor. Sir, do not refuse me this favour, after all those you have granted me.

Sgan. (*from the window*). Truly, Mr. Gorgibus, you have so much power over me that I can refuse you nothing. Show yourself, scoundrel! (*after having disappeared one moment, he reappears as a valet.*) Mr. Gorgibus, I am so much indebted to you. (*Disappears, and reappears again as doctor.*) Well, did you see that picture of drunkenness?

Gr.-Re. (*to Gorgibus*). I know they are but one, and to prove it, tell him that you want to see them both together.

Gor. But grant me the favour of showing yourself with him, and of embracing him at the window before me.

Sgan. (*from the window*). It is a thing I would refuse to any one but you; but, to show you that I would do anything for your sake, I consent, though with difficulty, and I wish that he

should first ask you to forgive him for the trouble he has given you.—Yes, Mr. Gorgibus, I beg your pardon for having troubled you so much; and I promise you, my brother, in the presence of Mr. Gorgibus, to be so careful in future that you will never have reason to complain. I beg of you not to think any more of what is past (*he kisses his hat and his ruff, which he has put at the end of his elbow*).

Gor. Well, did you not see them both?

Gr.-Re. Upon my word, he is a sorcerer!

Sgan. (*coming out of the house as doctor*). I give you back the key of your house, sir. I do not wish this scoundrel to come down with me, for he makes me ashamed of him. I would not, for anything, that he should be seen with me in this town, where I have some reputation. You can send him away when you please. I wish you good morning, and am your humble ser-

vant (*feigns to go, but, after having thrown down his gown, enters the house by the window*).

Gor. I must go, and set this poor fellow free. To say the truth, if his brother has forgiven him, it is not before ill-treating him very much (*goes into his house, and comes out with Sganarelle as a servant*).

Sgan. I thank you very much, sir, for the trouble you have taken and the kindness you have shown me. I shall be obliged to you for it all my life.

Gr.-Re. (*to Gorgibus*). Where do you think the doctor is now?

Gor. He is gone away.

Gr.-Re. (*who has picked up Sganarelle's gown*). I hold him under my arm. There is the knave who played the doctor and deceived you; and, while he is deceiving you and playing you off,

Valère and your daughter are together, doing all they like.

Gor. Ah! how unfortunate I am! But you shall be hanged! you knave! you scoundrel!

Sgan. Why, sir, what good will it do you to hang me? Hear a word or two, I beg of you. It is true that, thanks to my stratagem, my master is with your daughter; but, while serving him, I have done you no wrong. It is a good match for her, both as to birth and money. Believe me, do not make a scandal which would turn to your shame; but send this knave here to the devil along with Villebrequin. But here are our lovers.

SCENE XV.——VALÈRE, LUCILE, GOR-
GIBUS, SGANARELLE.

Val. We come to ask you to forgive us.

Gor. I forgive you; and, on seeing such a good son-in-law, think myself happily deceived by Sganarelle. Now, let us all go to the wedding, and drink the health of the company.