

The Imaginary Invalid

by Moliere

Adapted by Joellen Bland

Characters:

ARGAN, a hypochondriac

TOINETTE, his maidservant

ANGELIQUE, his daughter

BELINE, his wife

MONSIEUR BONNEFOY, a lawyer

CLEANTE, in love with Angelique

DR. PURGON, Argan's physician

THOMAS DIAFOIRUS, clumsy suitor to Angelique

BERALDE, Argan's brother

Costumes: Period dress of the seventeenth century in France. Argan wears a dressing gown, nightcap and slippers. Toinette wears plain dark dress with white apron and small lace cap. Beline wears hat and gloves in Scene 2.

Properties: Medicine bottles, slips of paper representing bills, a small hand-bell, a shawl, a walking cane, a feather duster, 4 or 5 plump sofa pillows, a music stand and several sheets of music, a rolled paper tied with a ribbon, a tray, a decanter and five wine glasses, a doctor's bag.

SCENE 1

TIME: Mid-seventeenth century.

SETTING: The richly-furnished sitting room of Argan's house in Paris. Furnishings should include a sofa, table and chair at center, two or three side chairs, and a music stand and two chairs at far right. There is an entrance to the hall at left, and another door on the right.

AT RISE: ARGAN sits at small table covered with medicine bottles, piles of bills, and small handbell. His legs are covered with shawl. A cane is propped against chair.

ARGAN (*Looking through bills*): Hm-m-m-m. These medical bills total up to sixty-three francs for twelve bottles of medicine and twenty injections this month. But **I'm** not as well this month as I was last month! (*Impatiently*) Where is that servant girl? She's never here when I want her! (*Rings bell furiously; shouting*) Toinette! (*Shakes bell harder and shouts*) Toinette!

TOINETTE (*Entering calmly from left carrying feather duster*): Here I am, master.

ARGAN: You good-for-nothing! You've left me alone for a whole hour! I might have died! (*Coughs*) Here! Take these pesky bills away, and make sure the hot water is ready for my next injection!

TOINETTE (*Picking up bills*): Humph! (*Looks them over*) Dr. Purgon plays fine games with your carcass. I'd like to ask him just exactly what's wrong with you that you need all these medicines.

ARGAN: Hold your tongue! Who are you to question my doctor's orders? You know, I am deathly ill.

TOINETTE (*Mildly*): Ah, yes! Everyone knows that Monsieur Argan is the sickest man in Paris! You've seen to that. (*Puts bills into table drawer, then dusts room with feather duster*)

ANGELIQUE (*Entering left*): Good morning, Father. (*Gives ARGAN a hug*)

ARGAN: Angelique, my dear daughter! I want to talk to you about something very important.

ANGELIQUE: And I must have a word with you, Father. But Dr. Purgon is waiting in the hall to give you your injection.

ARGAN: Ah! Good! I'll be back in a moment (*Hobbles out*)

ANGELIQUE (*In confiding tone*): Toinette! Can you guess what I want to talk to my father about?

TOINETTE: I expect it's that young man, Cleante. You are never happy unless you are talking about him.

ANGELIQUE (*Dreamily*): You *do* think he's very handsome, don't you?

TOINETTE: Very!

ANGELIQUE: Toinette, do you think he really loves me as much as he says he does?

TOINETTE: You'll soon find out Didn't he write to you yesterday to say that he was going to ask your father for your hand? (*ANGELIQUE nods.*) That's a very good way of testing his true intentions. (*ARGAN re-enters. TOINETTE resumes dusting.*)

ARGAN: Well now, Angelique, I've some good news. (*Sits slowly*) I have received and accepted an offer of marriage for you. (*ANGELIQUE gasps, beams with joy.*) Ah, you are smiling I see there's no need to ask you if you want to be married.

ANGELIQUE (*Smiling*): It's my duty to obey you in everything, Father. I'm so grateful for your goodness! (*Kissing him on forehead*)

TOINETTE (*Turning*): I really must give you credit for agreeing to this marriage, master.
It's very sensible of you.

ARGAN (*Frowning*): Toinette, I did not ask for your opinion! (*She shrugs, goes back to dusting.*) I haven't yet seen the young man, Angelique, but I'm told that I shall be pleased with him, and that you will, too.

ANGELIQUE: Oh, you may be sure I shall!

ARGAN(*Surprised*): Why? Have you seen him?

ANGELIQUE: Why, yes, Father. We met a week ago at the theater and fell in love at first sight

ARGAN: Oh? I didn't know that, but I'm glad to hear it. I've heard that he's a very trustworthy young man.

ANGELIQUE (*Nodding happily*): Yes, Father.

ARGAN: And he comes from a good family.

ANGELIQUE (*Proudly*): Yes, Father.

ARGAN: And he speaks excellent Latin and Greek.

ANGELIQUE (*Startled*): He does? (*TONETTE watches them, surprised.*)

ARGAN: Why, he's taking his degree as a doctor in three days!

ANGELIQUE: He is?

ARGAN: Of course. Didn't he tell you?

ANGELIQUE: Why, no, Father. Who told you?

ARGAN: My physician, Dr. Purgon.

ANGELIQUE: Does Dr. Purgon know him?

ARGAN: Of course, he knows him. He's his own nephew!

ANGELIQUE (*Incredulous*): Cleante is Dr. Purgon's nephew?

ARGAN: Cleante? Who is Cleante? I thought we were talking about the young man who wants to marry you.

ANGELIQUE (*Confused*): Yes, of course . . . that is . . . I mean . . .

ARGAN: Very well, then. His name is Thomas, not Cleante. . . . Thomas Diafoirus. Dr. Purgon and I arranged the marriage yesterday, and Thomas is coming here to see you this afternoon. (*He looks at ANGELIQUE, who is speechless with surprise*) Why, what's the matter? You look completely astonished!

ANGELIQUE (*Faintly*): Father, you have been talking about one person, and — and I thought you meant someone else. (*Weeps*)

TOINETTE (*Interrupting*): Master, this is ridiculous! How can you think of marrying your daughter to a doctor? You already have plenty of money.

ARGAN(*Impatiently*): If you must know, I want my daughter to marry a doctor so that I can have a ready supply of medicine and consultations. (*Loudly*) You know how feeble and ill I am!

TOINETTE (*Skeptically*): Are you feeble and ill, master?

ARGAN(*Shouting*): You impudent creature! Of course I am!

TOINETTE. Very well, if you insist. (*Sharply*) But your daughter isn't ill, so there's so need for her to marry a doctor.

ARGAN(*Pompously*): A daughter should be pleased to marry someone who will attend to her father's poor health.

TOINETTE: Master, may I offer you some friendly advice? Cancel this marriage at once! I'm sure it will not be good for you or your daughter!

ARGAN (*Taken aback*): What? Explain yourself!

TOINETTE: Master, you are much too kindhearted to force your daughter to marry a man she doesn't love.

ARGAN: I am not! (*Stands and shakes his fist at TOINETTE*) I can be very hardhearted when I want to!

TOINETTE: Easy, master. Don't forget you are feeble and ill. (ARGAN *quickly sits down, then glares at TOINETTE.*)

ARGAN(*Banging his fist on table*): Stop trying to confuse me, Toinette. I command Angelique to marry the man I have chosen for her! (ANGELIQUE *weeps loudly.*)

TOINETTE (*Belligerently*): And I absolutely forbid it!

ARGAN: What! How dare you, a common servant, speak to me like that!

TOINETTE (*Calmly*): When a master does not think sensibly, it is up to his sensible servant to correct him.

ARGAN: You impudent creature! (*Jumps up, seizing cane*) I'll beat you for your impudence! (*Starts after her, ANGELIQUE watches*)

TOINETTE (*Dodging him*): But it's my duty to keep you from disgracing yourself, master.

ARGAN(*Chasing her around table*): Stand still! I'll teach you your duty!

TOINETTE(*Shouting defiantly*): I'll never agree to this marriage! Never! (*He swings his cane at her wildly.*)

ANGELIQUE (*Taking him by the arm*): Oh, Father, do sit down! You'll make yourself ill.

TOINETTE: (*Laughing*): You're really quite light on your feet, master. (*ARGAN flops down into his chair, breathless.*)

ARGAN: Oh, I'm done for! You will be the end of me!

BELINE (*From offstage*): Argan? (*TOINETTE grabs ANGELIQUE and they hurry off right, as BELINE enters left*)

ARGAN: Beline, my dear wife! Come and rescue me! (*She crosses to ARGAN.*)

BELINE (*Soothingly*): What is the trouble, my dearest?

ARGAN: That horrible Toinette!

BELINE (*Smoothing his brow*): Now, now, don't get excited.

ARGAN: She infuriates me! She dared to tell me I'm not ill!

BELINE: Oh, the impudence!

ARGAN: You know how weak I am, my love.

BELINE: Yes, my dearest. I'll speak to her. (*Sternly*) Toinette!

TOINETTE (*Entering right, and curtsying*): Madame?

BELINE: Toinette, why have you been upsetting my husband?

TOINETTE (*Sweetly*): Why, madame, I don't know what you mean. I always try to please him in everything.

ARGAN (*Angrily*): You deceitful creature! You never please me in anything!

TOINETTE: It's just that he told me he meant Angelique to marry Thomas Di Afoirus, and I said I thought it was a terrible idea

BELINE: I think you are quite right, Toinette, but if you annoy my husband again, I'll have to dismiss you. Now, hand me those pillows and help me make him comfortable. (TOINETTE *gives her pillows from sofa.*) I'll just put this pillow beside you, and one to support you here, and another at your back.

TOINETTE (*Putting a pillow on his head*): And this one to keep the morning dew off you! (*Laughs and runs out right*)

ARGAN (*Jumping up and throwing pillows after her*): You wretch! You devil! Oh! I can't bear any more of this! That wicked girl has completely upset me. I'll have to take eight doses of medicine and a dozen injections to put myself to rights again!

BELINE: There, there! Sit down. She doesn't mean any harm. You know she's really quite fond of you. (*He sits.*)

ARGAN: But she never cares for me the way you do, my dear. You are my only consolation and comfort.

BELINE (*Sweetly*): My love!

ARGAN: I want to show you how much you mean to me, my dear. As you know, I am going to make my will soon.

BELINE: Please don't talk about it! (*Greedily*) The word "will" makes me tremble.

ARGAN: But I asked you to talk to your lawyer about it.

BELINE: I did! In fact, he's here now, waiting to see you.

ARGAN: Then ask him to come in.

BELINE (*With mock concern*): I really can't bear the thought of all this. (*Calls off left eagerly*) Monsieur Bonnefoy, won't you please come in right away? (BONNEFOY *enters.*)

BONNEFOY (*Bowing*): Madame! Monsieur Argan!

ARGAN: Please sit down, sir. My wife has told me that you are a most trustworthy man and in her confidence. I wish to make my will, sir, and leave my entire estate to her.

BONNEFOY (*Sitting*): Yes, your wife has told me of your intentions, sir, but I understand that you also have a daughter?

ARGAN: Yes, I do, but she is about to marry a doctor who will be quite wealthy. I intend to give her a handsome dowry, but my wife is to have everything else.

BELINE: Oh, my dear, if anything happens to you, I won't want to go on living. (*Pretending to sob*) I should follow you to the grave to prove my love for you.

ARGAN: My dear wife, don't cry. To ease your grief, I will give you twenty thousand gold francs, which I keep behind the wall in my closet, for your birthday next week

BELINE: Oh, no, no, no, my dear! I don't want them! I couldn't accept them! (*Suddenly*) Uh...how much did you say you had in your closet?

ARGAN: Twenty thousand gold francs, my love.

BELINE: Twenty thousand gold francs! Oh, but money is nothing to me, my dear. All I want is you! Uh... did you say I couldn't have the money until next week?

BONNEFOY (*Breaking in*): Ahem! Do you wish to draw up the will now, sir?

ARGAN: Yes, indeed! Please step into my study, sir. (*Reaches for cane and starts to rise. BELINE helps him.*)

BELINE: My, poor boy, lean on me. Such a dreadful, tiresome business, making a will. (*ARGAN stands and starts left. BELINE and BONNEFOY exchange satisfied glances, as they exit left with ARGAN. TOINETTE and ANGELIQUE enter right*)

TOINETTE: I'm sure your stepmother is forcing your father into something that will be against your interests, Angélique.

ANGELIQUE: I don't care what he does with his money as long as he doesn't force me to marry a man I don't love. Oh, Toinette, please don't desert me in my trouble!

TOINETTE: Desert you? Never! I'll do everything I can to help you, but from now on, I must change my tactics and pretend to agree with your father, or he will suspect me.

ANGELIQUE: Very well, and please, Toinette, try to see Cleante and tell him about this marriage Father has arranged.

TOINETTE: Don't worry about a thing. You can rely on me! (*They exit left. Curtain*)

SCENE 2

TIME: *Later that afternoon.*

SETTING: *Same as Scene 1.*

AT RISE: TOINETTE *enters left looks around.*

TOINETTE (*Calling off*): There's no one here. Come in! (CLEANTE and ANGELIQUE *enter*. TOINETTE *remains near door, listening attentively and looking off watchfully.*)

ANGELIQUE: Cleante, I was so surprised to find you here.

CLEANTE: When Toinette told me about this dreadful marriage your father has arranged, I knew I had to see you at once.

ANGELIQUE (*Anxiously*): Oh, but if my father should see you. . .

CLEANTE: Toinette will introduce me to him as a substitute for your singing teacher. (*Leads her to sofa*) Now, please tell me what you intend to do. I must know. (*They sit.*)

ANGELIQUE: I... I really don't know. It's my duty to obey my father, but. . .

CLEANTE: Surely he won't force you to marry a man you don't love — a man you've never even met!

ANGELIQUE: Oh, but I'm to meet him this very afternoon.

CLEANTE: But he cannot love you half as much as I do!

ANGELIQUE (*Turning away shyly*): And how do I know that?

CLEANTE (*Kneeling and taking her hand*): Dearest Angelique, you must marry no one but me! This very morning I asked your Uncle Beralde to speak to your father and offer my plea for your hand.

ANGELIQUE (*Turning to him, smiling*): Oh, Cleante, you really do love me!(CLEANTE *kisses her hand*)

TOINETTE (*Urgently*): The master is coming! (CLEANTE and ANGELIQUE *quickly move to music stand far right, pick up sheets of music, sit down and pretend to study them.* ARGAN *enters left leaning on cane.*)

TOINETTE: There's a young gentleman here, sir.

CLEANTE (*Rising and bowing*): Good afternoon, sir. I'm happy to see you are feeling much better.

TOINETTE (*Pretending to be angry*): What do you mean, feeling better? He's still very ill!

CLEANTE: Oh, but I heard that he was better, and I think he looks quite well.

TOINETTE: Why, he's never looked so bad as he does today.

ARGAN: She's quite right, sir. I'm not very well today.

TOINETTE: Just because he can move around, eat, drink, and sleep as well as anyone, doesn't mean he isn't extremely ill. (*Starts off left*) Excuse me, someone's at the door.
(*Exits*)

ARGAN: Well! For once that girl is speaking sensibly! (*Sits*)

CLEANTE: Sir, I have come in the place of your daughter's singing teacher, who had to go out of the city today.

ARGAN: I see. Well, continue with your lesson, Angelique, but sing very softly. My ears are so sensitive, you know.

TOINETTE (*Re-entering*): Upon my word, master, I take back everything I said against the marriage you have arranged. Here are Dr. Purgon and his nephew. (*Smothers a laugh*) What a goodlooking and intelligent son-in-law you are going to have!

CLEANTE (*Starting out*): Excuse me.

ARGAN: Oh, you need not go, sir. My daughter is about to see her future husband for the first time. You must meet him and come to the wedding,

CLEANTE: You are too kind, sir. (*Returns to music stand and sits as PURGON, and THOMAS DIAFOIRUS, a clumsy young man with a stupid expression and poor posture, enter left*)

ARGAN: Dr. Purgon, I receive you and your nephew with the greatest of pleasure! You'll pardon me if I don't rise.

PURGON: By all means, remain seated, sir. Thomas, make your compliments.

THOMAS: Do I begin with the father?

PURGON: Of course. (*THOMAS walks Over to ARGAN and bows.*)

THOMAS (*Standing stiffly and speaking mechanically*): Sir, I come to salute, cherish and honor you as a second father, and to thank you humbly and respectfully for making

possible my future alliance with your daughter and her generous dowry. (*Bows clumsily and steps back beside DR. PURGON*)

TOINETTE (*Aside to audience*): Hail to our colleges that send such clever graduates into the world!

THOMAS: Was that all right, uncle?

PURGON: Quite.

ARGAN: Angelique, come and greet the gentleman. (*ANGELIQUE steps forward reluctantly.*)

THOMAS (*Bowing awkwardly*): Madame! Heaven has rightly given you the title of mother, and...

ARGAN: Sir, this is my daughter! (*CLEANTE chuckles behind his hand*)

THOMAS: Oh! (*Confused*) Well, where is your wife?

ARGAN: She will be here in a moment.

PURGON: Thomas, make your compliments to the young lady!

THOMAS (*Staring over ANGELIQUE'S head*): Madam, I find myself entranced by your beauty, and offer to you this day upon the altar of your charms, my devoted heart which seeks no greater glory than to be your humble and devoted servant and husband. (*CLEANTE clears his throat loudly and looks scornfully at THOMAS.*)

TOINETTE (*Aside; mockingly*): How hard he must have studied to learn that original speech!

ARGAN: Please be seated, gentlemen. (*THOMAS sits on sofa.*) Angelique, sit there on the sofa with your intended. (*ANGELIQUE looks helplessly at CLEANTE, then sits on sofa.*) Dr. Purgon, you are most fortunate to have such a fine nephew.

PURGON: I have good reason to be proud of him, sir. As a doctor, he follows my example and rejects the alleged medical discoveries of these modern times, such as the circulation of the blood.

THOMAS: I have written a thesis against those who uphold the circulation of the blood. With your permission, sir, I offer it to the young lady as the first fruits of my genius. (*Hands a rolled paper to ANGELIQUE*) And very soon I would like to invite her to see a dissection and hear my dissertation upon it. (*ANGELIQUE moves away from THOMAS. CLEANTE edges his chair closer to ANGELIQUE.*)

TOINETTE (*Aside*): How amusing! Some young gentlemen take young ladies to the theater, but I'm sure a dissection would be much more entertaining!

ARGAN(*To PURGON*): Tell me, sir, have you ever thought of promoting your nephew's career at court?

PURGON: My experience, sir, has been that it is better to practice among the general public. They are less exacting. People of royal blood always insist on being cured when they are ill.

TOINETTE (*Aside*): Ha! As if fellows such as he could cure anyone! His job is to collect fat fees and prescribe useless remedies. (*BELNE enters left.*)

ARGAN: Ah, here is my wife. Beline, my love, here (*Indicates THOMAS*) is the future bridegroom.

THOMAS (*With a stiff bow*): Madame! Heaven has rightly given you the title of mother, since in your visage I behold —

BELINE (*Abruptly*): I am happy to meet you, sir.

ARGAN: Come, Angelique, my dear. Give this gentleman your hand and pledge him your troth as your husband to be. (*ANGELIQUE, dismayed jumps up and moves closer to CLEANTE.*)

ANGELIQUE: Please, Father, don't rush things. Give us time to get acquainted.

THOMAS: As far as I am concerned, mademoiselle, we can get acquainted after we are married.

CLEANTE: Pardon me, sir, but I have heard that such an arrangement is rarely, if ever, satisfactory.

THOMAS (*Rudely*): No one asked for your opinion, sir!

ANGELIQUE (*Handing rolled paper back to THOMAS*): I must confess, sir, that you have not yet favorably impressed me. If you are an honorable gentleman, you will not want a wife who is forced to marry you.

THOMAS (*Giving rolled paper back to her*): On the contrary, mademoiselle, I can accept you and your handsome dowry from the hands of your father, and remain a man of honor.

ANGELIQUE (*Pushing paper back at him*): Forcing yourself upon me, sir, is a poor way to make me love you. (*Moves closer to CLEANTE*)

CLEANTE: I quite agree with the young lady, sir.

THOMAS (*Ignoring CLEANTE*): May I point out, mademoiselle, that in ancient times young men carried off by force the women they intended to marry. Love had nothing to do with it.

ANGELIQUE: But we are living in modern times, sir, and as far as I am concerned love has *everything* to do with it!

ARGAN: Angelique! That is no way to speak to your future husband!

BELINE (*To ARGAN*): If I were you, I wouldn't insist that she marry anyone. I would send her directly to a convent.

TOINETTE (*Aside*): Where she wouldn't need her generous dowry!

ANGELIQUE: Father, if you will not allow me to marry a man I love, then I beg you not to force me to marry a man I could never love. (*CLEANTE nods encouragement to her.*)

THOMAS: Well! (*Goes to stand by DR PURGON, pouting*)

ARGAN: Oh, Thomas, Dr. Purgon, I am so sorry about this! Angelique, apologize at once!

ANGELIQUE: **I'm** sorry, Father, but I regard marriage as a lifelong bond to be approached with caution. (*Turns to BELINE*) Some women, however, many only in hopes of becoming rich upon the death of their husbands.

BELINE (*Sharply*): And what do you mean by that?

ANGELIQUE (*Mildly*): Only what I have said, madame.

ARGAN: Angelique, listen to me! You will marry Thomas Diafoirus within three days, or you will enter a convent! Make your choice! (*ANGELIQUE looks tearfully at ARGAN, then helplessly at CLEANTE, then runs out left sobbing. CLEANTE rises from his chair, then sits again, agitated*) Don't worry, Dr. Purgon, I'll bring her to her senses.

TOINETTE (*Aside*): Poor Angelique! But her Uncle Beralde is expected to call on her father this afternoon. He is very fond of her and will do all he can to help her, especially when I tell him my plans! (*Beckons to CLEANTE to follow her, and they slip out left, unnoticed*)

BELINE: I doubt that your daughter will ever be sensible, my dear. But I must be off. I have legal business with Monsieur Bonnefoy.

ARGAN: Yes, yes. Goodbye, my love. (*She exits.*)

PURGON (*Stiffly*): We must be going, too, sir.

ARGAN: Oh, but you aren't forgetting my injection, are you, sir?

PURGON: I will return in a moment (*Turning*) Say good day, Thomas.

THOMAS (*Sulkily*): Good day, sir. ARGAN: Good day, Thomas. And don't worry. I am sure my daughter will soon become your wife. (PURGON and THOMAS exit Shortly, BELINE reenters, wearing hat and gloves.)

BELINE: My dear Argan, as I passed your study door on my way out, I saw that young man with Angelique. He left when he saw me.

ARGAN: What young man? (*Hopefully*) Thomas?

BELINE: No, the one who was sitting by the music stand.

ARGAN: The singing teacher?

BELINE: I don't know, but (*Sarcastically*) when I saw him, he certainly wasn't giving Angelique a singing lesson. I must be going. (*Exits left*)

ARGAN(*Enraged*): Oh, that crafty daughter of mine! No wonder she was so obstinate! She's in love with that singing teacher! (*Sinks down in chair*) Oh, what trouble that child brings me! I haven't had time to think of my illness for the past hour. Oh-h-! (BERALDE *strides in left*)

BERALDE (*Briskly*): Good afternoon, brother! How are you feeling today?

ARGAN: Beralde, how good of you to come see me. I'm very bad.

BERALDE: Oh? That's a pity. But I think I can cheer you up. I have come with an offer of marriage for my niece.

ARGAN(*Standing, angrily*): Don't mention my daughter to me! She has deceived me and I'm sending her to a convent!

BERALDE: What? Why do you want to put that dear child into a convent?

ARGAN(*Angrily*): Because I'm the master of this house, and I will do as I think fit with my daughter! (BERALDE *sits.*)

BERALDE: You never mentioned anything about a convent until your wife advised you on the matter, brother.

ARGAN: Now my poor wife is brought into it! You have always been against her!

BERALDE: All right, I won't speak of her. But tell me, why do you wish to have Angelique marry a doctor? Are you determined to be an invalid for the rest of your life?

ARGAN: What do you mean?

BERALDE: I mean that you have a perfectly healthy constitution. Look how you have survived all the medicines and injections your doctors have forced upon you!

ARGAN: But, brother, the medicines are what keep me alive. Dr. Purgon tells me that without his strict attendance, I wouldn't survive three days.

BERALDE: Nonsense! He will attend you into your grave, if you keep him as your doctor. But, come, brother, I urge you to make some concession to your daughter's wishes about marriage. Her entire happiness depends upon it. (PURGON *enters left with his bag, followed by TOINETTE carrying tray of wine glasses and decanter.*)

ARGAN: Excuse me brother. Here is Dr. Purgon with my injection.

BERALDE: Another one? (*Stands*) You must be mad! (*Goes to TOINETTE*) Can't you pass an hour without an injection or a dose of something? (*Takes glass of wine from tray and winks at TOINETTE*) Send him away and enjoy yourself for a while!

PURGON (*Insulted*): How dare you try to prevent my patient from having his injection!

BERALDE (*Pushing PURGON toward door*): Oh, go away, sir! Let your patient enjoy a glass of good wine instead!

ARGAN (*Anxiously*): Beralde, please!

TOINETTE (*Pretending to be indignant*): Really, sir!

BERALDE: Brother, is there no way to cure you of this disease of being doctored? A

ARGAN: If you were in my state of health, you wouldn't talk like that!

BERALDE: And what exactly *is* the matter with you?

ARGAN: Well, Dr. Purgon hasn't said exactly what it is, but —

PURGON (*Furiously*): Monsieur Argan, are you rebelling against me?

ARGAN (*Apologetically*): Oh, no, sir! I...

PURGON: Are you rejecting this injection which I formulated just for you?

ARGAN: Heavens, no, I . . .

BERALDE (*To PURGON*): It appears that he is, sir!

PURGON: It's unnatural! (*To ARGAN*) I declare I'll have nothing more to do with you!

ARGAN (*Desperately*): But, it was my brother who —

PURGON: This is outrageous! A crime against medicine!

ARGAN: But, Dr. Purgon, I —

PURGON: I am finished with you! Furthermore, the marriage between my nephew and your daughter is off! (*Starts out left*)

ARGAN: Please, please, Dr. Purgon! (*Starts after him*) Come back!

PURGON: I predict that within three days you will be in an incurable condition!

ARGAN (*Falling to his knees*): Have mercy! Don't leave me!

PURGON: It is your own doing Goodbye, sir! (*Exits left*)

ARGAN: Brother, look what you've done! Now I will die!

BERALDE (*Helping him up*): Don't be ridiculous! Come, pull yourself together. Here is your chance to be rid of doctors for good. (*Winks at TOINETTE, who winks back*)

ARGAN (*Miserably*): But Dr. Purgon understood my symptoms, and knew exactly how I should be treated. TOINETTE: Poor master! Here, sit down. (*Helps him to chair*)

BERALDE: Now, calm yourself, and let me tell you about the suitor I have in mind for Angelique.

ARGAN (*Banging cane on floor*): No! She has refused to marry the man I chose for her. I have made up my mind, Beralde! She will enter a convent!

BERALDE (*With determination*): Brother, I can no longer stand by and watch you fall into every trap your wife sets for you!

ARGAN (*Angrily*): Trap? What are you talking about?

TOINETTE (*To BERALDE*): Ah, sir, you mustn't talk about the mistress that way. She loves the master dearly.

ARGAN: That's right! Just ask Beline how fond she is of me.

TOINETTE: Quite so. Would you like me to prove to you just how much she loves the master?

BERALDE: How will you do that?

TOINETTE: She has just come back from seeing her lawyer and will be coming in here in a moment for a glass of wine. Master, you lie down on the sofa and pretend to be dead. Then your brother will see her great grief when I tell her the sad news.

ARGAN: This seems quite unnecessary, but, very well. Beralde, you will see for yourself that you are wrong.

TOINETTE (*To BERALDE*): Will you hide over there behind the chair, sir? (*Points to large chair, where BERALDE goes to hide*) And now (*To ARGAN*), master, lie on the sofa, but don't move. (*ARGAN lies on sofa and closes his eyes.*) Don't either of you move. Sh-h! I hear the mistress now. (*TOINETTE kneels beside ARGAN pretending to sob loudly, as BELINE enters left*)

BELINE (*Rushing over to TOINETTE*): Whatever is the matter?

TOINETTE (*Sobbing*): Oh, mistress, your husband is dead!

BELINE (*Coolly*): Dead? Are you sure?

TOINETTE: Yes. No one else knows because it just happened a moment ago. See for yourself. (*BELINE looks closely at ARGAN, then laughs.*)

BELINE: He's dead, all right! What a relief! Thank goodness he's made his will, leaving everything to me! (*Suddenly*) Toinette, why are you crying?

TOINETTE: I thought it was the proper thing to do, madame.

BELINE: Don't be silly. He was a nuisance to us all, always wanting an injection or a dose of medicine, always coughing and complaining!

BERALDE(*Aside*): I must say, this is a fine funeral oration!

BELINE: Toinette, if you help me carry out my plans, I'll see that you're rewarded. I'll demand that Angelique enter a convent, then I will seize her dowry. I'll give you a third of it. Now, we'll carry him to his bed and keep his death a secret until I get the money out of his closet. But first, I'll get his keys. (*Bends over ARGAN and starts to reach into his pocket*)

ARGAN (*Suddenly sitting up*): So, the game is up! This is how you love me!

BELINE (*Shrieking and jumping back*): You aren't dead after all! (*Shrieks and wails*) Oh., oh, oh! (*Runs off*)

ARGAN (*Shaking his fist after her*): Deceitful woman! How could you do this to me? Leave my house at once!

BERALDE (*Coming out from behind chair*): Well, brother, at last you see how things are.

TOINETTE (*Pretending surprise*): I would never have believed it! Oh! I hear Angelique in the hall. Why not lie down again, master, and see how she takes the news?

ARGAN (*Reluctantly*): Oh, very well. (*Sprawls on sofa again. TOINETTE kneels beside ARGAN and pretends to cry loudly. BERALDE hides again.*)

ANGELIQUE (*Running in left*): Toinette, what's the matter'?

TOINETTE: Oh, I have sad news, my dear Angelique. Your father is... is dead.

ANGELIQUE: My father... dead? (*Bursts into tears and throws herself at ARGAN's feet*) My dear father, you were all the world to me, and here you have died when you were angry with me! (*CLEANTE enters.*)

CLEANTE: Angelique, what is it?

ANGELIQUE (*Sobbing*): I have lost my dear father!

CLEANTE: What a terrible misfortune! Just when your uncle was to come to speak to him on my behalf!

ANGELIQUE: Oh, Cleante, now that I've lost my dear father, we must give up all thought of marriage.

ARGAN (*Sitting up*): My dear daughter!

ANGELIQUE (*Jumping back*): Oh, Father! You are all right. (*Embraces him*)

ARGAN: Don't be frightened. I'm not dead after all. I'm overjoyed to find you such a loving daughter! (*BERALDE comes forward.*)

ANGELIQUE: Oh, Father, since you are truly alive, let me beg one favor of you. If you will not allow me to marry my true love. Cleante, please do not force me to marry Thomas Diafoirus.

BERALDE: Come, brother, how can you refuse them? For you see now who truly loves you.

TOINETTE: And surely you see that these two love each other.

ARGAN (*After a pause*): Young man, if you will become a doctor, you may have my daughter for your wife. (ANGELIQUE *embraces* ARGAN)

CLEANTE: Oh, willingly, sir! But it will take a few years.

TOINETTE: I will look after you in the meantime, master. Now come, have a glass of wine.
(*Pours wine*)

ARGAN: Oh, I can't! I mustn't... I... but I haven't had a glass of wine for so long. Dr. Purgon wouldn't allow it.

TOINETTE (*Handing him glass*): Here! It will do you good.

ANGELIQUE: Sure it will taste much better than a dose of medicine.

CLEANTE (*Lifting glass*): To my lovely Angelique!

BERALDE: To the approaching marriage!

ARGAN: To my rescued estate!

TOINETTE: And to my master's good health! (*All raise glasses and drink. It being so long since he's had a drink, ARGAN begins to cough as others laugh pleasantly. Curtain*)

THE END