

The School for Wives

by Moliere

Adapted by Paul T. Nolan

Characters

ARNOLPHE, rich old man, using the alias M. de la Souche

LUCINDE, his somewhat deaf neighbor

ALAIN, his male servant

GEORGETTE, his female servant

AGNES, his ward and intended wife

CHRYSALDE, his friend

HORACE, a young man in love with Agnes

ORONIE, Horace's father

ENRIQUE, Chrysalde's brother-in-law

Costumes: Seventeenth-century French dress. In Scene 2 Arnolphe wears a cloak.

Properties: Knitting, papers, letter, lantern.

SCENE 1

TIME: Seventeenth century.

SETTING: A country home. At center are white wrought-iron chairs and table. A backdrop of trees and shrubs encloses the scene.

AT RISE: ARNOLPHE, sitting at table, is speaking to LUCINDE, who is knitting.

Throughout scene, LUCINDE appears to be so deaf that she does not understand a word he says.

ARNOLPHE: All men are fools with women. But not I, not Arnolphe. (*Turns and gestures toward LUCINDE*) Do you follow me, old neighbor?

LUCINDE (*Nodding in agreement*): True, this is not the season for rain.

ARNOLPHE (*Smiling*): Your deafness, dear Lucinde, may be a trial for you, but I consider it your greatest virtue. At times a man needs to confide in a woman. If he's wise, he'll pick one who is deaf. Don't you agree?

LUCINDE: In the first year of the reign of our good King Louis, it rained almost every day.

ARNOLPHE (*Smiling*): I love your understanding. Now, I'll tell you my secret. I am going to be married. But I am not going to be a fool. The girl I mean to marry has every virtue, for she was trained in my special school for wives.

LUCINDE: Sometimes I like rain.

ARNOLPHE (*Half to himself*): Some friends will say my Agnes is nothing but a young, silly girl. True, she is a trifle younger than I am.

LUCINDE: I remember the rain depressed you that summer.

ARNOLPHE (*Reasoning to himself*): I am not silly to marry a young, naive girl. It's the man who marries a clever wife who is silly.

LUCINDE: I wondered at the time if it was the rain that depressed you. I thought perhaps it was love.

ARNOLPHE (*Caught off-guard; to LUCINDE*): What's that? (*To himself*) Once I was a young fool in love with a woman of great wit. But she married another. That's how I learned about women.

LUCINDE: Of course, the years have proved that you have never been in love. But I did wonder.

ARNOLPHE: I love Agnes, in my own way. She will be an excellent wife, as I have had her well trained all these years. When Agnes was four, I saw her in an orphanage. I made her my ward and took her to a little, isolated convent to be reared. I told the nun there to keep her as ignorant as possible. Now Agnes is old enough to marry, and she is everything I desire in a woman - sweet, kind, and naive.

LUCINDE: The weather is like women. One never knows what tomorrow will bring.

ARNOLPHE (*Looking at her questioningly*): If I didn't know better, Lucinde, sometimes I would think you understood every word I say.

LUCINDE: But rain has its good side, too.

ARNOLPHE (*Musing*): There is one dark cloud on my horizon - that young fool, Horace, the son of my friend, Oronte. He is in love with my Agnes. He knows her as the ward of M. de la Souche. But fortunately he does *not* know that in the country *I* use the name of M. de la Souche. Thus, he has told me all about his plot to steal Agnes, little suspecting that I am the de la Souche he mocks. I'll trip him up, but first I must know how far this romance has gone. I'll pretend to be his friend. But I first must question Agnes, to find out what happened between them during my absence.

LUCINDE (*Putting aside knitting and rising*): I have enjoyed our talk about the weather, but now I must go.

ARNOLPHE (*Going to her*): I'll walk to the carriage with you, good Lucinde. (*Aside to audience*) Perhaps I am a fool to talk so freely to her. She could destroy me if she knew my

plans. (*Shrugs*) But she is deaf, and I must confide in someone. (LUCINDE and ARNOLPHE *exit right, as ALAIN and GEORGETTE enter right.*)

ALAIN: Our master has gone with Mme. Lucinde.

GEORGETTE: Good. He scares me. He looked so fierce when he found out that Agnes has a young admirer.

ALAIN: That visit did make him angry. I told you it would.

GEORGETTE: Why does he keep Agnes in the house all the time?

ALAIN: Because he is jealous. He is afraid that some young man will try to steal her from him.

GEORGETTE (*Looking off right*): Here he comes, and he still looks angry. Play dumb.

ARNOLPHE (*Entering and going over to them*): Where is Miss Agnes?

GEORGETTE: In her room, sir, as you ordered.

ARNOLPHE: Go quickly and fetch her here.

GEORGETTE: Yes, sir. Right away, sir. (*Runs off left*)

ARNOLPHE (*To ALAIN*): I'm still angry with you, Alain, for letting that young fool visit Miss Agnes in my absence.

ALAIN: He bribed me, sir, or I never would have betrayed you.

ARNOLPHE: Now you must help me, or I'll discharge you.

ALAIN (*Aside*): Threats are stronger than bribes. (*To ARNOLPHE*) You can count on me.

ARNOLPHE: Good. First, don't say a word to Miss Agnes about my discovery of her adventure.

ALAIN: She knows you're angry.

ARNOLPHE: But she doesn't know why. She's a good, simple child, and I can convince her of anything. When she gets here, I'll trick her and find out what happened. I must know how seriously she takes that young man's attentions. (*AGNES enters.*) She's here. Leave us alone.

ALAIN: Yes, sir. (*Exits down left*)

ARNOLPHE (*Turning to AGNES and pretending to be pleased*): Ah, Agnes, is this not a fine day?

AGNES (*Sweetly*): Very fine, now that I'm out of my room.

ARNOLPHE: Did anything happen in my absence?

AGNES: The kitten died.

ARNOLPHE: That's a pity, but we are all mortal. (*Pauses and asks casually*) Were you bored in my absence?

AGNES: I am never bored.

ARNOLPHE: I've been gone nine days. How did you spend the time?

AGNES: I made six shirts and six nightcaps.

ARNOLPHE: Agnes, the world is filled with gossip. Do you know that some of our neighbors are so ridiculous that they are saying a young man visited you in my absence? (*False laugh*)

AGNES: That isn't gossip, sir.

ARNOLPHE: What! Is it true, then, that a man visited you?

AGNES: Every day.

ARNOLPHE (*Angrily*): Didn't I forbid you to see anyone in my absence?

AGNES: Yes, but you would have done the same in my place.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): She is so simple she always speaks the truth. (*To AGNES*) Tell me about it.

AGNES (*Sighing*): It was wonderful. I was on the balcony when this young man passed below. When he saw me, he bowed very respectfully. You told me never to be rude; so I made him a curtsy. He bowed again. So I made another curtsy. He made a third bow, and I a third curtsy. And on and on he went, bowing. And on and on I went, curtsying. I became so dizzy that I would have fainted, but I thought that might be rude.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): I did tell her never to be rude.

AGNES: I was afraid that with my curtsying I might, by accident, have knocked a flower pot from the balcony and hit him.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): I wish the whole balcony had landed on his head.

AGNES (*Pleased*): But Georgette told me that it was my eyes that had given him a blow. She said that the young man was sick with pining for me, that he would die if he could not see me again. I didn't want to be a murderess, so I sent Georgette to bring him to me immediately.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): That cursed Georgette.

AGNES: And that is how Horace came to see me. Could any kind woman leave such a handsome young man in pain?

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): This is the danger of innocence.

AGNES (*Innocently*): Did I do something wrong?

ARNOLPHE: No, no. What happened next?

AGNES (*Smiling*): That's the best part. He was wonderful, and as soon as we were together, he recovered completely.

ARNOLPHE (*Struggling to control his anger*): What did he say to you when you were alone?

AGNES: He swore he loved me, and with the prettiest words.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): The villain! (*To her*) With all these sweet words, did he also.. .steal a few kisses?

AGNES: He wouldn't steal anything from me, sir.

ARNOLPHE (*Relieved*): That's some comfort.

AGNES: I gave them to him willingly.

ARNOLPHE (*Exploding*): Thunderation! (*Pauses*) But it's not your fault, Agnes, so I'll say no more about it. But that young rogue took advantage of you.

AGNES: Oh, no, sir. He was very sincere.

ARNOLPHE: It's a sin to let a strange man kiss you.

AGNES: He wasn't strange, and his kisses were wonderful.

ARNOLPHE (*Sharply*): A woman shouldn't know about such things until she is married.

AGNES: After she is married, is it all right?

ARNOLPHE: Of course.

AGNES: Good. Then I want to be married.

ARNOLPHE: I have returned for just that purpose.

AGNES (*Gleefully*): I am so happy! When can my marriage take place?

ARNOLPHE: This very evening, if you like.

AGNES: I would like even sooner. I saw him just yesterday, (*Sighs*) but it seems like a year. But soon he'll be my husband.

ARNOLPHE: Who is *he*?

AGNES: Horace, of course.

ARNOLPHE: Him! No, no, no! I don't mean him. I've someone else in mind for you. (*Angrily*) Now, listen to me. When Horace comes, you tell him to go away. If he calls outside your window, throw a stone at him.

AGNES: I couldn't do that. He's too beautiful.

ARNOLPHE: You'll do as I say.

AGNES (*Almost weeping*): I couldn't be so cruel.

ARNOLPHE: I'll teach you what cruel means if you disobey me. Now, go to your room. (*Points upstage. AGNES exits.*) What good is a school for wives if this is the result? (*With resolve*) But I'll end this romance. I'll tell Horace's father that the young fool is chasing a poor, country girl, and I'll *make* Agnes send him away. (*Reflects*) She has a will of her own. I thought my training would have rid her of that fault. (*Stamps his foot*) Let poetic fools talk about women's rights. Women were born to serve men. And that's all there is to it. (*CHRYSALDE, reading papers, enters left, sees ARNOLPHE.*)

CHRYSALDE (*Going to him*): Ah, my good friend, Arnolphe.

ARNOLPHE: Sh-h! Please. Here in the country I am known as M. de la Souche.

CHRYSALDE: Is this part of your program to marry a perfect wife? (*Waves papers*) I've been reading your rules for wives. I'd like to meet any woman who would agree to these.

ARNOLPHE: You will — right after the wedding.

CHRYSALDE (*In disbelief*): Have you *really found a woman to agree to these?*

ARNOLPHE: Certainly.

CHRYSALDE: This one, for example? (*Reads*) "A woman should dress only to suit her husband, even if her friends think her costumes plain."

ARNOLPHE: That's what a wife should do.

CHRYSALDE: And this one? (*Reads*) "A woman should neither read nor write. Her husband should be her only source of information." (*Laughs*) That one's pretty outrageous.

ARNOLPHE: I don't want a modern woman, all tongue and temper.

CHRYSALDE (*Laughing*): Well, preach on, Arnolphe, but you'll surely stay single. Now, you said you had some bad news about Horace. Is the boy in trouble?

ARNOLPHE: The worst kind, I fear. The young fool has fallen in love with a simple country girl without a sou to her name. He means to marry her. Because Oronte is my good friend, I'd do anything to save his son.

CHRYSALDE: This news is not going to please Oronte.

ARNOLPHE: The girl is dirt poor and not very attractive.

CHRYSALDE: Then why does Horace want to marry her?

ARNOLPHE: Because he's a young fool. Any man who wants to marry before he's fifty is a fool.

CHRYSALDE: His father has other plans for Horace. It has been arranged for him to marry my niece.

ARNOLPHE (*Surprised*): Why, Chrysalde! I didn't know you had a niece.

CHRYSALDE: Nor did I, until a short time ago. She's my late sister's child. You may remember that my sister died seventeen years ago. It was supposed the child had died with the mother, but recently, Enrique returned from America, and he discovered his daughter is still alive.

ARNOLPHE: And he found her?

CHRYSALDE: I think so. Oronte and Enrique asked me to come here to find Horace. They'll join us here - with my lost niece, I presume. The wedding is set for this week. You must be present, Arnolphe.

ARNOLPHE (*Pleased*): I'll be there. (*Reflects*) Suppose Horace already has another wife picked out?

CHRYSALDE: Oronte will expect his son to obey him, but we'll see. As you know, he dotes upon the boy. It shouldn't be difficult to make Horace forget this country girl you mention. If my niece looks like her mother, she is the loveliest woman in all France.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): Not *as* lovely as my Agnes. (*To CHRYSALDE*) Oronte should be stern. A soft father makes a spoiled son.

CHRYSALDE: I must find Horace now. I'd think over those rules of yours if I were you. Hard laws make tough rebels. Good day. (*Exits right*)

ARNOLPHE (*To himself*): My Agnes will never be a rebel. She'll be proof to the world that women were made to serve. She's not my problem anyway. It's that rascal, Horace. (*Looks off left*) Here comes the villain now. I'll handle him.

HORACE (*Entering left*): Ah, my good friend, Arnolphe. I didn't expect to find you here so close to the house of M. de la Souche.

ARNOLPHE: But I expected you. As you are the son of my good friend, I have decided to help you.

HORACE: I need help. M. de la Souche has returned.

ARNOLPHE: That's bad luck.

HORACE: He knows I love Agnes, though how he found out I don't know. I told no one but you.

ARNOLPHE: Perhaps the servants told him.

HORACE: Perhaps. When I called on Agnes just now, her maid, Georgette, told me to leave and slammed the door in my face.

ARNOLPHE: Maybe she doesn't speak for her mistress.

HORACE: I know she doesn't. Just now I called beneath Agnes's window, and she threw a stone at me.

ARNOLPHE: Georgette did?

HORACE: No. Agnes did.

ARNOLPHE: Do women in love now throw stones at their lovers?

HORACE: She was just doing what her cruel jailer, M. de la Souche, made her do.

ARNOLPHE (*Nervously*): Perhaps he is really a good fellow who is doing what he thinks best for Agnes.

HORACE: He's a cruel man, but in spite of his attempts to drive me away, Agnes and I will trick him. (*Whispers*) I have sent a message to her.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): Chrysalde may laugh at my rules against a woman learning to read and write, but this proves the wisdom of that rule. (*To HORACE*) Are you sure she loves you?

HORACE: Listen to what she writes. (*Reads from letter*) "I have not had much practice in writing, for my guardian has tried to keep me in ignorance. I may be ignorant, but I know enough to be angry at what M. de la Souche is trying to force me to do to you. He told me not to believe you, but I trust you more than I do him and all his rules."

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): The vixen!

HORACE: What's that?

ARNOLPHE: Nothing. I just sneezed.

HORACE: But tonight, if you will help, Agnes and I are going to run away together to be married. I'm going to climb up her balcony and get her. I'll need a ladder, however. Can you get one for me?

ARNOLPHE: You should speak to your father first.

HORACE: There isn't time. My father wants me to be happy.

ARNOLPHE: Speak to him first. Don't be a fool.

HORACE (*Looking at him suspiciously*): Should I get help elsewhere?

ARNOLPHE: No, no, dear boy. I'll help you.

HORACE: Then you'll get the ladder for me. Now I must leave before de la Souche sees me. (*Exits right*)

ARNOLPHE: Am I to be tricked, at my age, by a young girl and a scatter-brained young man? (*Almost shouting*) Is there no virtue in women at all? (ALAIN and GEORGETTE enter.) You two, come here.

ALAIN: Yes, master. (ALAIN and GEORGETTE go to ARNOLPHE.)

ARNOLPHE: Listen to me. I have learned that Horace means to elope with Miss Agnes tonight. We must lay a trap for him. He is going to climb a ladder to her balcony, but when he reaches there, I want you to fall upon him and give him such a beating that he'll never come back.

ALAIN: If you want a man beaten, I am your servant.

ARNOLPHE: Good. Get inside now and don't say a word of this. (ALAIN and GEORGETTE exit right. ARNOLPHE starts off down left, as LUCINDE enters.)

LUCINDE: Arnolphe, I've been thinking about the rain.

ARNOLPHE: Not now, not now, Lucinde. I'm busy. (*He runs off right.*)

LUCINDE (*Shrugging*): I was just going to tell him to expect a storm. (*Curtain*)

SCENE 2

TIME: *That night.*

SETTING: *Same as Scene 1.*

AT RISE: ALAIN and GEORGETTE run on, followed by ARNOLPHE, who carries a lantern.

ARNOLPHE: Villains! What have you done by your violence?

ALAIN: We were just following orders, sir.

ARNOLPHE: I said beat Horace, not murder him. What am I to do with a dead man on my hands? Go back to the house. I must think. (ALAIN and GEORGETTE exit.) What will Horace's father say when he hears of this?

HORACE (*Groaning, staggering on right*): Is that you, M. Arnolphe?

ARNOLPHE (*Trembling*): Yes. Who are you?

HORACE: Horace. I need help.

ARNOLPHE (*Almost in panic*): A ghost. Risen from the dead.

HORACE: Almost. (*Goes to him*) Our plan failed. Just as I was reaching Agnes's balcony, some rogues fell upon me with clubs. I fell to earth, and they thought I was dead. That frightened them and they ran away.

ARNOLPHE: Did you see who it was?

HORACE: No, but it doesn't matter. Agnes came after they left. She really loves me. No matter the cost, she will be my bride.

ARNOLPHE: But your father?

HORACE: At first he may be angry, but Agnes and I will find a way to show him how important our marriage is. But I need help. Will you hide Agnes in your house so M. de la Souche won't find her while I make arrangements for our marriage?

ARNOLPHE (*Quietly*): I am delighted at the opportunity to serve you. I thank my stars for such a chance.

HORACE: M. Arnolphe, I am deeply touched. Agnes is waiting for me by the tree at the pond.

ARNOLPHE: I know the place. I'll get Agnes now. (*Puts cloak around his head*)

HORACE: But sir, why do you need a disguise?

ARNOLPHE: I am willing to help, but I wouldn't want your father to know. My disloyalty to him much disturbs me.

HORACE: You are a man of tender conscience, M. Arnolphe. (*AGNES enters right.*)

AGNES (*Whispering*): Horace? Where are you?

HORACE: I am here, my love. (*Starts to go to her*)

ARNOLPHE (*To HORACE*): Do not tell her who I am.

HORACE: I won't. (*Goes to AGNES and brings her to ARNOLPHE*) Agnes, my love. We have a trusted friend who will hide you for a few days.

ARNOLPHE (*In a disguised voice*): Yes, dear, you must come with me. I'll keep you safe. (*Takes AGNES's hand*)

AGNES: Horace, don't leave me.

HORACE: I have to go. M. de la Souche will be searching for us, and I must lead him astray.

ARNOLPHE (*Trying to pull AGNES away*): Come, my dear.

AGNES (*Resisting ARNOLPHE*): Horace, your friend is pulling me too hard.

HORACE: He knows it's dangerous here and is trying to save us. AGNES: I don't want to go with a stranger.

HORACE: He is no stranger. He is a friend.

AGNES: Take me with you, Horace. (*To ARNOLPHE*) Please, sir, don't pull me so hard.

HORACE: I must leave. It is getting light.

AGNES: When shall I see you again? HORACE: Soon. Goodbye, my love, for now. (*Exits left*)

ARNOLPHE: Come, young lady. I'll take you where you'll be safe.

AGNES: Your voice! I know it.

ARNOLPHE: Do you, hussy? (*Throwing back cloak*) And my face, is it familiar, too? Don't bother to cry out. Your rover is gone. You young serpent!

AGNES: Why are you speaking so harshly to me?

ARNOLPHE: I caught you running after a young man.

AGNES: But Horace is to be my husband. Didn't you say I should never disobey my husband?

ARNOLPHE: Yes, but I meant for you to be *my* wife. I thought you understood that.

AGNES: I did. But to be frank with you, Horace is more to my taste than you are. Besides, I love him.

ARNOLPHE: How dare you tell me so!

AGNES: You told me always to speak the truth to you.

ARNOLPHE: Well, it shouldn't be the truth.

AGNES: Alas, I can't help whom I love.

ARNOLPHE (*Almost screaming*): Why don't you love me?

AGNES: In all the time I have known you, you have never been lovable.

ARNOLPHE: I tried.

AGNES: Then you must not be very skillful. Horace taught me to love him, and he didn't even have to try.

ARNOLPHE: Listen, little wretch, I'll forgive you if you love me.

AGNES: I would if it were in my power.

ARNOLPHE: You can if you will. Just listen to this sigh of love. (*Sighs loudly*) See this dying look. (*Stares at her with mouth open*) See what a handsome fellow I am. (*Strikes a pose*) This young villain must have thrown a spell over you, but you'll be much happier with me. What would you have me do? Beat myself? Tear out half my hair? Kill myself? Just say the word and I will do what you ask.

AGNES: Say no more. All of this does not touch my heart. Horace can do more with one wink of an eye.

ARNOLPHE: You've gone too far. I'll put you in a safe place and you will stay there the rest of your life. (*ALAIN comes running in.*)

ALAIN: Master, master! Sound the alarm! We have been robbed.

ARNOLPHE: What are you talking about?

ALAIN: Someone has stolen our corpse and Miss Agnes, too.

ARNOLPHE: Listen, you idiot. Here is Miss Agnes. Take her to her room and keep her locked up until I give further orders. (*To AGNES*) Perhaps in solitude, you will learn to love me. Go. (*ALAIN leads AGNES off right. LUCINDE enters left.*)

LUCINDE: M. Arnolphe, I want to talk to you.

ARNOLPHE (*Shouting angrily*): Go away. I have troubles enough of my own. (*Runs off right*)

LUCINDE: He is a most peculiar man, and somewhat rude. (*Curtain*)

SCENE 3

TIME: *Morning.*

SETTING: *Same as Scene 2.*

AT RISE: HORACE and ARNOLPHE enter left.

HORACE: I am plunged in grief, M. Arnolphe. I just saw my father. He has made a match for me. Without a word of warning, he is here to attend my wedding - to a woman I don't even know. Please help me.

ARNOLPHE: What can I do, my friend?

HORACE: Don't tell him about Agnes. Perhaps, if he doesn't learn of my true love, I can convince him - with your help, good friend - that this proposed match is not a good one.

ARNOLPHE: With my help? Ah, to be sure.

HORACE: I look upon you almost as more of a real father than my own. (*Looks off left*) Here he comes now, with this unknown girl's father. (ENRIQUE, ORONTE, and CHRYSALDE enter.)

ARNOLPHE: And my friend, Chrysalde. (*Aside*) I hope he doesn't reveal that I am M. de la Souche. (*Goes to ORONTE and embraces him*) Ah, good friend, your son just told me you were coming. Welcome.

ORONTE: Thank you, Arnolphe. Do you remember Enrique? ARNOLPHE: It has been many years. Welcome.

ENRIQUE: Many thanks, M. Arnolphe.

CHRYSALDE: Am I welcome, too? And by what name shall I call you?

ARNOLPHE: By *my* name, of course - Arnolphe! I know no other. (*Laughs*) You are always joking, Chrysalde.

CHRYSALDE: And you are sometimes otherwise.

ARNOLPHE (*Turning back to ORONTE*): I know what brings you here.

ORONTE: You have heard already? ARNOLPHE: I must tell you that your son is opposed to the match. He asked me to urge you to delay his marriage. But instead I urge you to be firm.

HORACE (*Aside*): Oh, the traitor!

CHRYSALDE (*Startled*): The young woman is my niece, but I don't think we should force Horace into marriage.

ENRIQUE: I agree. I've yet to see my daughter, and I'm not anxious for her to marry a man who is unwilling.

ARNOLPHE: Will three grown men be ruled by a mere boy?

LUCINDE (*Entering left*): Arnolphe. I have been looking for you.

ARNOLPHE: Not now, you old fool. Go away.

ENRIQUE: Sir, is that any way to speak to a lady?

ARNOLPHE: It doesn't make any difference how I speak. She is deaf.

LUCINDE (*Smiling*): Or would you rather I call you M. de la Souche?

HORACE: What's that? *You* are M. de la Souche? *You* are my rival?

ARNOLPHE: **That** is so. My Agnes has nothing to do with you. You are pledged to another.

ENRIQUE: I don't understand what this is all about.

ARNOLPHE: It doesn't concern *your* daughter, sir, but someone near and dear to me. Where is your daughter?

ENRIQUE: There is a problem, sir.

ORONTE: Just a temporary one, I'm sure. We found the convent in which the child was reared. But the old nun there has forgotten the name of the family that adopted her.

CHRYSALDE: But she did say it was in this province. So we have come to you, Arnolphe. We knew you could tell us who in this area adopted a seventeen-year-old beauty.

ARNOLPHE (*Shocked*): What? There is no such person in the province. Go away now. I want to be alone.

LUCINDE: I know who it is.

ARNOLPHE: You? You cannot even hear.

LUCINDE: I hear what I wish to hear, and I know what I know.

ARNOLPHE (*Aside*): I am undone.

LUCINDE (*To ENRIQUE*): I not only know where your daughter is, sir, but I have arranged to bring her here.

ARNOLPHE: Don't bring her here. Take them to her, and let me take care of my own affairs.

LUCINDE: This affair concerns you. (*Calling*) All right, Georgette, bring forth the mysterious woman. Her husband-to-be awaits her.

HORACE: But I don't want anyone but Agnes. (*GEORGE'1 Eh enters right, leading AGNES.*)

ARNOLPHE: My Agnes, what is she doing here?

HORACE *My* Agnes, what is she doing here?

AGNES: What am I doing here?

ENRIQUE (*Embracing AGNES*): My daughter, my daughter!

ARNOLPHE: That's not your daughter. That is my Agnes.

LUCINDE: She is Enrique's daughter. When you told me your plans, I investigated and discovered all.

ARNOLPHE (*Angrily*): This *is* too much. I... I... (*He stalks up right.*)

ORONTE: What *is* all this?

HORACE: Father, in time I shall tell you the whole story. But now, just let me say that I intend to be a dutiful son and marry the woman you've chosen for me at once. (*Going to AGNES*) This is the only woman I ever loved.

ENRIQUE: Then everyone is happy, after all.

LUCINDE: I suppose Arnolphe will never marry now.

CHRYSALDE: Don't despair. You still have your health and the use of all your senses.

LUCINDE (*Cupping ear and speaking loudly*): The use of my what? (*All laugh as curtain falls.*)

THE END