

A
Doctor
by
Persuasion

by Molière

adapted by Graham J. Evans

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A Doctor by Persuasion
an adaptation by Graham J Evans
from the original by Molière

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First presented by The Players' Theatre
at the Dylan Thomas Theatre, Swansea, 7th May 2009

Sganarelle	:	Jonathan James
Martine (his wife)	:	Claire Bowen
Madame Robèrt	:	Melanie Denholme
Lucas	:	Chris Griffiths
(servant to Gèronte)		
Valère	:	Carol Williams
Jacqueline	:	Sophie Jones
(a wet nurse)		
Gèronte	:	Graham J Evans
Léandre	:	Gabe Torrens
(lover of Lucinde)		
Lucinde	:	Gemma Titley
(daughter of Gèronte)		
Stage Manager	:	Mavis Gibbs
Sound/Lighting	:	Paul Buckland
ASM	:	Ryan Powell
Props	:	Ron Smith

Directed by Gareth Gibbs

Note: NO PERFORMANCE MAY BE GIVEN WITHOUT A LICENCE

Performance Fee Code: Ch

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Scene One

A clearing in the wood

*Sganarelle is slumped on a tree stump, fast asleep.
Enter MARTINE (She is hiding an axe behind her back)*

Martine: Husband dear. Love of my life
Wake up; it's me, your obedient wife.
I had been hoping to find you awake...
I said, 'CAN YOU HEAR ME?'

Sganarelle: What's that? For God's sake!
You stupid woman! You could have killed me then!

Martine: Well go back to sleep; I'll try it again.

Sganarelle: My heart's pounding now and I'm shaking all through.
What are doing here?

Martine: Looking for you.
And where would the local woodcutter be?
In the wood, of course, surrounded by trees
And the hundreds of faggots he's already cut,
And here you are sleeping with not a stick...

Sganarelle: But I've been at it for hours. Two minutes I've stopped.

Martine: And where have you put all the wood that you've chopped?

Sganarelle: It's behind that bush: twenty-four stacks!
Now what do you want?

Martine: YOU FORGOT YOUR AXE!

Sganarelle: Aah... About the axe: it's a difficult story...

Martine: Don't bother; I'll not listen to more (*to audience*), he's
Always like this, either lying and scheming
Or sitting about drunk and daydreaming
(*To Sganarelle*) And what time did you get in last night?
It must have been late; you gave me a fright
With your crashing and banging and singing as well.
I know you were drunk; it's easy to tell.
That auberge will be the death of you
And, with any luck, your boozy friends too.
You're a noisy, bawdy bunch of old louts.
And what do you find to talk about?

- Sganarelle: What we men discuss you could never dream:
There's mostly a philosophical theme.
It's not all singing and emptying bottles:
Last night it was Plato and Aristotle...
- Martine: You and your stupid philosophy!
- Sganarelle: ...And the night before was Diogenese
And the long-argued idealistic schism
Caused by his blatant cynicism.
- Martine: 'Idealistic schism' indeed!
Pick up that axe; you have a wife to feed.
- Sganarelle: You'd have been awfully proud to hear me declaim
In Latin, of course, in defence of the same
And the way I really made my mark
When the subject moved to the thoughts of Plutarch
Will be talked about for years to come
- Martine: *(Grabbing him by the arm)*
You lazy man! Get off your bum.
- Sganarelle: Unhand me at once, you disgusting old crone
I'm your lord and master; leave me alone.
- Martine: 'Lord and master'? Don't make me laugh!
I've put up with this nonsense 18 years and a half.
Your debauchery, gambling and drunken living
Are things for which you will not be forgiven,
But your laziness is by far the most galling.
- Sganarelle: Are you talking to me, woman? This is appalling!
Have you forgotten, you harlot, how lucky you are?
Of all the men in your life I'm the cleverest by far.
You've forgotten have you? Then I will dispense
A severe beating to teach you more sense.
(He grabs a stick and begins laying about her)
Take that and that you nagging old whore.
- Martine: Ouch! Leave me alone. I beg you, no more!
- Enter Mme Robèrt*
- Mme. Robèrt: Now, now! What on earth is happening here?
I can't believe what I heard assailing my ears!
This is typical of all those violent men!
Did this brute hit you hard with a stick just then?

- Martine: What's it to do with you? It's a private dispute?
- Mme. Robèrt: I'm concerned for your welfare. Is this the brute?
(She taps Sganarelle on the shoulder)
Did you give this unfortunate woman a blow?

(Sganarelle turns to face her. She immediately changes her attitude and starts flirting with him)
- Sganarelle: Why don't you mind your own business?
- Mme. Robèrt: Well hello!
- Sganarelle: Kindly don't interrupt when I'm beating my wife.
- Martine: Who is she?
- Sganarelle: I've never seen her before in my life.
- Martine: Is she some floozy from out of your past?
You promised me that one last month was the last.
- Mme. Robèrt: Let me introduce myself: I'm the widow Robèrt
And I'm concerned at the harm that could come to you pair.
You could do her some damage, a big boy like you.
Or pull a muscle, which would hurt you too.
- Martine: What do you mean by this interference?
You can't judge this on its initial appearance:
- Mme. Robèrt: I heard you scream - it was quite distinct.
And he's holding a stick. The two things are linked.
- Martine: All you have observed is the outward show,
I might quite like it for all you know.
- Mme. Robèrt: Then may I suggest a little more care?
(To Sganarelle) You should not smack her head but her derriere.
Bend her across your manly knee and
Forget the stick - just the palm of your hand.
The lesson would do her a power of good
And I'm sure she'd prefer it... I know I would!
- Martine: How dare you stand there and lecture us?
Did I ask for your help?
- Mme. Robèrt: You were making a fuss.
- Martine: He'll punish me any way that we choose.

Don't just stand there - say something, you!

Sganarelle: "Dictum Sapienti sat est", as Plutarch said.
Or would have if he hadn't been dead.

Mme. Robèrt: Good heavens! Don't tell me you speak Latin too...
Is it Latin or Greek?

Sganarelle: One of the two.

Mme. Robèrt: I love a man with a classical bent.
I can see now that violence was not your intent
(*To Martine*)
You were never in any danger at all
How dare you send out an emergency call!

Martine: I didn't ask you for any assistance,
My husband's fed up with your flirtatious persistence
(*Sganarelle has discovered a splinter in his finger*)
Get rid of her, Husband. Don't stand there and fidget

Sganarelle: I've got a splinter, look! Right here in my digit.
It must have come out of my wallop stick...

(*Martine inspects his finger*)

Martine: Oh, how disappointing! It's just a small prick!

Mme. Robèrt: You heartless woman! Here, let me inspect it.
There's a very real danger it could be infected.
Yes, It looks quite serious, of that there's no doubt.
(*To Sganarelle*) Come home with me; I'll soon have it out.
I'll dress the wound with ointment and herbs;
You can pay me by conjugating some verbs.
Is it me or has the weather turned hot?
Come on, I'll soon make you better...

Martine: No you will not!
Be off with you, you forward young trollop
Before I turn nasty and give you a wallop.

Sganarelle: Silence, woman! Our friend means no harm.
What's happened to your good-manners and charm?
(*He addresses Mme. Robèrt. Martine picks up the axe and advances upon them*).
I apologise for her verbal attacks...

Mme. Robèrt: Sir, what does your wife intend with that axe?

About the playwright

Graham J. Evans, a former soldier, coal miner and window cleaner to the gentry, was born in Aberystwyth but raised 'Down South' in the Rhymney Valley. His first play, *A Strong Smell of Burning*, also published by DAW Publications, won the coveted Crawshay Cup in the 2003 Wales One Act Festival and was runner-up in the Geoffrey Whitworth UK-wide competition. Now retired, Graham divides his time between writing, getting under his wife's feet and fulfilling his duties as a magistrate.

A Doctor by Persuasion

Géronte is worried as the marriage he has arranged for his daughter Lucinde to his OLD friend has been postponed because she has lost her voice. Local doctors are baffled, so Géronte sends out his two faithful servants to search for a brilliant doctor. They meet Sganarelle who has to be 'persuaded' to use his medical skills...

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