Tartuffe: Born Again

Translated and adapted by
Freyda Thomas

From the Original French by
Moliére

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUELFRENCH.COM

Copyright © 1997 by Freyda Thomas

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *TARTUFFE: BORN AGAIN* is subject to a Licensing Fee. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. In its present form the play is dedicated to the reading public only.

The amateur live stage performance rights to *TARTUFFE: BORN AGAIN* are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc., and licensing arrangements and performance licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur Licensing Fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a licensing quotation and a performance license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Licensing Fees are payable one week before the opening performance of the play to Samuel French, Inc., at 45 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

Licensing Fee of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

Stock licensing fees quoted upon application to Samuel French, Inc.

For all other rights than those stipulated above, apply to: Harden-Curtis Associates, 850 7th Avenue - #405 New York, NY 10019.

Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured in writing from Samuel French, Inc.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing and advertising for the play: "Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc."

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

ISBN 978-0-573-65242-4 Printed in U.S.A. #21991

No one shall commit or authorize any act or omission by which the copyright of, or the right to copyright, this play may be impaired.

No one shall make any changes in this play for the purpose of production.

Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised in their own interests to apply to Samuel French, Inc., for written permission before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of *TARTUFFE: BORN AGAIN* *must* give credit to the Author of the Play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for the purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production. The name of the Author *must* appear on a separate line on which no other name appears, immediately following the title and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent of the size of the title type.

ABOUT THE ADAPTATION

This is a strictly modern adaptation, set in a TV studio in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, present day, while America gets to know its most famous (and infamous) Tartuffes of late 20th century American society. It is intended as an accessible alternative to the excellent classical period renderings available. The cast is smaller by two characters, Flipote & Laurent. Monsieur Loyal is replaced by Ms. DeSalle, a property appraiser, and the officer of the king is replaced by Agent Loyal, FBI. The long "commercial" for the king spoken by the officer at the end of the play is replaced by a speech on justice and its power to punish the guilty and restore law and order to a democratic society. Other than these changes, some slight character adjustments and the use of modern colloquial English, (in verse), the play is as Molière wrote it.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MRS. PERNELL: *Mother to Orgon (70's)*

ORGON: *Master of the house (50's)*

ELMIRE: *Orgon's wife (mid 30's)*

MARYANN: *Orgon's daughter (mid 20's)*

DAMIS: *Orgon's son (mid-late 20's)*

VALERE: *Maryann's fiance (early 30's)*

CLEANTE: *Elmire's brother (40's)*

TARTUFFE: *A deposed televangelist (40's)*

DORINE: *Personal assistant to Orgon (30's-50's)*

MS. DE SALLE: *A property appraiser (40's)*

AGENT LOYAL: *A government agent (30's-40's)*

The entire play takes place in Orgon's newly acquired TV studio in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the 1980's.

This publication is dedicated to

John Glover

and the entire cast
of TARTUFFE: BORN AGAIN
for their inspiring talent
dedication and courage;
and to all my true and loyal friends
whose unconditional love and support
created a glorious playground
so the Muses could come
and whisper this play in my ear.

ACT I

(Baton Rouge, 1980's. A television studio, recently bought by ORGON for his latest passion. The set is unbelievably ornate, with gilded angels, oriental carpets, gilt-framed religious paintings hanging from above, all somehow co-existing with TV cameras, monitors, light and sound boards, the requisite refreshment table, and a digital piano. At curtain rise DORINE enters, goes to the light board and turns up the lights on the set. CLEANTE enters with a travel bag, they hug as we hear voices from offstage. Enter ELMIRE [ORGON's wife], MRS. PERNELL [his mother, a very old woman with a cane], DAMIS [his son], and MARYANN [his daughter]. They are all talking at once. MRS. PERNELL's voice cuts them off.)

CLEANTE

(Referring to MRS. PERNELL)
Where does she get the energy!?

MRS. PERNELL

Come on!
From this place I am going, going, gone!

ELMIRE

But why?

MRS. PERNELL

Because I cannot bear to see
The inconsideration shown to me.

Each time we have a meetin', I think, "Good."
This time you'll all behave the way you should,
But no! Nobody heeds my good advice,
I'm given no respect! Now, is that nice?
No! Everybody has to have his say.
You wonder why I want to get away?
It's Babylon, the way you babble-on!
Good God, the torments I have undergone!
(General protest)
No more discussion, anyone! I'm leaving!

ELMIRE

But we –

MRS. PERNELL

I am aghast!

DORINE

I –

MRS. PERNELL

Disbelieving
Attitudes from every one of you!

ELMIRE

But mother –

DORINE

What exactly did we do?

MRS. PERNELL

(To DORINE)
Add ignorance to all your other crimes.
You're rudely impudent a hundred times
An hour, so it seems.

DORINE

Oh no I'm not!

MRS. PERNELL

(To ELMIRE)
Aha! She should be fired on the spot!
(To DORINE)
Employees heed commands – they know their place.
They don't talk back or stare off into space
When they are being addressed.

DORINE

(Doing it)
I don't do that!

MRS. PERNELL

You're sneaky, snide and slinky as a cat!
I don't care how long you've worked for my son –

DORINE

Ten years, and when I think what all I've done –

MRS. PERNELL

I don't trust you – floor manager indeed,
A loyal employee is what we need.

DAMIS

But nana –

MRS. PERNELL

There you go, just butting in!
Good manners make the man, and discipline!
Give up your wicked ways or I foresee
A life of evil and debauchery.

MARYANN

Be gentle nana –

MRS. PERNELL

Balderdash! And you,
Miss pink & pretty, daddy's dear, true blue –

MARYANN

I hope so –

MRS. PERNELL
Well, you've got a secret, dear,
And secrets make a daughter insincere.
ELMIRE
I think –
MRS. PERNELL
You do? I've seen no indication.
From common sense you've taken a vacation!
You shop, you spend, you dress like no one should,
In town such manners go misunderstood.
My son's first wife was better far indeed
At giving growing children what they need.
And she was closer to his age than you,
A younger wife – now there's a how d'ye do!
CLEANTE
If you'd permit –
MRS. PERNELL
To you? Not on your life!
You may be brother to my son's **young** wife,
But you're a bold blasphemer!
CLEANTE
Woe is me!
MRS. PERNELL
Your "good opinions" are pure heresy.
You quip, you quote, take nothing seriously –
If I were in my son's place, I'd say, "Out!"
You can't fool me, I know what you're about.
You advocate a sinful way of living,
For which God will be very unforgiving.
CLEANTE
She used to like us! What has gone awry?

DAMIS

Just look around you to identify
The cause of all this newfound piety.
Tartuffe's to blame.

CLEANTE

Tar-who?

DAMIS

The tyranny
Upon our lives since he came here to stay
Has caused a crisis every single day.

MARYANN

My dad and nana, you know how they are.
But this time things are going way too far.

DAMIS

Just say his name and watch –

CLEANTE

(To MRS. PERNELL)

Madame? Tartuffe –

MRS. PERNELL

Ah! There's a splendid soul, a living proof
That piety makes saints of men.

CLEANTE

(In mock piety)

How true.

MRS. PERNELL

Your tone reveals that you're a skeptic too.
You'd all do well to heed his pious words.
He's ... what's the phrase I'm seeking?

DORINE

For the birds.

CLEANTE

(Aside, to DAMIS)
So this is what's been happ'ning since I've gone.

DORINE

You won't believe the dreadful goings-on!

CLEANTE

Such as?

DORINE

The two of them are nuts.

CLEANTE

Uh-oh.

DAMIS

They're driving us all crazy!

CLEANTE

Quel tableau.
Just like the time Orgon came in entrancing
Us with all the joys of ballroom dancing.

(He flips a switch on the digital piano and dances with DORINE.)

MRS. PERNELL

See there! You're joking when you should be praying.
Tartuffe will show the way – that's all I'm saying.

DORINE

The way to misery!

MRS. PERNELL

Morality!
His smallest prayer will set your spirit free.

CLEANTE

(Falling to his knees)
Dear God, I want to be a better dancer.

(He rises and tries again with DORINE. They are superb)
You're absolutely right! Prayer is the answer!

DORINE

I wouldn't say Gesundheit to that scum.
How did he get a foothold here? How come?

MRS. PERNELL

He does the things he does to serve his God.

DORINE

He does the things he does 'cause he's a fraud.

MRS. PERNELL

You hold your tongue! He cares for all of you!
It pains him, all the wicked things you do.
The swarms of noisy people everywhere,
It's turned into a heathen thoroughfare!
They're talking all throughout the neighborhood
About the way you live, and that's not good.
You traffic with insufferable riff-raff,
It turns my stomach –
(To CLEANTE & DORINE who are snickering)
Don't you dare to laugh!
That you can't see your error is a pity –
You act as though you lived in New York City!
The neighbors are suspicious!

DORINE

Yes, we know.
The work of women of "a certain age,"
For them religious right takes center stage ...
Too old to put the fire in mens' eyes
Do they seek out the joys of being wise
While they grow old? No! Do you wonder why??
They'd much prefer to sneak and snoop and spy

Upon some younger gal who's having fun,
The kind of fun of which they're having none!

MRS. PERNELL

Those women you would slander are God-fearing!

DORINE

Those women fear their beauty disappearing.
They're virtuous from sheer necessity!
When they were young they all played wild and free.
When they had new equipment to attract,
They partied with the best and that's a fact.

MRS. PERNELL

I'm forced to hold my tongue here in God's house
Because Miss Chatterbox must rail and grouse?
Oh no. I'll speak my piece, in spite of you!
You'll all show penitence before I'm through!
This man my son has fostered is a gift.
A gift from God sent to us to uplift
Our souls from all the muck in which we dwell,
The muck that sends the lot of us to hell!
This gifted man will offer no reproof
That isn't based on sin, this man Tartuffe.
Let him pursue his path and he'll restore a
House that acts like Sodom and Gomorrah!

CLEANTE

Oh dear, I fear my soul has upped and died!

MRS. PERNELL

Now listen up! I will not be defied!
You're all board members in this corporation
My son has founded. I want dedication!
I've given him my power of attorney
To take us on our spiritual journey

With this ...
(Indicating studio)
to lead us all to Heaven's gate,
And all you want to do is deprecate
Tartuffe, who has the power to take us there.
So you will all support him, or I swear
We'll cut you off without a single dime!
I've argued over this for the last time.

DAMIS

She's kidding, right?

MARYANN

It's just an empty threat.

ELMIRE

She wouldn't go that far.

PERNELL

You wanna bet?
Until the moment you have congregated
Behind Tartuffe, 'til he's appreciated
For his work, I'll speak to none of you.
You tell my son what I intend to do.

ELMIRE

I'll see you to the door.

MRS. PERNELL

No need for that.

CLEANTE

(Kneeling before her)
Farewell, dear granny. Don't forget your hat.
(She grabs it and leaves in a huff, ELMIRE behind)
My my, she gets more ... lovely every day.

DORINE

And meanwhile this Tartuffe won't go away!

MARYANN
The situation's getting very grave.
DAMIS
You won't believe the way they both behave!
And she's a saint compared to what our dad
Has done to us with this religious fad ...
CLEANTE
He's worse than that?
DAMIS
Much worse.
MARYANN
Oh yes.
DORINE
You bet.
To see him carry on you might forget
That he was once a government official,
A figure of respect in the judicial
Branch. A man who earned a reputation
For wisdom, and the country's admiration.
Now he cries "Brother!" Hugs him like a child ...
DAMIS
Regales Tartuffe with gorgeous gifts, goes wild
With worry if Tartuffe so much as sneezes.
Swears that he'll stay by him until hell freezes,
Ignores his family –
DORINE
– daughter, son and wife,
In staunch pursuit of this religious life.
Look at this set! Bought just for him! The cost!
I can't imagine how much money's lost.

DAMIS
Meanwhile, the subject of our discourse here,
Is in a word or two, a profiteer!
MARYANN
It's sad to watch.
DORINE
Tartuffe's become his hero,
But if you're asking me the man's a zero,
DAMIS
Except for his ability to deceive.
DORINE
He plays Orgon for all he's worth, believe
You me. Gets money out of him like that,
He knows just where his bread is buttered at.
CLEANTE
Sounds bad.
DAMIS
He's master of our lives, in fact.
He reprimands my slightest harmless act.
He tells us that our lifestyle is a crime,
He talks and talks and –
DORINE
He talks all the time.
MARYANN
Which just makes father censor all our actions!
Why, everyday he thinks up new infractions,
DORINE
It's such a shame, a pure disgrace to see
That man take over this whole family.
And he's allowed to tell us what to do.
Lightheartedness, and laughter are taboo,

Our socializing's rank and frivolous –
And if we crack a joke – good God, the fuss!

ELMIRE

(As she reenters)
You're lucky you were spared the final blow.
And my poor husband's ten times worse, you know.
Please talk to him, Clay. He's so fond of you.
Perhaps you'll help.

CLEANTE

I'll see what I can do.

DAMIS

And while you're at it, try to sound him out
About Valere and Maryann.

CLEANTE

About – ?

DAMIS

He said that they could marry.

CLEANTE

Ah.

DAMIS

But he
Won't even talk about it now.

CLEANTE

I see.
And?

DAMIS

Well, Valere has got this sister, And ...
Well, she and I ...

CLEANTE

I think I understand.
Let's see ... Valere and she ... his sister ... ?

DAMIS

ME!

CLEANTE

You know, I should be paid a salary.
Go talk to him, save her, fix that, fix this ...

DAMIS

Well, you're the expert on familial bliss.

CLEANTE

How did I get elected to this post?

ELMIRE

We trust you, Clay.

CLEANTE

Well, here's our gracious host.
Go on, go 'way, leave me alone with him.
Keep smiling everyone, don't look so grim!

(CLEANTE finally shoos everyone away. ORGON enters.)

ORGON

Ah, brother, bless you!

CLEANTE

Bless me!? Did I sneeze?

ORGON

(He begins searching)
No, why? Dorine? Would you get down here, please?

CLEANTE

A blessing? 'Tis not typical of you.

ORGON

I've said goodbye to he who was.

CLEANTE

He who?

ORGON

Me.

CLEANTE

Oh, too bad. I liked that fellow.

ORGON

No!

He hadn't found salvation!

CLEANTE

Here we go,

ORGON

Where is that girl!

CLEANTE

What grabs you this time?

ORGON

This

is different. I am in eternal bliss.

CLEANTE

How nice. And what's the cause of all this pleasure?

ORGON

Tartuffe.

CLEANTE

Tartuffe? Is that a name?

ORGON

A treasure

Is this awe-inspiring man.

CLEANTE

I'm sure of that.

But all the same I smell a great big rat.

ORGON

(Over the mike at the stage manager's console)

DORINE, GET DOWN HERE PRONTO!

(To CLEANTE)

You've not met
The man whom you condemn, let's not forget.

CLEANTE

You're right. I'll try to stifle an opinion
Until I'm standing in his blest dominion.

DORINE

(Offstage, over a loudspeaker)
I'M COMIN'!

ORGON

GOOD!

CLEANTE

How calm and how serene
The new persona is.

ORGON

Thank you. I mean
He'll move you, Clay, to tears.

CLEANTE

I'm sure he will.

ORGON

He'll woo you with his words.

CLEANTE

My heart be still.

ORGON

But first of all, I must catch up on news
At home since I've been gone, so please excuse –
DORINE!!

DORINE

(Right behind him, scaring him)
YES!?

ORGON

How were things while I was gone?

DORINE

(She begins to fix him a drink and a sandwich from the food table)

We did our level best to carry on.
Except two days ago, your wife – Elmire?
Was taken with a fever so severe –

ORGON

Oh! How's Tartuffe?

DORINE

In primo health, I'd say.
And growing rounder every passing day.

ORGON

Poor fellow.

DORINE

Madam, that night at the table
Could eat no food. She simply wasn't able.
A headache came to wrestle with the fever,
And both took hold. I was afraid to leave her!

ORGON

Ah. And Tartuffe?

DORINE

Well, seeing her distress
He ate her meal for her.

CLEANTE

That shows largesse!
What did he have?

DORINE

Let's see ... red beans and rice,
An okra gumbo, after that a slice
Of Mississippi mud cake, hoppin' john,
Fried Chicken, turnip greens, shall I go on?

ORGON

Mm, hmm!

DORINE

Some sole, and when he'd finished that fish,
He asked the cook to fix him cajun catfish!

ORGON

The poor man's starving!

DORINE

Madam got much worse.
I even thought of calling in a nurse!
But she said –

ORGON

And Tartuffe?

DORINE

Oh, he was fine.
Especially after three carafes of wine –
The best you've got, I ought to add.

ORGON

Poor man.

DORINE

And then your wife, imagine if you can,
Was carried from the table in a faint.

ORGON

And poor Tartuffe?

DORINE

Oh, he was just a saint!
To show Elmire his sympathy he went
To bed at once.

ORGON

Poor man.

DORINE

Completely spent,
Your failing wife was taken to her bed.
The poor thing couldn't even lift her head.
We tried all sorts of cures, to no avail,
By two AM her face was very pale.
I thought she might d –

ORGON

What happened to Tartuffe?

DORINE

(Aside, to CLEANTE)
That man's a nut case – now you have the proof.
(To ORGON)
He spent the night in sweet repose, I think.

ORGON

Poor man.

DORINE

Your wife recovered. Have a drink.
They both recovered, swiftly.

ORGON

Praise the Lord.

DORINE

(Aside to CLEANTE)
You see what we've been telling you?

CLEANTE

I'm floored.

ORGON

Poor Tar –

DORINE

Stuff it. I'll convey to your dear wife
Your joy at her inspired return to life.

(She exits.)

CLEANTE
She's making fun of you, it would appear.
ORGON
They all do, but I'm turning a deaf ear.
CLEANTE
So, tell me all about this fellow.
ORGON
Well,
It's just a miracle! So much to tell.
For quite some time I've felt a discontent
Surround me, that my life has been misspent.
All my good fortune, smiling down on me,
While life for others seemed such tragedy.
Yet mine was empty, void of meaning, grim.
And then one day, it happened. I saw ***him***.
CLEANTE
I see.
ORGON
I saw. The light. Right on TV.
It seemed like he was speaking straight to me,
As though God sent him with a holy plan.
A man who ... he's a man who ... he's a man.
CLEANTE
No! Tell me more.
ORGON
My soul began to glow.
And then they went and threw him off the show!
Accused, unfairly, of some nasty tricks,
They fired him.

CLEANTE
Oh, those dirty politics.
ORGON
Unjust it was, that they should so berate
A man like him.
CLEANTE
A sort of Gospelgate.
ORGON
I had to save him, so I tracked him down,
Convinced him that he should –
CLEANTE
Move here to town.
Move in with you to boot.
ORGON
Yes!
CLEANTE
And control
The dire degradation of your soul,
Despite your family's and Dorine's suspicions.
ORGON
Oh yes, I've heard their slurs and admonitions.
I'm well aware of that, but it's no matter.
I've learned to rise above their foolish chatter.
Tartuffe says we must not let earthly cares
Envelop us in Satan's sneaky snares.
He's taught me how to shun earthly affection
For higher realms of Godly introspection.
I've cut myself from human ties. I'm free
To live the holy life. Why I could see
My children, wife and mother disappear
Forever more and never shed a tear.

CLEANTE
A noble sentiment, I must remark.
ORGON
Yeah, isn't it? How he ignites the spark
Of holy light in me. You won't believe
How pious this man is, how he will grieve
At his most innocent of sins.
CLEANTE
Do tell.
ORGON
Last week, he nearly fell into a spell
Because he killed a fly without compassion.
He trembled for an hour, his face was ...
CLEANTE
Ashen.
And so is mine. Have you gone round the bend?
These crazy whims of yours, when will they end?
Orgon, I am profoundly shocked at you.
I'm doing what I swore I'd never do.
I'm talking seriously. Hear me out.
Your family's happiness stands well in doubt,
And when that many loved ones are involved,
It's better to just get the problem solved.
In this case, what is false and what is true.
I think I know the difference, but do you?
The faithful and the "un," or better yet
The ones just out to get what they can get
From people who think God is to be feared.
A club you've joined since this Tartuffe appeared.
I haven't met him yet, but well I know
The whole routine when he begins his show.

He struts around the stage with blazing eyes,
Calls, "God!" but it's himself he deifies.
And then the fire and brimstone rain upon
The crowd. The vengeful sword of God is drawn –
As if God carried swords or judged our deeds.
Out of man's fear of God, Tartuffe succeeds!
When did we all forget that God is love?
What makes us worship other men above
Our own unalienable right to choose?
Let others choose your path, and you will lose.
Choose how and when and if you're one with God,
Judge every thought you think? I find that odd.
Evangelists who glorify or damn
According to **their** judgment? What a sham.
I do not mean to say they're all deceivers,
But there are those who'd make us all believers
By using fear to keep us under thumb.
That you can't tell the diff'rence, I'm struck dumb,
But then stupidity is not at play,
It's blindness.

ORGON

Is that all you have to say?

CLEANTE

That's quite enough of preaching for one day.

ORGON

Then, thank you.

CLEANTE

Now I'm going out to play.
Oh brother, I forgot!

ORGON

Yes?

CLEANTE

One thing more.
I have been asked to plead the case of four
Most anxious lovers who await your nod
So they may marry.

ORGON

That is up to God.

CLEANTE

But didn't you, I'm told, give them your word?

ORGON

I may have.

CLEANTE

That's exactly what occurred.

ORGON

So?

CLEANTE

So? You mean your word's no longer good?

ORGON

I mean that God will tell me what I should
and should not do.

CLEANTE

What shall I tell those four?

ORGON

That all will be revealed – no less, no more.
The will of Heaven has to be obeyed.

(He exits.)

CLEANTE

(Aside)
Which means Tartuffe, I'm very much afraid.

ORGON

(Offstage)
I heard that!

CLEANTE

(Sitting and doddling at the piano)
Never one to dwell in gloom,
Nevertheless I sense impending doom!
The lovebirds are in trouble – and Orgon!
And granny – this Tartuffe! Ce n'est pas bon!
But then they do have me to pull them through,
The villain, the buffoon, the ingenue,
What if I turned away? 'Twould be pure treason.
It's hard sometimes to be the voice of reason.

(The lights change. DORINE enters, has a few words with CLEANTE, he exits and she hides on the set somewhere as ORGON reenters, followed by MARYANN.)

ORGON

Now, Maryann.

MARYANN

Yes, daddy?

ORGON

Come here, dear.
I want to make sure no one else is near.

(He checks various hiding places, including underneath the table. MARYANN sees DORINE but ORGON does not.)

MARYANN

But why? Have you a secret?

ORGON
Yes, I do.
MARYANN
Oh! What is it about – give me a clue.
ORGON
Just like we used to play when you were little.
MARYANN
I loved that game.
ORGON
And I.
MARYANN
Tell me the riddle.
ORGON
Let's see now, who's the sweetest child on earth?
Who loved her daddy from her day of birth?
MARYANN
Who could it be?
ORGON
The answer is not simple.
Her eyes are blue (green, brown), upon her cheek a dimple ...
MARYANN
Do I know her?
ORGON
Indeed. This mademoiselle
Is kind and treats her father very well.
MARYANN
What does she do?
ORGON
She brings him little treats ...
(She gives him one)
Ruffs up his hair, surprises him with sweets,
Obeys him in all things to please him –

MARYANN

Yes,
But who this daughter is, I cannot guess.

ORGON

And he, her father, knows her heart so well,
That when she's hiding something, he can tell.

MARYANN

Oh?

ORGON

Have you guessed yet who I'm talking of?
My daughter and the fact that she's in love!

MARYANN

I thought you knew!

ORGON

I do, and I'm delighted,
That in your heart the flame has been ignited
By such a man.

MARYANN

You like him!

ORGON

Yes, I do.
I couldn't be more happy, entre nous.

MARYANN

Then you approve my choice?

ORGON

Here is my proof.
(He gives her a little Tiffany box with a diamond ring)
You have my full consent to wed Tartuffe.

MARYANN

Oh thank you, daddy! I'm so – whud you say?

ORGON

The worthiest of men in every way.

MARYANN

But –

ORGON

And you love him.

MARYANN

I –

ORGON

You'll be his wife

Within the week.

MARYANN

I will?

ORGON

A holy life

You'll have, my dear.

MARYANN

I feel a little faint.

My knees have turned to water.

ORGON

He's a saint!

MARYANN

I may throw up.

ORGON

Well, what have you to say?

MARYANN

(Aside)

I cannot speak! My face is very gray.

ORGON

Come, tell me what you think of your intended.

MARYANN

Well, daddy, I ...

ORGON

I know how you pretended
To stay aloof to his divine mystique,
But I could see the blush upon your cheek,
Feigned interest in Valere to raise his pique,
But your papá's too smart for such a ruse.
He knows Tartuffe's the lover you would choose.

MARYANN

I'm in a nightmare. That's what it's about.
In just a moment I'll wake up and shout.

(She does.)

ORGON

Ah, she cries for joy!

MARYANN

It's not a dream!
There's nothing changing, even when I scream!
(She does again)
Oh dear, I don't know what I'm thinking of.

ORGON

Ah, Cupid does strange things to girls in love.

DORINE

(Emerging from a hiding place)
That's it, I've heard enough,

ORGON

Who is that!?

DORINE

Guess!

ORGON

Have you been spyin' on me?

DORINE
I confess.
ORGON
You have a snooping nose beyond compare!
I can't believe the wicked things you dare!
DORINE
And always will when lunacy breaks loose.
ORGON
For such behavior you have no excuse.
DORINE
You wanna bet?
ORGON
You scullion! I demand
You leave this studio.
DORINE
At your command.
I'm on my way as soon as you deny
That what I've heard just now is true.
ORGON
Not I.
DORINE
If it's a joke, your humor is bizarre.
ORGON
I tell you I'm not kidding.
DORINE
Yes, you are!
ORGON
What do I have to say to make my case!?
It's true, I swear!
DORINE
I'm laughing in your face.
Ha! Ha!

ORGON

And HA right back to you, I say!
Tartuffe is now my daughter's fiancé!

DORINE

And what about Valere?

ORGON

Valere?

MARYANN

Valere!

DORINE

You promised she could have him. Do you dare
To tell a lie and say it isn't true?

ORGON

It's partly true, but do not misconstrue
Approval with a promise.

DORINE

You approved.

ORGON

I did, but now my spirit has been moved
By higher thought to change the situation.
Valere does not possess the dedication
To God or church – I never see him there.

DORINE

So just because you don't see him in prayer
That means he doesn't? You think he should wait
Till he sees you, then throw himself prostrate
At th' alter, just to prove he is sincere
Like some who care much more how they appear
Than what they want to say or hear from God?
Like some whose pious postures are facade?

ORGON

I don't recall soliciting your advice.

(To MARYANN)
This marriage, child, will serve to bless you twice:
The first, a blesséd husband you can treasure,
The second, love beyond all earthly pleasure.

DORINE

Oh well, then, you're determined to be stupid.
It's obvious you know much more than Cupid.
Tartuffe has got you –

ORGON

One more word and I'll –

DORINE

The lifted gaze, the phony pious smile,
He hasn't got a cent to call his own!
He can't get through the day without a loan.

ORGON

Because a man is penniless should we
Assume that he's engaged in villany?
Great saints were all impoverished like Tartuffe.
Like them, he shuns the world and stays aloof:
"Above" the earth in Heaven's sweet domain.
He pays no heed to gold or worldly gain.
Or that his clothes and shoes are all in tatters –

DORINE

Not any more they're not.

ORGON

Such temp'ral matters
Are of no great importance to his quest,
To live a life that's sanctified and blest.
And just because his tastes were never garish,
The other jealous preachers took his parish!
But I intend to help him in that realm
And set him up again in Heaven's helm.

DORINE

You mean, he said he lost his preacher's frock
Because he hated money? What a crock!
But let's pursue another path. Your daughter.
You're all prepared to send her to the slaughter
Of her soul by wedding her to one
She absolutely hates? I say, Well done!
I'm talking the destruction of her soul,
For when a girl is forced to play the role
Of wife, and she's unhappy, I have found,
She's more inclined than not to fool around.

ORGON

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!!!

DORINE

I simply can't abide
When someone's being taken for a ride.
I'll spell it for you – F-R-A-U-D!
Which makes you sucker of the century!
Although God knows you're gullible at best,
A sitting duck for our ambitious guest.
You and your mother, I would like to mention,
Stand all alone in this mess – pay attention!

ORGON

I certainly will not! I am the master
Of my life!

DORINE

And that's our first disaster.

ORGON

(To himself)
I'm pure of spirit, worldly cares are nil –
I'm calm. Dorine, I need an ulcer pill!

DORINE

I'll bet you do.

ORGON

It's your fault! You're too bold!
I ought to throw you out into the cold!

DORINE

It's June.

ORGON

I will not have this talking back!
Oh God, you're giving me a heart attack!

DORINE

(Giving him his pill)
Too bad they don't make pills to give you brains.

ORGON

The street is most unpleasant when it rains.
Or how about the humid, sweltering summer?
Remember what that's like?

DORINE

Yep. It's a bummer.

ORGON

You think about that while you stand right here,
And listen without talking. Is that clear?

DORINE

You know, I hate to be the one –

ORGON

Be quiet!

DORINE

Up the creek is how I'd classify it.

ORGON

I can't believe her mouth. How does she dare?

DORINE

I'm only telling you because I care.

ORGON

You do?

DORINE

Of course! You're in my every prayer!

ORGON

I am?

DORINE

You are.

ORGON

Well, I don't want to be!
You're saying this to mollycoddle me!

DORINE

Too bad you feel that way. Like it or not
I'm going to get you out of this damned spot.

ORGON

I'm not in any spot!

DORINE

Oh, yes you are!
You've let this situation go too far!

ORGON

Meanwhile, you're talking!

DORINE

Goodness, so I am.
I'll stop right now.

ORGON

Fine.

DORINE

Yessir, I'm a clam.

ORGON

I'm glad.

DORINE

I'm all zipped up.

ORGON
How nice to hear.
DORINE
Not one sound from my lips.
ORGON
SOMETIME THIS YEAR?
(He turns to MARYANN before DORINE can speak again)
Now, Maryann ...

(He pauses, waits for an interruption, turns to DORINE, turns back to MARYANN.)

MARYANN
Yes, daddy?
ORGON
(Turning back to DORINE)
Well?
DORINE
Well what?
ORGON
Why aren't you talking?
DORINE
You said I should not.
ORGON
(He turns back to MARYANN)
Now daughter –
MARYANN
Yes?
ORGON
(Turning back to DORINE)
I know you're going to speak!

You're bursting to say something! You're too weak
To stifle such an urge. Your throat is parched,
Your lips are poised, your vocal chords are arched,
You're ready to explode, to scream, to shout!
If you don't utter something you'll pass out!
(DORINE yawns and pretends to doze)
Hooray, she's quiet.
(He turns back to MARYANN)
Now, this marriage plan
Will be –

DORINE

– the sad demise of Maryann.

ORGON

Did I hear something?

MARYANN

I don't think so.

ORGON

Good.
I hope, my child, that you have understood
That this great man, in all of Christendom
Is first and last –

DORINE

– a total worthless bum!!

ORGON

That does it! Out you go!

DORINE

Uh-uh, not me!

ORGON

Was ever there so foul an employee!

DORINE

I doubt it.

ORGON

I will **not** give credence to
The foolish ravings of the likes of you.
I'm going to my office now to pray.
My daughter, you're bethrothed this very day.

(He exits.)

DORINE

And you, Miss timid. Where'd you put your tongue?
I'll overlook your youth because you're young,
But must I fight your battles one and all,
While you stand gaping like a kewpie doll?

MARYANN

I tried to speak, I did! I was so shocked
At first, I couldn't talk! My throat was locked,
And when I tried, he wouldn't listen!

DORINE

Swell.
You're really in the soup now, mademoiselle.

MARYANN

Oh help me, tell me what to do, Dorine!

DORINE

Stand up to him! Get angry! Make a scene!
Walk up and say, "I want to have a chat."
Then tell him you can't marry just like that!
Ordain your life at someone else's bidding?
A marriage at his whim? He must be kidding!
Tell him you're thrilled he loves Tartuffe so dearly,
That being the case, then he should wed him, clearly!

MARYANN

I can't say that!

DORINE
And what about Valere?
MARYANN
Valere?
DORINE
You know, the man for whom you care?
The one you told me you adored –
MARYANN
I do!
DORINE
The one I thought you'd chosen.
MARYANN
But it's true!
DORINE
The one you kept me up all night about.
MARYANN
That's him!
DORINE
You love him?
MARYANN
Yes! How can you doubt
I do?
DORINE
OK. Then what do you suggest
We do about this mess, what would be best
To alter this "fiancé substitution?"
MARYANN
I'll die first!
DORINE
Ah, now there's a good solution.
You just pop off, bye-bye! Now that's good thinking.
Just let me know which poison you'll be drinking.

MARYANN
Don't joke, Dorine, please show some sympathy.
DORINE
For those who freeze in front of tyranny
I have no patience.
MARYANN
I know I'm too shy.
DORINE
Just say, "I will not do it!"
MARYANN
Well, I'll try,
But surely it's Valere who needs to deal
With daddy's change of mind.
DORINE
That's how you feel?
Your father's hoodwinked and Valere's to blame?
Let him do all your dirty work? For shame!
MARYANN
But how can I just openly refuse?
In families such as ours there are taboos.
To flaunt my love for Val and then defy
My father's wish?
DORINE
You're right. Don't even try.
MARYANN
What?
DORINE
It's not worth the struggle.
MARYANN
But Valere!

DORINE

Just say so long, then go off and prepare
Yourself to be the wife of what's his name?

MARYANN

You can't be serious!

DORINE

Your heart's aflame
To be united with that saintly soul.

MARYANN

Dorine!

DORINE

You long to play the wifely role
Beside the man your daddy has selected.

MARYANN

How can you be so cruel!?

DORINE

Yep, you're infected
With Tartuffe's own special brand of charm.
Just march right down the aisle and take his arm.

MARYANN

Ugh!

DORINE

No! This marriage must be consummated.
It's clear you want to be Tartuffilated!
It's not for me to halt your inclinations,
I'm sure Tartuffe will fill your expectations
Of what a husband is.

MARYANN

I'm getting sick.

DORINE

Most def'nitely the one that you should pick.

He's handsome, in a meas'ly sort of fashion,
And someone who will show unbridled passion
In some motel room on your wedding night.

MARYANN

I'm going to faint!

DORINE

You're absolutely right.
A father's wish is law. There's no escape,
No matter if he picks a hairy ape
To be his son-in-law. But why complain?
You'll learn to live all right without a brain.
Let's see, you'll follow him where duty calls,
Wear lots of make-up, visit shopping malls,
Fluff up your hair until it's two feet wide,
And when he's on TV, stand right beside
Your husband, looking up adoringly
While he expounds the Right Morality.
Praise God! You'll sing, to help his cause along,
(Hitting a chord on the piano and singing)
"I cry for Jesus ...", do you know that song?
And just for fun – oh isn't this divine,
You'll open up your own cosmetic line!
Just close your eyes, imagine such a life!
(MARYANN starts to go)
Wait, I'm not through!

MARYANN

I'm going to get a knife.
Since you won't help me, what else can I do?

DORINE

All right, I'm stopping. I was teasing you.

MARYANN

I'll take a stand, if you will show me how.

DORINE

Of course I'll show you everything, but now,
The word is "stall" while we think up a plan.
(Looking up an aisle)
And look at this, my sweet, here comes your man.

MARYANN

He doesn't seem to be in perfect humor.

DORINE

In fact he looks quite angry.

(VALERE bursts into the room.)

VALERE

What's this rumor
I've heard, about a certain man
Bethrothed to my fiancé, Maryann?
Well?

MARYANN

Well, my father –

VALERE

So you mean it's true?

MARYANN

Yes.

VALERE

Well!

MARYANN

What do you think I ought to do?

VALERE

What do I – do you mean you are not sure?

MARYANN

I don't know.

VALERE

You don't know? Well, there's a cure
For indecision. You want my advice?
Go marry him at once!

MARYANN

That's very nice!
You really mean it?

VALERE

Yes, of course I do.
A splendid offer. Why, I'm thrilled for you.

MARYANN

You are?

VALERE

Of course.

MARYANN

Good. I'll take your advice.
I'll marry him.

VALERE

How nice.

DORINE

You've said that twice.

VALERE

You clearly think it's good advice to take,

MARYANN

You gave it eas'ly.

DORINE

Oh, for Heaven's sake!

VALERE

It's what you wanted.

MARYANN

And it's what you want.

"Go marry him," you said. How very blunt.
So, naturally, to please you, I must do it.

DORINE

(Aside)
Love makes some people crazy, so I view it.

VALERE

I'm glad to know the depth of your true feeling.

MARYANN

Don't talk to me of depth. It's clear you're dealing
With this like a jerk. In tones quite frank
You told me to accept the offer. Thank
You very much.

VALERE

Don't put the blame on me!
It's what you want, as anyone could see.
You're looking for a way to break your word
To me.

MARYANN

I see!

VALERE

Good.

DORINE

(Aside)
This is too absurd.

VALERE

At least I know you never loved me.

MARYANN

Oh!
Yes. Well, no point in staying.

MARYANN

Yes, please go.