

THE AMOROUS DOCTOR: THE FRENCH SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY TEXT IN
MODERN TRANSLATION

by

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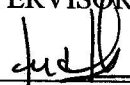
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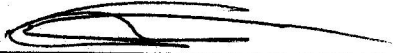
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This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. Jan Walsh Hokenson, Department of Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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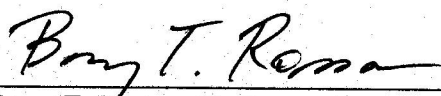

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ABSTRACT

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The anonymous French seventeenth-century play *le Docteur Amoureux* (1691) was written for the Théâtre Italien, the Italian troupe acting in Paris. It incorporated the techniques of both Old French farce and the commedia dell’arte into mainstream comic modes, in the manner of Molière but with some amusing twists. *Le Docteur Amoureux* remains a significant part of the French comic canon and the historical corpus of drama, yet it has never been translated into English. With prefatory commentary on the text and the period, the genres of stage performance, and the challenges involved in translating historical texts, this first translation of *le Docteur Amoureux* is intended to serve contemporary theater research into this rich and prolific period in the history of the French theater under Louis XIV.

“THE AMOROUS DOCTOR”: THE FRENCH SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
TEXT IN MODERN TRANSLATION

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis entails an original translation of the anonymous seventeenth-century play, *le Docteur Amoureux* (1691), which incorporated the techniques of farce and commedia dell'arte into mainstream comic modes, in the manner of Molière but with some amusing twists.

The tradition of French farce is unique among the comic canons of European countries, partly because of its long-standing presence in French cities and villages, beginning in late medieval times and continuing up until the present. Even today one sees the fundamental elements of French farce in such films as *Le dîner de cons* and *Delicatessen*. It seems clear that the French not only continue to appreciate this type of comedy but that something in French culture continues to foster it. Historically, the broadening of medieval farce into elite and mainstream culture has been traced to Molière's stage in the seventeenth century, when he integrated both farce and the commedia dell'arte into the modern theater (Dandrey 19). In this later play, the anonymous *le Docteur Amoureux* (1691), also written during the reign of Louis XIV, we can see an even more clear instance of this blending of Old French farce, Italian comedy, and elite or court theater. This play, while anchored in medieval farce, is part of the late tradition of the commedia dell'arte, written in French for the Théâtre Italien, the Italian troupe acting in Paris. It remains a

significant part of the historical French corpus, yet it has not heretofore been translated.

Concerning genre, the earliest example of what may be properly called a farce is often debated, insofar as many scholars and critics are still disputing the proper definitions of dramatic genres in the medieval theater. Genre categories were often overlapping and, in any case such formal strictures were not of great importance at that time. Michel Rousse, in his study of medieval theater, has noted the difficulty in establishing a continuity:

Le théâtre médiéval fourmille de problèmes non résolus, d'énigmes non déchiffrées. En premier lieu sa naissance, bien sûr ; mais une fois la forme théâtrale établie, son histoire et son évolution ne se laissent pas lire de façon continue. Un des points les plus obscurs reste l'apparition et le développement de la farce. (51)

[The medieval theatre abounds with unresolved problems and undecipherable enigmas. In the first place, of course its birth; but once the theatrical form was established, its history and evolution does not present itself in a straightforward, continuous fashion. One of the most obscure points that remains is the appearance and development of the farce.]

This is an important point to stress: many scholars and critics note the difficulties in distinguishing farce from other dramatic genres of the medieval theater, notably the *fabliaux*, the *sottie*, the morality play, the *sermon joyeux*, and the dramatic monologue.

Critics and theater historians also debate whether or not to include as “farce” texts that date back to the thirteenth century, such as *le Garçon et l’Aveugle* or *le Jeu de la Feuillée*, which, though they bear the foundations of a farce, were performed at a time before the word even existed. If one were to include these plays, others would also have to be given equal consideration. In contemplating the idea of including the thirteenth century when speaking about farce, most critics are skeptical. Michel Rousse concludes, “Faut-il rejoindre le XIIIe siècle? On s’accorde à s’en douter” (52).

Thus, in the standard view today, conventionally, farce is defined as a short comic episode, which usually contains recognizable or realistic characters and often involves physical gestures such as a “coup de bâton, coup de poing,” or some other sort of stress on the actors’ physicality. Farces in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were typically written in verse, of about 400 lines, with three to four characters, and included themes of everyday life, such as trivial marriage quarrels, adultery, and the suppression of upstart women, often exemplifying linear action and role reversal of situations. Approximately 150 farces make up the repertory of farces from the period 1440 to 1560 (Strubel 789). Michel Corvin defines farce in the *Encyclopédie de théâtre* as a “courte pièce, reposante sur l’affrontement comique de personnages populaires qui cherchent le plus souvent à duper ou dominer autrui . . . car le langage lui-même est tromperie” (320-1). Barbara Bowen adds, in her elaborate study of farce, the ubiquitous ruse, as well as “gestes volontaires” and “gestes involontaires,” the entrances and exits, “les entrées et sorties” which evoke laughter, as in many farces in which the husband, having

forgotten something on his way to the market, returns home unexpectedly to discover his wife with her lover (36). In many of these situations, the lover is hidden behind a door or in a closet, unbeknownst to the husband, whose ignorance again incites laughter. The principal aim of the farce is indeed to evoke laughter, as André Tissier explains in commenting on medieval performance:

La farce n'avait pour but que de faire rire. Sur d'étroits tréteaux, sans décor – un rideau de fond . . . les 'joueurs' s'ébattaient au gré de la fantaisie verbale du texte et des situations d'un quotidien volontairement schématisé. . . . Pantins ou Italiens de la commedia dell'arte? On n'en est encore ni aux uns ni aux autres. Il fallait faire rire. Et on rit. Mais on rit de mots et de gestes. (15-16)

Originally, farces were played either in the middle or at the end of mystery and morality plays (“farcé” or “stuffed” between performances). Mystery plays would often be played over a number of days with the whole town involved in the performance. The farce was becoming more popular, especially when the mystery plays were banned by Parliament in 1548 (Radcliff-Umstead 235). There were many groups performing farces, such as Les Enfants sans souci and les Basochiens. One can trace the roots of farcical developments back to the carnivals and May festivals. “On ne peut évoquer farces et sotties sans les relier à Carnaval, et plus généralement aux fêtes populaires liées à la lutte symbolique de l'Hiver et de l'Été, et qui vont du solstice d'hiver” (de Jomaron 55). Ethnologists and archetypal critics still read the jousts and combats of farce in folkloric terms (Rozik 159).

The period considered one of the most prolific in the performance of farce occurs right after the end of The Hundred Years' War, between 1450 and 1550, with the first fifty years being the more productive. Two of the most popular and sophisticated of all farces during this period are *La Farce de Maître Pathelin* (1464) and *La Farce du Cuvier* (1490s). The latter was performed as recently as 1981 at the Carreau du Temple (Tissier 21) and in 2006 at the Vingtième Théâtre in Paris, demonstrating the vital life of the genre to this day.

In the *Farce de Maître Pathelin*, we see another characteristic of farce in the use of word play, specifically “jargons factices ou patois,” as well as the quintessential exemplification of ruse as *le fil conducteur* (Bowen 5). This prominence of ruse is most apparent in the famous scene in which Pathelin, in bed feigning illness, speaks different dialects of French so as to confuse Guillaume, the Draper, who finally leaves in a state of confusion. This farce also embodies the famous dictum, “à trompeur, trompeur et demi!” The devious lawyer is in the end outwitted by an even more clever shepherd. As Anthony Caputi notes in his study of vulgar comedy, “our pleasure does not consist simply in the fact that the lawyer . . . is defeated by his client, but in the fact that he is tricked by the very device which he himself contrived” (191).

Long performed on church porches or carnival trestles, the medieval farce begins to decline around 1550, when the new Renaissance or “humanist” comedy comes to prominence, particularly through the improved translations of the Latin comedies of Terence and Plautus. Humanist dramatists, such as Étienne Jodelle, Jacques Grévin, and Pierre de Larivey, began to imitate the models of classical

antiquity, thus disassociating themselves from the medieval genres and particularly the “obscene” medieval French farce that they found deplorable. The poetics esteemed by the Renaissance humanists were those of Horace. The importance of the classical models as objects of imitation was crucial to the development of mainstream French comedy by the seventeenth century, as we see in Molière. We can see a similar parallel in the development of the Italian theater. “Not until Italian playwrights took Plautus and Terence as models did a genuine theater arise in modern times” (Radcliff-Umstead 11). A cardinal point, however, is that as much as the humanists wanted to veer away from the Old French farce, it nonetheless found its way, albeit perhaps unwittingly, into the works of some of the most esteemed French Renaissance comic writers, not least Molière. Thus, it may be concluded that although farce was officially dismissed and considered vulgar, many writers of the Renaissance as well as Molière in the seventeenth century appropriated its comic techniques, and often its themes and motifs, for “modern” plays and audiences. (See Patrick Dandrey for a detailed history of this process, 19-23). Similarly, *le Docteur Amoureux* was created for the Théâtre Italien in Paris, a leading stage, yet it included such farcical elements as ludicrous disguises, concealments, and eavesdropping.

The influence of the itinerant Italian players, however, cannot be overestimated insofar as they affected theatrical performances throughout Western Europe in the sixteenth century. For its part, French theatrical tradition was deeply impacted by the Italian players, chiefly through the exposure to the “comic characters and devices,” which made a fairly substantial contribution to the

development of French comedy. As a comic mode, almost a distinct improvisational genre of stereotyped players, the *commedia dell'arte* is sometimes referred to as *commedia all'improvviso* or the theater of masks, employing a special style of acting that distinguishes it from other types of European theatre existing at that time: it entailed an “actor-based” theatrical method centered on improvised acting. In Naples, the original *commedia* troupe of professional players enacted both masked and unmasked characters, whose gestures and grimaces played a significant role in the “conspicuously physical and pantomimic [movements]” (Richards 1). The fixed character types, or stock characters, typically include two *vecchi* (old men), two *zanni* (comic servants), and two or more *innamorati* (pairs of lovers) (Richards 109). *Commedia* plays thus differ from the other chief Italian theatrical tradition of the time, known as *commedia errudita*, “the literary drama of scripted plays, performed mainly by *dilettanti* in socially exclusive courts and academies” (Richards 1). Because the *commedia dell'arte* relied more on living actors’ skills at improvising stories and jokes than on printed books for their scenarios, we have very little in the way of their texts today. Because the *commedia errudita* used more published scripts, one can more easily trace its historical development.

The exact origins of the Italian *commedia dell'arte* remain somewhat obscure. Some scholars and commentators point back to Roman times and specifically to the Atellan farce, whose buffoons resemble to some extent what we now call the *commedia dell'arte* (Radcliff-Umstead 233). Other scholars question the possibility of stating with any plausible or credible degree of certainty its true origins, since there is no evidence of the format of the productions – the masks, the

improvisatory nature of the performance – and no records prior to the sixteenth century. Most critical histories begin in the mid-sixteenth century in Italy, insofar as the first mention of a professional acting troupe among Italian players occurs in 1545 at Padua (Richards 11). Thereafter, it is clear that many troupes began to assemble, and to perform in many Italian cities and increasingly abroad.

As the acclaim of the Italian players spread across Europe, the Italian troupes were invited to perform at various royal festivities in Spain, England, Germany, and the Low Countries. Although the first documented appearance of the Italian troupes in France appears to be 1548 in Lyons, at a festival honoring the visit of Henry II and Catherine de Medicis, there is reason to believe that Italian players were present in France as early as 1500, during the reign of Charles VIII and undoubtedly also that of François I, who delighted in surrounding himself with the latest artists (Scott 17). The *Gelosi* Company, one of the most popular troupes, visited Paris in 1577 at the invitation of Henry III (Scott 16). Warmly welcomed in France, the Italian players were particularly appreciated for their “vivacity and gaiety,” as well as their spontaneous improvisation, which appeared to have thoroughly pleased the kings and queens as well as the general populace (Scott 17).

In 1653, the Italian troupe, under the direction of the famous Italian actor Scaramouche (Tiberio Fiorilli) was installed in Paris at the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon which they shared with Molière when he returned to Paris in 1658 (de Jomaron 154). Molière had met and perhaps worked with an Italian troupe in Lyon, when he was touring in the provinces, but it was in 1658 that they both shared the stage of the Petit-Bourbon. Molière’s work reflects his direct appropriation of the techniques

of the *commedia dell'arte*. In particular, Molière admired and learned from the actor Scaramouche:

[Il] fut pour Molière un modèle et un maître et [il] partagea avec lui en 1658, la salle du Petit Bourbon, le fascinant par son jeu et sa maîtrise dans l'art d'improviser. . . . Entre 1650 et 1658, il avait rencontré la troupe des *gelosi* et savait ainsi apprécier encore davantage le mouvement dramatique et le sens de la technique à la fois savante et souple de la *commedia dell'arte*. (Clavilier and Duchefdelaville 25)

Patrick Dandrey has written a detailed study of *commedia* techniques in Molière's work, arguing persuasively that Molière's "comédie classique" is actually a pioneering fusion of farce – as enriched with *commedia* techniques – and *théâtre bourgeois* forms (Dandrey 155-7, 163).

Concerning changing conventions of dramatic structure, in the classical period under Louis XIV, strict rules of playwriting intensified the principles elucidated by Aristotle and Horace, to the extent that a work had to respect the three unities of time, place, and action, and the dominant poetics of *la vraisemblance* or verisimilitude. Following the Greek and Roman ideal of perfection, and in echo of Horace, five-acts were held to comprise a well-wrought play. Most comic writers, including Molière and our anonymous playwright, respected these standards.

Concerning comedy, criteria for classical comedy included the subject matter or theme, foremost among which figured love intrigues. In a typical example, a tyrannical father wishes to marry his daughter to a wealthy man, and rivalries

ensue but end happily. The character types are usually fairly fixed, and of a mediocre social rank, often members of the bourgeoisie with their valets and servants, though sometimes also (as in Molière) “les gentilshommes,” such as a marquis, but, contrary to tragedy, never kings or princes (Guichemerre, “La Comédie classique” 4-5). The important aim of “la vraisemblance,” the ‘imitating’ of reality, also stated as “peindre le réel,” could never be sacrificed to another primary aim, that of instructing the spectator, “plaire et instruire” (Guichemerre, “La Comédie classique” 6).

As Patrick Dandrey has shown, Molière appears to follow far more closely the humanists and the classical models than was previously thought by critical commentators. “Molière, en partie sinon en totalité, présentait plus de conformité qu’on ne l’avait longtemps cru avec les préceptes des théoriciens humanistes du genre comique, glossateurs du théâtre de Plaute et de Térence, interprètes des allusions d’Aristote et d’Horace à la comédie” (8). Dandrey studies closely the role of mimesis in Molière’s achieving the comic effect: “car le rire est provoqué par la déformation du réel dont la reproduction exacte au contraire est nécessaire à susciter la délectation mimétique” (18).

Concerning the intellectual or conceptual context of comic performance in this period, we can ascertain some of Molière’s theoretical ideas concerning the comic genre in his prefaces, as well as in some dialogue within his plays. If we assume that Dorante, the chevalier in *La Critique de l’École des femmes*, speaks for Molière, we can see in Dorante’s reply to the Marquis how Molière envisions the role of “le réel”: “Mais lorsque vous peignez les hommes, il faut peindre d’après

nature. On veut que ces portraits ressemblent ; et vous n’avez rien fait, si vous n’y faites reconnoître les gens de votre siècle” (Scène 6). Molière accomplishes this resemblance through his characterization of people as complex wholes, including their defects, “les défauts de tout le monde,” which serve as a comic target for his theater and the entertaining of his audience. In the politically astute preface to *Tartuffe*, moreover, Molière stresses comedy as a means of social correction: “Si l’emploi de la comédie est de corriger les vices des hommes, je ne vois pas par quelle raison il y en aura de privilégiés” (18). Elsewhere he stresses the critique of society, and he was one of the first playwrights to mock the nobility during performances at Court. Apropos of the character of the Marquis in *La Critique*, Dorante says: “Tu es donc, Marquis, de ces Messieurs du bel air, qui ne veulent pas que le parterre ait du sens commun, et qui seroient fâchés d’avoir ri avec lui, fût-ce de la meilleure chose du monde?” (Scène 5). The parterre refers to the section of the theatre located directly in front of the stage where the spectators stood, thus holding the cheapest tickets. As is well known, Molière’s often quite strong populist notes provoked laughter that sometimes brought royal displeasure, which was usually only temporary.

Apropos of *le Docteur Amoureux*, it is also important to note that Molière’s plays often mock the medical profession, religion, and the condition of women. He refers to his view of doctors in the preface to *Tartuffe*: “La médecine est un art profitable, et chacun la révère comme une des plus excellentes choses que nous ayons ; et cependant il y a eu des temps où elle s’est rendue odieuse et souvent on en a fait un art d’empoisonner les hommes” (21). Similarly, *le Docteur Amoureux*

entails sharp mockery of the professions of philosophy and astrology. The doctor, although a philosopher (in *le Docteur Amoureux*), is characterized by his pedantic sensibility and use of Latin in a pompous and sometimes awkward manner. Julia Prest notes that, as precursors, “in both the French farce tradition and the Italian commedia dell’arte, the medical doctor and the pedantic philosopher feature as recognized comic types” (140). Molière often intensified this comic business by having the valets such as Sganarelle in *le Médecin Volant* function as mock doctors, for their master’s benefit, sometimes by intervening to deter a marriage, and always to advance the love intrigue in one way or another.

The mid- and late seventeenth-century theatrical scene in Paris consisted of three principal theatres where players performed in the French language: The Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Théâtre du Marais, and the Palais-Royal. The Théâtre du Marais was actually a tennis court (*jeu de paume*) used for theatrical performances, as was quite typical of the time. Most performances were staged at inns or tennis courts, or still on the old tréteaux as had been the case for the medieval farces and was again in the seventeenth century for Tabarin and the farceurs on the Pont-Neuf. Molière’s troupe had played at the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon, along with the Italian troupe, from 1658 until 1660, when that theater was dismantled. Molière’s troupe was then “awarded the use of the Palais-Royal” (Clarke 19) which, once again, they shared with the Italians until Molière’s death in 1673.

Concerning performance conditions in seventeenth-century France, the theatrical space played a fairly important role and seating was often a reflection of social hierarchy. Before 1620, there was only one public theater in Paris, the Hôtel

de Bourgogne, which was owned by the Confrérie de la Passion, who had a sort of monopoly on production, often charging exorbitant prices to companies who rented the theater. Lighting in the typical theater consisted of candles in sconces (which were placed around the theater), and chandeliers, and consequently the cost of candles was actually a fairly significant expenditure in the staging of performances (Clarke 25). Jan Clarke raises the point that performances after the 1670s started about five o'clock, meaning that the auditorium might have been darkened so as to make "lighting effects more striking" (25). The theater also profited from the recent introduction of machines on stage, utilized to convey supernatural effects which could not otherwise be represented – rather than reported, as in the past (Polsky 13).

The focal point of the performance for the purposes of this study is the role of improvisation, which had distinguished the *commedia dell'arte* from other theatrical traditions in Europe (where scripted plays were mainly used), and which forms an essential part of the performance of *le Docteur Amoureux*, as in Act III, Scene 7. Antonio Fava, the renowned teacher, actor, and director of Teatro del Vicolo (a contemporary *commedia dell'arte* school based in Italy), notes:

The moment of improvisation is the highest moment of the acting, because you are very aware of your work – something you completely control, and you think continually of the reaction of the audience and you play to them . . . Foot movements, the steps the actor takes, the gestures, the movement of the head, coordination of speech and movement, are all very important fundamental aspects of acting. Movement with the feet creates laughter.

These points are not governed by the script, but are left to the actor and director. Clearly, in translating a text, any improvisation poses an important difficulty. Aspects of humor that can be brought about by an actor's movement of the feet or the head, both of which involved a fair amount of expertise and training on the part of the actor, lie outside the text. Commentators and scholars of the *commedia dell'arte* acknowledge this as a particularly difficult aspect of historical reconstruction, of performance as of translation. Kenneth and Laura Richards, in their study of the *commedia dell'arte*, have noted that the scenario, on the page, "rarely seems very entertaining; the apparently naive nonsense of the situations, comic or serious, can be off-putting" (147). They add that "for twentieth-century readers, a great deal of imaginative work has to be done to get beyond the text to some awareness of the performance possibilities latent in these actors' briefs" (147). As I will explain below, the two sections of this play left open for improvisation will be heavily annotated in my translation.

Le Docteur Amoureux is archived today in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (as Ms. Français 12.545), and was published for the first time in 1937 by Henry Carrington Lancaster in his book *Five French Farces* (Lancaster 18). Lancaster estimates that the play was written sometime between 1691 and 1694, the only period when the known actors – playing the stock characters Isabelle, Mezetin, Scaramouche, Colombine, and Arlequin – all appear to have been members of the troupe simultaneously (Lancaster, *History* 698). These stock characters and the fact that two scenes are given in résumé only (i.e., to be improvised on stage), are some of the indications of the play's having been part of the Théâtre Italien's repertoire of

plays produced for the Italian troupe performing in Paris during the period 1681-1697. The Italian troupe was expelled in 1697 for a play entitled *La Fausse Prude*, which allegedly attacked the King's mistress, Madame de Maintenon.

Two decades later, when the Italians were invited back in 1716, under the direction of Luigi Riccoboni – considered the first Italian theater historian – the names of some of the stock characters were changed in the manuscript of *le Docteur Amoureux* to reflect the actors playing the roles at this time. For example, the character “Isabelle” was changed to “Flaminia,” played by Riccoboni's wife, Elena Virginia Balletti (Lancaster, “Introduction” 19). I will be using the text annotated for the 1716 performance (i.e., the Bibliothèque Nationale de France manuscript, as also used by Lancaster and other scholars).

Concerning the performance dates of *le Docteur Amoureux*, only one date is certain: the 22nd of June 1746 (although Lancaster dates it as 1745 in *Five French Farces*), as noted in a register from the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra in Paris (Brenner 39). Virginia Scott claims, in her history of the commedia, that a performance may have taken place in 1691. There is no record, however, of any performances of the play at the Comédie-Française, according to the theater's archivist (in a personal communication).

Beyond the broad precedents set by Molière, one source for *le Docteur Amoureux* was a short story entitled *Histoire de Socrates* by Madame de Villedieu (also known as Mlle Desjardins) published in her *Les Amours des grands hommes* in 1671 (see Morrissette 345). Lancaster also notes that the play follows quite literally the structure and speeches of the *Histoire de Socrates*, with some modifications,

such as the locale being moved from Athens to Rome. Both story and play allude to the story of Abélard and Héloïse, as echoed in the characters of the Doctor and his ward Flaminia (Lancaster, “History” 697).

In the play there are seven characters: the Doctor, his wife Colombine, his servant Mezetin, the ward Flaminia, the Doctor’s pupil Lélío, his servant Arlequin, and the astrologer Marinette. The intrigue is as follows: The Doctor is entrusted by an old friend with the care of Flaminia, his beautiful young daughter, whom the Doctor in turn confides to the female astrologer, Marinette. By keeping his lovely ward at Marinette’s he hopes to keep Colombine’s jealousy in check. The Doctor, however, frequents Marinette’s home ostensibly in order to educate Flaminia by giving her lessons in philosophy and virtue. These visits enrage Colombine, and also arouse the curiosity of the Doctor’s former pupil, Lélío, who has just returned from Spain. A wealthy bachelor, Lélío decides to visit the young girl himself in the guise of an Armenian. When he arrives at Marinette’s home, he mistakes her for Flaminia, and leaves disappointed at not finding her to be the beautiful girl he was hoping to seduce. With the help of his servant Arlequin, Lélío eventually discovers his mistake. The Doctor, in the end, is forced to abandon the young Flaminia to his rival Lélío.

Le Docteur Amoureux teems with quiproquos, pedantic language, and disguises designed for comic effect. The play reflects the conventions of the comedies that were being performed in its period, as in the clever servant Arlequin’s coming to the aid of his master Lélío to obtain the beautiful ward. The play combines the finest features of mainstream late seventeenth-century comedy in

typical but still amusing ways. Yet this fascinating play remains very difficult to obtain in French today, and it has never been translated.

The following translation of *le Docteur Amoureux* entails some particular considerations that I should like to examine briefly before turning to the text. First we should note certain differences that distinguish translating for the stage as opposed to narrative prose and poetry, and second, certain issues involved in translating historical texts.

Although stage plays have sometimes been translated solely for scholarly purposes rather than actual performance, this text like its translation is intended for performance. Since a play is written primarily for actors, it must be “speakable and performable” (Zuber, “Languages” 93). In turn, that criterion requires attention to non-verbal elements, such as movements, gestures, speech rhythms, intonations, mimicry, silences, pauses, or whatever else may comprise the oral delivery (Zuber, “Languages” 92). Translators for the stage often acknowledge that this oral dimension is a central component guiding their work. In a 1989 “Round Table” discussion, published in *Sixièmes Assises de la Traduction Littéraire*, Michel Bataillon cites the well-known French translator of Shakespeare, Jean-Michel Déprats: “la théâtralité, pour moi, c’est d’abord une dimension d’oralité . . . un acte sonore ou orale, un mouvement de la voix” (77).

This aural “théâtralité,” as a translative issue, can be heard in *le Docteur Amoureux*, in Act II, Scene 2, in which Léo pays his first visit to Flaminia. Before his arrival, he is expecting to meet the young and beautiful Flaminia, and instead encounters Marinette, the old shrew. In the hands of a skilled actor, the audience

may be far more moved by Lélío's facial expressions and gestures than by the actual words that he speaks. On stage, a pause or silence can also have a powerful impact in a given character's insinuations or implications, even in scenes where there is no dialogue at all yet something is being transmitted non-verbally, as in Act III, Scene 7 of *The Amorous Doctor*, filled with movement and pantomime.

In theatrical translation, the translator must consider the "immediacy of the impact on the audience" (Zuber, "Languages" 92). Ortrun Zuber also notes that the translator should be processing a sort of mental picture of the performance while translating, in order to create a text that will beactable (92). The performability of a play also entails the sub-text or "implied meaning behind the words that the characters speak," that which is meant but not stated (Petrone-Fresco 74). The sub-text reveals the real message that a character conveys, or the "feeling behind the words" (Clifford 264). This factor can be a quite subjective yet fundamental aspect of translating dialogue. Dramatists often note that what is not spoken in a play usually has more impact than what is actually said. As John Clifford, English translator of the Spanish playwright Federico Garcia Lorca, observes, "what is left unsaid matters as much as what is said: and as translators we have to be sensitive to both" (Clifford 264). Many translators have acknowledged that thus translating the "spirit" or "energy" of the play is the most essential and often the most challenging task. Clifford also recounts Lorca's observation that most translators of his plays are unable to translate the spirit of the play, which remains "far beyond the translator's reach" (264). Clearly, the treatment of the sub-text requires a delicate balance, and the translation can swiftly become too explicit, overstated. In a 1993 "Round Table"

discussion on theatre translation, Isabelle Rüf cites André Markowicz's experience when he over-translated parts of Gogol's *le Révizor*, which hampered the performance of the actors:

Par une interprétation trop appuyée, je fermais, quand il aurait fallu laisser toutes les portes ouvertes. [Le metteur en scène Antoine Vitez] m'accusait de 'surtraduire,' d'en faire trop à certains moments. . . . [et] c'était une erreur, bien sûr, justement parce que c'était beaucoup trop voyant, beaucoup trop explicite, trop bien trouvé, et . . . cela entravaît le jeu de l'acteur. (56)

Thus, the unarticulated sub-text poses several challenges to the translator. In the following translation, I have focused a great deal on this matter of sub-texts. For example, in the scene where the Doctor voices his long tirade against women, against his wife in particular, I had to ask myself over and over again, what is he really communicating? Neil Bartlett, who has translated works of Molière, Racine, and Genet, puts this problem well in stating that his main focus is on theatrical stress or punctuation. As he explains, "I'm not translating on the level of 'what does this mean?', but rather in order to reproduce as accurately as possible the theatrical cadence of a precise sentence" (Bartlett 67). His method draws on the vocal quality of a sentence, the cadence and supposed manner of speaking. Similarly in this translation, I have tried to transpose the text from French to English actors with their cadences in mind.

The most challenging aspect in translating *le Docteur Amoureux* has been the dated language and context. It was the epoch of Molière that shaped the

language register and historical context. The language in the 1691 French text of *le Docteur Amoureux* is quite comparable to Molière's more bourgeois plays such as *le Tartuffe* and *l'École des femmes*; however, it does seem to safe to say that this play was intended for an equally elite but not royal audience, that is, it aims at a register between bourgeois and courtly. An equivalent social circle today might be the highest reaches of the Hyannis Port circle. However, transposing the register from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first century entails a considerably more colloquial level, such as that used by educated middle-class Americans. The play could also be transposed into an aristocratic register, but that would require an expensive production, and this translation has been aimed at mainstream stage performance. Another potential challenge, though downplayed in this translation, is the transposition of the characters' professions. For example, one could render the astrologer as a physicist, and the Doctor as a life coach, if one wished to further colloquialize the script.

The following passage illustrates the transposition from the seventeenth-century French elite register of *le Docteur Amoureux* into the twenty-first century populist colloquial register of *The Amorous Doctor*. In Act I, Scene 6, Lelio tells the Doctor that he should not be imposing his philosophy on his friends if he himself is not going to be a living example of it:

LÉLIO: Vous nous imposez donc de cette sorte, Monsieur le Docteur; vous nous prechez incessamment le mépris des passions, mon âge et mes engagements ne meritent aucune indulgence de vous, et comme si vous depensiez tout vostre fond philosophique en

conseil pour vos amis, vous en demeurez depourueu pour vous-
mesme.

This translation follows:

LÉLIO: You impose on us in some respects, *Monsieur le Docteur*.
You preach to us incessantly your contempt for the passions. My
youth and commitments don't seem to merit any indulgence on your
part -- and even as you waste all your philosophy on advising your
friends, you have none left for yourself.

As this example illustrates, Lelio's register reflects that of an educated middle-class
American speaker. The speech also highlights the inherent linguistic difficulties
posed by the French text.

Modernizing the language in translating is also a means for reducing the
potential alienation of the audience that can occur with a more antiquated
translation. Thus, it is far more typical to translate historical texts into a
contemporary voice. Still, the problem is practical: How is it possible to foster a
'modern' translation while sorting out the inherent problematic created by this time
gap? So as to not alienate the spectator and to lessen this gap, David Johnston
proposes using the "hermeneutic component" as a viable approach:

While we clearly recognise some aspect of ourselves in the human
complexity of the past, the simple quality of the "pastness" of
historical texts very often obscures any sense we might derive of
their aliveness. It is all too easy to allow the past to remain other to
us. Any worthwhile recreative strategy should allow us to profile

and relativise our own modernity through what Mary Snell-Hornby describes as the hermeneutic component which relates past writing to modern thinking and hence makes them alive. (Johnston, “Betwixt” 264)

It is precisely this “hermeneutic component” which the translation must access, to help reduce this “otherness” and make the text less a diachronic materialization than a synchronous happening. Johnston also notes that the “liminal space” acts as a link to aid in our becoming re-familiar with the richness of our past (Betwixt 264). To make the translation come “alive,” however, a translator must first familiarize himself/herself with the text. Then the possibility exists of entering into the world of the characters. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that this process of familiarization engages the translator in two simultaneous translations, one on the linguistic level and another on the level of characterization and dramatization.

Another challenge in translating the comical text is the audience (McLeish 155). What may have been considered comical in late seventeenth-century France will not have the same humorous effects on twenty-first century theatregoers. It seems probable that the delight which the valets Mezetin and Arlequin exhibit in receiving their respective commissions, although humorous even today, might have had even more comic appeal at that point in time. Kenneth McLeish, English translator of Aristophanes and of Ludwig Holberg (who is known as the “Danish Molière”), has argued that a translator of comedy may need to pursue a more forceful role, since the process of translating humor requires “not merely a text derived from a foreign-language original, but a mode of performance, a register,

which will unlock the laughter latent in that text, and translate that into the terms of his or her own audience” (McLeish 155). The notion of “laughter latent in the text” is a crucial point and an indelible challenge: the resulting dialogue must not become oversimplified, over-translated, or under-communicated. We can see an example of this problem in Act II, Scene 2, where L lio mocks Marinette, the astrologer as she tries to convince him that she knows everything about L lio (never mind that he is standing right in front of her!). L lio’s sarcastic reply about her extraordinary astrological knowledge goes unnoticed by her, in the full comical confusions of this scene.

McLeish also refers to the varying degrees of translator’s intervention in translating comedy, in for example explicating improvisation. A “text-based, literary comedy” (155) may require far less involvement than for example a comedy such as *le Docteur Amoureux*, which makes use of what he calls “non-textual conventions” (156) and reflects the *commedia dell’arte* style. Concerning the challenges posed by *commedia dell’arte* plays, McLeish elaborates: “They were clearly meant to perform a wealth of physical business, *lazzi*, but these were never described, but merely indicated in the text” (McLeish 157). For example, as in the discussion of the valets above, upon receiving their commission Arlequin may have performed some *lazzi*, which would elicit even more laughter from the audience. Another example of “non-textual conventions” in the play occurs in Act III, Scene 7, where the original text has only stage directions, without dialogue. This is intended to leave room for improvisation and interpretation, as the scene can be played in innumerable ways.

This first translation of *le Docteur Amoureux* is intended to serve contemporary theater research into this rich and prolific period in the history of the French theater under Louis XIV. In English, this is unexplored territory, and I am pleased to be able to help bring to the stage a play that has never before been translated, and thus, as Walter Benjamin would say, contribute to its afterlife (Benjamin 79).

TRANSLATION:

The Amorous Doctor

Characters:

THE DOCTOR, in love with Flaminia

MEZETIN, his servant

COLOMBINE, his wife

FLAMINIA, the young ward

LÉLIO, Flaminia's lover

ARLEQUIN, Léo's valet

MARINETTE, an old astrologer, in love with Léo

Scene: A piazza in Rome

ACT ONE

Scene 1

THE DOCTOR, MEZETIN

MEZETIN: Shame on you, Doctor! You're running away from your marital responsibilities -- and if your wife were to deceive you like that, you would very much deserve it! Besides, with your physique, how can you even think about being in love with anyone?

THE DOCTOR: Naturally, Mezetin, an imbecile like you could not possibly comprehend that physical attractiveness is not a necessary requirement for being loved. Just have a look at the portraits left to us of the estimable philosopher Doctor Pierre Abelard to see that he was not a beautiful man. Far from it. He was poorly built, indeed! Yet although he professed a strict philosophy, he was in love with his dear Héloïse. But as love knows to change its form according to its needs, and knows how to disguise itself, it is thus not through such ordinary means that love has manifested itself in me, but rather through the guise of virtue. You have now learned of my secret, Mezetin, please do not abuse it.

MEZETIN: I wouldn't dream of it, *Monsieur*.

THE DOCTOR: Listen carefully. Flaminia is the daughter of one of my oldest friends. A few domestic reasons forced him to move to Rome, and he died there. He counted very much on my friendship, relying on my loyalty and trustworthiness, and so he gave me the guardianship and care of raising his only daughter.

MEZETIN: In a word, you saw to it with as much care as generosity.

THE DOCTOR: The girl is beautiful, I do confess, but it is not on such a fragile point that I feel such esteem for her.

MEZETIN: Oh, it's her virtue, her virtue, no doubt!

THE DOCTOR: Yes, Mezetin, I see in her an enlightened spirit whose great fruit I wish to harvest, and be the recipient of, so as to propagate wisdom. My goal is to make her a strong woman, and prudently judging that any relationship with the world could constitute an obstacle to this great design, I have arranged to place her under the watchful eye of Marinette, the astrologer -- who under the pretext of her celestial observations, lives in solitude. Charmed by the inclinations that I find in Flaminia's soul, I spend all day educating her on moral virtue. But today, Mezetin, I would like you to be a witness to the lesson I am going to give her. Follow me.

Scene 2

THE DOCTOR, MEZETIN, FLAMINIA

At Flaminia's house

THE DOCTOR, *knocks at the door*: Hola, open up for me, Flaminia!

FLAMINIA: Who is it?

THE DOCTOR: It's me. Do you not know my voice?

FLAMINIA: Oh, it's you. *Monsieur le Docteur*.

THE DOCTOR: In what occupation am I surprising you, beautiful and wise Flaminia?

FLAMINIA, *enters with a book in her hand*: I see here that there are three different opinions on the principles of natural bodies. The first one is from Aristotle and the other Peripatetics who say that they are products of the four elements. The second is

from Epicurus and Democritus, who insist that they are atoms. The last one is from Paracelsus and some chemists who claim that they entail salt, sulfur, and mercury.

MEZETIN: There's a lot of devilry underneath all of this.

THE DOCTOR: Wise Flaminia. The first of these opinions is true. The other is the same, provided one explains it properly. The last one is a fantasy which has some relationship to Aristotle's opinions of the elements, in the sense that one gives it today. But that is enough for now. I am very proud of you, virtuous Flaminia. Let us now move on to morality, a subject that you will understand even better than physics, because despite your great youth I see a keen mind and something rather heroic in the feelings of your heart.

FLAMINIA: If it is true that one can find in me those estimable qualities, then I owe them all to you, *Monsieur le Docteur*. And to the care you have devoted to the cultivation of my mind.

THE DOCTOR: I find, wise Flaminia, that you have benefitted in every way, and the feelings of gratitude that you express to me are proof of it.

MEZETIN, *aside*: Oh, the beautiful pupil, how charming she is!

THE DOCTOR: But why do you think that heaven created such an accomplished creature? It is neither out of a singular preference for you nor out of hatred for those women born less perfect, but it is rather in order to manifest in you the power of the quality of the soul over the qualities of the body. If you were average-looking, you would not have to undergo the same temptations, and thus your victory over vice would not be a true example. But when one notices in the most beautiful girl in Italy such a steadfast soul, unshakeable by the attacks of passions with a laudable disdain

for perishable qualities, and a firm love for those qualities that must never perish, you will become a living paragon that our libertines will not have the audacity to attack. Adieu, virtuous Flaminia -- continue persevering in the narrow path of your virtues.

Scene 3

THE DOCTOR, MEZETIN

MEZETIN: *Monsieur le Docteur*, the beautiful lessons that you've given Flaminia about the weaknesses of love should only concern lovers and yet they also concern marital relations. Your wife, Colombine as the daughter of Lord Geronimo, nicknamed the Just, is no less fair, but she thinks you become anxious when you don't see Flaminia for a while and she has discovered that you spend all of your time away from home with this beautiful girl. I'm not too stupid to have noticed how much furious jealousy this attachment has caused . . . There, there, *Monsieur le Docteur*, here she comes -- she'll tell you the rest.

Scene 4

COLOMBINE, THE DOCTOR, MEZETIN

COLOMBINE: Have you just given a lesson to your charming pupil? Is she taking advantage of all that you are teaching her? Will you make her famous? Upon my word, I am concerned that this pupil will turn you upside down, will reverse the philosophy and brain of the good doctor, and I think . . .

THE DOCTOR: My wife, may I speak to you frankly?

COLOMBINE: That would please me.

THE DOCTOR: I tell you with all the care and gentleness possible that you seem to have been chosen by God to keep my virtue intact. Never has there been a wife more disobedient than you, and because your honor has maintained itself unstained by the little merit you actually possess, you are a tyrant without compassion who demands tons of patience from those who owe you the least and you attribute to the virtuous Flaminia all those false names that your jealousy invents!

COLOMBINE: And with good reason!

THE DOCTOR: But my wife, is it because of your own experience that you are such a poor judge of the virtue of your own sex? It seems to me that one should only suspect others of weaknesses that they are capable of.

COLOMBINE: What are you implying?

THE DOCTOR: Do you think that heaven favored you with special privileges, that you are the only woman capable of being chaste, that such a privilege is denied to other women?

COLOMBINE: I don't know how to respond to such subtle reasoning. I read only my prayer book, and I would be quite incapable of reading anything else. But the common commerce of relationships between the two sexes is neither legal nor honest. There is always enmeshed in it some criminal goal, and as one of your disciples said so well the other day, men and women exist in the world only to perpetuate it.

MEZETIN: She's right.

THE DOCTOR: You have retained there, my wife, some beautiful points of my lessons. But my goal is not for Flaminia to become so knowledgeable, and the

philosophy that I am teaching her contains precepts much opposed to those that you condescend to remember.

COLOMBINE: That's always how you say it. Love never misses a pretext. If you were a painter, you'd say that you were teaching Flaminia your art. You're a philosopher, and you pretend to teach her philosophy, but *Monsieur le Docteur*, when one wants to give lectures on virtue, one doesn't choose such beautiful young schoolgirls.

THE DOCTOR: My wife, you are mad!

COLOMBINE: I am certainly not mad!

THE DOCTOR: You are delusional, I'm telling you.

COLOMBINE: I am not delusional either. I will use *Seigneur Lelio* as my witness.

THE DOCTOR: Be quiet, my wife.

COLOMBINE: I'm in the mood to speak. Say what you like, but I will not stop.

Scene 5

LÉLIO, THE DOCTOR, COLOMBINE, MEZETIN

LÉLIO: Hello there, (Hey!) *Monsieur le Docteur*.

THE DOCTOR (*to Colombine*): Leave, I tell you!

COLOMBINE: I will not! I can see that you are worried. You wouldn't like your charming friend to meet Flaminia.

MEZETIN: (*aside*) Indeed! He's right! People as charming as *Seigneur Lelio* are without question the grand harvesters of the seeds of such "wisdom."

LÉLIO: May I enquire into the reason for your difference of opinion?

COLOMBINE: *Seigneur Lelio*, my husband here treats me like a madwoman, a jealous fantasist, simply because I don't wish to suffer for the fact that he spends all his days with Flaminia, a schoolgirl, far too attractive and charming for a philosopher.

LÉLIO: If that's true, *Monsieur le Docteur*, then there's no question that you are wrong!

COLOMBINE: It's the truth!

THE DOCTOR: Now listen here, *Seigneur Lelio*. That is a deception of the worst kind. Can I not attend to a young schoolgirl without being unfaithful? Will you give the name of vice to the most innocent of all passions? Will you believe a learned girl guilty of such harmful accusations? Is chastity not to be found in the youth and beauty of a young girl? Simply because my wife is a far too touchy and jealous sort, are you going to take her complaints to be signs of oracles, her thoughts to be utterances of truth? Must we give credence to all her suspicions, give voice to her fantasies, and support all her follies? Finally *Seigneur Lelio*, do you wish to side with a jealous and guilty wife against a young and unfortunate girl?

LÉLIO: Hey, *Monsieur le Docteur* . . . !

THE DOCTOR (*to Colombine*): Go away, and beware of my rage!

COLOMBINE (*aside*): As a woman, I must unfortunately yield, but I will return again!

Scene 6

LÉLIO, THE DOCTEUR

LÉLIO: You impose on us in some respects, *Monsieur le Docteur*. You preach to us incessantly your contempt for the passions. My youth and commitments don't seem to merit any indulgence on your part -- and even as you waste all your philosophy on advising your friends, you have none left for yourself.

THE DOCTOR: I have already told you several times, *Seigneur Lelio*, that your tendencies conform very little to the strict ways I hold myself to, which does not, in any way, prevent us from having a perfect friendship. Are you going to believe the sheer nonsense of an angry woman? It is merely the imaginings of her jealousy, without *vraisemblance* or truth.

MEZETIN, *aside*: That's a bit doubtful, I say! I certainly wouldn't swear to it!

LÉLIO: What, is it not true that you are attached to the attractive Flaminia, about whom your wife appears to be very alarmed?

THE DOCTOR: I admit that I take great pleasure in cultivating a natural beauty, that coincidence has brought to me, as a result of a friendship which obliges me to nourish it.

LÉLIO: And this natural beauty is to be found in a young and beautiful person?

THE DOCTOR: What has that got to do with our subject of conversation? The beauty of a woman and the soul of a philosopher, could they possibly have anything in common?

LÉLIO: I have just returned from a country which has given me abundant experience in love. When I felt intimidated by Rosalie's beauty, I spoke like you,

and I said to myself, L lio, the first ladies of Rome, and even those more distinguished, look favorably upon loving a courtesan. If my heart so desired, I could have seen Rozalie and allowed myself to be carried away passionately, perhaps for a few hours, but this trivial distraction should not be confused with love, which Rozalie, given her nature, was simply unable to provide. Meanwhile, you know where this love led me, the criticism I had exposed myself to, in order to keep it going, and the perils which jeopardized my ambition.

THE DOCTOR: Your soul and mine are quite different, L lio. Your wealth continually leads you to pursue sensual pleasure. You are weakened by the delights that are encouraged by your social standing. You believe yourself capable of pursuing all that you desire. As for me, my meager fortune assures my tranquility. I see beauty only as an effect of nature, which assists me in developing my virtue, whereas in your case it only corrupts you further, and it is from this shipwreck that I have learned to keep temptation at bay.

L LIO: Do you seriously believe your philosophy is so strong, so unshakeable, that you wouldn't succumb -- under any circumstances -- to the temptation of beauty? Those who hold an even stronger opinion than you, have in the end, I'm afraid, succumbed to such a temptation.

THE DOCTOR: Say what you like L lio, criticize all you want, but you will not shake the firmness of my conviction, since my reasons are founded on experience. I do agree that Flaminia is worthy being loved, but I cannot admit that I am capable of loving anything but the virtue that I recognize in her. So farewell, *Seigneur* L lio, I must now be off to give a public lecture to my disciples. Follow me, Mezetin.

Scene 7

LÉLIO, *alone*: The Doctor's account of Flaminia's merits has indeed piqued my curiosity. I would like to know if his distinctions about beauty are as sharp as those of philosophy. I noticed just now in our meeting that the Doctor is rather possessive of his treasure. I believe that, in order to know, I must have a look at her. I will follow our philosopher to find Flaminia's house. As soon as I see that he has left, I'll enter into her home disguised as a foreigner and speaking a foreign language. I'll deceive, if I can, the eyes of Argus, and even the most relentless surveillance, saying that I have just come to bring her news from her country. I speak several languages, and, between the various qualities I possess, the one that ranks first is the one that allows me to take on different characters. Perhaps the Doctor will have already given orders to prevent any possible lover from finding her, having no doubt informed her of all the artifices and tricks imaginable. It doesn't matter, one must take one's chances. I'll give Arlequin all the necessary orders to succeed in this new intrigue.

ACT TWO

Scene 1

ARLEQUIN: Doctor Metaphraste is at the Academy just now. I followed him ever so closely and at a rapid pace to discover Flaminia's house. I am now completely out of breath. Please allow me to breathe. *He takes a big breath.*

LÉLIO: Hurry up then!

ARLEQUIN: There is no time to lose *Seigneur* Lelio. Do you see the beautiful house at the entrance to the grand piazza to your right?

LÉLIO: I see it.

ARLEQUIN: That's the house where Flaminia -- the one you are yearning to meet -
- is staying.

LÉLIO: Please be on the watch and make sure that the Doctor doesn't come and
surprise me. *He knocks at the door.*

Scene 2

MARINETTE, LÉLIO

MARINETTE: Who is it?

LÉLIO: Please open up for me. (*Moving back two steps, Aside*). What? What am I
seeing before my eyes? What the devil? Here's a woman who, far from being
charming as I had hoped, is as ghastly as can be. Madame, aren't you Doctor
Metaphraste's disciple?

MARINETTE: Why, yes. What do you have to say to me?

LÉLIO: Nothing at all, Madame. I had very much to say to Flaminia, when I arrived
here, but now I have nothing else to do but vanish!

MARINETTE: *Seigneur*, I must confess that I find you charming to look at, and to
listen to -- that you must reduce all who see you to the spell of your charm. I cannot
contain myself . . .

LÉLIO: Madame, please let me leave.

MARINETTE: Magnificent knight, I suddenly feel wounded, like I've been struck
with a whip, and I must tell you that I cannot bear to lose so quickly something that
has become so precious to me.

LÉLIO: I beg of you, Madame, for God's sake, please let me leave.

MARINETTE: I see very well what surprises you and makes you want to flee. No doubt you have heard me depicted as more beautiful than you've found me to be, but *Seigneur*, please do come in, I'd like to show you the beautiful place which the learned Doctor Metaphraste finds so enchanting. *She draws the curtains.*

The set represents an astrologer's laboratory, with spheres, globes, mathematical instruments, figures of magic, and astrological maps.

MARINETTE *continues trying to seduce him, now through her astrological knowledge*: Look here! Observe what merits more admiration than all the fragile beauty that nature can possibly provide. This collection contains the destinies of several empires. I can read in the heavens all the memorable events that are happening in the world -- and I have far greater knowledge of the future than ordinary people. I alone have personally reassured Metaphraste against the worries he had concerning the illustrious L  lio.

L  LIO: Ah, you know L  lio then?

MARINETTE: Fine question, indeed! Is there anything in the world that I'd like to know that I do not know? The great Doctor Metaphraste has informed me of the hour of L  lio's birth and I have drawn up his astrological chart. Here it is. I've performed the directions and revolutions of the planets, and from this I can say with certainty that I know everything that is happening to L  lio, as if I were he.

L  LIO: What? You know even his most trivial actions?

MARINETTE: Yes. I know his most trivial actions, without exception.

L  LIO: I didn't believe that astrology could give such precise details. I know that it's possible to decipher the influence of the planets and the stars on one's

tendencies and temperament. I can even believe that a man's life is somewhat influenced by the movements of the planets, even directly affected by them; however, that you should know exactly what L lio is doing, even as we speak... I'm afraid, Madame, you will have a hard time convincing me of that . . .

MARINETTE: I see that you disdain my knowledge. People who judge things only by their overall appearance have only penetrated the surface of the science of the stars. I have pursued my research much further, and when I performed someone's astrological chart, I could often detect beneath their words, the reason for their visit.

L LIO: Madame, would you please give me proof of this rare knowledge you have concerning L lio? I knew him in Spain and respect him immensely, and I plan to go to his house after I leave here. I will confirm what you have said -- and you would not be making a small conversion if you were to give me faith in astrology.

MARINETTE: I would be more than happy to have any pretext to keep such an endearing knight for a few more moments; permit me, sir, to consult my books, to look at his chart, and to examine the alignment of the planets a bit more closely.

L LIO: Yes, that would be fine, Madame.

MARINETTE, *after having a glance through some charts*: Are you discreet?

L LIO: Yes, of course, and moreover, I am one of L lio's best friends.

MARINETTE, *approaching his ear*: He's in a passionate rendez-vous with one of the most beautiful women in Rome, someone he loves and who loves him ardently.

L LIO, *in a roar of laughter*: Ah, ah, ah . . .

MARINETTE: This result of my observation shouldn't provoke such an outburst. I'm surprised by this sudden outpouring of joy. I think you doubt what I'm saying.

LÉLIO: Excuse me, Madame, you couldn't have said it better! I have actual proof of the certainty of your science and I will caution Léo so that he will be wiser in future, since all of his actions from now on will be known so perfectly that he is advised not to do anything he doesn't wish to be known. Adieu, Madame!

Scene 3

THE DOCTOR, MEZETIN

THE DOCTOR: Colombine winds me up with her incessant jealous visions. What is the use of my philosophy and my books? How did I get myself into such a mess with a wife? Did I not know that she was just a dimwit in brains, a scorpion in malice, a dragon in rage, a hunter's net in her ruse and deceit? I ignored Aristotle's commentary, which says that there is nothing weaker than a woman and more hopeless at giving advice -- least capable of governing cities: *a muliere male tegitur civitas*, at procuring peace and harmony, *foeminae sunt litigiosae*, at showing great courage!

MEZETIN: *Monsieur le Docteur*, listen!

THE DOCTOR: Plutarch said that there is nothing more thoughtless than the utterances of a woman, more stinging than her insults, more stubborn than her audacity, more detestable than her trickery, more dangerous than her anger, and more hypocritical than her tears.

MEZETIN: What volubility!

THE DOCTOR: It is with good reason that an elder referred to them as crocodile tears, since this cruel animal cries on the head of a dead man, not out of compassion but to soften his skull in order to get at the brain more easily, and often when a

woman cries, it is a result of rage and frustration from being unable to carry out the revenge she desires, and of not triumphing in intrigues and plots. It is not without reason that the old proverb was coined:

Good lawyer, bad neighbor

Good earth, bad road

Good mule, bad beast

Good woman, bad mind

MEZETIN: What a rhetoric!

THE DOCTOR: If her hatred comes from displeasure in love, then it will be so violent and fiery that all the water in the ocean will be unable to extinguish it. That passion will irritate her so strongly that no one will know how to subdue her, not even the most accomplished of all men.

MEZETIN: For God's sake! A word please . . .

THE DOCTOR: Unless he possesses the seriousness of Cato

The fervour of Demosthenes,

The gentleness of Cicero,

The charm of Crassus,

The zeal of Pericles,

The grandiloquence of Isocrates,

The fidelity of Cleandre,

The persistence of Anacharsis,

The beauty of Narcissus,

The looks of Pallantia,

The gait of Gradasse,
The bravery of Roland,
The valour of Achilles,
The prudence of Ulysses
And the fortune of Aeneas . . .

MEZETIN: Stop . . .!

THE DOCTOR: Only when he will be as perfectly well versed in the affairs of the
State as:

Numa in Rome,
Charondas in Carthage
Lycurgus in Sparta,
Solon in Athens
Epaminondas in Thebes
Minos in Crete,
Damascius in Syria,
Oromasis in Persia,
Zoroaster in Babylon,
And Osiris in Egypt,

And finally, even if he is learned, valiant courageous and skilfull in all areas, he will
be unable to subdue this uncontrolled and indomitable natural.

MEZETIN: There, there, *Monsieur le Docteur*. Pull yourself together now. Here
comes Lélío.

Scene 4

LÉLIO, *dressed as an Armenian*: Happy chance! What a splendid encounter! I see well now, *Seigneur* Metaphraste, that you make your public lectures short because you have private ones to present in secret; but don't give me the evil eye seeing me disguised like this.

THE DOCTOR: I have no doubt that love has got something to do with this metamorphosis of yours.

LÉLIO: Please don't even think about giving me one of your lectures remonstrating against sensual delights. I'm warning you, Doctor Metaphraste, I know exactly what you want to say to me. I admit that I am wrong, my dear Doctor, and you have the right to complain about me, but I've suffered enough already for my curiosity about a few pleasures. If I had known that you had so little discernment, Doctor, your Flaminia wouldn't have cost me the trouble of a disguise. Adieu.

Scene 5

THE DOCTOR

THE DOCTOR: He is fleeing. He's not in the mood to listen to my lectures on morality and I am not in the right mind either. I am far more troubled by what I have just heard than by anything that has happened in all my life. I must immediately be off to Marinette's to get an explanation of this sordid affair!

Scene 6

THE DOCTOR, MARINETTE

THE DOCTOR, *knocks at the door*: Marinette, Marinette!

MARINETTE: What do you want, Doctor Metaphraste?

THE DOCTOR: You promised me not to let anyone see Flaminia, at the very least not any man in the world. We even agreed that you would receive any compliments that were addressed to her, so as to conceal her from any plots or traps set by the curious. Meanwhile, Marinette, you -- who I believed to be a prudent woman and to whom I confided someone whom I so singularly esteem -- you betrayed my trust and your promise in favor of L lio.

MARINETTE: Me! I let L lio see Flaminia? Who told you such lies?

THE DOCTOR: It is the truth. I heard it from L lio himself, who I found disguised just a few steps from here. He told me that he had just left Flaminia.

MARINETTE: If it was L lio who had asked to see Flaminia, disguised as a foreigner, then there's no need to worry. I was the one who received him, and he took me to be Flaminia. *Flaminia appears at the window.*

THE DOCTOR: Oh, I am utterly delighted. Let us retire to the garden and please recount the details of all that had transpired in your meeting with L lio. Flaminia may overhear us if we stay here.

Scene 7

FLAMINIA, *alone*: I have just overheard a conversation through the office's window, of which I did not miss a single word. I'm deeply unhappy being locked up here. From now on, I will devise a plan to get my revenge by somehow informing L lio of his error. If only I can find someone . . . Ah, here's Mezetin.

Scene 8

FLAMINIA, MEZETIN

FLAMINIA: Come here, my poor Mezetin. I know that you're a discreet man. I need to ask a favor of you. Will you please deliver a letter to Lélío from me without telling your master?

MEZETIN: To tell the truth, Madame, this task is a bit dicey, but there's nothing that Mezetin wouldn't do for a beautiful person like you.

FLAMINIA: It's not compliments I'm seeking, my poor Mezetin, but a bit of secrecy and enthusiasm.

MEZETIN: You can count on me. Go ahead and write it quickly then.

Scene 9

MEZETIN: I think I understand completely what's in the message. But I've got to look out for myself, haven't I? I expect to be well paid for delivering a letter from such a beautiful person to the gallant and magnificent Lélío, but I'll have to find the most favorable moment to collect my commission and I hope . . .

Scene 10

FLAMINIA: My dear Mezetin, there's my letter. Take these two gold coins and go diligently.

MEZETIN: Mademoiselle, if I dared . . .

FLAMINIA: Run and return as quickly as possible to relieve me of my worries.

Flaminia goes in.

Scene 11

LÉLIO, *alone*: I've just received a letter, which far from pleasing me, disappoints and irritates me. Flaminia, who like other misguided and ignorant astrologers, finds in the stars what she wants to find and not what they predict, is persuaded that my stars and hers are compatible and insists upon her observations -- that due to a dominant influence of the stars, I am bound to love her. And believing that she must advance this happy destiny with a few tender exhortations, she's given Mezetin the task of delivering me this letter, which I must read again for the sheer rarity of the thing. *He reads*:

Are you still doubtful of my science, and is it not true that Lelio was in love when I saw him disguised as a foreigner? Such metamorphoses belong to gallantry, and since I find half of my predictions so accurate I've dared to promise myself that the rest will soon be accomplished. *He tears the letter into pieces after having read it.*

LÉLIO, *continuing on after reading*: Refined people like me find such sacrifices undignified and such advances of women more like insults, so that they have the reverse effect. Whatever the case may be, I'm obliged to respond, but I will do so in a way that discourages her from writing a second letter. Mezetin must come and take it. Here he is.

Scene 12

MEZETIN, LÉLIO

LÉLIO: Mezetin, listen. I take so few precautions with Flaminia that I would like to read you my reply to her letter so that you will not consider taking on such an errand in the future. *He reads:*

You have such close communication with the heavens that men are unworthy of having any with you. I have a sensual nature, and my ways and my heart are simply not suited to yours. I am not right for you, learned Flaminia, and you degrade yourself and your rare merit in lowering your standards to be with the sensuous Léo.

Go, Mezetin, and don't bring back any more letters. I won't say a word to your master.

MEZETIN, *in leaving*: There's a perfect love letter, well received and magnificently paid.

Scene 13

LÉLIO, *alone*: That's how one must rid oneself of all such regrettable letters. Good heavens! When I think about it, what a horribly ugly shrew! Can love possibly enter the heart of someone like that? Now what's this valet want?

Scene 14

LÉLIO, FLAMINIA'S SERVANT

FLAMINIA'S SERVANT: I have come here, *Seigneur* Léo to bring you a love letter from Flaminia.

LÉLIO: To me?

FLAMINIA'S SERVANT: Yes, to you.

LÉLIO: No doubt it's a second letter very much like the first. But I have far too many other more delightful pursuits to attend to rather than be mucking about with such a tedious chore as this one. Tell Flaminia that I have refused to receive her letter, that I can guess its contents, and that my engagements with *Seigneur* Metaphraste don't permit me to have any contact with her -- and that she should be so kind as to put an end to this nonsense.

FLAMINIA'S SERVANT, *in leaving*: Oh, the unfortunate messenger, the unfortunate messenger.

Scene 15

LÉLIO: Such unkind words being reported to anyone other than Flaminia, would cause such embarrassment and shame, that everything would be resolved effortlessly by silence. But Flaminia is less likely to take offense, and her science promises a happy ending to her undertaking, so she will not be put off by even the slightest difficulty. I can imagine that she will so continue harassing me with her astrological buffoonery that I will never return home without finding a letter from Flaminia! They will be strewn all about my rooms and my bathroom like the daily newspapers.

I resolve to put an end to this torrent of madness. I am known for being gentle and civil, and I would like to save myself from any harsh feelings towards a sex that I adore -- such frequent messages from a vengeful woman could cause serious damage to my reputation and prevent other possible, delightful encounters that might arise. I'll write to Flaminia for the very last time, in a way that will not call

for a reply, so she can't pretend not to have received it. I will entrust Arlequin to deliver it in person, using a clever trick.

Scene 16

ARLEQUIN, LÉLIO

ARLEQUIN: Shall we go, *Seigneur Lélio*?

LÉLIO: Listen, Arlequin. Go and find some of the dried plants and sea animals in the study, deck yourself out as a merchant, and go to Flaminia's door to ask her if she'd like to accept them. Doctor Metaphraste has gone off to spend two hours alone to work on a public lecture he's giving tomorrow. Also, no one will recognize you in such a disguise. Take this note and give it directly to Flaminia.

ARLEQUIN: But *Seigneur Lélio*, what if Madame, the astrologer wants to do a chart of my birth? What?

LÉLIO: Go and don't fear anything.

ARLEQUIN: The truth is, I'm more fearful of the influence of the arms than the stars.

ACT THREE

Scene One

ARLEQUIN, *alone, dressed as a merchant*: Well, yes, how oddly dressed I am! I don't think that even the astrologer, with all the knowledge of her art, will recognize me. That's the rarity, the curiosity, the rarity, the curiosity!

Scene Two

FLAMINIA, ARLEQUIN

FLAMINIA, *by the window*: What are you selling, my good friend?

ARLEQUIN: Some very eccentric curiosities, my beautiful lady, eccentric curiosities.

FLAMINIA: Let's have a look at them!

ARLEQUIN: Come down, please, beautiful and curious lady. Here's some dried crocodile skin. Here are some cuckoos. But as there is no shortage of such things in this country, I will not show them all to you.

FLAMINIA: You haven't got anything else?

ARLEQUIN: Here are some petrified plants, some mandragoras, some zoophytes. But here's one of the rarest finds in my entire boutique. It's a note from *Seigneur Léo*.

FLAMINIA, *refusing it*: Tell *Seigneur Léo* that I can guess what the letter contains and that my engagements with Doctor Metaphraste don't permit me to have any with him. Adieu, please leave and don't come back again!

Scene 3

ARLEQUIN, *alone*: Well done! I didn't do too badly on that one! What will the *Seigneur Léo* have to say: that I'm an animal, a yokel, an oaf, a beggar, a numbskull, a beast, and a stumble bum -- to have so cleverly failed to succeed!

Scene 4

LÉLIO, ARLEQUIN

LÉLIO: Arlequin, how did it go?

ARLEQUIN: Your affair is not going well, *Seigneur Léo*. I presented your letter with all the cleverness and intelligence you could possibly hope for, but Flaminia, strongly

annoyed, refused to accept it. These were her precise terms: She said that I should tell you that her engagements with *Seigneur* Metaphraste don't permit her to have any with you, and she brusquely dismissed me.

LÉLIO, *roaring in laughter*: Ah, ah, ah . . .

ARLEQUIN: You're laughing? Is there anything at all funny in what I've just said?

LÉLIO: What? I've managed to displease Flaminia? Ah, Destiny is my loyal friend and I owe her a multitude of thanks.

ARLEQUIN: *Seigneur* Léo I believed that I was delivering you a death-blow, in telling you that a person of such perfect beauty refused to receive anything from you.

LÉLIO: Arlequin, you are sometimes very witty. I take pleasure in listening to your brilliant mockery.

ARLEQUIN: I assure you, *Seigneur* Léo, I am speaking to you far more seriously than usual and I've never seen a more beautiful person.

LÉLIO: Yes, in fact, Flaminia is a very beautiful person. The malfunctioning of her mind that manifests itself in that haggard look of hers, the wildness which marks her facial appearance, her terrible figure, the awkward conversation produced by the gauntness that those chimerical studies cause in her -- these are truly reasons to drive a man who is unloved by her to despair!

ARLEQUIN: What are you talking about *Seigneur* Léo, disproportionate figure and haggard face? I saw nothing of the kind in the young Flaminia. She's as beautiful as she is well shaped. Her manners are thoroughly engaging. I may not be

an expert in beauty, but she's the most accomplished-looking person in all of Rome. If you like I'll give you an exact description of her.

Firstly, I will tell you that I'm not mistaken, if I may say so, when I say that she's beautiful, has a lovely figure, and is charming because she's so very lively. Oh, what beautiful eyes she has! I've never seen a more beautiful body. She has a noble look, and the contour of her face is well sculpted. And those chubby and delicate cheeks!

LÉLIO: And her complexion?

ARLEQUIN: It's the most beautiful complexion in the world, white and alive. She's got beautiful hands as well. The whiteness of her beautiful breast and her bright red face can be mistaken for lilies and roses. Her presence obscures them.

LÉLIO: And her teeth?

ARLEQUIN: Her teeth are white like snow. One can say that she's the most striking brunette you've ever seen. She walks delightfully. Finally she has a spiritual face, and indeed she is divine.

LÉLIO: In listening to you, that's pretty well a concise guide for perfection. Tell me, Arlequin, who taught you how to recognize the traits of a beautiful person?

ARLEQUIN: You know, *Seigneur* Lélio, before I came to work for you, I spent two years living at the home of the most gifted painter in Italy; and without appearing to eavesdrop, I listened to the lessons that he gave his pupils.

LÉLIO: Let's hear what you've retained.

ARLEQUIN: He told them that thirty perfections were necessary to render the most perfect and accomplished beauty. He distinguished them three by three, following

the model of the beautiful Helen. Listen. Three white, three black, three red, three long, three short, three wide, three narrow, three large, three fine, three small. I will mark them in detail if you like. The three white are the skin, the teeth, the face . . .

LÉLIO: No, leave the description and let's come back to the original. I just can't match up the account you're giving me of Flaminia with the person I saw with my own eyes. I beg you to please clear up this mystery. Return to Flaminia's and make believe that you lost something. Try to clarify this, in a way that leaves no room for doubt. Run quickly and don't stop along the way.

Scene 5

ARLEQUIN, MARINETTE

ARLEQUIN, *knocking at the astrologer's door, sees Flaminia appear with Marinette:*

MARINETTE: What do you want?

ARLEQUIN: While showing my merchandise to Madame, I dropped a packet of dried seed. I've come to find it.

MARINETTE: Tell me another one, boy, and don't come back here again! It won't be good for you. Off to the devil's house you go! *She slams the door on him.*

Scene 6

ARLEQUIN, LÉLIO

ARLEQUIN: A plague on the shrew!

LÉLIO: Hey there! Can't you enlighten me, as you promised?

ARLEQUIN: Here's the news.

LÉLIO: Yes, what?

ARLEQUIN: I found in the old *Dovegna* the exact replica of the one you had mistaken for Flaminia.

LÉLIO: I'm sure of my mistake. It's Marinette the astrologer, and you found in her the description I had given you of Flaminia!

ARLEQUIN: That's the absolute truth.

LÉLIO: This causes me such deep sorrow that I cannot express it -- I have an admiration for beauty that borders on idolatry. I cannot imagine that there is even one person in the world who has reason to complain against me. Ah! I've just thought of an idea! Put on your usual clothes and return to Marinette, the astrologer's. I will pretend to be friends with her in order to have a chance to see Flaminia, and you tell Marinette that my indifference towards her was just a trick to appear disinterested, and that her perseverance has reassured me, so I am now ready to give myself wholly over to her. Let her know that I believe that it's the stars that ultimately preside over matters of love, and she can command my destiny as she pleases, as absolute mistress. Go, my dear Arlequin.

ARLEQUIN: You can count on me.

Scene 7

Mezetin, Pantalon, and Scaramouche enter to deliver a serenade, presented from the Doctor to Flaminia, and are interrupted by the watch. This nocturnal scene is accompanied by gestures and pantomime, and finishes in fright and horror on both sides.

Scene 8

MARINETTE, ARLEQUIN

MARINETTE: You couldn't have brought me better news, and I will repay you by offering you this diamond as a gift.

ARLEQUIN: Madame, that is the finest prediction you could possibly grant me.

How much is it worth?

MARINETTE: Two ounces of gold.

ARLEQUIN: Won't you buy it from me, please? I prefer hard cash.

MARINETTE: Gladly. That's precisely what I've got in my purse. As for the rest, you can assure your master that he is free to come whenever he wishes and he will be perfectly well received, and that the Doctor's absence favors my plans and his. In a word, the *Seigneur* Lelio may become so familiar with this house that there will eventually be no hours during which he will be forbidden entry.

ARLEQUIN, *in leaving*: Madame, I will run diligently and inform my master of your good intentions.

Scene 9

LÉLIO: A plague on the serenade! Arlequin hasn't returned and I'm furiously impatient to know the effects of the last message. I will no doubt encounter serious difficulties finding a way to speak to Flaminia. The rigorous guard of the astrologer and the anger that Flaminia may anticipate towards me will jeopardize all my pursuits. No matter, one must take one's chances. But here's Arlequin.

Scene 10

ARLEQUIN, LÉLIO

ARLEQUIN: I've been looking for you, *Seigneur*, to tell you that everything is going according to plan, that you can go to Marinette's immediately and she's given orders to one of her disciples to take you to her apartment.

LÉLIO: I'm delighted to hear such news -- given the love that now consumes me.

ARLEQUIN: Go inside while I stand guard.

LÉLIO: An obstacle is already standing in my way. I'm afraid it's going to be literally impossible to see Flaminia and speak to her. The jealous Marinette will employ all her magical powers to conceal her from my view. It's a hopeless affair! This surveillance will bring me to desperation. You've given me a description of Flaminia which has doubled my curiosity -- and it's certain that the most modest desires become more ardent when they encounter obstacles.

ARLEQUIN: *Seigneur* Lelio, everything will go well. Trust the god of love.

LÉLIO: If by some misfortune, I encounter obstacles, as I fear, I nonetheless, feel inclined to forget the friendship I owe to Doctor Metaphraste, by taking such a risk to see

Flaminia, but what if I am not excited by the sight of her?

ARLEQUIN: Be careful to stay on guard, otherwise all will be lost.

LÉLIO: I confess, moreover, that the fear of displeasing a beautiful woman whom I love without even knowing her, holds me back. I've thought of a trick that will be less dramatic but will perhaps work better. Let's go in. Wait for me, Arlequin.

ARLEQUIN: May the god of love guide you with grace and laughter!

Scene 11

ARLEQUIN: Ah, the cursed profession of a lover! A poor devil of a lover can't sleep, can't rest, can't eat, and can't drink, which makes it worse. He speaks to himself incessantly. He jumps and runs about aimlessly through the streets, he comes and goes, out of breath. He quarrels with himself, and leads a miserable life in continual torment. This tyrannical love causes him to find darkness instead of light, discord instead of peace, thorns for flowers, tears for laughter, poison instead of nourishment, continual complaints about all music, in brief, continual work and never any rest. Love drives a lover to do wild things -- paint on nudes, walk on the air, sigh frantically, and write on water. The day annoys the unfortunate lover, and the darkness, the shadows and the uncertainty of the night redoubles his pain, company is a nuisance, and solitude renews his suffering. If nobody tries to console him, he becomes desperate; if anyone tries to help cure him and lessen his worries, he complains they've aggravated the situation, made it worse . . . But enough of my lectures. Here's Léo with Marinette.

Scene 12

LÉLIO, MARINETTE

LÉLIO: Yes, Madame. I know very well that the Doctor Metaphraste is soon to return. I had promised him not to come to your house, but I must confess that I am as fearful of being caught by surprise as I am of depriving myself of such a splendid, tender meeting here with you.

MARINETTE: My lovely knight, to assist you in your concern for your friend, I'll agree to meet you secretly in the wood.

LÉLIO: Learned and gracious Marinette, I shall be waiting with impatience.

MARINETTE: I no less, lovable Léo.

Scene 13

MARINETTE, *enchanted by the pleasure of Léo's feigned passion, sings a tune:*

I deny myself nothing, Léo has delighted me.

Happy if I am loved by thee,

I'll render with my fate the whole universe jealous

Love, love, there's nothing sweeter,

I deny myself nothing, Léo has delighted me.

MARINETTE, *continues after singing:* Here's a light veil which will assist me in bringing good tidings. I commend myself to love and to the stars. I hereby place in the most favorable position in the stars the rendezvous that the lovable Léo has given me, and I will go surely.

Scene 14

LÉLIO, ARLEQUIN, SERVANTS

ARLEQUIN: Appear, *Seigneur*. You haven't got time to lose. Flaminia has been relieved of her relentless surveillance. Go, and profit from Marinette's absence.

LÉLIO: That's my plan. *While he's trying to enter, one of Marinette's servants enters.*

A SERVANT: *Seigneur*, I've got orders not to let anyone in.

LÉLIO: I must go in!

SECOND SERVANT: I've already told you that you can't come in. We're following orders, and we'll stop you from going to Flaminia's apartment.

LÉLIO: Cheeky scoundrels, don't you know I've got a fiery, uncontrollable soul and I'll threaten to kill the first one that gets in my way?

Scene 15

FLAMINIA, LÉLIO

FLAMINIA: What's that noise?

LÉLIO, *appears surprised*: What a sight, what am I seeing! Madame, is it from *you* that I had refused to receive the letters? And towards *you* that I behaved so disrespectfully, driven against the beautiful sex? And it was towards *you* that I had conceived such disgust? Ah, Madame, what can my heart do to repair the faults of its blindness? What can I possibly do to make it up to you? All the love that is in my heart, could it possibly erase my crime?

FLAMINIA: I see that you must be the *Seigneur* Léo. The respect that I've always had for your reputation cannot be overcome by the anger that your presence awakens. But *Seigneur*, why have you come here? All the beautiful women in Rome, are they not capable of satisfying your curious desires? And you, of renouncing the only person that the Doctor Metaphraste forbids you to see?

LÉLIO: Please don't speak about Doctor Metaphraste. If he's in love with you, he's no longer so dear to me as to merit so much caution on my part, and if he isn't in love with you, it's unjust to deprive me of seeing you.

FLAMINIA: He's not in love with me, or at least if he is, neither of us is aware of it. But *Seigneur*, he's passionately in love with virtue and all that is virtuous, a subject he has wholeheartedly dedicated himself to teaching me about. He fears that a temperament like yours will only bring ruin to all of his teachings. Please leave,

Seigneur Lelio. Leave my spirit to the wisdom that Metaphraste has devoted himself to. I can already sense in speaking to you something incompatible with the strictness that's been preached to me for so long. The sight of you is giving rise to an emotion that I can neither overcome nor define. Please leave, your presence and the precepts of Metaphraste, cannot co-exist.

LÉLIO: I can't hide from you, charming Flaminia, the fact that the sight of you has moved me to love and joy. Please, Madame, forget the precepts that nature condemns and which the heavens wouldn't approve of in a creature born as beautiful as you. It suits Metaphraste -- who's got only the beauty of his soul to offer -- to renounce sensual pleasure. He saves himself from sorrow by preventing any encounters that his few charms might bring his way. But you, beautiful Flaminia, you were made to be adored by all who see you, and you reverse the order of the heavens when you hide your worth in such a sad and hopeless seclusion.

FLAMINIA: What Doctor Metaphraste has told me seems far wiser than what you're telling me, yet, for some inescapable reason that I cannot comprehend, your words have pierced my heart in a way that I cannot explain or define. They have a secret intelligence with the movement of my soul which defies reason. I'm asking you once again, please leave, Lelio. Your presence is becoming disastrous for me, and if you haven't any respect for my philosophy, those three or four years of study will crumble under the attacks of your very first glance. But I hear someone. Please hide yourself over here. If you are seen, I'll lose everything.

Scene 16

The set shows the Academy

MARINETTE, *carrying a lantern*: How unfortunate I am to have lost the love note. I've looked everywhere and no sign of him . . . Alas, I hear someone. Oh no, it's Metaphraste. Stay clear from here! *She leaves.*

Scene 17

THE DOCTOR, MEZETIN

THE DOCTOR: Where did you find this note?

MEZETIN: Two steps from here.

THE DOCTOR, *after reading it*: I recognize the handwriting. It is Lélío's. I am of the opinion that we should interrupt this rendez-vous. I often do such disappointing things to Lélío -- I love him tenderly and I know that his predilection for love affairs only brings him trouble. Follow me, Mezetin.

Scene 18

Evening.

MARINETTE, *alone*: I've been waiting too long. I'm beginning to feel anger towards the stars. Lélío's far too late in coming. But I hear someone. The night is obscure. *She coughs twice.* The signal's had no effect. Lélío! Lélío! Are you waiting for me?

Scene 19

Marinette is stopped by Colombine, who, coming from behind a tree, places herself between Marinette and the Doctor.

THE DOCTOR: Who is it?

COLOMBINE: It's you Metaphraste! So this is how you're preparing yourself to defend wisdom against those who wish to attack it. You need a love intrigue to support your position for the party of virtue, and the time that you pretend to give to the study of philosophy you really employ in making yourself unworthy of the title of philosopher.

The Doctor pretends to hit Colombine, who flees.

Scene 20

One of the Doctor's disciples, having lost some papers at the Academy, comes to look for them with a torch in his hand, which illumines Marinette. She tries to run away, but the Doctor stops her.

THE DOCTOR: Who am I seeing? What? It is you, you shameful one, who had a rendez-vous with L elio.

MARINETTE: Me, Seigneur? Who told you that?

THE DOCTOR: Shameful indignant woman! I now see that you have not got the courage to own up to your mischief. What have you got to say, wretched Marinette? I have just begun to understand the mystery of this whole scheme. I know that L elio is far too refined to love someone like you. I remember what he said about you when I met him in his disguise, but now I have reason to fear everything when it comes to Flaminia. Ah, Marinette, weak Marinette, in one moment you destroyed years of precaution. Let us go get an explanation. I want to speak to Flaminia.

Scene 21

The set shows Flaminia's house

THE DOCTOR, FLAMINIA, LÉLIO, MARINETTE

THE DOCTOR, *surprised at seeing them together*. What am I seeing? I cannot believe my eyes! Is it just a thought, an illusion? Treacherous friend, there is villainy in your actions. You have revealed a secret that I wanted to keep hidden, and without any consideration for our friendship, which ought to have been dear to you. You refuse me the first indulgence that I ever asked of you.

LÉLIO: It is not our friendship that has caused such a reaction, Metaphraste. Your anger would be far more tempered if it had been something as minor as that. But the problem is that you love Flaminia. I always sensed that to be the case, and the confusion I see in your heart only confirms my suspicions.

THE DOCTOR: How shrewd you are, Lélio! I have told you persistently, as I have already protested, that I do not love Flaminia. I have confidence in my wisdom, which does not allow me to examine myself further on this point. Meanwhile, I do not know how this has happened, but the reproach that you are making impels me to re-examine myself. It is no longer in my power to repudiate what appears to have a strong resemblance to love. I do recognize my tendency toward a strong jealousy, and when I examine my dread that Flaminia would not love or be loved, I understand now that it is only love that could make me so apprehensive. Love, cruel love!

LÉLIO: Pull yourself together, *Seigneur* Metaphraste.

THE DOCTOR: Oh heavens! What have I done for you to see in my heart feelings that I was ignoring, and which are so violent that now I can no longer ignore them. Ah L lio, unjust, cruel L lio, I loved you more than you yourself. I often took risks that jeopardized my profession and the esteem of Rome to protect your interests. I combatted your weaknesses with all my power and I even ignored them when I was unable to conquer them. Ungrateful L lio, why have you come to discover mine? If I do not love Flaminia, then you have scarred my reputation in accusing me of loving her, and if I do indeed love her, as I am beginning to believe I do, then you have offended our friendship in revealing yourself as my rival. Remove yourself, L lio from this danger, out of respect for a philosopher who wishes to keep his pupil free from the influences of passion; or otherwise consider me a loyal friend who merits some sacrifices, remove yourself from this situation, and please do not see Flaminia again!

L LIO: Doctor, I have far too much esteem for your philosophy to cause you such harm. It is true that desire has triumphed over virtue in its audacity to attack. Fight on, my dear Metaphraste, and continue fighting with all your determination. But don't damage the glory of your life by letting others know that the sensual L lio had succeeded in obtaining what you didn't dare try for yourself.

THE DOCTOR: My dear L lio, I must open up my heart to you completely. I am at the moment incapable of thinking clearly, and I would gladly sacrifice my reputation as a philosopher to have the privilege of loving Flaminia without any disturbances.

LÉLIO: I remain firm in my proposal, Doctor. You must accept that I love Flaminia and, even more, that she loves me. Are you not happy, my charming Flaminia?

FLAMINIA: *Seigneur* Léo, I confess with pleasure that these precepts of wisdom so carefully given to me, and which, for a long time, I believed victorious over temptation, cede to your very first attack.

LÉLIO: Ah Madame, what I owe to all your kindness . . .!

THE DOCTOR: Cruel Destiny! I will die of pain, but I must surrender to this end. Cruel love! Human weakness!

MARINETTE: Deceptive stars, I call upon you who gave me hope that my wish would be fulfilled, but who've taken it away from me. I now have proof that the heavens offer no guaranty whatsoever -- that they are devilishly unreliable. Instead of consulting my books on the reasons for your deception, stars, I now cast them into the fire!

End

The play ends with music and a dance between Léo and Flaminia.

APPENDIX:

Le Docteur Amoureux

Please note that this text version was taken from H. Carrington Lancaster, *Five French Farces*, pages 112-138.

ACTEURS.

LE DOCTEUR, amoureux de Flaminia.

MEZETIN, valet du Docteur.

COLOMBINE, femme jalouse du Docteur.

LÉLIO, amant de Flaminia.

ARLEQUIN, valet de Lelio.

FLAMINIA, fille sçauante, amante de Lelio.

MARINETTE, vieille astrologue, amoureuse de Lelio.

La scene est dans vne place de Rome.

ACTE PREMIER

Scene Premiere

LE DOCTEUR, MEZETIN

MEZETIN: Vous deuriez mourir de honte, Monsieur le Docteur, de donner ainsy l'estrapade à la foy conjugale et vous meriteriez bien que Colombine donna pareillement le croc en jambe à la fidelité matrimoniale. Bati comme vous estes, est-il possible que vous songiez à aimer?

LE DOCTEUR: Vn idiot comme toy, Mezetin, ne sçait point qu'il n'est pas toujours necessaire d'estre aimable pour concevoir le dessein de se faire aimer. Les portraits qu'on nous a laissez du Docteur Abelar n'ont rien qui conuienne aux qualitez d'un amant. Il estoit fort mal fait. Il faisoit profession d'une philosophie seure et cependant il estoit amoureux de sa chere Aloïse. Mais comme l'amour sçait changer de forme selon les besoins qu'il a de se deguïser, ce n'est point sous sa figure ordinaire qu'il se produit dans mon âme, c'est sous celle de la vertu. Apprens mon secret, Mezetin, et n'en abuse pas.

MEZETIN: Ho, que je n'ay garde, Monsieur!

LE DOCTEUR: Ecoute. Flaminia est fille d'un de mes plus anciens amis. Quelques raisons domestiques l'ayant obligé de s'establi à Rome, il y est mort et comptant sur mon amitié comme sur luy-mesme, il m'a confié la conduite de sa fille unique.

MEZETIN: En un mot, vous vous en estes chargé avec autant de soin que generosité.

LE DOCTEUR: Cette fille est belle, je l'auoüeray, mais ce n'est point sur un bien si fragile que je fonde mon estime.

MEZETIN: Sur sa vertu, sur sa vertu sans doute.

LE DOCTEUR: Ouy, Mezetin, je remarque en elle des lumieres d'esprit dont j'espere tirer de grands fruits pour la sagesse. J'entreprends d'en faire une femme forte, et jugeant prudemment que le commerce avec le monde pouuoit apporter un obstacle à ce dessein, j'ay deposé Flaminia entre les mains de l'astrologue Marinette, qui sur le pretexte de ses obseruations celestes vit dans une extreme solitude. Charmé des dispositions que je trouue dans l'âme de Flaminia, je passe des journées entieres à former ses moeurs à la vertu; mais, Mezetin, je veux aujourd'huy que tu sois tesmoin de la leçon que je vay luy donner. Suis-moy.

Scene 2

Le theatre represente la maison de Flaminia.

LE DOCTEUR, MEZETIN, FLAMINIA.

LE DOCTEUR: *frapant à la porte*: Hola, ho, ouurez-moy, Flaminia!

FLAMINIA: Qui est-ce?

LE DOCTEUR: C'est moy. Ne conoissez-vous pas ma voix?

FLAMINIA: Ah c'est vous, Monsieur le Docteur.

LE DOCTEUR: Dans quelle occupation puis-je vous surprendre, belle et sage Flaminia?

FLAMINIA, *un liure à la main*: Je remarque ici qu'il y a trois opinions qu'on pretend estre differentes sur les principes des corps naturelz. La premiere est d'Aristote et des autres peripateticiens qui disent que ce sont les quatre elemens. La deuxiesme est d'Epicure et de Democrite, qui tiennent que ce sont les atomes. La derniere est de Paracelse et des chimistes, qui publient que ce sont le sel, le souffre, et le mercure.

MEZETIN: Voila bien de la diablerie là-dedans.

LE DOCTEUR: Sage Flaminia, la premiere de ces opinions est veritable. L'autre est la mesme, si on l'explique comme il faut. La derniere est vne imagination qui a quelque rapport avec l'opinion des elemens d'Aristote dans le sens qu'on luy donne aujourd'huy . . . mais en voila assez pour cette fois, je suis fort content de vous, vertueuse Flaminia. Passons à la morale, que vous comprendrez encor mieux que la physique, car malgré vostre grande jeunesse je remarque beaucoup de solidité dans vostre esprit, et quelque chose d'heroique dans les sentimens de vostre coeur.

FLAMINIA: S'il est vray que l'on trouue en moy quelques bonnes qualitez, je les dois toutes, monsieur le Docteur, aux soins que vous voulez bien prendre de me cultiuer l'esprit.

LE DOCTEUR: Je m'apperçois, sage Flaminia, que vous profitez de toutes les manieres, et les sentimens de reconnoissance que vous me faites paroistre en sont vne marque.

MEZETIN, *à part*: Ah la belle ecoliere, qu'elle est charmante!

LE DOCTEUR: Mais pourquoy pensez-vous que le ciel vous ait fait naistre si accomplie? Ce n'est ny par vn amour singulier pour vostre personne ny par aucune haine pour les femmes qui naissent moins parfaits, c'est pour manifester en vous la puissance des qualitez de l'âme sur celles du corps. Si vous n'auiez q[u]'vne beauté mediocre, vous seriez sollicitée au vice si foiblement que vostre victoire seroit d'aucun exemple. Mais lorsque dans la plus belle fille d'Italie on remarque vne âme inbranlable aux attaques des passions, vn louïable mepris pour les qualitez perissables et vn amour solide pour celles qui ne doiuent jamais perir, vous deuiendrez vn axiome viuant que nos libertins n'auront pas l'audace d'attaquer. Adieu, vertueuse Flaminia, perseuez toujours dans l'estroit sentier de vos vertus.
Pauci quos ardens euexit ad aetera virtus.

Scene 3.

LE DOCTEUR, MEZETIN.

MEZETIN: Monsieur le Docteur, les beaux preceptes que vous venez de donner à Flaminia contre les foiblesses de l'amour, ne deuroient allarmer que les amoureux et toutesfois ils allarment l'amour conjugal. Colombine, vostre epouze, qui pour estre fille du seigneur Geronimo surnommé le Juste n'en est pas plus equitable, vous trouue inquiet quand vous ne voyez pas Flaminia, elle a decouvert que vous passez chez cette belle fille tout le temps que vous ne passez pas chez vous. Je ne suis pas si idiot que je ne remarque bien qu'elle a conçu vne jalousie furieuse de cet attachement . . . Tenez, tenez, Monsieur le Docteur. La voici justement qui vous dira le reste.

Scene 4.

COLOMBINE, LE DOCTEUR, MEZETIN.

COLOMBINE: Hé bien, venez-vous de faire leçon à vostre charmante ecoliere, profite-[t-] elle, en ferez-vous vne illustre? Par ma foy j'ay bien peur que cette ecoliere ne renuerse toute la ceruelle et toute la philosophie du Docteur et je pense...

LE DOCTEUR: Ma femme, voulez-vous que je vous parle naturellement?

COLOMBINE: Vous me ferez plaisir.

LE DOCTEUR: Je vous diray avec tout le menagement et l'adoucissement possible que vous paraissez auoir esté choisie du ciel pour tenir ma vertu en haleine. Il ne fut jamais vne epouze plus indocile que vous, et parce que vostre honneur s'est peut-estre maintenu sans tache à l'abry de vostre peu de merite, vous estes vn tyran sans misericorde qui exigez des tributs de patience des gens qui vous en doiuent le moins, et vous qualifiez la vertueuse Flaminia de tous les titres faux que vostre jalousie vous dicte.

COLOMBINE: Ils ne sont que trop bien fondez.

LE DOCTEUR: Mais, ma femme, est-ce par vostre experience que vous jugez si mal de la vertu de votre sexe? Il me semble que l'on ne devrait soupçonner les autres que des foiblesses dont on est capable.

COLOMBINE: Que dites-vous?

LE DOCTEUR: Pensez-vous que le ciel vous ait fauorise d'un priuilege special, et quand vous voulez qu'on le croye prodigue de chasteté envers vous, est-il à presumer qu'il en soit auare envers toutes les autres femmes?

COLOMBINE: Je ne sçay point repondre à tous ces subtilz raisonnemens, je ne lis que dans le liure de mes prieres, et je serais bien fâché de lire dans vn autre. Mais les entreueües si frequentes entre sexes differens ne sont ny licites ny honnestes. Il s'y mesle toujours quelques desseins criminelz, et comme disoit fort bien vn de vos disciples il y a quelques jours, les hommes et les femmes ne sont au monde que pour le perpetuer.

MEZETIN: Elle a raison.

LE DOCTEUR: Vous retenez là, ma femme, de beaux endroits des leçons de mes disciples. Je n'ay pas dessein que Flaminia deuienne si sçauante, et la philosophie que je luy enseigne a des preceptes bien opposez à ceux dont vous daignez vous souuenir.

COLOMBINE: Voila toujours comme il faut dire. L'amour ne manque point de pretextes. Si vous estiez peintre, vous diriez que vous enseigneriez vostre art à cette Flaminia. Vous estes philosophe, vous feignez de luy apprendre à philosopher, mais, monsieur le Docteur, quand on ne veut donner que des leçons de vertu, on ne choisit point des ecolieres si jeunes et si belles.

LE DOCTEUR: Vous estes folle, ma femme.

COLOMBINE: Je ne suis point vne folle.

LE DOCTEUR: Vous estes vne visionnaire, vous dis-je.

COLOMBINE: Je ne suis point vne visionnaire. J'en prends à tesmoin le seigneur Lélío.

LE DOCTEUR: Taisez-vous, ma femme.

COLOMBINE: Je suis en humeur de parler. Vous aurez beau me faire des signes, je ne m'arresteray point.

Scene 5

LÉLIO, LE DOCTEUR, COLOMBINE, MEZETIN.

LÉLIO: Hé, bon jour, monsieur le Docteur.

LE DOCTEUR à *Colombine*: Sortez, vous dis-je!

COLOMBINE: Je ne sortiray point. Je voy vostre inquietude. Vous ne voulez pas que vostre amy connoisse Flaminia.

MEZETIN: Il a raison. Les gens aussi charmans que le seigneur Lélio sont de grands moissonneurs de semences philosophiques.

LÉLIO: Puis-je estre juge de vos differents?

COLOMBINE: Seigneur Lélio, mon mary me traite de folle, de visionnaire et de jalouse parce que je ne veux pas souffrir qu'il passe les jours et les nuits avec Flaminia, escoliere trop aimable et trop charmante pour vn philosophe.

LÉLIO: Si cela est ainsy, monsieur le Docteur, vous auez tort assurément.

COLOMBINE: C'est la verité.

LE DOCTEUR: Vous l'écoutez, seigneur Lélio. C'est vne imposture la plus grande du monde. Ne puis-je auoir vne jeune escoliere sans estre infidelle? Donnera-t-on le nom de vice à la plus innocente de toutes les passions, rendra-t-on criminelle vne fille sçauante sur des soupçons si injurieux, et la chasteté ne se trouuera-t-elle point avec la jeunesse et la beauté d'une fille? Parce que ma femme est d'un naturel ombrageux et jaloux, veut-on prendre ses plaintes pour des oracles, ses songes pour des veritez, ses chimeres pour des corps, faut-il consacrer toutes ses deffiances, justifier toutes ses fantaisies, et approuver toutes ses extrauagances? Enfin, seigneur Lélio, voudriez-vous deffendre vne jalollze coupable contre vne innocente malheureuse?

LÉLIO: Hé, monsieur le Docteur . . . !

LE DOCTEUR à *Colombine*: Retirez-vous et craignez ma fureur.

COLOMBINE, à *part*: Je suis femme, il faut ceder, mais jusqu'à recommencer.

Scene 6

LÉLIO, LE DOCTEUR

LÉLIO: Vous nous imposez donc de cette sorte, Monsieur le Docteur; vous nous prechez incessamment le mépris des passions, mon âge et mes engagements ne meritent aucune indulgence de vous, et comme si vous dependiez tout vostre fond philosophique en conseil pour vos amis, vous en demeurez depourueu pour vous-mesme.

LE DOCTEUR: Je vous ay deja dit plusieurs fois, seigneur Lélio, que vos inclinations, peu conformes à la seuerite dont je fais profession, n'empeschent pas que nous ne soyons liez d'une amitié tres parfaite. Mais croyez-vous aux discours d'une femme en colere? Ce sont visions de sa jalousie qui n'ont ny vraysemblance ny fondement.

MEZETIN, à *part*: cela est vn peu douteux, je n'en voudrois pas jurer.

LÉLIO: Quoy, il n'est pas vray que vous ayez de l'attachement pour cette aimable Flaminia, dont vostre femme paroist si fort allarmée. . . ?

LE DOCTEUR: J'auoue que je me suis fait vn plaisir de cultiuer vn beau naturel que le hazard offre à mes soins et que des considerations d'amitié m'obligent à ne pas laisser sterile.

LÉLIO: Et ce beau naturel est placé dans vne belle et jeune personne.

LE DOCTEUR: Que fait cette circonstance à nostre propos? La beauté d'une femme et l'âme d'un philosophe peuuent-elles auoir quelque chose à demesler ensemble?

LÉLIO: Je reuiens d'un pays qui m'a donné de l'experience en amour. Je disois comme vous quand on me menaçoit des attraits de Rozalie, quoy, disois-je, Lélio, que les premieres Dames de Rome regardent fauorablement, et que des personnes encor plus distinguées n'ont pas dedaigné, aimeroit une courtisane? Je la veray et s'il prend enuie à mon coeur de se delasser des grandes passions, je l'aimeray peut-estre pendant quelques heures, mais cette legere distraction ne doit point se nommer de l'amour, et Rozalie n'est pas d'un caractere à m'en donner. Cependant vous sçauiez où cet amour m'a porté, les censures où je me suis exposé pour le soutenir, et les perilz où il a jetté mon ambition.

LE DOCTEUR: Vostre âme et la mienne sont bien differentes, vos richesses sollicitent incessamment vostre volupté, vous estes amoly par les delices inseparables de vostre rang, et vous trouuant toujours en estat de tout entreprendre, vous croyez pouuoir tout ozer et tout desirer. Quant à moy, la mediocrité de ma fortune assure ma tranquillité. Je ne regarde la beauté que comme vn effet de la nature qui m'eleue

à la connoissance de sa cause, et trouuant des matieres d'exercer ma vertu dans ce qui corrompt la vostre, c'est de ce naufrage que j'apprends à me tenir dans le port.

LÉLIO: Cher Docteur, n'ayez point tant de confiance à vostre philosophie, on en a veu echoïer de plus fortes que la vostre contre la beauté.

LE DOCTEUR: Vous auez beau dire et beau faire, vous n'esbranlerez point l'opinion que j'ay de ma fermeté, mes raisons sont fondees sur de longues experiences. Je conuiens, si vous voulez, que Flaminia est digne d'estre aimée. Mais je ne puis conuenir que je sois capable d'aimer autre chose que la vertu que je reconnois en elle. A Dieu, seigneur Lélio, permettez que j'aïlle donner vne leçon publique à mes dissiples. Sui-moy, Mezetin.

Scene 7

LÉLIO, *seul*: Ce tesmoignage que le Docteur rend du merite de Flaminia pique ma curiosité. Je veux sçauoir s'il fait des distinctions aussi justes en beauté qu'en philosophie. J'ay remarqué dans l'entretien que nous auons eu ensemble que le Docteur est auare de son tresor. Je croy que pour en auoir la veüe il faut la dérober. Je vay faire obseruer nostre philosophe pour decouurir la maison de Flaminia. Si tost que je sçauray qu'il sera sorti de chez elle, je m'y introduiray sous vn habit trauesti et auec vn langage estranger. Je tromperay si je puis les Argus et les surueillantes les plus assidues, disant que je viens luy apporter des nouuelles de sa patrie. Je parle plusieurs langues, et entre les qualités que je possede, celle de prendre toutes sortes de caracteres occupe le premier rang. Peut-estre que le Docteur aura donne des ordres à l'epeuue de toutes les conjonctures galantes et de tous les artifices amoureux. N'importe, tentons fortune. Je vays donner à Arlequin tous les ordres necessaires pour faire reussir cette nouvelle intrigue.

ACTE SECOND

Scene Premiere

ARLEQUIN, LÉLIO *sous vn habit d'Armenien*.

ARLEQUIN: Le Docteur Metaphraste est presentement à l'Academie. J'ay bien fait du chemin pour le suiure à la trace et pour decouurir la maison de Flaminia. Je me suis mis tout hors d'haleine, permettez que je respire. *Il fait vn grand soupir*.

LÉLIO: Depesche donc.

ARLEQUIN: Il n'y a point de temps à perdre, seigneur Lélio. Voyez-vous cette belle maison qui est à l'entrée de la grande place à main droite?

LÉLIO: Je la voy.

ARLEQUIN: C'est la maison où loge Flaminia, que vous ne connoissez pas encor et que vous bruslez de connoistre. Entrez.

LÉLIO: Fais sentinelle et prends garde que le Docteur ne vienne me surprendre. *Il frappe à la porte.* Hola!

Scene Deuxiesme

MARINETTE *astrologue*, LÉLIO

MARINETTE: Qui est-ce?

LÉLIO: Ouurez-moy de grace. *Reculant deux pas, à part.* Que vois-je? Voicy vne femme dont la figure est aussi desagreable que j'auois esperé de la trouuer charmante. Madame, n'estes-vous pas la disciple du Docteur Metaphraste.

MARINETTE: Ouy. Qu'avez-vous à me dire et que demandez-vous de moy?

LÉLIO: Rien, Madame. J'auois beaucoup de choses à dire à Flaminia lorsque je suis venu dans cette maison, mais je n'ay plus rien à faire qu'à me retirer.

MARINETTE: Seigneur, je vous auoüeray que je vous trouue vn charme dans l'air et dans la maniere de parler qui vous soumet aisement les coeurs de tous les gens qui vous voyent. Je ne puis m'empescher . . .

LÉLIO: Madame, permettez que je me retire.

MARINETTE: Aimable caualier, je me sens subitement blessée comme d'vn coup de trait, et il faut que je vous dise que je ne puis me resoudre à perdre si tost la presence d'vn objet qui commence à me deuenir cher.

LÉLIO: De grace, permettez . . .

MARINETTE: Je voy bien ce qui vous estonne et vous fait fuir; vous m'avez sans doute entendu depeindre plus belle que vous ne me trouuez, mais, seigneur, entrez, je veux vous faire voir par qu'elle espece de beauté le sçauant Metaphraste peut estre touché.

Le theatre represente vn cabinet orne de spheres, de globes, d'instrumens de mathematiques, de figures magiques et de portefeuilles astrologiques.

MARINETTE, *continüe*: Regardez, seigneur, voila ce qui merite plus d'admiration que toutes les beautez fragiles que la nature peut donner. Ce portefeuille contient le

destin de plusieurs empires. Je lis dans les astres tout ce qui arriue de memorable sur la terre, et plus sçauante dans l'auenir que les personnes ordinaires ne le sont dans le present, j'ay seule rassuré Metaphraste contre les craintes qu'il auoit pour l'illustre Lélío.

LÉLIO: Vous connoissez donc Lélío?

MARINETTE: Belle demande! Y a-t-il quelque chose dans le monde que je veuille connoistre que je connoisse pas? J'ay appris du Docteur Theophraste l'heure où Lélío est né, j'ay fait la figure de sa natiuité. La voila. J'en ay fait les directions et les reuolutions, et j'ose me vanter que je sçay tout ce qui luy arriue comme luy-mesme.

LÉLIO: Quoy, vous sçavez jusqu'à ses actions indifferentes?

MARINETTE: Je sçay toutes ses actions indifferentes, qui dit tout n'excepte rien.

LÉLIO: Je ne croyois pas que l'astrologie entra ainsy dans le detail des plus petites choses. Je sçauois bien que l'on peut tirer de l'influence des astres des jugemens sur les inclinations et sur le temperament; je veux mesme croire que la vie de l'homme est sujette à des reuolutions assez surprenantes pour estre marquées dans le ciel, mais que vous sçachiez ce que fait Lélío au moment que je parle, c'est ce que vous aurez de la peine à me persuader.

MARINETTE: Je voy bien que vous ignorez ce que je sçay faire. Les gens qui ne jugent des choses qu'en gros, n'ont penetré que la superficie de la science des astres. J'ay poussé mes recherches plus loin, et quand j'ay fait la figure astrologique de quelqu'un, je rendrois compte à vn besoin du nombre de ses parolles.

LÉLIO: Hé de grâce, Madame, daignez me donner vne preuue de ce rare sçauoir en la personne de Lélío. Je l'ay connu en Espagne, je l'estime et j'ay fait dessein d'aller chez luy en sortant de cette maison. Je rectifieray ce que vous m'aurez dit, et vous ne ferez pas vne petite conuersion, si vous me donnez de la foy pour l'astrologie.

MARINETTE: Je suis bien aise d'auoir ce pretexte de retenir encor quelques momens vn caualier si aimable; permettez-moy de voir quelque chose dans mes liures, de confronter sa figure, et d'examiner vn peu les lignes et les planettes.

LÉLIO: Je le veux bien, Madame.

MARINETTE, *apres auoir vn peu feüilleté*: Estes-vous discret?

LÉLIO: Ouy, sans doute, et de plus vn des meilleurs amis qu'ait jamais eu Lélío.

MARINETTE, *s'approchant de son oreille*: Il est en rendezvous amoureux avec vne des plus belles personnes de Rome, qu'il aime et dont il est ardamement aimé.

LÉLIO, *faisant un éclat de rire*: Ah, ah, ah . . .

MARINETTE: Ce resultat de l'obseruation ne doit point vous causer cet eclat, et je suis surprise de cet epanchement de joye. Je pense que vous doutez de ce que je vous dis.

LÉLIO: Pardonnez-moy, Madame, vous ne pouuiez rencontrer plus juste. J'ay des preuues veritables de la certitude de vostre science, et je vais auertir Lelio qu'il soit plus sage à l'auenir, car puisqu'on sçait si parfaitement tout ce qu'il fait, il ne doit rien faire qu'il ne veuille qui soit sçeu. Adieu, Madame.

Scene 3

LE DOCTEUR, MEZETIN

LE DOCTEUR: Colombine me fait enrager par ses visions continuelles de jalousie. De quoy m'ont seruy ma doctrine et mes liures? Pourquoi me suis-je embarassé d'une femme? Ne sçauois-je pas que c'est vn vent pour ses legeretez, vn scorpion pour ses malices, vn dragon pour ses fureurs, vn filet de chasseur pour ses feintes et ses tromperies. Ignorois-je qu'il n'y a rien de plus foible q[u']vne femme et de moins propre à donner conseil, dit Aristote, et de plus incapable de gouverner les villes, dit le mesme, *a muliere male tegitur ciuitas*, de procurer la paix et la concorde, *foeminae sunt litigiosae*, de faire paroistre vn grand courage, *toeminae sunt debilioris naturae maribus*?

MEZETIN: Monsieur le Docteur, escoutez.

LE DOCTEUR: Plutarque dit qu'il n'y a rien de plus leger que la langue d'une femme, plus piquant que ses outrages, plus temeraire que son audace, plus detestable que ses artifices, plus dangereux que sa colere et plus dissimulé que ses larmes.

MEZETIN: Quelle volubilité!

LE DOCTEUR: C'est avec raison q[u']vn ancien appelloit leurs larmes des pleurs de crocodile, car comme ce cruel animal pleure sur la teste d'un homme mort, non par compassion, mais pour en attendrir le test, afin d'en attirer plus facilement la ceruelle, ainsy souuent lorsque la femme pleure ce n'est pas de sa faute, mais de rage et de depit de ne pouoir exercer sa vengeance comme elle desire, ou de ne pas venir à bout de ses intrigues amoureuses. Aussi ce n'est pas sans raison qu'on a fait cet ancien proverbe:

Bon auocat, mauuais voisin,
Bonne terre, mauuais chemin,
Bonne mule, mauuaise beste,
Bonne femme, mauuaise teste.

MEZETIN: Quel(le) flux de bouche!

LE DOCTEUR: Si sa haine est originaire d'un deplaisir d'amour, elle sera si violente et si ardente que toute l'eau de la mer ne la sauroit esteindre. Cette passion l'irrite si fort que personne ne sauroit l'adoucir, non pas mesme le plus accompli de tous les hommes . . .

MEZETIN: De grace, vne parolle . . .

LE DOCTEUR: Quand il auroit la grauité de Caton,
La ferueur de Demosthene,
La douceur de Ciceron,
L'agrement de Crassus,
L'ardeur de Pericles,
Les periodes emphatiques d'Isocrate,
La fideité de Cleandre,
La constance d'Anacharsis,
La beauté de Narcisse,
La bonne mine de Palante,
La demarche de Gradasse,
Le braue maintien de Roland,
La valeur d'Achile,
La prudence d'Vlisse,
et la fortune d'Enée.

MEZETIN: Arrestez . . .

LE DOCTEUR: Quand il seroit versé aux affaires d'estat aussi parfaitement que
Numa à Rome,
Charondas à Cartage,
Licurgue à Sparte,
Solon à Athenes,
Epaminondas à Thebes,
Minos en Crete,
Damanthe en Syrie,
Oromasus en Perse,
Zoroastre en Babilone,
et Oziris en Egypte,
Enfin fût-il docte, vaillant, courageux et adroit en toutes choses, il ne pouroit dompter ce nature(le) indompté et indomptable.

MEZETIN: En voila bien, Monsieur le Docteur. Reprenez vn peu vos sens.
Voila Lélío.

Scene 4

LÉLIO, LE DOCTEUR, MEZETIN

LÉLIO, *en habit d'Armenien*: Heureuse rencontre! Je voy bien, seigneur Metaphraste, que vous faites vos leçons publiques bien courtes depuis que vous en auez de secrettes à donner; mais ne me regardez point d'vn oeil seure en me voyant deguisé de cette sorte.

LE DOCTEUR: Je ne doute point que l'amour n'ait quelque part à cette metamorphose.

LÉLIO: Ne vous preparez point à me faire vne de ces remontrances dont vous combattez sans cesse la volupté. Je vous preuiens, seigneur Metaphraste, je deuine tout ce que vous voulez me dire. Je confesse que j'ay tort, mon cher Docteur, et que vous auez sujet de vous plaindre de moy, mais je suis assez puni de ma curiosité par le peu de plaisir qui m'en reste. Je n'en auray jamais de si vaine, et si j'auois pu vous soupçonner d'vn discernement si peu delicat, vostre Flaminia ne m'auroit pas coute la peine d'vn deguisement. A Dieu.

Scene 5

LE DOCTEUR: Il fuit. Il n'est point d'humeur d'ecouter mes moralitez, et je ne suis pas en estat de luy en faire. Je suis plus troublé de ce que je viens d'entendre que je ne l'ay esté de tous les accidens de ma vie. Il faut au plus viste que je parle à Marinette pour m'esclaircir de tout cecy.

Scene 6

LE DOCTEUR, MARINETTE

LE DOCTEUR *frappe à la porte*: Marinette! Marinette!

MARINETTE: Que voulez-vous, seigneur Metaphraste?

LE DOCTEUR: Vous m'auiez promis de ne laisser voir Flaminia à personne ou du moins à aucun homme du monde. Nous estions mesme conuenus que vous receuriez les compliments qui luy seroient adressez, afin d'en tirer nos mesures pour la dérober aux pieges des curieux. Cependant, Marinette, vous que je croyois vne femme prudente et à qui je confie vne personne que j'estime si singulierement, vous trahissez cette confiance et vostre promesse en faueur de Lélío.

MARINETTE: Moy! J'ay laissé voir vostre Flaminia à Lélío. De qui tenez-vous ce mensonge?

LE DOCTEUR: Ce n'est que trop vne verité. Je la tiens de Lélío mesme, que j'ay trouué deguisé à quatre pas d'ici et qui m'a dit qu'il venoit de quitter Flaminia.

MARINETTE: Si c'est Lélío qui est venu demander Flaminia sous l'habit d'un étranger, calmez vostre inquietude. C'est moy qui ay receu sa visite et c'est moy qu'il prend pour Flaminia. *Flaminia paroist à la fenestre.*

LE DOCTEUR: J'en suis ravi. Mais entrons dans le jardin et venez m'y faire le detail de tout ce qui s'est passé dans vostre entreueüe avec Lélío. Nous pourions ici estre entendus de Flaminia.

Scene 7

FLAMINIA *seule*: Je viens d'entendre par la fenestre du cabinet vne conuersation dont je n'ay pas perdu vne seule parolle. Je suis fort mecontente de la captiuité où l'on me retient. Dés ce moment je forme le dessein de m'en venger en tirant Lélío de son erreur. Si je pouuais trouuer quelqu'un . . . Mais voicy Mezetin.

Scene 8

FLAMINIA, MEZETIN

FLAMINIA: Vien ça, mon pauvre Mezetin. Je te connois pour un garçon discret. Il faut que tu me rende un seruice. Je te prie de rendre vne lettre de ma part à Lélío à l'insçu de ton maistre.

MEZETIN: A vous dire le vray, Madame, la commission est un peu delicate, mais il n'est rien que Mezetin ne fasse pour vne belle personne comme vous.

FLAMINIA: Ce ne sont point des compliments que je te demande, mon pauvre Mezetin, mais seulement un peu de zele et de secret.

MEZETIN: Allez vite ment escrire et reposez-vous sur moy du reste.

Scene 9

LÉLIO, *seul*: Peste soit de la serenade. Arlequin ne reuiet point et je suis dans vne furieuse impatience de sçauoir l'effet de sa derniere ambassade. J'auray sans doute bien de la peine à trouuer le moment de parler à Flaminia. Les soins de l'astrologue et la colere dont Flaminia est preuenüe contre moy la derobent peut-estre à toutes mes poursuites. N'importe. Il faut tout tenter. Mais voicy Arlequin.

Scene 10

FLAMINIA, MEZETIN

FLAMINIA: Tien, mon cher Mezetin, voila ma lettre. Prends ces deux pistolles et pars en diligence.

MEZETIN: Mademoiselle, si j'osois . . .

FLAMINIA: Tréue aux remercimens, Cours et reuiens au plutost me livrer d'inquietude. *Flaminia rentre.*

Scene 11

LÉLIO, *seul*: Je vien de receuoir vne lettre qui, loin de me faire plaisir, me chagrine et m'irrite. Flaminia qui, suiuant l'erreur des astrologues ignorans, trouue dans les astres ce qu'elle veut y trouuer plustost que ce qu'ils anoncent, s'est persuadée que mon estoille et la sienne se regardoient d'un regard sympathique et jure sur la foy de ses obseruations que je suis necessité et contraind à l'aimer par vne influence dominante, et croyant deuoir auancer cette heureuse destinee par quelques tendres exortations, elle a chargé Mezetin de me rendre cette lettre que je veux relire encor par la rareté du fait. *Il lit:*

Douterez-vous encor de ma science et n'est-il pas vray que Lelio estoit en partie d'amour lors que je le voyois deguisé sous vn habit etranger? Ces metamorphoses n'appartiennent qu'à la galanterie, et je trouue la moitié de mes predictions si justes que j'oze me promettre d'en voir bientost le reste accompli. *Il dechire la lettre apres l'auoir leüe.*

LÉLIO *continue apres auoir leu*: Les gens aussi delicats que je le suis reçoient comme des injures les sacrifices qu'ils croyent indignes d'eux et les auances des femmes ont cela de propre qu'elles produisent toujours vn effet contraire à ce qu'elles s'en promettent. Quoy qu'il en soit, j'ay promis la reponse que voicy et je la fais d'une maniere à ne me pas attirer vn second message. Mezetin doit la venir prendre. Le voicy.

Scene 12

MEZETIN, LÉLIO

LÉLIO: Mezetin, escoute. Je garde si peu de mesures avec Flaminia que je veux bien te lire la reponse que je fais à sa lettre afin que tu ne te charges plus d'une pareille commission. *Il lit:*

Vous auez vne communication si etroite avec le ciel que les hommes sont indignes d'en auoir avec vous. J'ay l'ame voluptueuse et le chemin de mon

coeur est la preuention de mes sens. Je ne vous suis pas propre, sçauante Flaminia, et vous profaneriez vostre rare merite en vous abaissant jusqu'au sensuel Lélío.

Il continue apres auoir leu: Va, Mezetin, et ne m'apporte plus de pareilles lettres. Je ne diray rien à ton maistre.

MEZETIN, *s'en allant:* Voila vn message amoureux parfaitement bien receu et magnifiquement payé.

Scene 13

LÉLIO, *seul.* C'est ainsy que l'on doit se deffaire de tous les fâcheux messages. Juste ciel! Quand j'y pense, quelle horrible Megere en laideur! L'amour peut-il entrer dans vn coeur comme celuy-la? Mais que veut ce valet?

Scene 14

UN VALET DE FLAMINIA, LÉLIO

LE VALET: Je viens, seigneur Lélío, m'acquiter d'un message amoureux de la part de Flaminia.

LÉLIO: A moy?

LE VALET: A vous-mesme.

LÉLIO: C'est sans doute encor vne seconde lettre du caractere de la premiere. Mais j'ay trop d'intrigues agreables à menager pour donner mon temps à vn commerce ennuyeux. Tu diras à Flaminia que j'ay refusé de receuoir la lettre, que je deuine ce qu'elle contient, que mes engagemens avec le seigneur Metaphraste ne me permettent pas d'en auoir avec elle et que je la prie de mettre fin à ses bontez pour jamais.

LE VALET, *s'en allant:* Ah, la malheureuse ambassade, la malheureuse ambassade!

Scene 15

LÉLIO, *seul:* Ces parolles desobligeantes estant raportées à vne autre que Flaminia, elle en conceuroit vn depot meslé de honte qui la feroit resoudre sans peine au silence que je luy impose. Mais Flaminia, moins aisée à s'offencer et à qui sa science promet vn heureux succez de son entreprise, ne se rebutera pas pour toutes ces difficultez. Je preuoy qu'elle m'assasinera de menaces astrologiques et que je ne reuiendray plus chez moy sans y trouuer vn billet de Flaminia. Ils seront semez sur ma toilette et dans mon cabinet comme des agenda journaliers.

Je suis resolu d'arrester ce torrent. On sçait que je suis naturellement doux et ciuil, je veux m'espargner des occasions de brusquerie envers vn sexe que j'adore, et ces messages frequens de la part d'une femme mecontente peuuent me nuire dans quelques autres affaires. Je veux escrire pour la derniere fois à Flaminia dans des termes qui ne souffrent point de reponse et afin qu'elle ne puisse feindre de n'auoir pas receu ma lettre je vais charger Arlequin de la luy rendre en main propre à la faueur d'un artifice que je vais luy suggerer. Hola, Arlequin.

Scene 16

ARLEQUIN, LÉLIO

ARLEQUIN: On y va, que vous plaist-il, seigneur Lélio?

LÉLIO: Ecoute, Arlequin. Va prendre dans mon cabinet des plantes petrifiées, des animaux de mer desseichez, et t'erigeant en marchande de ces sortes de marchandises, va demander à la porte de Flaminia si l'on ne veut point en achepter. Le Docteur Metaphraste est allé passer deux heures de temps dans sa solitude pour s'y preparer à vne dispute publique pour demain. Ainsi personne ne te reconnoistra sous ton deguisement. Prends ce billet et le rends adroitement à Flaminia.

ARLEQUIN: Mais, seigneur Lélio, me repondez-vous de mon dos, s'il prenoit enuie à madame l'astrologue de faire de ce costé la figure de ma natiuité? Plaist-il?

LÉLIO: Va, dis-je, et ne crains rien.

ARLEQUIN: Pour moy, je crains plus l'influence du bras que celle des astres.

ACTE TROISIÈSME

Scene Premiere

ARLEQUIN *seul sous l'habit d'une marchande*: Ma foy, me voila plaisamment fagoté! Je ne croy pas que l'astrologue avec toutes les lumieres de son art puisse me reconnoistre. Voila la rareté, la curiosité, la rareté, la curiosité!

Scene 2

FLAMINIA, *par la fenêtre*: Que vendez-vous là, ma bonne amie?

ARLEQUIN: De grandes curiositez, ma belle dame, de grandes curiositez.

FLAMINIA: Voyons-les.

ARLEQUIN: Descendez, s'il vous plaist, belle et curieuse dame.

ARLEQUIN, *apres qu'elle est de[s]cendiue*: Tenez, voila la peau d'vn cocodrille desseché. Voila aussi plusieurs coucous. Mais comme il n'en manque point en ce pays-cy, je ne vous les montre pas.

FLAMINIA: N'avez-vous rien autre chose?

ARLEQUIN: Voicy plusieurs plantes petrifiées, des mandragores, des zoophites; mais voila la piece la plus rare de ma boutique. C'est vn billet que le seigneur Lelio vous enuoye.

FLAMINIA, *le refusant*: Vous direz au seigneur Lelio que je deuine ce que ce billet contient et que mes engagemens avec le seigneur Metaphraste ne me permettent pas d'en auoir avec luy. A Dieu, retirez-vous et n'y reuenez plus.

Scene 3

ARLEQUIN, *seul*: Fort bien. Je n'ay pas mal operé. Que dira le seigneur Lelio, que je suis vn animal, vne pecore, vn balour, vn belistre, vn sot, vne beste, vn maladroit de n'auoir pas mieux reussi?

Scene 4

LÉLIO, ARLEQUIN

LÉLIO: Hé bien, Arlequin, qu'as-tu fait?

ARLEQUIN: Vos affaires vont mal, seigneur Lelio. J'ay presenté vostre lettre avec toute l'adresse que vous pouuiez esperer de mon intelligence, mais Flaminia, fort irritée, n'a point voulu la receuoir. Voila ses propres termes: elle m'a dit de vous dire que ses engagemens avec le seigneur Metaphraste ne luy permettent pas d'en auoir avec vous, et m'a congedié fort brusquement.

LÉLIO, *faisant vn esclat de rire*: Ah, ah, ah, ah . . .

ARLEQUIN: Vous riez. Ce que je dis est-il si risible?

LÉLIO: Quoy, je suis paruenu jusqu'à deplaire à Flaminia! Le destin est de mes amis et je luy dois vn sacrifice de remercimens.

ARLEQUIN: Helas, seigneur Lelio, je croyois vous apporter le coup de la mort, en vous disant q[u']vne personne d'vne beauté si parfaite n'a pas voulu receuoir ce qui luy vient de vostre part.

LÉLIO: Arlequin, tu as quelquefois de l'esprit. Je prends plaisir à t'entendre quand tu railles agreablement, et je croy que tu veux me diuertir à ton ordinaire.

ARLEQUIN: Je vous jure, seigneur Lélío, que je vous parle plus serieusement qu'à l'ordinaire, et que je n'ay jamais veu vne plus belle personne.

LÉLIO: En effet, Flaminia est vne tres belle personne. Cet air egaré qui marque par sa phisionomie le dereglement de son esprit, cette taille mal prise, cette conuersation contrainte et la maigreur que ses applications chimeriques luy causent, sont de bonnes raisons de desespoir pour vn homme qui n'en est pas aimé.

ARLEQUIN: Que dites-vous, seigneur, de taille mal prise et de phisionomie egarée? Je n'ay rien veu de tout cela dans la jeune Flaminia. Elle est aussi belle que bien faite. Ses manieres sont engageantes, et je ne me connois pas en beauté, ou c'est la personne la plus accomplie qui soit dans Rome. Si vous voulez, je vais vous en faire le portrait au juste.

Premierement je vous diray que je ne me trompe point quand j'oze vous assurer qu'elle est belle, bien faite et charmante, car elle est animée. Ah, qu'elle à les yeux beaux! Je n'ay jamais veu vne plus belle taille, elle est degagée. Elle a l'air noble, le tour du visage bien fait. Ah, que ses joües sont potelées et delicates!

LÉLIO: Et son teint?

ARLEQUIN: C'est le plus beau teint du monde, vn teint blanc et vif. Oh, qu'elle a de belles mains! La blancheur de son beau sein et le vermillon de son visage font tort aux lys et aux roses. Sa presence les efface.

LÉLIO: Et les dents?

ARLEQUIN: Elle a les dents blanches comme neige. On peut dire que c'est la brune la plus piquante que l'on puisse voir. Elle marche agreablement. Enfin, elle a la phisionomie spirituelle et l'est en effet.

LÉLIO: A t'entendre c'est vn abregé de toutes les perfections. Dis-moy, Arlequin, qui t'a appris à connoistre les traits d'vne belle personne?

ARLEQUIN: Vous sçaez, seigneur Lélío, qu'auant d'estre à vostre seruice, j'ay demeuré deux ans chez le plus habile peintre d'Italie, et sans faire semblant de rien j'escoutois les leçons qu'il donnoit à ses eleues.

LÉLIO: Voyons ce que tu as retenu.

ARLEQUIN: Il leur disoit qu'il falloit trente perfections pour rendre vne beauté parfaite et accomplie. Il les distinguoit trois par trois sur le modèle de la belle Helene. Escoutez. Trois blanches, trois noires, trois rouges, trois longues, trois

courtes, trois larges, trois étroites, trois grosses, trois desliez et trois petites. Je vay, si vous voulez, les marquer en detail. Trois blanches: la peau, les dents et le visage...

LÉLIO: Laissons là les portraits. Venons à l'original. Je ne puis accorder le rapport que tu me fais de Flaminia avec ce que j'ay veu de mes propres yeux. Je te conjure, mon pauvre Arlequin, de vouloir demesler cette intrigue. Retourne chez Flaminia en feignant d'y auoir perdu quelque chose. Tâche de t'esclaircir encor d'une maniere à n'en pas douter. Cours et ne t'arreste pas.

Scene 5

ARLEQUIN, *frapant à la porte de l'astrologue, y voit paroistre Flaminia avec Marinette.*

MARINETTE: Que demandez-vous?

ARLEQUIN: En montrant mes curiositez à madame, j'ay laissé tomber vn paquet de semence petrifiée et je viens la chercher.

MARINETTE: A d'autres, ma bonne amie, ne reuenez plus ici. Il n'y fait pas bon pour vous. Allez à la maison du diable. *Elle luy ferme la porte au nez.*

Scene 6

LÉLIO, ARLEQUIN

{ARLEQUIN:} Peste soit de la Megere!

LÉLIO: Hé bien, me donneras-tu l'eclaircissement que tu m'as promis?

ARLEQUIN: Voici bien des nouvelles.

LÉLIO: Hé, quoy?

ARLEQUIN: J'ay trouué dans vne vieille Douegna le veritable portrait que vous m'avez crû faire de Flaminia.

LÉLIO: Je ne doute plus à present de mon erreur. C'est Marinette l'astrologue et tu as trouué dans sa figure ce que j'auois cru rencontrer dans Flaminia.

ARLEQUIN: C'est la verité pure.

LÉLIO: Cela me met dans vn chagrin que je ne puis exprimer. J'ay pour les belles personnes vne admiration qui va jusqu'à l'idolatrie. Je ne puis m'imaginer sans

desespoir qu'il y en ait vne au monde qui ait sujet de se plaindre de moy. Il me vient vn expedient. Reprens ton habit ordinaire. Retourne chez l'astrologue Marinette; je veux feindre avec elle vn commerce d'amitié afin d'auoir occasion de voir Flaminia. Dis-luy que l'indifference que j'ay affecté{e} pour elle n'estoit qu'un artifice pour esprouuer les dispositions fauorables où je l'ay veu{e} pour moy, que sa perseuerence m'en ayant assuré, je suis prest de me donner à elle, que je connois bien que les astres president aux affaires d'amour, que m'y soumettant sans murmure, elle peut ordonner de ma destinée en maistresse absolüe. Va, mon cher Arlequin.

ARLEQUIN: Reposez-vous sur moy.

Scene 7

Mezetin, Pantalon et Scaramouche viennent pour donner vne serenade à Flaminia de la part du Docteur et sont interrompus par le guet. Cette scene nocturne est accompagnée de gestes et d'actions pantomimes, et finit par des frayeurs et des epouuantes de part et d'autre.

Scene 8

MARINETTE, ARLEQUIN

MARINETTE: Tu ne pouuois m'apporter vne plus heureuse nouvelle, et je te la payé par le don de ce diamant.

ARLEQUIN: Voila, Madame, la plus heureuse prediction que vous puissiez me faire. Combien cela vaut-il?

MARINETTE: Vingt-cinq pistolles.

ARLEQUIN: Achetez-le-moy. J'aime mieux l'argent comptant.

MARINETTE: Volontiers. Les voila justement dans cette bourse. Au reste, tu peux assurer ton maistre qu'il a la liberté de venir quand il voudra et qu'il sera parfaitement bien receu, que l'absence du Docteur fauorise ses desseins et les miens. En vn mot, le seigneur Lelio peut deuenir si familier dans cette maison qu'il n'y aura plus d'heures interdites pour luy.

ARLEQUIN, *en s'en allant*: Madame, je cours en diligence informer mon maistre de vos bonnes intentions. *Flaminia se retire.*

Scene 9

LÉLIO, *seul*: Peste soit de la serenade. Arlequin ne reuient point et je suis dans vne furieuse impatience de sçauoir l'effet de sa derniere ambassade. J'auray sans doute bien de la peine à trouuer le moment de parler à Flaminia. Les soins de l'astrologue et la colere dont Flaminia est preuenüe contre moy la derobent peut-estre à toutes mes poursuites. N'importe. Il faut tout tenter. Mais voicy Arlequin.

Scene 10

ARLEQUIN, LÉLIO

ARLEQUIN: Je vous cherche, seigneur, pour vous dire que tout va bien, que vous pouuez aller voir Marinette dès ce moment et qu'elle a donné ordre à vn de ses disciples de vous conduire à son appartement.

LÉLIO: Je suis rauy de cette nouvelle pour les veues amoureuses que j'ay.

ARLEQUIN: Entrez donc, tandis que je ferai ici sentinelle.

LÉLIO: V n petit obstacle m'arreste encor. Je crains qu'il me soit impossible de voir Flaminia et de luy parler. La jalouze Marinette employra tous ses artifices pour la derobier à mes yeux, cette surueillante me desesperera. Tu m'as fait vn portrait de Flaminia qui redouble ma curiosite, et l'on sçait que les desirs les plus moderez deuiennent ardents quand ils rencontrent des obstacles.

ARLEQUIN: Seigneur Lelio, tout ira bien. Esperez au Dieu d'amour.

LÉLIO: Si par malheur je rencontre les obstacles que je crains, je me sens disposé à oublier ce que je dois à l'amitié du Docteur Theophraste, et peut-estre à commettre vne violence pour voir Flaminia, si je desesperes de jouir de sa veüe par les voyes de la douceur.

ARLEQUIN: Donnez-vous-en bien de garde. Ce seroit tout perdre et tout gêter.

LÉLIO: Je t'auoueray d'ailleurs que la crainte de deplaire à vne belle personne que j'aime deja sans la connoistre me retient. Je m'auise d'vn artifice qui aura moins d'eclat et qui me reussira peut-estre mieux. Entrons. Attends-moy, Arlequin.

ARLEQUIN: Que le Dieu d'amour vous conduise avec les graces et les ris.

Scene 11

ARLEQUIN, *seul*: Ah, la maudite profession que celle d'vn amant! Vn pauvre diable d'amant ne dort point, ne repose point, ne mange point, ne boit point, qui pis

est. Il s'entretient sans cesse avec luy-mesme. Il saute, il court par les rues, il va, il vient, il süe comme moy à force de courir. Il se querelle luy-mesme et traîne vne miserable vie parmy les peines et les tourments. Enfin, ce tyran d'amour fait qu'un malheureux amant trouue la nuit au lieu du soleil, la discorde au lieu de la paix, des epines pour des fleurs, des pleurs pour des ris, des plaintes continuelles pour toute musique, du poison au lieu de nourriture, enfin vn trauail continuel et jamais de repos. L'amour fait q[u] un amant peint sur les nües, qu'il marche dans l'air et le bat en vain avec ses soupirs, et qu'il escrit sur l'eau. Le jour ennuye vn malheureux amant, les tenebres et les ombres de la nuit redoublent ses douleurs, la compagnie l'importune, la solitude renouuelle ses peines. S'il n'a personne qui le console, il se desespere et si quelq[u] vn entreprend de le vouloir guerir et d'adoucir son mal, il se plaind qu'on luy enuenuime sa playe et que . . . Tréue à mes moralitez. Voicy Lélío avec Marinette.

Scene 12

LÉLIO, MARINETTE

LÉLIO: Ouy, Madame, je sçay de bonne part que le Docteur Metaphraste est prest de reuenir. Je luy ay promis de n'aller point chez vous, et je vous auoüeray que j'ay autant de crainte d'estre surpris par son arriuée que de repugnance à me prier d'un entretien si doux.

MARINETTE: Aimable caualier, pour seconder vos menagemens pour vostre amy je consents de vous voir secrettement dans le bocage academique dont nous sommes conuenus.

LÉLIO: Sçauante et gratieuse Marinette, j'attendray l'effet de vos promesses avec la derniere impatience. Adieu.

MARINETTE: Je n'en auray pas moins, aimable Lélío.

Scene 13

MARINETTE, *charmée du plaisir que luy cause la feinte passion de Lélío, chante vn air:*

Je ne m'en deffends point, Lelia m'a charmée,
Heureuse si j'en suis aimée,
Je rendray de mon sort tout l'univers jaloux.
Aimons, aimons, il n'est rien de plus doux.
Je ne m'en deffends point, Lélío m'a charmée.

MARINETTE, *continue apres avoir chanté*: Voicy vn voile leger dont je me suis munie pour fauoriser mon entreprise. Je me recommande à l'amour et aux etoilles. Je mets au rang des constellations les plus propices l'assignation amoureuse que l'aimable Lélío m'a donnée et je vais m'y rendre en diligence.

Scene 14

ARLEQUIN, LÉLIO

ARLEQUIN: Paroissez, seigneur. Il est temps. Flaminia est deliurée de sa surueillante incommode. Profitez de son absence.

LÉLIO: C'est mon dessein. *Dans le temps qu'il veut entrer, vn domestique de Marinette paroist pour l'en empe[s]cher.*

VN DOMESTIQUE: Seigneur, j'ay ordre de ne laisser entrer personne.

LÉLIO: Je veux entrer.

SECOND DOMESTIQUE, *le repoussant*: On n'entre pas, vous dis-je. Nous suiions les ordres, et nous vous empe[s]cherons bien d'aller à l'appartement de Flaminia.

LÉLIO: Canaille insolente, sçavez-vous bien que je n'ay pas l'âme docile et que je menace de mort le premier qui s'opposera à mon passage?

Scene 15

FLAMINIA, LÉLIO, ARLEQUIN.

FLAMINIA: Quel bruit entens-je?

LÉLIO, *paroissant surpris*: Que vois-je, o ciel ! Quoy, Madame, c'est de vous que j'ay refusé de recevoir vn billet, c'est à vous que j'ay fait la premiere inciulite qui me soit echapée contre le beau sexe, et c'est pour vous que j'auois conceu vne horreur si criminelle? Ah, Madame, que peut faire mon coeur pour reparer les fautes de son aueuglement? Tout l'amour qu'il vous presente seroit-il capable d'effacer son crime?

FLAMINIA: Je comprends à vostre discours que vous estes le seigneur Lélío. L'estime que j'ay toujours eu pour vostre reputation n'a pas este si bien surmontée par ma colere qu'elle ne se reueille à vostre presence. Mais, seigneur, pourquoy venez-vous ici? Toutes les belles femmes de Rome ne sçauoient-elles remplir vos desirs curieux sans deterer la seule dont le Docteur Metaphraste vous interdit la veüe?

LÉLIO: Ne parlons point, Madame, du Docteur Metaphraste. S'il a de l'amour pour vous, il ne m'est plus assez cher pour meriter de moy tant de menagemens, et s'il ne vous aime pas, il est injuste de vouloir me prier de vostre veüe.

FLAMINIA: Il ne m'aime pas, ou du moins, s'il m'aime, nous n'en sçauons rien ny luy ny moy. Mais, seigneur, il est passionnement amoureux de la vertu. Il a tâché de me communiquer cette passion louable. Il craint q[u']vn merite comme le vostre ne soit capable de detruire ses preceptes. Retirez-vous, seigneur Lélio. Laissez, de grâce, toute mon âme à la sagesse où Metaphraste l'a deuouée. Je sens deja je ne sçay quel trouble en vous parlant qui deuient incompatible avec la fermeté qu'on me presche depuis si longtemps. Vous me donnez vne emotion que je ne puis ny surmonter ny definir. Retirez-vous, de grâce, vostre veüe et les preceptes de Theophraste ne sçauoient s'accorder ensemble.

LÉLIO: Je ne puis vous cacher, charmante Flaminia, q[u']vn tel aueu me transporte d'amour et de joye. Ah, de grace, Madame, oubliez des preceptes que la nature condamne et que le ciel a tesmoigné ne pas approuuer quand il vous a fait naistre si belle. Il sied bien à Metaphraste, qui n'a que la beauté de l'âme en partage, de renoncer aux plaisirs des sens. Il s'espargne de grands chagrins quand il preuient les suites fâcheuses que pouroit auoir son peu de charmes, mais vous, belle Flaminia, qui estes faite pour estre adorée de tous ceux qui vous approchent, vous renuersez l'ordre du ciel quand vous enseuelissez vostre merite dans vne triste retraite qui le rend inutile.

FLAMINIA: Ce que me disoit Metaphraste estoit bien plus judicieux que ce que vous me dites, et cependant, par vne fatalité que je ne conçois pas, il auoit besoin de toute sa science pour me persuader et vos parolles pénétrent jusqu'à mon coeur, elles ont vne intelligence secrette avec les mouuemens de mon âme, qui reuolte mes sens contre la raison. Encor vne fois, Lélio, retirez-vous. Vostre veüe deuient funeste pour moy et si vous n'avez pitié de ma philosophie, trois ou quatre années d'étude vont succomber aux attaques de vos premiers regards. Mais j'entends quelq[u']vn. Cachez-vous dans cet endroit, je vous prie. Si l'on vous voit, je suis perdue.

Scene 16

Le theatre represente l'Academie

MARINETTE, *avec vne lanterne sourde*: Que je suis malheureuse d'auoir perdu le billet de l'assignation. J'ay beau chercher, rien ne s'offre à ma veüe . . . J'entends quelq[u']vn. Juste ciel, c'est Metaphraste! Euitons sa presence. *Elle se retire.*

Scene 17

LE DOCTEUR, MEZETIN

LE DOCTEUR: Où dis-tu que tu as trouué ce billet?

MEZETIN: A deux pas d'ici.

LE DOCTEUR, *apres auoir leu.* Je reconnois le caractere de Lélio. Je suis d'auis d'aller interrompre le rendez-vous. Je fais souuent ces sortes de chagrins à Lélio. Je l'aime tendrement et je sçais que son penchant vers l'amour luy attire souuent des affaires fâcheuses. Suy-moy, Mezetin.

Scene 18. *Nocturne.*

MARINETTE, *seule:* C'est trop attendre. Je commence à murmurer contre mon etoille. Lélio tarde trop à venir. Mais j'entens quelq[u']vn. La nuit est bien obscure, suiuous à la trace. *Elle tousse 2 fois.* Ce signal est sans effet. Lélio! Lélio! Est-ce pour m'esprouuer que vous me fuyez de cette sorte . . . ? M'attendez-vous?

Scene 19

Marinette est arrestee par Colombine, qui sortant de derriere vn arbre, se met entre elle et le Docteur.

LE DOCTEUR: Qui est-ce?

COLOMBINE: C'est done ainsy, Metaphraste, que tu te prepare[s] à disputer de la sagesse contre les gens qui voudroient l'attaquer. Il te faut vne intrigue amoureuse pour disposer ton âme à soutenir le parti de la vertu, et le temps que tu feins de donner à l'etude de la philosophie tu l'employes à te rendre indigne du titre de philosophe. Perfide!

Le Docteur feint de vouloir fraper Colombine, qui fuit.

Scene 20

Vn dissiple du Docteur, ayant perdu quelques papiers dans l'Academie, vient les chercher avec vn flambeau à la main, ce qui fait reconnoistre Marinette. Elle veut s'echaper, mais le Docteur l'arreste.

LE DOCTEUR, MARINETTE.

LE DOCTEUR: Que vois-je? Quoy, c'est vous, malheureuse, qui auez receu vn rendez-vous de Lélio?

MARINETTE: Moy, seigneur? Qui vous a dit cela?

LE DOCTEUR: Indigne que tu es, le trouble où je te voy m'assure de ce que tu n'as pas la force de m'auoüer. Mais que dis-je, malheureuse Marinette? Je commence à comprendre tout le mystere de cette intrigue. Lélío est trop delicat pour aimer vne personne faite comme toy. Je sçay ce qu'il m'en a dit lorsque je l'ay rencontré tantost en habit trauesti, et j'ay lieu de tout craindre au sujet de Flaminia. Ah Marinette, foible Marinette, tu detruis dans vn seul moment des precautions de plusieurs années. Allons prendre vn cruel eclaircissement. Je veux parler à Flaminia.

Scene 21

Le theatre represente la maison de Flaminia.

LE DOCTEUR, FLAMINIA, LÉLIO, MARINETTE.

LE DOCTEUR, *les surprénant ensemble*. Ah ciel! Que vois-je? Est-ce vn songe, est-ce vne illusion? Perfide amy, il y a de la tyrannie dans ce que vous faites. Vous m'arrachez vn secret que le voulois garder, et sans respect, Lélío, pour vne amitié qui deuoit vous estre chere, vous me refusez la premiere complaisance que j'aye jamais exigé[e] de la vostre.

LÉLIO: Ce n'est pas cette amitié qui vous fait agir, Metaphraste. Vostre colere seroit plus moderée, si elle n'auoit q[u]'vne cause si tranquile. Mais vous aimez Flaminia. Je l'ay toujours pressenti et le trouble que je remarque dans vostre âme confirme tous mes soupçons.

LE DOCTEUR: Que vous estes penetrant, Lélío! Je vous dis qu'il est constant, comme je vous l'ay protesté, que je ne croy point aimer Flaminia. J'ay vne confiance en ma sagesse qui ne me permet pas de m'examiner sur ce point. Cependant, je ne sçay par quelle secrette raison, le reproche que vous me faites me force à faire vne petite reueüe sur moy-mesme. Il n'est plus en mon pouuoir de desauoüer que ce que je sens a vne grande ressemblance avec l'amour. Ouy, je reconnois ma precaution pour vne forte jalousie et quand j'examine les craintes terribles que j'ay que Flaminia n'aime et ne soit aimée, je comprends qu'il n'y à que l'amour qui puisse me donner ces apprehensions. O amour, cruel amour!

LÉLIO: Remettez-vous, seigneur Metaphraste.

LE DOCTEUR: Ah ciel! que vous ai-je fait pour venir demesler dans mon coeur des sentimens que j'ignorois et qu'il doit m'estre si cruel de ne plus ignorer? Ah Lélío, injuste Lélío, je vous ay plus aimé que vous ne vous aimez vous-mesme. J'ay hazardé souuent ma vie, mon credit et l'estime de Rome pour soutenir vos interets. J'ay combattu vos foiblesses de tout mon pouuoir et je les ay cachées quand je n'ay pu les vaincre. Ingrat Lélío, pourquoy me decourez-vous les miennes? Si je n'aime

point Flaminia, vous offensez ma reputation en m'accusant de l'aimer, et si je l'aime en effet, comme je commence à le craindre, vous offensez nostre amitié en vous exposant au peril d'estre mon riuai. Tirez-vous de ce danger, Lélío, et soit que vous me regardiez comme vn philosophe qui veut maintenir son eleue exempte de passion, ou que vous me regardiez comme vn amy fidelle qui merite quelques sacrifices, retirez-vous de grâce et ne voyez jamais Flaminia.

LÉLIO: J'estime trop vostre philosophie pour luy faire cette injure. Il est juste qu'elle triomphe des desirs qui ont l'audace de l'attaquer. Combattez, mon cher Metaphraste, et combattez toujours avec succez. Vous terniriez la gloire de vostre vie, si vous laissiez croire à la posterite que le voluptueux Lélío eut obtenu sur luy-mesme ce que vous n'ozez entreprendre sur vous.

LE DOCTEUR: Mon cher Lélío, il faut vous ouurir mon âme toute entiere. Je suis presentement incapable de goûter de si beaux raisonnemens et j'immolerois volontiers ma reputation de sage au priuilege d'aimer Flaminia sans inquietude.

LÉLIO: Je me tiens ferme dans ma proposition. Il faut que vous souffriez que j'aime Flaminia et mesme que j'en sois aimé. N'en (n')estes-vous pas contente, charmante Flaminia?

FLAMINIA: Seigneur Lélío, je vous auoüeray avec plaisir que ces preceptes de sagesse si soigneusement donnez, et q[u']vne longue habitude sembloit deuoir rendre victorieux des protestations et des assidueitez, cedent à vos premieres attaques.

LÉLIO: Ah Madame, que ne dois-je point à toutes vos bontez . . . !

LE DOCTEUR: Destin cruel, j'en mourray de douleur, mais il faut ceder au sort. O amour, cruel amour! O foiblesse humaine!

MARINETTE: Astres trompeurs, je vous appelle en garantie du coeur que vous m'avez fait esperer et que vous m'avez enlevé. J'eprouve d'une maniere bien fatale que quand on est reduit à se prendre à ces sortes de cautions, on trouve que les astres sont de mechantes suretez, et loin de consulter dauantage mes liures sur la tromperie que l'on m'a faite, je vais tous les jetter au feu.

La piece finit par vn diuertissement de musique et de danse que Lélío donne à Flaminia.

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