

The Middle Class Gentleman

by

Moliere

Web-Books.Com

The Middle Class Gentleman

The Cast	3
Act One	4
Act Two.....	11
Act Three	24
Act Four	51
Act Five	59

The Cast

Comedy-Ballet presented at Chambord, for the entertainment of the King, in the month of October 1670, and to the public in Paris for the first time at the Palais-Royal Theater 23 November 1670

THE CAST

Monsieur Jourdain, bourgeois.

Madame Jourdain, his wife.

Lucile, their daughter.

Nicole, maid.

Cleonte, suitor of Lucile.

Covielle, Cleonte's valet.

Dorante, Count, suitor of Dorimene.

Dorimene, Marchioness.

Music Master.

Pupil of the Music Master.

Dancing Master.

Fencing Master.

Master of Philosophy.

Tailor.

Tailor's apprentice.

Two lackeys.

Many male and female musicians, instrumentalists, dancers, cooks, tailor's apprentices, and others necessary for the interludes.

The scene is Monsieur Jourdain's house in Paris.

Act One

SCENE I (Music Master, Dancing Master, Musicians, and Dancers)

(The play opens with a great assembly of instruments, and in the middle of the stage is a pupil of the Music Master seated at a table composing a melody which Monsieur Jourdain has ordered for a serenade.)

MUSIC MASTER: (To Musicians) Come, come into this room, sit there and wait until he comes.

DANCING MASTER: (To dancers) And you too, on this side.

MUSIC MASTER: (To Pupil) Is it done?

PUPIL: Yes.

MUSIC MASTER: Let's see. . . This is good.

DANCING MASTER: Is it something new?

MUSIC MASTER: Yes, it's a melody for a serenade that I set him to composing here, while waiting for our man to awake.

DANCING MASTER: May I see it?

MUSIC MASTER: You'll hear it, with the dialogue, when he comes. He won't be long.

DANCING MASTER: Our work, yours and mine, is not trivial at present.

MUSIC MASTER: This is true. We've found here such a man as we both need. This is a nice source of income for us -- this Monsieur Jourdain, with the visions of nobility and gallantry that he has gotten into his head. You and I should hope that everyone resembled him.

DANCING MASTER: Not entirely; I could wish that he understood better the things that we give him.

MUSIC MASTER: It's true that he understands them poorly, but he pays well, and that's what our art needs now more than anything else.

DANCING MASTER: As for me, I admit, I feed a little on glory. Applause touches me; and I hold that, in all the fine arts, it is painful to produce for dolts, to endure the barbarous opinions of a fool about my choreography. It is a pleasure, don't tell me otherwise, to work for people who can appreciate the fine points of an art, who know how

to give a sweet reception to the beauties of a work and, by pleasurable approbations, gratify us for our labor. Yes, the most agreeable recompense we can receive for the things we do is to see them recognized and flattered by an applause that honors us. There is nothing, in my opinion, that pays us better for all our fatigue; and it is an exquisite delight to receive the praises of the well-informed.

MUSIC MASTER: I agree, and I enjoy them as you do. There is surely nothing more agreeable than the applause you speak of; but that incense does not provide a living. Pure praises do not provide a comfortable existence; it is necessary to add something solid, and the best way to praise is to praise with cash-in-hand. He's a man, it's true, whose insight is very slight, who talks nonsense about everything and applauds only for the wrong reasons but his money makes up for his judgments. He has discernment in his purse. His praises are in cash, and this ignorant bourgeois is worth more to us, as you see, than the educated nobleman who introduced us here.

DANCING MASTER: There is some truth in what you say; but I find that you lean a little too heavily on money; and material interest is something so base that a man of good taste should never show an attachment to it.

MUSIC MASTER: You are ready enough to receive the money our man gives you.

DANCING MASTER: Assuredly; but I don't place all my happiness in it, and I could wish that together with his fortune he had some good taste in things.

MUSIC MASTER: I could wish it too, that's what both of us are working for as much as we can. But, in any case, he gives us the means to make ourselves known in the world; and he will pay others if they will praise him.

DANCING MASTER: Here he comes.

SCENE II (Monsieur Jourdain, Two Lackeys, Music Master, Dancing Master, Pupil, Musicians, and Dancers)

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Well gentlemen? What's this? Are you going to show me your little skit?

DANCING MASTER: How? What little skit?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Well, the. . . What-do-you-call it? Your prologue or dialogue of songs and dances.

DANCING MASTER: Ha, ha!

MUSIC MASTER: You find us ready for you.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: I kept you waiting a little, but it's because I'm having myself dressed today like the people of quality, and my tailor sent me some silk stockings that I thought I would never get on.

MUSIC MASTER: We are here only to wait upon your leisure.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: I want you both to stay until they have brought me my suit, so that you may see me.

DANCING MASTER: Whatever you would like.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: You will see me fitted out properly, from head to foot.

MUSIC MASTER: We have no doubt of it.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: I had this robe made for me.

DANCING MASTER: It's very attractive.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: My tailor told me the people of quality dress like this in the mornings.

MUSIC MASTER: It's marvelously becoming.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Hey lackeys! My two lackeys!

FIRST LACKEY: What do you wish, Sir?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Nothing. I just wanted to see if you were paying attention. (To the two masters) What say you of my liveries?

DANCING MASTER: They're magnificent.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: (Half opening his gown, showing a pair of tight red velvet breeches, and a green velvet vest, that he is wearing) Here again is a sort of lounging dress to perform my morning exercises in.

MUSIC MASTER: It is elegant.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Lackey!

FIRST LACKEY: Sir?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: The other lackey!

SECOND LACKEY: Sir?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Hold my robe. (To the Masters) Do you think I look good?

DANCING MASTER: Very well. No one could look better.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Now let's have a look at your little show. **MUSIC MASTER:** I would like very much for you to listen to a melody he (indicating his student) has just composed for the serenade that you ordered from me. He's one of my pupils who has an admirable talent for these kinds of things.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Yes, but you should not have had that done by a pupil; you yourself were none too good for that piece of work.

MUSIC MASTER: You must not let the name of pupil fool you, sir. Pupils of this sort know as much as the greatest masters, and the melody is as fine as could be made. Just listen.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: (To Lackeys) Give me my robe so I can listen better . . . Wait, I believe I would be better without a robe. . . No, give it back, that will be better.

MUSICIAN: (Singing) I languish night and day, my suffering is extreme Since to your control your lovely eyes subjected me; If you thus treat, fair Iris, those you love, Alas, how would you treat an enemy?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: This song seems to me a little mournful, it lulls to sleep, and I would like it if you could liven it up a little, here and there.

MUSIC MASTER: It is necessary, Sir, that the tune be suited to the words.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Someone taught me a perfectly pretty one some time ago. Listen . . . Now . . . how does it go?

DANCING MASTER: By my faith, I don't know.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: There are sheep in it.

DANCING MASTER: Sheep?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Yes. Ah! (He sings) I thought my Jeanneton As beautiful as sweet; I thought my Jeanneton Far sweeter than a sheep. Alas! Alas! She is a hundred times, A thousand times, more cruel Than tigers in the woods! Isn't it pretty?

MUSIC MASTER: The prettiest in the world.

DANCING MASTER: And you sing it well.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: It's without having learned music.

MUSIC MASTER: You ought to learn it, Sir, as you are learning dancing. They are two arts which have a close connection.

DANCING MASTER: And which open the mind of a man to fine things.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: And do people of quality learn music, too?

MUSIC MASTER: Yes sir.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: I'll learn it then. But I don't know when I can find time; for besides the Fencing Master who's teaching me, I have also engaged a master of philosophy who is to begin this morning.

MUSIC MASTER: Philosophy is something; but music, sir, music . . .

DANCING MASTER: Music and dancing, music and dancing, that's all that's necessary.

MUSIC MASTER: There's nothing so useful in a State as music.

DANCING MASTER: There's nothing so necessary to men as dancing.

MUSIC MASTER: Without music, a State cannot subsist.

DANCING MASTER: Without the dance, a man can do nothing.

MUSIC MASTER: All the disorders, all the wars one sees in the world happen only from not learning music.

DANCING MASTER: All the misfortunes of mankind, all the dreadful disasters that fill the history books, the blunders of politicians and the faults of omission of great commanders, all this comes from not knowing how to dance.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: How is that?

MUSIC MASTER: Does not war result from a lack of agreement between men?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: That is true.

MUSIC MASTER: And if all men learned music, wouldn't that be a means of bringing about harmony and of seeing universal peace in the world?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: You are right.

DANCING MASTER: When a man has committed a mistake in his conduct, in family affairs, or in affairs of government of a state, or in the command of an army, do we not always say, "He took a bad step in such and such an affair?"

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Yes, that's said.

DANCING MASTER: And can taking a bad step result from anything but not knowing how to dance?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: It's true, you are both right.

DANCING MASTER: It makes you see the excellence and usefulness of music and the dance.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: I understand that, now.

MUSIC MASTER: Do you wish to see our pieces?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Yes.

MUSIC MASTER: I have already told you that this is a little attempt I have made to show the different passions that music can express.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Very good.

MUSIC MASTER (To musicians) Here, come forward. (To Monsieur Jourdain) You must imagine that they are dressed as shepherds.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Why always as shepherds? You see nothing but that everywhere.

MUSIC MASTER: When we have characters that are to speak in music, it's necessary, for believability, to make them pastoral. Singing has always been assigned to shepherds; and it is scarcely natural dialogue for princes or merchants to sing their passions.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Alright, alright. Let's see.

DIALOGUE IN MUSIC: (A Woman and Two Men)

ALL THREE: A heart, under the domination of love, Is always with a thousand cares oppressed. It is said that we gladly languish, gladly sigh; But, despite what can be said, There is nothing so sweet as our liberty!

FIRST MAN: There is nothing so sweet as the loving fires That make two hearts beat as one. One cannot live without amorous desires; Take love from life, you take away the pleasures.

SECOND MAN: It would be sweet to submit to love's rule, If one could find faithful love, But, alas! oh cruel rule! No faithful shepherdess is to be seen, And that inconstant sex, much too unworthy, Must renounce love eternally.

FIRST MAN: Pleasing ardor!

WOMAN: Happy liberty!

SECOND MAN: Deceitful woman!

FIRST MAN: How precious you are to me!

WOMAN: How you please my heart!

SECOND MAN: How horrible you are to me!

FIRST MAN: Ah, leave, for love, that mortal hate!

WOMAN: We can, we can show you a faithful shepherdess!

SECOND MAN: Alas! Where to find her?

WOMAN: In order to defend our reputation, I want to offer you my heart!

FIRST MAN: But, shepherdess, can I believe That it will not be deceitful?

WOMAN: We'll see through experience, Who of the two loves best.

SECOND MAN: Who lacks constancy, May the gods destroy!

ALL THREE: With ardors so beautiful Let us be inflamed! Ah, how sweet it is to love,
When two hearts are faithful!

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Is that all?

MUSIC MASTER: Yes.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: I find it well-done, and there are some pretty enough sayings
in it.

DANCING MASTER: Here, for my presentation, is a little display of the loveliest
movements and the most beautiful attitudes with which a dance can possibly be varied.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Are these shepherds too?

DANCING MASTER: They're whatever you please. Let's go! (Four dancers execute all
the different movements and all the kinds of steps that the Dancing Master commands;
and this dance makes the First Interlude.)

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

