By Tim Kelly

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IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?
A Wild West adaptation of the farcical “doctor plays” of Molière

By TIM KELLY

GREASE GULCH CHARACTERS
(In Order of Speaking)

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SETTING

TIME: When the West was wild.

PLACE: The lobby of the Grease Gulch Boarding House Hotel and General Store.

DOWN RIGHT is the entrance into the dining room. In front of this entrance, Upstage a little, is a table with two chairs. STAGE RIGHT is the entrance from the street. UP RIGHT CENTER is the doorway to the hotel office. UP CENTER is the registration desk [or table]. Registration ledger, pen, etc. UP LEFT are stairs that lead to the second story of the hotel [a few steps will suffice, or the “stairs” can be eliminated altogether]. STAGE LEFT is the entrance into the interior of the General Store. However, much of the merchandise is on display in the lobby. There’s a counter [or long table] LEFT CENTER. On the counter are bolts of cloths, canned goods, lamps, pots and pans, ladies’ hats, etc. DOWN LEFT, behind the counter, are shelves with more merchandise, including a section marked “Cures and Such.” In front of the counter there’s a stool. Another stool is positioned at the DOWNSTAGE end of the counter. At the UPSTAGE end of the counter is a headless clothing “dummy.” DOWN LEFT CENTER is a backless bench. Additional stage dressing: rugs, barrel, hanging lamp, pictures, etc., as desired. The FORESTAGE represents a country road.
IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

ACT ONE

1 AT RISE: TOM, about 15 or 16, is seated at the table playing a hand of solitaire. WIDOW STOCKADE is busy at the counter, folding napkins. As she works, she hums.

   TOM: Drat!

   WIDOW STOCKADE: What’s wrong, Tom?

   TOM: Another six. Just when I don’t want it.

   WIDOW STOCKADE: It’s only a game.

   TOM: I shouldn’t play cards with myself. I can’t win. Even when I cheat.

5 WIDOW STOCKADE: (Holds up napkins.) Aren’t these divine?

   TOM: What are they?

   WIDOW STOCKADE: What a question. They’re dinner napkins. Imported.

   TOM: Imported from where?

5 WIDOW STOCKADE: Possum Creek.

   TOM: What’s a man supposed to do with a dinner napkin?

   WIDOW STOCKADE: When you’re finished with dinner you wipe your mouth on it.

   TOM: (Holds up his wrist, indicating.) What’s the matter with the back of my shirt—sleeve?

   WIDOW STOCKADE: How like Grease Gulch. No refinement.

   HEPZIBAH: (ENTERS UP LEFT, hurries down the stairs in a “state”.) Oh! Oh! Oh!

   TOM: How do, Miz Canary.

   WIDOW STOCKADE: ‘Morning, Hepzibah.

   HEPZIBAH: (Too nervous to reply, she hurries UP RIGHT.) Oh! Oh! Oh! (EXITS UP RIGHT into the OFFICE.)

   TOM: Wonder what’s the matter with her?

   WIDOW STOCKADE: It probably has something to do with her daughter.

   TOM: Lucy?

   WIDOW STOCKADE: She doesn’t want to marry. It’s the talk of the town.

   TOM: You mean she wants to be an old maid?

   WIDOW STOCKADE: I mean she doesn’t want to marry her father’s choice. Whole town knows she’s in love with Lester Goodbe.

   TOM: Lester Goodbe. (Out to AUDIENCE.) My very best friend.
WIDOW STOCKADE: Only Lester is poorer than a church mouse.
TOM: (To his friend’s defense.) Lester’s got a good heart.

WIDOW STOCKADE: Try ringing that up on a cash register. Mayor Canary is dead set against a penniless husband for Lucy. (From inside the office comes the voice of MAYOR CANARY.)

MAYOR: (From OFF, inside the office.) What!?

HEPZIBAH: (From OFF, inside the office.) Calm yourself, Caesar.

MAYOR: (From OFF.) She’ll marry him! She’ll marry today! Fetch her down here!

HEPZIBAH: (From OFF.) But, Caesar, dear—

MAYOR: (From OFF.) Don’t you “Ceasar, dear” me. Move!

HEPZIBAH: (Runs ON UP RIGHT CENTER, plainly terrified of her bullying husband.) Oh! Oh! Oh!

TOM: How do, Miz Canary.

WIDOW STOCKADE: ‘Morning, Hepzibah.

HEPZIBAH: (Runs UP LEFT, up the stairs.) Oh! Oh! Oh!

MAYOR: (STEPS ON UP RIGHT CENTER from his office. He’s a big man, overbearing. Wears spectacles. Yells after HEPZIBAH.) It’s a daughter’s duty to respect her father’s wishes! If you brought her up proper, I wouldn’t have this problem! Hepzibah, you’ve spoiled that girl! It’s all your fault! (Notices TOM and WIDOW STOCKADE staring at him, frozen in fascination.) What are you two staring at!

(His powerful voice shatters their concentration. TOM immediately begins to play with the cards and WIDOW STOCKADE resumes folding napkins. MAYOR EXITS back to his office as BLOSSOM, a teenage girl, comes down the stairs, moves behind bench.)

BLOSSOM: What a day, what a day. Poor Lucy is beside herself.

TOM: Never can figure out why you gals make such a fuss about getting hitched. I reckon Otis ain’t so bad.

BLOSSOM: He ain’t so good, either.

TOM: He’s rich.

BLOSSOM: Rich! That’s all you men think about. You sound like Mayor Canary.

WIDOW STOCKADE: Not too loud, Blossom. (Points to office.) He might overhear.

BLOSSOM: Let him. It’s plumb cruel of Mayor Canary to force his only daughter to marry a man she doesn’t love.

WIDOW STOCKADE: (In sympathy, dabs at the corner of one eye with a hanky.) I shall never forget the day I got married. I was only 30. Practically a child bride.
TOM: And one week later you was a widow lady.

WIDOW STOCKADE: Alas.

TOM: It was in all the papers.

BLOSSOM: How did your husband die?

WIDOW STOCKADE: He was brutally attacked by a savage chicken.

BLOSSOM: How awful!

TOM: (To AUDIENCE.) I’ve heard of husbands being henpecked—but not to pieces. (LUCY, a charming, pretty and determined girl, ENTERS UP LEFT, hurries down the stairs followed by a distraught HEPZIBAH.)

HEPZIBAH: Lucy, oh, Lucy. Be good.

LUCY: No, no, no. It’s useless to argue, Mother. I want Lester Goodbe for a husband.

HEPZIBAH: Think of your father.

LUCY: You think of him.

HEPZIBAH: What a stubborn girl you are. What’s a mother to do? Oh! Oh! Oh! (Steps behind the registration desk, puts elbows to the wood and rests her chin in the cup of her hands. Moves her head from side to side in dismay, continuing to lament “Oh! Oh! Oh!”)

LUCY: I don’t mean to be stubborn. I don’t mean to be disobedient. But I will not marry a man father has selected. Especially when I don’t love him.

BLOSSOM: (Applauds.) Bravo, Lucy. Bravo.

TOM: Them’s my sentiments.

WIDOW STOCKADE: (Admiringly.) Such a strong-willed girl.

HEPZIBAH: Your father says you will marry Otis Lackginger and you will marry him today.

OTHERS: Today!? (LUCY sits on the bench, folds her arms in defiant fashion.)

LUCY: Never!

HEPZIBAH: Your wedding’s today, I tell you.

LUCY: Never, never— never!

MAYOR: (Storms IN from the office. His glasses are resting atop his head.) I heard that!

LUCY: Good. I won’t have to repeat it. (As MAYOR stomps to bench, BLOSSOM steps to counter, afraid of his anger.)

MAYOR: Enough of your sass, gal! You’ll do what I say.

LUCY: I love Lester Goodbe.

OTHERS: She loves Lester Goodbe.
MAYOR: I heard! (Softer tone.) Now, now, precious. Be nice to Daddy. Father knows best. Lester Goodbe is a nobody.

HEPZIBAH: He’s the sheriff’s nephew.

MAYOR: That’s what I said. A nobody.

TOM: You ain’t being fair to Lester, Mayor. He’s going places.

MAYOR: The sooner the better. (Softly, to LUCY.) With Otis you’ll have everything money can buy. Servants, respect, indoor plumbing.

LUCY: I don’t love Otis Lackinger.

MAYOR: Who’s talking about love? I’m talking about marriage.

WIDOW STOCKADE: Oh, Mayor Canary, what a cynical thing to say.

MAYOR: Mind your own business, Widow Stockade. Otherwise, I’ll raise the rent on your general store.

HEPZIBAH: You don’t mean that, Caesar.

MAYOR: I said it, didn’t I? I never say anything I don’t mean. Never did like the idea of a general store in the lobby. Ain’t natural.

TOM: But it’s different.

MAYOR: You keep out of this, Tom Sawyer Huckleberry Finn Jones.

OTHERS: Junior.

MAYOR: Yeah. “Junior.” (To AUDIENCE.) Silliest name I ever heard for a dumb kid.

LUCY: My mind is made up.

MAYOR: Well, unmake it.

BLOSSOM: A mind isn’t a bed, Mayor. You can’t make it and unmake it.

MAYOR: Who asked you?

HEPZIBAH: Be polite, Caesar.

MAYOR: I’m always polite and you shut up.

HEPZIBAH: Remember your high blood pressure.

MAYOR: You remember it.

WIDOW STOCKADE: I’ve the very thing for high blood pressure. (Searches the “Cures and Such” shelf and finds a small bottle.) Here we are. (Reads label.) “Norwegian Cod Liver Oil mixed with Syrup of Figs.”

OTHERS: Ugh!

WIDOW STOCKADE: I’ll pour out a tablespoon. (She does.)

MAYOR: As far as I’m concerned, you can pour it on the table. (Talking “sweetly,” he steps closer to LUCY.) I know why you’re upset, precious. It’s the heat. Hot weather always did make you a mite irksome. (Sits beside her and talks baby talk.) But I know my baby
girl. My Lucy—woosy always obeys her papa. My little princess would never do anything that made Daddy—waddy unhappy.

LUCY: (Stands.) If you don’t stop all this, I’ll run away!

HEPZIBAH: Lucy!

LUCY: I mean it. I’ll run away and never come back. (Stamps her foot.) I will, I will, I will. (MAYOR rises like an erupting volcano.)

MAYOR: You stop stamping your foot. You’ll wear out the shoe leather. If you run away, I’ll have the sheriff fetch you back.

LUCY: I will not marry Otis Lackginger and that is that!

MAYOR: Well, my girl, we’ll see about this. (Points to HEPZIBAH.) I said it before and I’ll say it again —this is all your fault.

BLOSSOM: You’re being unreasonable, Mayor.

MAYOR: Shut up, you! (BLOSSOM, startled and frightened by his outburst, jumps back against the counter, flinging out one arm.)

BLOSSOM: Oh!

(In flinging her arm, she manages to hit the tablespoon which WIDOW STOCKADE is holding in front of her face. Caught off guard, WIDOW STOCKADE takes the spoon in her mouth and swallows the medicine.)

WIDOW STOCKADE: Yeech! Yuck! Oooooow! Water, water. I need water. (Hurries OFF LEFT into her store.)

MAYOR: Hepzibah!

HEPZIBAH: Caesar?

MAYOR: (Points to LUCY.) Don’t let her out of your sight. I’ve got to see a man about a wedding.

TOM: Otis?

MAYOR: No, the preacher.

LUCY/BLOSSOM: Preacher! (MAYOR strides RIGHT.)

MAYOR: Always remember, Lucy, green is a restful color. Especially the long green. (Checks.) My spectacles? Where are my spectacles? Where’s the sheriff? I’ve been robbed.

HEPZIBAH: Nonsense, Caesar. (Points.) On your head.

MAYOR: (Drops them to eye level.) Who put them up there? Never mind. I’ll be back before you can spell Mississippi.

TOM: (Spells it out.) M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i.

MAYOR: I hate a smart-aleck kid. (EXITS RIGHT.)

LUCY: (Wails.) Ooooooh, Blossom.

BLOSSOM: Ooooooh, Lucy. (BLOSSOM comforts her.)

HEPZIBAH: Oh, dear.

TOM: Oh, shucks.
LUCY: Married to Otis Lackginger!
BLOSSOM: A fate worse than death.
TOM: You’ll have to take him for better or worse.
LUCY: Otis Lackginger is much worse than I take him for.

HEPZIBAH: (Hoping to calm the waters.) Look on the bright side, dear. After you’re married, a little stranger might arrive.
BLOSSOM: You mean a baby?
TOM: No, Otis’ brother. He’s a midget.
LUCY: Ooooh.

HEPZIBAH: (Moves in front of the registration desk.) Perhaps it won’t be so bad. Some men don’t live long after they marry.
LUCY: Mother, you don’t want me to marry Otis?
HEPZIBAH: I want you to be happy, Lucy. That’s all I’ve ever wanted, but I don’t want your father angry. He’s an absolute bear when he’s angry.
BLOSSOM: Don’t you fret, Lucy. Lester will think of something.
TOM: (Stands.) He’d better hurry. The preacher moves fast.
SHERIFF: (ENTERS RIGHT.) How do, one and all.
WIDOW STOCKADE: (ENTERS LEFT with a glass of water and sips.) That Norwegian Cod Liver Oil packs quite a punch. Tasted like I swallowed my tongue.
SHERIFF: Howdy, Widow.
WIDOW STOCKADE: Howdy, Sheriff.

LUCY: Come on, Blossom. We’ll sneak out the back way. (Takes BLOSSOM’S hand and starts to pull her toward the entry into the general store.)
SHERIFF: Hold on there, Miss Lucy. Your father says I got to watch you ‘til he gets back.
BLOSSOM: Sheriff, you don’t understand.
SHERIFF: What don’t I understand?
TOM: Lucy is getting hitched.
SHERIFF: Hitched?
OTHERS: Married.

SHERIFF: (Delighted.) You don’t say! It’s finally going to happen. Well, I’ll be pappy to a polecat if that ain’t the sweetest news I’ve heard this year. (Opens wide his arms to embrace LUCY.) Let me give you a big hug, Sugar. Soon we’ll be kin. My little niece-in-law. Lester is the luckiest boy in Grease Gulch.
TOM: No, no, Sheriff.
BLOSSOM: She isn’t marrying your nephew.
SHERIFF: Huh?
HEPZIBAH: She’s marrying Otis Lackginger.
SHERIFF: (Aghast.) Nooooo.
OTHERS: Yeeees.
SHERIFF: How come you want to marry Otis Lackginger? Why, he couldn’t get a date on a tombstone.
LUCY: I don’t want to marry him. My father wants to.
SHERIFF: The Mayor wants to marry Otis Lackginger? (To HEPZIBAH.) That’s bigamy, ain’t it?
WINDE STOCKADE: (Looks RIGHT and points.) Here he comes now.
BLOSSOM: The preacher?
HEPZIBAH: Caesar?
SHERIFF: The Mayor?
WINDE STOCKADE: No, Lester Goodbe.
SHERIFF: My nephew.
LUCY: My love!
LESTER: (ENTERS RIGHT carrying a huge bunch of flowers that practically cover his face. He’s a young cowpoke who we like at once,) I picked this bouquet for you, Lucy. Wild West Wildflowers.
LUCY: (In front of him.) No time for flowers, Lester. We’ve got a problem.
LESTER: Anybody got a vase?
WINDE STOCKADE: I have just the thing. A wooden bucket. (Crosses, takes the flowers and EXITS into her store.)
LESTER: Gosh, Lucy. You get prettier and prettier.
SHERIFF: Better stiffen your spine, Nephew. There’s bad news a-comin’.
TOM: That’s for sure.
LESTER: What are you talking about?
HEPZIBAH: Lucy is getting married.
LESTER: Everybody knows that. We ain’t set no date yet.
BLOSSOM: She’s not marrying you.
LESTER: How’s that?
LUCY: (Drifts back to the bench and sits, distressed.) Fate has been unkind, Lester.
LESTER: Fate who?
BLOSSOM: Her father is forcing her to marry Otis Lackginger.
LESTER: Otis Lackginger! Why, he couldn’t get a date on a tombstone.
HEPZIBAH: Sheriff already said that.
LUCY: Boo-hoo, boo-hoo.
TOM: Don’t just stand there, Lester. Do something.
LESTER: I reckon to.

BLOSSOM: That’s the spirit.

LESTER: (Crosses to the bench and drops to one knee. Takes LUCY’S hand.) Dear Lucy, I will never allow such a marriage to take place.

LUCY: Boo-hoo.

LESTER: You and me are made for each other. We belong together.

Two peas in a pod.

HEPZIBAH: Two lovebirds in a tree.
SHERIFF: Two fish in a stream.
BLOSSOM: Two sheep in a field.
TOM: Two pills in a box.

LUCY: Ooooooh, Lester, what are we going to do?

MAYOR: (Storms ON RIGHT.) You’re going to do exactly what I say! (To LESTER.) Get up, you galoot. No penniless cowpoke is marrying my daughter.

SHERIFF: Now, hold on, Mayor. My nephew is a good lad.

MAYOR: I’m the Mayor. You’re my employee. As Mayor to employee, I have only one word to say to you— shut up! (All cringe.)

TOM: That’s two words.

MAYOR: You shut up, too.

LESTER: (Stands.) Mayor Canary, I may be poor and I may be a cowpoke, but I’m honest.

MAYOR: Honest don’t put steak and potatoes on a plate. Someday, Lester, someone is going to knock you conscious.

HEPZIBAH: Be courteous, Caesar.

MAYOR: I’m always courteous. (To LESTER.) Get out of my way, Moosebrain. (Shoves LESTER aside and sits beside LUCY.) Now, gal, I’ve pleaded and I’ve begged and time’s run out. Otis Lackginger is a rich man. He’ll give you a nice home and a Persian cat.

LUCY: I don’t want a nice home. I don’t want a Persian cat. I want Lester. (As the MAYOR continues, others hang on every word. WIDOW STOCKADE returns and stands behind counter.)

MAYOR: Are you out of your senses? (Puts his hand to her forehead.) Hmmmm. You are a mite feverish.

WIDOW STOCKADE: I know what she needs. “Pink Pills for Pale People.”

For preview only
MAYOR: She don’t need no pink pills. (To LUCY.) I’ve got plans to expand this hotel. Having a rich son-in-law in the family is a wise step.

LESTER: I’d like to step on that suggestion.

MAYOR: Sheriff, if you can’t control your mangy nephew, I’ll get a new sheriff.

SHERIFF: Now, now, Lester. Behave. (Crosses to LESTER and guides him in front of the registration desk.)

BLOSSOM: (Points RIGHT.) Here he comes!

LESTER: Otis Lackginer?

BLOSSOM: No, the preacher.

OTHERS: (Except MAYOR.) Preacher!

PREACHER: (ENTERS RIGHT. He is a long, thin man dressed in black and a book in his grip. Somber.) Where is the deceased?

HEPZIBAH: No, no, Preacher. No one’s dead.

MAYOR: (Stands, irritated.) I told you before. It’s a wedding.

PREACHER: In that case, who is the bride?

OTHERS: Lucy Canary!

PREACHER: (To LUCY.) My congratulations, dear. (Crosses to LESTER and pumps his hand.) You’re a fortunate young man, Lester.

BLOSSOM: No, Preacher. He ain’t getting married.

PREACHER: But you said Lucy was the bride.

BLOSSOM: She is.

SHERIFF: But she ain’t marrying my nephew.

PREACHER: Lucy is getting married, but not to Lester Goodbe? My, my. This is quite a surprise. (To HEPZIBAH.) Who is the fortunate groom?

OTHERS: Otis Lackginger!

PREACHER: (Amazed.) Otis Lackginger? Why, he couldn’t get a date—(To AUDIENCE.) Never mind.

WIDOW STOCKADE: (Points RIGHT.) Here he comes now!

HEPZIBAH: It’s Otis!

MAYOR: (Faces RIGHT and opens his arms as welcome.) Behold the bridegroom! (Long pause. Nothing.)

TOM: What’s taking him so long?

MAYOR: Come along, Otis, you’re doing splendidly. Almost here. That’s it… few steps more… good, good… keep coming… left foot, right foot… excellent… you’re looking fit.

OTIS: (ENTERS RIGHT. He’s a decrepit gentleman with a long white beard. He’s bent over and he walks with the aid of two canes. His
movements are crablike and he resembles a giant spider. He’s hard of hearing and, if possible, he uses an ear trumpet. LUCY is appalled and steps to BLOSSOM for safety. In a whiny voice.) I should have stayed in bed, but my love for Sweet Lucy Canary overcame my aches and pains. Widow Stockade?

WIDOW STOCKADE: Yes, Mr. Lackginger?

OTIS: You got any more of that “New England Worm Eradicator”?

WIDOW STOCKADE: Two bottles.

OTIS: I’ll take them both. When it comes to getting rid of worms, that “Eradicator” can’t be beat.

BLOSSOM: (Grimaces.) We’ll take your word for it.

OTIS: I got me some of that Liquid Beef Tonic down at the medicine show, but it didn’t do me much good. I spent most of the night jumping up and down.

SHERIFF: Why?

OTIS: I was supposed to shake the bottle and I forgot.

LESTER: (To MAYOR.) And this is the man you want your daughter to marry?

MAYOR: A rich man is a wise man and a wife with a wise husband has no cause for complaint. (Brisk.) Don’t just stand there, Preacher. It’s marrying time.

LUCY: No!

LESTER: Lucy! (Moves for LUCY, but SHERIFF holds him back.)

SHERIFF: It’s too late, Nephew. Courage, courage.

LESTER: Stand beside me, Lucy. Get ready to pucker up. (Like a zombie, LUCY moves toward OTIS.) How lovely you are. Hee, hee, hee. My sweet plum.

PREACHER: (Reads from book.) Beloved, we are gathered here to pay homage to the memory of our dearly departed brother and sister—

TOM: Wrong page, Preacher.

PREACHER: (Checks.) What? Oh, yes. Silly of me. Sorry about that.

BLOSSOM: Not half as sorry as Lucy.

PREACHER: (Finds correct page.) This is it. We are gathered here to join this, uh, man and this woman —(LESTER stares, numb. LUCY, too, is numb. HEPZIBAH and WIDOW STOCKADE sob.)

MAYOR: Speed it up, Preacher. I don’t want her to change her mind. If you wrap it up in 60 seconds, I’ll throw in a rib dinner with buttered corn.

PREACHER: (Quickly.) Do you, Otis Lackginger, take Lucy Canary to be your lawful wife, to have and to hold—
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES ONSTAGE

ACT ONE: Table with chairs, registration desk with ledger and pen. Optional stairs, store counter with merchandise: blankets, magazines, funnel, bolts of cloth, canned goods, clothing, etc. Shelves with more stock, including shelf marked “Cures and Such” with small medicine bottles, boxes of pills. Stools, headless clothing dummy, backless bench. Additional stage dressing, as desired such as rugs, cracker or pickle barrel, hanging lamp, pictures, etc.

ACT TWO: Same as ACT ONE, plus a large cardboard tooth on a table.

PROPERTIES BROUGHT ON

ACT ONE:
Cards (TOM)
Napkins, hanky, spoon, glass of water, bucket, store goods, funnel, large white medical smock (WIDOW STOCKADE)
Eyeglasses (MAYOR)
Book (PREACHER)
Two canes, optional ear trumpet (OTIS)
Large bouquet of flowers (LESTER)
Magazine (BLOSSOM)
Pocket watch, carpetbag or suitcase with machete or saw, lantern, business card huge cardboard cutout of hypodermic syringe, battered hat (DR. PILLPURGE)
Shopping baskets (MRS. CORNSTARCH, MRS. CORNSILK)
Hatboxes (ALBERTA, CASSANDRA, TALLULAH)
Handbag with optional hand bell (MISS STRICT)

ACT TWO:
Small table with medicine bottles (DR. ABRACADABRA)
Drum, sign reading “Dr. Abracadabra’s Medicine Show”, plastic bottle with label (PRINCESS)
Feather duster, bed sheet, wedding veil, flowers (WIDOW STOCKADE)
Tray (MARJORIE)
Toothache bandana (ALBERTA)
Junk jewelry, fringed shawl, earrings, kerchief, dress (HAGG)
Dollar (MAYOR)
Suitcase (LUCY)
Medical suitcase with giant pliers, fake hand/foot, heart/liver, sausage links (socks) (DR. PILLPURGE)
Wax candle (HEPZIBAH)
Marriage license (SHERIFF)

SOUND EFFECTS
Lively music.

LIGHTING
Flashy-flickering lights, lighting for forestage

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS
Whatever would work for a “mellerdrammer” works here. Long skirts or dresses for the females, jeans and western shirts for most of the males. Special attention should be given to the GYPSY costume and PRINCESS needs an Indian costume with, maybe, a feathered headdress. MARJORIE needs to have an apron and hat for ACT TWO. ABRACADABRA and PILLPURGE wear whit Doctor’s coats.

ABOUT STAGING FARCE
The rules haven’t changed from Moliére’s time. Everything should be somewhat overdone, almost cartoonish. There must never be a “slow” or “dead” spot. Something is always happening. The dialogue moves briskly—and loudly. Characters do not enter and exit: they make an entrance; they make an exit.

MISCELLANEOUS
PILLS INTO FUNNEL: The narrow end of the funnel is blocked. This way, if enough pills are poured in they will “overflow” and get a laugh. If you don’t wish to do this business, simply pretend pills are being poured into the funnel.

HUGE HYPODERMIC SYRINGE: It’s one—dimensional, made from cardboard or wood and painted to look like the real thing (ditto for the dental pliers). Dr. Pillpurge needs two hands to carry it.

CUTOUT MEDICINE BOTTLES: For Medicine Show. If they are cutouts you eliminate the problem of dropping them (bottles). Or, the few bottles can be small, which will also reduce the risk of dropping them.

OPERATION BEHIND THE SCREEN: This slapstick routine was enormously popular in Moliére’s time (17th Century). Supposedly, we are watching an incredible operation where everything is taken out and then “put back in.” The hands and foot can be cutouts, ditto for a heart. It always gets a big laugh so don’t be afraid to “add on”—an arm, a leg, a wig, a big eye, etc. For a more “elaborate” touch: Dim the stage lights and have the “light” be a lantern or high—powered flashlight. It’s placed some distance
behind the sheet. Thus, we see the mad operation in silhouette.

BEATING UP SNAG: Play it for laughs—like a TV wrestling match. Snag might run off the stage and into audience with Lester and Sheriff in pursuit.

SPEECHLESS LUCY: The actress portraying Lucy is frequently on stage as the focus of attention, but speechless. Actress “must stay in scene,” observing and reacting. This goes for any actor who is in a scene, but without dialogue. They, too, must stay in the scene.

ABOUT THE JOKES: The script is filled with gags, puns, groaners, absurdities. Some jokes will bring a howl; others will fall flat. This will vary from performance to performance. The point is this—treat the jokes, the good, the bad, the indifferent, like normal dialogue. In other words—don’t “set up a joke and wait for the laugh.” Once the joke is out, move on to the next one.
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

We encourage you to read the entire script before making your final decision.

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