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IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

Is There a Doctor in the House?

A bluegrass, back-home
country, two act musical comedy

adapted from Molière
by Tim Kelly

music by
Bill Francoeur



Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Contemporary Drama Service

PO Box 7710 • Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710

PRODUCTION NOTES

ABOUT STAGING FARCE

The rules haven't changed from Moliere's time. Everything should be somewhat overdone, almost cartoonish. There must never be a "slow" or "dead" spot. Something is always happening. The dialog moves briskly — and loudly. Characters do not enter and exit; they make an entrance; they make an exit.

PROPS

ON STAGE: Table with (2) chairs, registration desk (or table) 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 (2), headless clothing dummy, backless bench. Additional stage dressing, as desired, e.g. rug(s), cracker or pickle barrel, hanging lamp, pictures, etc.

PERSONAL & BROUGHT ON, Act I:

TOM — cards

WIDOW — napkins, hanky, spoon, glass of water, bucket, store goods, funnel, large white medical smock

MAYOR — eyeglasses

PREACHER — book

OTIS — (2) canes, long white beard, optional ear trumpet

LESTER — flowers

BLOSSOM — magazine

DR. PILLPURGE — white medical smock, pocket watch, carpetbag or suitcase with machete or saw, lantern, business card. Huge cardboard cutout of hypodermic syringe, battered hat

MRS. CORNSTARCH & MRS. CORNSILK — shopping baskets

ALBERTA, CASSANDRA, TALLULAH — hatboxes

MISS STRICT — handbag with optional hand bell

PERSONAL & BROUGHT ON, Act II:

DR. ABRACADABRA — white medical smock, small table with medicine bottles

PRINCESS — drum, sign reading "Dr. Abracadabra's Medicine Show," plastic bottle with label

WIDOW — feather duster, bedsheet, wedding veil, flowers
MARJORIE — waitress apron, cap, tray
ALBERTA — toothache bandanna, giant tooth
GYPSY HAGG — junk jewelry, fringed shawl, earrings, kerchief,
dress for Lucy
SNAG — medical smock
MAYOR — dollar
LUCY — suitcase
DR. PILLPURGE — medical suitcase with giant pliers, fake
hand/foot, heart/liver, sausage links (socks)
HEPZIBAH — lighted wax candle
SHERIFF — marriage license

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 Moliere’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 the 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 dialog. 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 dialog. 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.

COSTUMES: Whatever would work for a "mellerdrummer" 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.

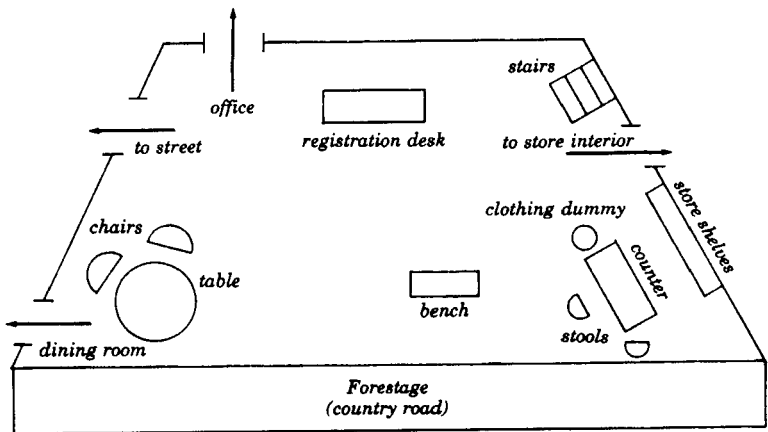
SETTING: The main action of the play takes place in the "Grease Gulch Boarding House Hotel and General Store" — when the West was wild.

ACT I: A crazy morning in summer

ACT II: A crazy afternoon

FLOOR PLAN

(The Boarding House Hotel and Grease Gulch General Store)



GREASE GULCH CHARACTERS

(In Order of Speaking)

TOM SAWYER HUCKLEBERRY FINN JONES, JR. — Young citizen.

WIDOW STOCKADE — Runs the general store. Her husband was picked to death by a hen.

HEPZIBAH — Mayor's wife.

MAYOR CAESAR CANARY — Owns the hotel. Something of a tyrant.

BLOSSOM — Lucy's friend, pretty.

LUCY CANARY — Mayor's independent teenage daughter. In love with Lester.

SHERIFF — Lester's uncle.

LESTER GOODBE — Cowpoke, in love with Lucy.

PREACHER — Likes weddings, funerals, too.

OTIS LACKGINGER — Needs a doctor.

DR. PILLPURGE — Town quack.

MRS. CORNSILK — Citizen.

MRS. CORNSTARCH — Citizen.

MARJORIE — Snag's young wife.

SNAG — Lazy cowboy who becomes "a famous doctor."

MISS STRICT — School marm.

ALBERTA — Pupil with toothache.

CASSANDRA — Pupil with tummy ache.

TALLULAH — Pupil with headache.

DR. ABRACADABRA — Medicine show quack.

PRINCESS FALLING STAR — His assistant.

GYPSY HAGG — Not to be trusted.

AMANDA FLIMFLAM — Lawyer from Denver.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS — Pupils, citizens.

SONG LIST

Act One

1. "Is There a Doctor in the House?" (*Company*) 1
2. "Who's Talkin' 'Bout Love?" (*Mayor, Citizens*) 6
3. "We Belong Together" (*Lucy, Lester, Blossom, Hepzibah, Sheriff, Tom*) 14
4. "Doctor Pillpurge Is Here!"
(*Dr. Pillpurge/Citizens*) 21
5. "Love Is the Best Dang Doctor" (*Blossom, Tom*) 33
6. "Pills, Pills!" (*Snag, Widow, Lester, Sheriff, Mayor, Alberta, Cassandra, Tallulah, Miss Strickt, Mrs. Cornstarch, Mrs. Cornsilk, Pillpurge, Citizens*) 41
7. "Is There a Doctor in the House?" — Reprise
(*Citizens*) 44
8. "Entr'acte" 45

Act Two

9. "Medicine Show Today!" (*Princess, Dr. Abracadabra, Citizens*) 45
10. "I'm Goin' Back to Punchin' Cows"
(*Snag, Cowboy Chorus*) 56
11. "We Belong Together" — Reprise (*Lucy, Lester*) 62
12. "The Professional Way" (*Pillpurge, Abracadabra, Snag, Hagg*) 66
13. "The Operation" — Blue Danube Waltz 70
14. "Chase Music" — The Professional Way 72
15. "Love Is the Best Dang Doctor" — Underscore 75
16. "Medicine Show Today!" — Reprise
(*Doctors, Citizens*) 78
17. Curtain Call — "Is There a Doctor in the House?" (*Company*) 81
18. "Exit Music" 82

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ACT I

PROLOGUE: Entire company On-stage in front of the curtain.
House lights down. When lights come up the entire company
sings.

SONG #1: "Is There a Doctor in the House?"

COMPANY: Is there a doctor in the house? Lordy Lord,
I'm a-needin' me a sawbones ... real bad.
Is there a doctor in the house, one I kin afford?
I've conjured up the worst affliction ever had!

WOMEN: I got an ache in my back, a crick in my neck.
Sweatin' head to toe and my heart's a-racin'.

MEN: My body's all a-quiver, startin' in to shiver.
If he don't come quick, why it's death I'm facin'!

COMPANY: Is there a doctor in the house? My oh my,
I'm a-needin' me a sawbones ... right quick!
Is there a doctor in the house? I could die.
I'm burnin' up with fever, lookin' mighty sick!

WOMEN: I'm feelin' dizzy, feelin' stuffed, sinuses are
blocked,
Got a poundin' in my head and it sounds like
thunder.

MEN: Stomach's talking back, lordy where's that
quack?
If he don't come quick, I'll be six feet under!

COMPANY: Is there a doctor in the house, golly gee,
I'm a-needin' me a sawbones, ... and how!
Is there a doctor in the house, he'd agree,
I'm headed fer the undertaker's place right now!

1 **WOMEN:** **I been a-coughin' up a storm, wheezin' in the**
2 **night,**
3 **Bones are feelin' brittle and my knees are**
4 **shakin'.**
5 **MEN:** **Tongue is tied in knots, my blood's got clots.**
6 **And if that ain't enough, I got the ding dang**
7 **trots!**
8
9 **COMPANY:** **Is there a doctor in the house? Lordy Lord,**
10 **I'm a-needin' me a sawbones ... real bad.**
11 **Is there a doctor in the house, one I kin afford?**
12 **I've conjured up the worst affliction ever had!**
13 **I've conjured up the worst affliction ever had!**
14 *(End of song)*

15
16 **SETTING:** Lobby of "Grease Gulch Boarding House Hotel and
17 General Store." Down Right is the entrance into the dining
18 room. In front of this entrance, Upstage a little, is a table with
19 two chairs. Stage Right is the entrance from the street. Up
20 Right Center is the doorway to the hotel office. Up Center is the
21 registration desk [or table]. Registration ledger, pen, etc. Up
22 Left are stairs that lead to the second story of the hotel [a few
23 steps will suffice, or the "stairs" can be eliminated altogether].
24 Stage Left is the entrance into the interior of the General Store.
25 However, much of the merchandise is on display in the lobby.
26 There's a counter [or long table] Left Center. On the counter are
27 bolts of cloth, canned goods, lamps, pots and pans, ladies' hats,
28 etc. Down Left, behind the counter, are shelves with more
29 merchandise, including a section marked "Cures and Such." In
30 front of the counter there's a stool. Another stool is positioned
31 at the Downstage end of the counter. At the Upstage end of the
32 counter is a headless clothing dummy. Down Left Center is a
33 backless bench. Additional stage dressing: rugs, barrel,
34 hanging lamp, pictures, etc., as desired. The Forestage
35 represents a country road.

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

4 **TOM:** Drat!

5 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** What's wrong, Tom?

6 **TOM:** Another six. Just when I don't want it.

7 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** It's only a game.

8 **TOM:** I shouldn't play cards with myself. I can't win. Even
9 when I cheat.

10 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** (*Holds up napkins.*) Aren't these divine?

11 **TOM:** What are they?

12 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** What a question. They're dinner
13 napkins. Imported.

14 **TOM:** Imported from where?

15 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** Possum Creek.

16 **TOM:** What's a man supposed to do with a dinner napkin?

17 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** When you're finished with dinner you
18 wipe your mouth with it.

19 **TOM:** (*Holding up his wrist, indicating*) What's the matter with
20 the back of my shirt-sleeve?

21 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** How like Grease Gulch. No refinement.
22 (*HEPZIBAH, wife of the hotel's owner, hurries down the stairs.*
23 *She's in a "state."*)

24 **HEPZIBAH:** Oh! Oh! Oh!

25 **TOM:** How do, Miz Canary.

26 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** 'Morning, Hepzibah. (*HEPZIBAH is too*
27 *nervous to reply, hurries into office.*)

28 **TOM:** Lucy?

29 **WIDOW STOCKADE:** She doesn't want to marry. It's the talk
30 of the town.

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

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

35 **TOM:** Lester Goodbe. (*Out to audience*) My very best friend.

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