

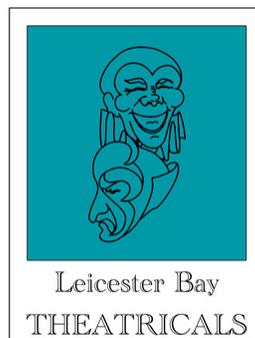
A five-act comedy by

Ludvig Holberg

Acting Edition adapted by

Jerry Argetsinger

(from the translation by Jerry Argetsinger and Sven Rossel)



Salt Lake City

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JEAN DE FRANCE

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Jean de France

By
Ludvig Holberg

Characters in the Comedy

JERONIMUS, a Merchant

FRANDS, Father of Jean

MAGDELONE, his Wife

JEAN DE FRANCE, his 20 year old son

PIERRE, Servant to Jean

ELSEBET, Daughter of Jeronimus

ANTONIUS, Beloved of Elsebet

MARTHE, Maid to Elsebet

ESPEN, Servant to Elsebet

ARV, Stable Boy to Frands (indeterminate age)

GAMBLER

Setting – The streets of Copenhagen, spring, 1723. The action starts mid-morning, advancing with each Act break, and concluding early evening the same day. While the entire play can take place in one place, it is possible to stage each act in a different location.

Many of the actions described in the stage directions were developed by the cast of the premiere American production at the Rochester Institute of Technology, 2015. These are incorporated into the script as they represent a set of successful staging choices to which the audience responded favorably. Each production is free to develop their own solutions.

A Note About the Language – This adaptation was carefully constructed so everyone in the audience can understand all action and dialogue without understanding any French. The joke is that none of the characters speak fluent, or even conversational French. They “speak at” French with varying degrees of success. Of course audience members who understand French will enjoy an additional dimension of comedy.

[Brackets] will contain translations of foreign terms. They are not to be spoken by the actors. Sometimes the brackets contain a single short word or phrase, in this case they follow the foreign word immediately. Other times there is a long phrase or set of phrases defined. This bracket set will follow at the end of the line of dialog.

Jean de France received its American premiere at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester NY, on April 9, 2015. It was directed by Gerald Argetsinger; Projection design was by Marla Schweppe; Projection modeler was Damian Kwiatkowski; Costumer was Damita Peace; Technical Director was David Slice; and Lighting was by Rosalee Hacker. The Assistant to the Director was James Kemper and the Stage Manager was Leslie Bowen. The cast was as follows:

JERONIMUS Mohamed Eldessouki
 FRANDS Harlan Haskins
 MAGDELONE Jill Lanese
 ELSEBET Alicia Cobb
 JEAN DE FRANCE David Martellock
 PIERRE Brandon Datko
 ANTONIUS Daniel Zhou
 ESPEN Ken Nepomuceno
 MARTHE Camela Kiernan
 ARV Joshua Schussler
 GAMBLER Devin Murray

Pronunciation:

Aabenraa: ō-bĕn-rō
 Bernikov: bear-nĕ-cow
 Birthe: beer-ta
 Copenhagen: Cō-pĕn-hag-ĕn (never "hawg")
 Elsebet: ĕl-sā-bĕt
 Frands: frāns
 Hans: hāns (never "ah" as in the German)
 Jochum: yō-kūm
 Lisbed: Līs-bĕth
 Marthe: mar-tă
 Magdelone: mag-dĕ-lōn-ă
 Pedersen: Pĕd-er-sen
 Rix-dollar: rĕks-dollar

JEAN DE FRANCE by **Ludvig Holberg**. Acting Edition by **Jerry Argetsinger** from the translation by Argetsinger and **Sven Rossel**. 8M 3W. 1 Exterior. Running Time: 1:45. (For production by Professional, Amateur and Educational Theatres.) "Jean de France" is Ludvig Holberg's character comedy written as an homage to Moliere, following the trappings of Commedia dell Arte. Hans Frandsen is excited that his 20 year old son, Hans, is returning home from a three month sojourn to Paris, but his neighbor, and future in-law, Jeronimus is skeptical. Rumor has it that Hans has assimilated all too many aspects of pretentious French culture starting with his name, which he has changed to "Jean de France." When Jean enters, his attire, attitudes and language demonstrate that he has become obsessed with putting on French airs. The boy's fiancée, Elsebet is horrified by his behavior and has also fallen in love with an honorable Dane, Antonius. Her maid and house boy agree to develop an intrigue that will reveal the ridiculousness of Jean de France's behavior and end their engagement. They devise a series of ludicrous "new Parisian fashions" all which Jean assimilates making his behavior even more outlandish. Humiliated, Jean vows to return to Paris allowing Elsebet to marry Antonius.

ORDER #3109.

Jean de France

Act One

Morning, a street in Copenhagen

(JERONIMUS and FRANDS enter from opposite directions.)

JERONIMUS: Good morning, neighbor. What are you doing up so early?

FRANDS: *(With a walking stick or cane.)* I had business in the marketplace.

JERONIMUS: What's new in the marketplace?

FRANDS: Not much, expect that they were hauling some man off to debtor's prison.

JERONIMUS: That's nothing. Why were they jailing him?

FRANDS: Someone said that he couldn't pay his debts.

JERONIMUS: That's nothing new.

FRANDS: It seems he took a long trip abroad and ran up an enormous stack of bills.

JERONIMUS: That's not new either. Just listen, dear neighbor, look at your own predicament. You have a son . . . I won't say any more. I just hope that my prediction doesn't come true. What happens to him affects me as much as it does you, for I've promised him to my daughter Elsebet. But you wouldn't listen to my advice. He had to have his way. He wants to travel, he gets to travel, even though he's only a nineteen-year old child!

FRANDS: May I remind you, neighbor, he turned twenty last January.

JERONIMUS: I can remember when he was born. It was the same time my beloved Birthe died. But that doesn't matter. Even if he is twenty years old, isn't it foolish to let him go running off to France?

FRANDS: I won't argue about whether or not it's dangerous, but I know that most young men in this country to go abroad at his age.

JERONIMUS: You're absolutely right, dear neighbor, and most of them end up just like that fellow you saw in the marketplace—ready to be hanged for their debts. Why shouldn't your son hang as well as another?

FRANDS: There's no danger of that, before he left he assured me of his honorable intentions.

JERONIMUS: Don't they all! I don't know how he's living in Paris, but I know one thing: I don't like his letters at all! He calls my daughter Elsebet "Isabelle." Instead of Hans he calls himself "Jean," and he calls me "Jerome"! He can call himself what he pleases as long as he calls my daughter and me by our Christian names!

FRANDS: My dear neighbor, that's the style! Young men do that to show off that they've learned a foreign language.

JERONIMUS: I don't dispute whether or not it's the style. I merely ask, is it a reasonable style? If a Frenchman named "Jean" visited this country and changed his name to "Hans," wouldn't his countrymen think he was crazy? It's a wonderful thing to learn a foreign language, but not until we've mastered our own; it's a wonderful thing to visit foreign countries, but not until we've gathered some years and maturity, not until we've earned enough capital to live on our interest; or to learn a profession we can't learn here at home. But here it's become some kind of right for poor middle-class children to go on such trips at random and destroy their families on the pretext of learning a language, which for just a few rix-dollars they can learn from a language teacher at home! Most of them become spoiled and learn nothing but crazy fashions,

which they bring back to infect the homeland. I can name at least a dozen fine fellows who studied for the ministry, who following the fashion, traveled abroad and threw away their Christianity, right up to the Catechism; threw away their money, and brought back all sorts of strange political ideas. They walk around with their *Bonjour* starving themselves until they fall into melancholy and drunkenness. The parents see their children corrupted and themselves destroyed. So, go on and laugh at me, dear neighbor. Your son has already spent more than fifteen hundred rix-dollars in France. You say it's taught him to speak French, but you haven't said anything about how much Latin he's forgotten. I can see that in the letters he's written to me. What the devil am I doing to do with French letters that I don't understand? First I have to pay postage; next I have to give Jan Baptist a bottle of wine to translate them into German; and then I can hardly understand them.

FRANDS: It won't do us any good to talk about it, neighbor; we can't change what's already happened.

Besides, it's not my fault; my wife insisted on it.

JERONIMUS: For shame! When you blame your wife you're merely blaming yourself. It's just as disgraceful for a man to say, "I'm ruined, but it's not my fault, it's what my wife wanted."

FRANDS: My dear neighbor, you're much too peevish. I'm not ruined yet, thank heaven. My son's coming home, so you can just calm down. He left Paris four weeks ago; so let that be the end of it.

JERONIMUS: End of it!

(Laughs.)

End of it? You'll learn, neighbor, you'll learn. Remember Mr. Kalf's son who travelled abroad a few years ago acting like a prince entertaining the ministers at all the courts. But he no sooner came home than he was forced to sell his horses, carriages, coachman, servants, all his extravagances and put on his old peasant clothes again. Maybe your son will do the same. Just try to give him beer bread soup for breakfast and see if he doesn't say, "I became accustomed to hot chocolate in Holland." Try to give him good Danish barley porridge and see if he doesn't cringe and the next night dine with a French chef! If they only brought back one nation's madness it wouldn't be so bad; that they come home pieced together with all of the absurdities of England, Germany, France and Italy. In the morning they want their chocolate, "Like I had in Holland;" in the evening they want to play games with their mistress, "Like I did in France." When they go on an errand in town they want a lackey with them, "Like I had in Berlin." Before they go to church they ask whether or not there's music, "Like there was in Italy." They think everything that's foreign is stylish and smart, even when they're being hauled off to debtor's prison because they can't pay their bills!

FRANDS: Now, now neighbor, it will surely be better than you think. Hasn't it been a long time since you got a letter from my son?

JERONIMUS: It must have been about four weeks.

FRANDS: He'd already left Paris four weeks ago.

JERONIMOUS: That's possible. His last letter was postmarked from Rouen—or perhaps I should say "Ruin." Isn't that somewhere in France?

FRANDS: Yes. From there he was going to sail home.

JERONIMOUS: Rouen is an ugly name. But here comes your stable boy, Arv, completely out-of-breath. I wonder what he wants.

ARV: *(Enters oblivious to the two men and crosses Down Stage.)* I swear I'd give a rix-dollar to have my

master at home for Hans Frandsen has arrived and no one can understand a word he says. He no sooner walked in than he asked, "Where is mon pear?" I couldn't believe such a question, for who the devil can find a ripe pear in the month of May? I answered, "There aren't any in this country this time of year." He was bewildered and looked as though he'd never before seen a Danish orchard. Then he asked about this "tray share mare." I told him he could surely find her at Halland Square because that's where they keep the horses. Then he called me a dog's name "Garson" and other names I'm afraid to mention.

FRANDS: What news, Arv?

ARV: A whole sackful.

FRANDS: Good or bad?

ARV: Both good and bad. Hans Frandsen has come home from the West Indies, but . . .

FRANDS: (*Interrupting him.*) The West Indies?

ARV: I believe it's from the West Indies because he's gone completely crazy. Or maybe he's pregnant. After all, the first thing he craved was a ripe pear.

FRANDS: Otherwise how is he? How does he look?

ARV: He looks strange. I don't know if you've seen a Jack of Clubs, but that's how he looks. He has on a red coat and a hat on his head that's wider than six of mine. It's just as wide as one a clown wears. He doesn't have to joke about it ahead of time, though, he'll be a cuckold soon enough. But I have to run and deliver this letter for him.

FRANDS: Who's the letter for?

ARV: (*Takes a letter out of his hat.*) Someone named, "Moons."

FRANDS: (*Grabs the letter and read haltingly without any attempt at a French accent.*) Let me see that. "*A Mons. Monsieur de Pedersen, Auditeur de la première Classe, in Copenhague.*" Oh! This must be for his good friend, Mr. Pedersen. You'd have run around for a long time looking for a man named Moons. Where is my son?

ARV: He'll be here in a moment. Right now he's in the Green Room fixing his wig in front of the mirror. I have to run.

(ARV rushes out as the two men look after him. Behind them JEAN DE FRANCE enters singing and practicing his dance steps as he promenades down the street.)

JEAN: (*No melody is specified. This well-known children's song works perfectly:*)

*Frère Jacques, frère Jacques,
Dormez-vous ? Dormez-vous ?
Sonnez les matines! Sonnez les matines!
Ding, dang, dong. Ding, dang, dong.*

I can't quite remember the *bougre de pagrad* that *Monsieurs Blondis* recently taught me. *Pardi*, it's a *grand Malheur*. [*bougre de pagrad*: dance steps; *grand Malheur*: a great misfortune;]

(Sees the two men.)

Mais voilà mon pere et mon pere-in-law; bon matin, Messieurs! Comment vive ma chère Isabelle?

[But there I see my father and my father-in-law; good morning gentlemen, how is my dear Elsebet?]

JERONIMUS: Listen to me, Hans Frandsen. I was born on Christen Bernikov Street, as was my father. There

has never been an Isabelle or Fidelle in our house; my name is Jeronimus Christophersen and my daughter's name is Elsebet, as God is my witness.

JEAN: It's all the same, *mon cher* papa-in-law. Elsebet is "Isabelle" or "Belle." However, *Belle* does have more panache.

JERONIMUS: Anyone who calls my daughter "Bell" will have me to contend with, for it's a dog's name! If you can't call us by our Christian names you'll have to look for new in-laws. I'm an old-fashioned, honorable citizen and don't like all of the new fads. You'd better listen to me instead of your highfalutin parley-vouing.

JEAN: *Pardonnez-moi, mon cher* papa-in-law, one never says, "new fads," *c'est ne pas bon Parisian, c'est Basbreton, pardi.* [*c'est . . . pardi* – excuse me, that isn't good Parisian, it's Lower Brittany-ish, by god;] (*He sings again, "Frère Jacques", and dances a few steps.*)

That is the latest minuet, *compose par le Sieur Blondis, le plus grand dance-maître en Europe.* Isn't it "dance-maître" in Danish, too? I completely forgot my Danish *dans* Paris.

[composed by Mr. Blondis. By god, a talented man, the greatest dance master in Europe.]

JERONIMUS: It's a shame that you didn't forget every letter because neither the Danes nor the French can understand you. If you'd stayed in Paris another fourteen days I suppose you'd have forgotten your name!

JEAN: *Non, ma foi,* I'll never forget so easily that my name is Jean de France, *non pardi, non.*

[*non, ma foi:* certainly not; *non pardi, non:* certainly excusable, for sure]

FRANDS: Jean de France Nong Paradise Nong? In Danish is that Hans Frandsen? Neighbor, that language must be more ornate than ours.

JERONIMUS: Instead of asking me such trivia, don't you think it would be better if you rapped your son alongside the head!

JEAN: *Messieurs! Je demande pardon,* I must go, we Parisians don't spend too much time in one places. La la la la la la. I must wander down to the square *à la Grève. Adieu si long.*

[*Messieurs! Je demande pardon:* Gentlemen, I beg your pardon; *à la Grève. Adieu si long:* near the city hall. Goodbye for now.]

(*JEAN kisses his father on both cheeks and turns to kiss JERONIMUS who stops him with a firm gesture, upon which he exits. PIERRE follows him, walking past the two men. Suddenly PIERRE turns and grabs JERONIMUS by the shoulders and plants a firm kiss on his cheek. He then runs out.*)

JERONIMUS: Goodbye, neighbor, I pray you'll forgive me for being so presumptuous as to speak to you. If the rumor your son will become a squire my daughter and I are unworthy of your company.

FRANDS: Oh! My dear Jeronimus, don't be so hasty. Have patience for fourteen days. I hope by then this madness will have passed. You remember that Herman Larsen's son was just like him. He killed everyone with his French gibberish! He was so caught up in it that he wouldn't even bed a girl if she wasn't French. He'd rather have eaten sawdust broth cooked by a French cook than Denmark's best meat soup. Worse, rather than step inside a Danish church, he would join the French Calvinist congregation on Aabenraa Street. But when he came to his senses, that very same man became so agreeable that he now burns every French book he can find. He fights with men merely because he thinks they have French-looking faces. I hope in a little time my son will become like him. But he must have something to do. I think I'll get him a job at the

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- Jean de France -- Jerry Argetsinger

Ministry of Finance. Then he'll have more to do all day than sing "la la la" and dance a Fool de Spain.

JERONIMUS: All right, Frands, one thing you can't say is I'm too petulant. I'll be patient for fourteen days. If he improves I'll see that he and my daughter are quickly married and that he gets a respectable job. Letting him run around with those fellows at the Ministry of Finance isn't good, neighbor; it is not good.

FRANDS: I'll go along with anything that you decide. I'll see you later.

JERONIMUS: Goodbye.

(He exits. As FRANDS watches him leave, MAGDELONE enters from a different direction.)

MAGDELONE: On my dear husband! Have you seen Hans Frandsen?

FRANDS: All too much of him, God knows.

MAGDELONE: You always complained that we did too much for our son.

FRANDS: That's true.

MAGDELONE: Well now aren't we happy for him!

FRANDS: That's the truth! A person can laugh himself to death when he looks at him.

MAGDELONE: Oh, he's such a sweet boy.

FRANDS: That's true.

MAGDELONE: Just think how he's learned to speak French is such a short time.

FRANDS: Incredible.

MAGDELONE: I hardly recognized him when I saw him.

FRANDS: Me neither.

MAGDELONE: He's become so alive!

FRANDS: Hasn't he.

MAGDELONE: And so polite.

FRANDS: Terribly.

MAGDELONE: France can completely change a man.

FRANDS: That's for damned sure.

MAGDELONE: He called me "Mardamme."

FRANDS: Did he?

MAGDELONE: He said it's too common to say "Mother."

FRANDS: That might be.

MAGDELONE: Be he called his sweetheart "Mattress." I thought that was odd.

FRANDS: How so?

MAGDELONE: Maybe that's the fashion in France.

FRANDS: Could be.

MAGDELONE: Thank heaven he doesn't mind being seen with his old-fashioned parents.

FRANDS: That's true.

MAGDELONE: Then why are you crying, dear husband? It must be for sheer happiness.

(Aside.)

The poor man thinks more of his children than he lets on.

(To Frands.)

I've also cried for joy.

FRANDS: And I for sorrow!

MAGDELONE: For sorrow?

FRANDS: Yes! For sorrow! Can't an honorable father cry when he sees his son transformed into a phony French fop?

MAGDELONE: What did you say, dumbox? Is my son a fop?

FRANDS: Yes! Captain of all fops!

MAGDELONE: Oh, miserable wretch that I am! Why must I be plagued with such a boorish husband who can't even recognize quality? My only joy in the world is that sweet boy, who my wicked husband doesn't even like. Wild beasts love their offspring; even heathens love their children! You alone hate your own child, whom foreigners adore for his refinement. I shouldn't brag about my own son, but I don't believe there's a more refined boy in Denmark than Hans Frandsen. If only you had common sense you could see it.

FRANDS: Just wherein lies his refinement?

MAGDELONE: It is therein because he is refined.

FRANDS: I don't see any refinement in his being able to go through fifteen hundred rix-dollars in so short a time.

MAGDELONE: All you talk about is what he spent. You say nothing about what he learned.

FRANDS: I see that he learned to dance a Fool de Spain, to sing a lot of love songs, and to corrupt his own language; for I don't think he can speak either Danish or French!

MAGDELONE: I have nothing more to say to that annoying man. I swear I won't share my bed with you for one more night!

(MAGDELONE turns to leave.)

FRANDS: Stay, dear wife, while I tell you something.

MAGDELONE: Not one more word.

FRANDS: My god, how quickly you can become angry.

MAGDELONE: Let me go I say!

FRANDS: No, Little Magdelone, I didn't mean any harm.

MAGDELONE: No more talk. I'm leaving.

FRANDS: Stay, Little Sweetheart, and you'll hear what you want to hear.

MAGDELONE: Nonsense!

FRANDS: My sugar-pie.

MAGDELONE: Rubbish!

FRANDS: Ducky.

MAGDELONE: Let me go!

FRANDS: Little honey-bun.

MAGDELONE: Away!

FRANDS: Buttercup.

MAGDELONE: Blah, blah, blah!

FRANDS: My daffodil.

MAGDELONE: Nothing!

FRANDS: My heart's joy.

MAGDELONE: To the devil with you!

FRANDS: My perfumed posy.

MAGDELONE: Go to hell!

FRANDS: Oh, my dearest wife. Don't be so mad at your little husband.

MAGDELONE: I won't be moved.

FRANDS: At your own little Frands.

MAGDELONE: Away! You deceiving snake!

FRANDS: I promise I'll never tease you like that again. Did you think I was serious?

MAGDELONE: You weren't serious?

FRANDS: Serious! Do you mean to say I can't see my son's refinement as well as you? I merely said those things to joke a little with you. Believe me, I cried with utter joy.

(Aside.)

Oh God, have mercy on the man who must give up both his own and his children's welfare in order to have peace at home.

MAGDELONE: Since you were only joking, my dear husband, I'm all right again. But look, here comes our son.

(JEAN enters singing "Frère Jacques", attended by PIERRE keeping time with a tambourine.)

MAGDELONE: Just pay attention to his whole manner of being and see if we don't have reason to love our son.

FRANDS: You're right about that, Magdelone.

MAGDELONE: My dear son! You mustn't stay away from your mama so long. I can't stand to be without you for a second.

JEAN: What does Madam think of this *Contretemps* [a dance step] that I learned just before I left Paris?

(He does a simple dance step.)

I don't believe, *pardi*, anyone can do it in this country. I can even do it in several *façons*; [variations] for example, first

(He does a slight variation.)

and second like this

(He does another variation.)

MAGDELONE: Isn't that a marvelous Capriole, husband?

JEAN: It is not a Caprioloe, Madam! It is a *Contretemps*!

MAGDELONE: I don't understand, dear son. You must forgive me. In the old days I learned a plain, simple minuet, but nothing more.

JEAN: Can you still do the walk?

MAGDELONE: Yes . . . maybe.

JEAN: Then let us dance a minuet together so you can see which *pas* [step] I can do.

MAGDELONE: I'm afraid it would be an odd dance. I'm too old to dance.

JEAN: Don't be ridiculous! *La tour seulement!* [Just the walk!]

MAGDELONE: No, my dearest son. I pray you, excuse me.

JEAN: *Ah pardi, je m'en mocque. La tour seulement!* [je m'en mocque: I don't give a damn]

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(JEAN leads MAGDELONE in the opened steps of a minuet as PIERRE plays the tambourine.)

FRANDS: (*Aside.*) I couldn't be more pleased if someone gave me ten rix-dollars. I don't care if he makes her dance in front of the royal palace. She deserves it for it was she who spoiled him.

MAGDELONE: My dear son, don't embarrass me!

(*She tries to break free from the dance but JEAN persists.*)

JEAN: No, *sans façon!* It doesn't become you to be begged so long. *La tour seulement!*

(*He continues the dance while singing "Frère Jacques," spinning her again and again.*)

FRANDS: (*Aside.*) This is great!

MAGDELONE: (*Spins away from JEAN and awkwardly collapses onto a bench.*) My feet are much too stiff for dancing.

JEAN: *Pardi! Mardi! Peste! Diantre! Tête bleue!* Now I'm mad! Can't you just give me this pleasure! *La tour seulement!* [*Pardi! Mardi! Peste! Diantre! Tête bleue!*: By god! Tuesday! Pest! Devil! By Jove!]

MAGDELONE: I'd better do it before my son gets really angry.

FRANDS: (*Aside.*) Ha ha ha!

JEAN: (*Looks from MAGDELONE to FRANDS and rushes over to him.*) Papa, you must sing a minuet.

FRANDS: What? Me sing?

JEAN: And be sure to keep the right beat while doing it.

FRANDS: You'll get upset anyway, my son, you'd better sing it yourself.

JEAN: No, *pardi, c'est impossible*, how can I sing and dance *dans le même temps?*

[*c'est impossible*: it's impossible; *dans le même temps*: at the same time]

MAGDELONE: If I can do our son the favor of dancing, then you can certainly sing for him!

FRANDS: I don't think you're serious, wife. I won't make a fool of myself! I'm too old for that.

JEAN: *Tête bleue! J'enrage!* [*J'enrage!*: Now I'm really angry!]

MAGDELONE: My dear son! Don't be angry! You'd better believe he'll sing, even if it drives him crazy.

JEAN: Oh, *pardi, chantez donc.* [*chantez donc*: at least sing]

(*He tries to start FRANDS singing "Frère Jacques," but he doesn't know the song. Finally FRANDS sings a Danish children's song. In our production we used:*)

Vil du, vil du, vil du, vil du, vil du, vil du

Med mig ud I marken gå?

Ja men, ja men, ja men, ja men, ja men,

Der skal tridve streger stå.

(*As FRANDS begins to sing, JEAN yells*)

That isn't a minuet, papa. Can't you sing a minuet?

FRANDS: This is the only song I know.

MAGDELONE (*Desperate.*) Just sing it! It doesn't matter if its old!

(*FRANDS sings and shakes his fist at them as they turn away dancing absurdly. Intermittently JEAN yells, La cadence, mon père! La cadence! They dance off followed by PIERRE still beating his tambourine.*)

FRANDS (*Alone he crosses down to the audience.*) Woe is me that I should have brought such a son into the world. I'd better get some advice before my entire house becomes a laughing stock!

End of ACT I

Act Two

A street in Copenhagen around noon

(The stage is empty. Suddenly, ESPEN runs in, looking everywhere to see if anyone is there. After he concludes that no one is around, he turns and yells off-stage.)

ESPEN: The coast is clear!

(ANTONIS and ELSEBET enter, secret lovers enjoying a rendezvous away from their parents, followed by MARTHE. She and ESPEN position themselves on either side of the stage as though they are guarding the young couple.)

ANTONIUS: Oh Elsebet, my most beautiful maiden. My heart is breaking from the unfortunate news that my rival, Hans Frandsen, has unexpectedly returned.

ELSEBET: How do you think my heart feels? I'm the one who's supposed to marry "Jean de France," the most abominable man in the world! I hated him even before he left because I recognized his conceited and repulsive nature. I could have easily predicted he'd go completely crazy if he traveled to Paris.

ANTONIUS: Would you then, my sweetheart, actually marry such a man?

ELSEBET: Not if I have my way, my dear Antonius. But you know I have a father who's as hardheaded as flint. What he says, goes—even if it ruins his own family.

ANTONIUS: As long as I live, I won't let that happen.

ELSEBET: How do you intend to stop it?

ANTONIUS: I said, "As long as I live." Before I allowed my eyes to see such a thing, I would kill myself.

ELSEBET: And I promise you, you passionate man, that if you kill yourself, with that selfsame sword I will also end my days. So let it go at that, and instead think of some advice to save us from this imminent misfortune. Be assured that neither our parents, nor anything in the world shall destroy the pact that has joined our hearts together.

ANTONIUS: Now I am satisfied.

MARTHE: You love-crazed fools! Instead of standing there making such a useless fuss, why don't you ask Espen and me to put our heads together? You know that nothing is impossible when the two of us scheme. Give us a little time to think about it, and in the meantime, wait inside.

(ANTONIUS and ELSEBET exit.)

MARTHE: Espen, you're a conniving rascal, now we'll see what you're good for.

ESPEN: Next to you, I don't think I can be beaten.

MARTHE: Any scheme will do. It doesn't matter if you get hanged for if you aren't hanged for this, they'll get you for something else soon enough.

ESPEN: I don't think I'll be hanged too soon, at least not if I believe the fortune-teller who read my palm the other day.

MARTHE: What did she predict?

ESPEN: She predicted that I wouldn't be hanged until you'd been whipped and thrown into jail for at least three years.

MARTHE: Rubbish! The old prophets are dead and the new ones don't work.

ESPEN: That's what you think. That hag was so old . . .

MARTHE: How old was she?

ESPEN: She was so old she didn't have a tooth in her mouth and couldn't speak a word because of her age.

MARTHE: Then how could she tell you that I'd be jailed? Liars have to have good memories.

ESPEN: She explained everything with gestures.

MARTHE: Nonsense! Let's get on with it while we're alone; valuable time is flying by.

ESPEN: I'm certainly not in the mood to pursue love just now, Mammeselle.

MARTHE: Shame on you, reprobate! You'll surely know when I'm in the mood. When I feel that urge, I'll go find someone other than you. When I feel that desire, I can arrange for ten carriages with gentlemen's servants to come for me. The work that I mean right now is to come up with some intrigue.

ESPEN: Now I understand what you mean.

(They pace first one way and then the other, stopping occasionally for false alarms. After a short time they come face to face.)

MARTHE: Are you finished with your plans yet, Espen?

ESPEN: Yes! I've figured out a way to weasel a lot of money out of old man Jeronimus.

MARTHE: You dunce! That's so passé! You probably stole the idea from an old comedy.

(The two do a slow take, turning to the audience because they realize they are in an old comedy. Then they look back at one another.)

I have a plan that's better. Let's call the lovers back in and see what they think of it. Hey Paris and Helen! Come here and listen to this!

(ANTONIUS and ELSEBET enter and cross Center Stage.)

ELSEBET: Here we are. Let's hear what you've come up with.

MARTHE: We counselors have agreed, according to a majority of the votes, that since it is a terrible sin to rebel against your parent, it would be best for Miss Elsebet to dismiss this love from her mind and marry the man to whom her father has promised her.

(ELSEBET and ANTONIUS are stunned.)

ELSEBET: You must be joking.

MARTHE: Yes! I am only joking, for I don't believe you should align yourself with the whims of your parents. They arrange marriages only for their own interests, so they can align themselves with families who can advance them. They often sacrifice their children's welfare in the process. Young people, on the other hand, don't think about such things, but choose a partner for a spouse whom they wish to live with in happiness, and they love just for love's sake. Do concur with me, Mr. Colleague?

ESPEN: Yes, that's the way it is.

MARTHE: If I were a judge in court with you, it would go with me as it does with those able judges who get a fool at their side. I'd always have two *vota*.

ESPEN: Oh! You understand Latin, Marthe.

MARTHE: As much as you.

ESPEN: The you know what this means: *Mulier taceat in Ecclesia?* [*Mulier. . . Ecclesia: Women should be silent in meetings*]

MARTHE: No, I don't.

ESPEN: In Danish we say it this way: that sows, like you, had better stick to their spinning wheels and not trouble themselves with matters that the Lord created men,

(Quick Aside.)

Like me.

(back to MARTHE)

to resolve.

MARTHE: Watch your mouth, Espen. The time will come when society will consider brains more important than sex and ability greater than name. When our intellects are weighed I shall be elevated to the position of magistrate and you won't be any higher than a pancake!

ANTONIUS: Please! Let's stop wasting time bickering and get to the heart of the matter!

MARTHE: Let Espen talk. He has some marvelous council for you.

ESPEN: Don't plague us any longer, Marthe. Tell us what you've planned to help out these dear young people.

MARTHE: First you will admit that you're a dummy.

ESPEN: Like hell I will.

ELSEBET: Sweet Espen, for my sake, can't you admit that you're a dummy?

ESPEN: All right! I'm a dummy! Are you satisfied?

MARTHE: Whether you mean it or not, it's true. He meditated almost a half-hour like he was preparing a sermon, but all he came up with was a worn-out, moldy intrigue like all the old comedies are full of. On the other hand, here's my plan: You've heard that Hans Frandsen is so caught up in anything French, that if it were Parisian to walk around in broad daylight without pants, he'd do it.

(The others laugh.)

Now remember, I worked for a French chef on Willow Street for three years? Well I learned enough French for everyday conversation. I'll pretend to be a French lady who has just come here from Paris and has fallen in love with Hans Frandsen. What happens after that, only time will tell. Just follow my lead. Espen will be my valet.

ELSEBET: Then we'd better get you dressed for the part!

ANTONIUS: Sweetheart, you get the clothes for Marthe and I'll take care of Espen.

ESPEN: You must no longer call me Espen. Refer to me as Mr. Valet.

ANTONIUS: Then go, Mr. Valet!

(MARTHE and ESPEN exit. As ANTONIUS and ELSEBET watch them disappear off-stage, ARV enters from the other direction.)

ARV: *(Laughs as he crosses Down Stage)* Ha ha ha!

ANTONIUS: Isn't that Arv, Frands Hansen's stable boy?

ARV: Ha ha ha! To hell with all madness!

ANTONIUS: Arv! What are you laughing at so heartily?

ARV: Oh, Monsieur Antonius, I'm ready to bust a gut!

ANTONIUS: What's making you laugh like that?

ARV: I'm coming from a party where you could have seen the strangest dance!

ANTONIUS: Who was there?

ARV: Hans Frandsen was dancing a folk dance with his mother while his father sang for them!

ANTONIUS: What nonsense!

ARV: I swear it's true! Shame on the missus, I didn't know she could dance like that. See! This is how she went

and wiggled her rump.

(He shakes his rump at the audience.)

I wish I had a piece of chalk so I could draw a picture of the whole scene, for I can draw. All the while Hans danced, he yelled at his father, "Lack-a-dance! Lack-a-dance!" What that means, only the devil knows. I could see that the poor man was singing against his will for he sang, cried and shook his first all at the same time.

ANTONIUS: But who could have force him to sing against his will?

ARV: Everyone in that house dances to Hans Frandsen's tune. He rules over his mother and she rules her husband.

ANTONIUS: That fellow must be completely crazy.

ARV: I think he suffered a hard blow to the head in France. He calls me "Garsong," a dog's name. I swear if he calls me Garsong once more, I'll answer, "Yes, Sultan!" for I can prove by the parish records that I was christened Arv Andersen. But what can I saw when his mother lets him call her "Mare," which is even worse. And when Jeronimus finds out what he calls his daughter, he'll thrash him!

ANTONIUS: What does he call her?

ARV: I'm afraid you'll tell someone else.

ANTONIUS: I swear I won't.

ARV: He calls her his "mattress!" It's true enough that a wife, in some ways, is sort of a blanket in bed, but it's not right for him to call her either his blanket or his mattress. They aren't even married yet! But, I've got to tell everyone.

(He runs out.)

ELSEBET: It's terrible for parents to let themselves be dominated by a crazy child.

ANTONIUS: But my love, the crazier he gets, the better it is for us. The worst news I could hear is that he's improving.

ELSEBET: My dear Antonius! Our happiness lies in the hands of Espen and Marthe. My father has a kind of absurd honor; even though he sees my misery right before his eyes, he won't break his promise. He says it's not for the sake of the individual, but for the family.

ANTONIUS: But what if Marthe and Espen's scheme fails and Jeronimus won't go back on his word? What will you do then?

ELSEBET: On, my dear Antonius! Stop plaguing me with such questions. I've already declared once that I would rather. . . . But here comes my father. Run away as fast as you can!

(ELSEBET watches after ANTONIUS as he rushes out. JERONIMUS enters just in time to see his back disappearing off stage.)

JERONIMUS: Listen, Coquette! Don't you have more to do than stand in the doorway watching young men stroll by? I am Jeronimus and not Frands Hansen. Don't think you're going to get the freedom he gives his children. If I had a son like Hans Frandsen, I'd twist his head off.

ELSEBET: But my dear Father, since he is so offensive, why will you force me to marry him?

JERONIMUS: Will you argue, too? Will you also ask why I do things? It should be enough for you that I want it. At the very least, through it we'll become related to a very fine family. That's a relationship that shouldn't be thrown away, for Frands Hansen is not only honorable, but is quite well-to-do. Besides that, I've given

my promise and I won't break it.

ELSEBET: But, dear Papa . . .

JERONIMUS: "Papa! Papa?" Are you going to speak French too? If you come with that papa again, the laundry-stick won't be too good for you! What else do you have to say?

ELSEBET: Just this, Frands Hansen is a respectable man, but it's not him I have to marry; it's his son, who is an offensive person, about whom I've already heard a great many crazy stories since he came home.

JERONIMUS: It's clear you're trying to weasel news out of me. Inside! Get in to your embroidery, that's certainly good enough for you. "I've already heard so many stories!" It's clear! You are trying to weasel information out of me! I'll tell you one thing, Elsebet, you're going to be married this coming week. I'm the man who's strong enough to keep both you and Hans Frandsen in line! Now get inside!

(They exit.)

End of ACT II

Act Three

A street in Copenhagen, early afternoon the same day.

JEAN: (*Enters and looks around for his servant.*) Pierre! Pierre!

PIERRE: (*Enters from another direction.*) *Que voulez-vous?* [What do you want?]

JEAN: (*Beating him with a lace hanky.*) *Fripon! Muraud! Coquin! Bougre! Badaud! Fainéant! Que le Diable t'emporte!* [Rascal, scoundrel, rogue, ass, cheeky, ne'er-do-well. The devil take you!]

PIERRE: Why is Monsieur swearing at me?

JEAN: How could you have lived with me *dans* Paris for fifteen weeks and not learned *comment* to answer your master when he calls you? You should say: *Monsieur! Main non pas: Que voulez-vous?*" [comment: how; *Mais . . . vous:* But not, what do you want.]

PIERRE: That's such a minor thing. It's not worth so much swearing.

JEAN: That's true. But it isn't so much to curse at you; I need to practice my French. I recently received a list of forty new curses from my *Maître de langue*. [language teacher] I can't rehearse them without you.

PIERRE: Monsieur can rehearse his curses on himself! Just say *me* instead of *te* [you], then you can practice your curses and no one is offended.

JEAN: Oh, Pierre. I wish we were back in Paris again. *Dieu donne, que nous étions dans Paris* again. Now I can't remember the French word for "again." [God grant that we were in Paris]

PIERRE: It's "*aussi*."

JEAN: That's right, *aussi*. Feel free to correct me whenever I make a mistake. Don't you wish we were in Paris *aussi*?

PIERRE: Oh sure. Whoever hungers, thirsts, and freezes greatly there, suffers no hardship.

JEAN: Oh! *Bougre! Crasseux! Gourmand!* You speak as though you were born *à la Place Moubere* or *à Pont-Neuf*. [Ass! Skinflint! Glutton!--*à la Place . . . Pont-Neuf:* A square on the Left Bank or a bridge over the River Seine.]

PIERRE: Monsieur talks like *un fou, un bête, un* fool, *un sot, un bouffon*, as if you were born *dans un* madhouse or in a theater! [a lunatic, an idiot, a fool, a buffon]

JEAN: What did you say, *bourreau?* [executioner]

PIERRE: You shouldn't get so upset, Monsieur, I was just practicing my French.

JEAN: Of course. *Écoutez, Pierre.* [Listen]

PIERRE: Monsieur!

JEAN: I can't stand to see all these Danish faces.

PIERRE: But Mademoiselle Isabelle has a pretty face.

JEAN: It's pretty enough, but it's so Danish; *c'est une visage à la Danois, à la Copenhague, pardi*. But I could get used to her face if she didn't speak Danish. [It's a Danish face, a Copenhagen face, by god]

PIERRE: Has Monsieur talked with her since he's come home?

JEAN: *Oui pardi si fait*, but do you know what she said? [Yes, by god, of course]

PIERRE: Non pardi non fait. [No, by god, of course not]

JEAN: She said,

(*with a strong Western accent*)

"Welcome home again, Hans!"

(Returns to his usual manner of speaking)

Oh! When I think about it my stomach leaps to my throat! If she were a Frenchwoman she would have said, “*Je suis ravi de vous voir, mon cher m’ amie Jean de France.*” [I am delighted to see you, my dear friend]

PIERRE: *Oui pardi si fait.* The French are immensely polite in these matters, even though they don’t mean anything by it.

JEAN: Pierre, we’ll practice our French and not say one word of Danish together.

PIERRE: *Oui pardi si fait.* What we can’t say in French we’ll explain by gestures and grimaces. Then we’ll even look like we were born in France!

JEAN: Pierre.

PIERRE: Monsieur.

JEAN: I’m going to eat dinner *chez Pêche.* [at Pêche]

PIERRE: Wouldn’t Monsieur rather eat at Mister Jacob’s? You get better food there for less money.

JEAN: Oh! At Mister Jacob’s! The name alone proves he’s a bad cook. If there weren’t a French chef in the city I’d starve to death.

PIERRE: That’s true, the food does taste good when it’s French, since they always give you so little of it. Nothing piques the appetite more than being served a tiny portion.

JEAN: Do you know of any other French chef?

PIERRE: *Oui Monsieur!* There’s another named Cabo.

JEAN: Which of them speaks the better French?

PIERRE: They both speak about the same. It’s a *plaisir* to listen to both of them, for when they do their best they throw in a few Spanish words and that sounds very beautiful. But who is that strange servant?

(*ESPEN enters and goes through the motions of looking for someone or something that seems to be lost.*)

I wonder what he’s up to?

ESPEN: I was told he lives around here. There! I see two people, I can ask them. *Avec permission, Monsieur’s!* Do you know any of the people on this street? [With permission]

JEAN: Yes, I know myself, *moi même.*

ESPEN: That’s a good thing, to know yourself. I don’t think there are four people in the entire city who can say it! Isn’t there a Danish Monsieur who lives on this street named Jean de France?

JEAN: *Je m’appelle Jean de France à votre très humble service.*

PIERRE: I’ll translate his answer into Danish. “My name is Hans Frandsen, at your service.” You’ll excuse me for having to explain my master’s words, he can understand Danish well enough, but he has difficulty expressing himself, for he has just returned from living fifteen whole weeks in Paris, where he didn’t hear a single Danish word.

ESPEN: Wow! Fifteen whole weeks! You certainly have my respect. I’ve been in the service of the French lady, Madame la Flèche, for only two days and already when I speak Danish I find a French word or two in my mouth. But, if his name is Monsieur Jean de France, he’s the man I’m looking for.

(*To JEAN*)

Aren’t you the man who just came back from Paris?

JEAN: *Oui, Monsieur.*

ESPEN: The one who lived there for fifteen weeks?

JEAN: *Oui, Monsieur.*

ESPEN: The one who lived in the Quarter of the city—what’s it called—it’s right on the tip of my tongue.

JEAN: *Faubourg St. Germain.*

ESPEN: Yes! That’s the street! The gentleman is supposed to have a servant—a very talented and honest fellow named Pierre.

PIERRE: *A votre très humble service.*

ESPEN: I see that I’ve found the right man. I have a humble compliment to deliver to Monsieur from Madame la Flèche.

JEAN: Oh! Is it possible? And how is the charming lady?

ESPEN: She said that she had the honor of meeting you in Paris and that she came to Denmark primarily because of you.

JEAN: Oh! *La charmante Dame!* I spent many wonderful hours with her in Paris. [The charming lady.]

PIERRE: *(Pulling him aside.)* Monsieur, you’ve never met the woman!

JEAN: *Taisez-vous, bougre!* Don’t you know it’s *à la française* to answer that way? If I admitted that I didn’t know her, he’d take me for a native Dane. You’ll never learn to act refined. I should say that I respect Madame la Flèche above all others. *Pardi, est-il possible* that Madame la Flèche has come to Denmark on my account? I would *ma foi* travel to India, or even further, to Africa, just to kiss her beautiful hands. But how long ago did she leave Paris? [*Taisez-vous, bougre – Shut up, ass!*]

ESPEN: Twelve days.

JEAN: Oh, *est-il possible?* Just twelve days! May I have the *bonjour* to kiss her hands, and the honor to speak with her? [good fortune]

ESPEN: Nothing would please her more. That’s precisely why she sent me to find you.

JEAN: Oh, Monsieur! Please arrange our meeting and, here, do not refuse these two ducats as a sign of friendship.

ESPEN; My lady, Madame le Flèche, is one of the wealthiest women in France, so I am not in need of your gift; but so you don’t think of me as aloof by refusing it,

(He snatches it.)

I will accept it. On the other hand, I hope Monsieur is not above accepting this small gift from my lad—a portrait painted by Monsieur Cabbage Banal, France’s greatest miniature artist. And since it became the highest fashion just before she left Paris for a cavalier to wear one of these around his neck to show reverence for his lady, my lady hopes that Monsieur will wear this around his neck for her sake.

(The miniature must look like a homemade “official” medallion. Ours actually was a period portrait cut from a damaged 19th century book, glued to a rough piece of wood and suspended on a scrounge velvet cord adorned with wooden beads.)

JEAN: Look! I shall quickly *dans votre présence* hang it around my neck. May I show that *hardiesse* [boldness] and be so *impudent* to take the *liberté* to ask, just how can Madame la Flèche speak with you? After all, you do not understand French.

ESPEN: No, Monsieur! I was not born in Denmark! Only my enemies say that. I was born more than fifty miles south of Randers, where we are considered a branch of the Holy Roman Empire. So I’m Roman, not

Danish, which I humbly request Monsieur to explain to everyone he knows.

JEAN: it would be a shame to do otherwise; for it's evident by Monsieur's *manières* [manners] and accent that he is not Danish. Tell me, where might I have the good fortune of seeing Madame la Flèche?

ESPEN: Anywhere Monsieur likes; otherwise she'll come by this way at three o'clock.

JEAN: Then I will *présentement* take the opportunity to kiss her *belles mains*.

[*présentement* – quickly; *belles mains* – beautiful hands]

ESPEN: I'm sure she'll love that!

JEAN: *Je me recommande*. [Give my regards.]

(*He exits.*)

JEAN: Pierre.

PIERRE: Monsieur!

JEAN: What do you think of this portrait?

PIERRE: If you didn't know it was a miniature, you'd think it was a picture cut out of a book and pasted onto a piece of wood.

JEAN: *C'est pourtant fait par le Sieru Cabbage Banal, le plus grand painter en Europe.*

[But it was, however, done by . . . the greatest painter in Europe.]

PIERRE: Just how does Monsieur know that?

JEAN: Didn't you hear the man say it with his own mouth? Don't you think he knows? I'll tell you one thing, men who were born in the Holy Roman Empire are no dummies!

(*He sees JERONIMUS and FRANDS approaching off-stage.*)

But here come those two old philistines again. I wish I were somewhere else, you can't have a cultivated conversation with them; all they talk about is the weather and the economy.

(*JEAN and PIERRE move to hide themselves.*)

JERONIMUS: (*Entering with FRANDS.*) You'd better believe it, neighbor, I find that which is consumed by coffee, tea and tobacco can amount to several pouches of gold a year. That money was all saved in the olden days.

FRANDS: After all, it takes a lot of gold to fill several pouches.

JERONIMUS: Don't I know it! A respectable household can't manage with less than one hundred rix-dollars a year. Now that's just one account, if we add in several others, you'll quickly understand what I mean. For example, just the other day, to be a little stylish, I went into a coffee house. It cost me two rix-dollars for a mere few cups. Just see if I go back there very soon.

FRANDS: True, it has been expensive. But now the prices are beginning to go down considerably.

JERONIMUS: That's not true at all in tea houses, for I've noticed that here in Copenhagen, once prices are raised, they stay high even where then wholesale prices drop in half.

FRANDS: But remember that we also have to eat! What's the use of having money if you don't use it?

JERONIMUS: Can you get a good, natural taste from water and burnt beans? Try to give coffee without sugar to a baby. He spits it out! You say that perhaps some people, like your son think it tastes heavenly. But I say that your son and other such idiots have forced themselves to go against nature, merely because coffee is fashionable and because it's foreign. After a while they think it tastes good out of habit.

(*JEAN is seething. PIERRE tries to hold him back.*)

FRANDS: (*Noticing the commotion.*) There's my son now.

JERONIMUS: Yes, it's him. I'm not afraid to set the record straight. I'll tell him to his face.

(He crosses over to confront JEAN, but sees the "miniature" and stops cold. He stares at it, then hurries back to FRANDS.)

But what the hell is that trinket hanging around his neck?

FRANDS: (*Crosses over to get a better look at the miniature. He returns to JERONIMUS*) Maybe it's the style in Paris.

JERONIMUS: I don't give a damn if it's fashionable. Only a fool walks around dressed differently than all his countrymen.

FRANDS: (*Crosses over to JEAN who has been primping.*) Listen to me, son. What is that little saint-thingy hanging around your neck? Everyone is going to think you're either crazy – or Catholic.

JEAN: Pierre.

PIERRE: Monsieur.

JEAN: *Pierre! Expliquez cela pour ce vieux homme; je vai, vous me trouverez après de Monsieur Pêche.*

[Pierre, explain it to the old man; I'm leaving, you can find me with Mr. Pêche.]

(He exits.)

FRANDS: Peer! Why did my son run off so quickly?

PIERRE: He had something to do and asked me to make his excuses.

FRANDS: What kind of picture thing was that hanging around his neck?

PIERRE: That is a portrait that he brought back from France.

FRANDS: Is it the style to wear those in Paris?

PIERRE: Good heaven, yes! Anyone who does not wear one is labeled a bumpkin and can never be admitted to the court.

FRANDS: But the workmanship was so shoddy. I could certainly do better.

PIERRE: Be careful what you say, Monsieur, you could get into a lot of trouble. That portrait was executed by Monsieur Cabbage Banal, the greatest artist on the faculty in Paris.

JERONIMUS: I'll be I can find that at home in an old chronicle. I could see that it was just clipped out of a book. Listen, neighbor, your son is a fool and you're not much better! Much as I favored this engagement, I won't sell out my only daughter to the likes of him. And you, scoundrel, if you want to stay healthy, tell us immediately who drove him to this madness!

PIERRE: I give you my word that I don't know where he got that picture; but I swear under the portrait are the words, Monsieur Cabbage Banal *fecit*.

[*fecit* (Latin): created by]

FRANDS: Pierre! Shame on you for being so coarse!

JERONIMUS: Give me your cane, neighbor!

(He grabs the cane and turns to threaten PIERRE.)

When you master asks who beat you, just say, "Jeronimus feck it!"

(JERONIMUS chases PIERRE beating him as they exit. We hear a big commotion off stage while JERONIMUS continues the beating as PIERRE screams and begs for mercy. Finally there is quiet and JERONIMUS enters and crosses back to return FRAND's cane.)

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- Jean de France -- Jerry Argetsinger

JERONIMUS: Listen neighbor, I hope we can remain friends even though I've canceled the engagement between my daughter and your son.

FRANDS: But you promised to be patient for fourteen days to see if my son would come to his senses. If you break it off so quickly there'll be such gossip in this city! For the sake of the friendship that has always been between us, be patient for that long.

JERONIMUS: All right. Fourteen days will pass quickly; but I'm convinced that in that time, he'll only get worse, not better.

FRANDS: I ask for nothing more than you wait these two weeks.

JERONIMUS: *(Extending his hand on the deal.)* All right. I'll wait that long.

FRANDS: Now, dear neighbor, I must go home for dinner. My wife is waiting for me.

JERONIMUS: *(As FRANDS walks away.)* *Prosit Mahlzeit!* [*Prosit Mahlzeit* (German): Bon appetite.]
(FRANDS turns raising his cane, but stops as he gets that it was a joke. They smile at each other and exit opposite directions.)

END OF ACT III

ACT IV -- 7 more pages

ACT V -- 8 more pages