

ЖАН-БАТИСТ МОЛЬЕР

DON GARCIA OF
NAVARRE; OR, THE
JEALOUS PRINCE

Жан-Батист Мольер

**Don Garcia of Navarre;
Or, the Jealous Prince**

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Molière

Don Garcia of Navarre; Or, the Jealous Prince. A Heroic Comedy in Five Acts

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE

Nothing can be more unlike *The Pretentious Young Ladies* or *Sganarelle* than Molière's *Don Garcia of Navarre*. The Théâtre du Palais-Royal had opened on the 20th January, 1661, with *The Love-Tiff* and *Sganarelle*, but as the young wife of Louis XIV., Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip IV., King of Spain, had only lately arrived, and as a taste for the Spanish drama appeared to spring up anew in France, Molière thought perhaps that a heroic comedy in that style might meet with some success, the more so as a company of Spanish actors had been performing in Paris the plays of Lope de Vega and Calderon, since the 24th of July, 1660. Therefore, he brought out, on the 4th of February, 1661, his new play of *Don Garcia of Navarre*. It is said that there exists a Spanish play of the same name, of which the author is unknown; Molière seems to have partly followed an Italian comedy, written by Giacinto Andrea Cicognini, under the name of *Le Gelosie fortunata del principe Rodrigo*; the style, loftiness and delicacy of expression are peculiar to the French dramatist.

Don Garcia of Navarre met with no favourable reception, though the author played the part of the hero. He withdrew it after five representations, but still did not think its condemnation final, for he played it again before the King on the 29th of September, 1662, in October, 1663, at Chantilly, and twice at Versailles. He attempted it anew on the theatre of the Palace-Royal in the month of November, 1663; but as it was everywhere unfavourably received, he resolved never to play it more, and even would not print it, for it was only published after his death in 1682. He inserted some parts of this comedy in the *Misanthrope*, the *Femmes Savantes*, *Amphitryon*, *Tartuffe* and *Les Fâcheux*, where they produced great effect.

Though it has not gained a place on the French stage, it nevertheless possesses some fine passages. Molière wished to create a counterpart of *Sganarelle*, the type of ridiculous jealousy, and to delineate passionate jealousy, its doubts, fears, perplexities and anxieties, and in this he has succeeded admirably. However noble-minded Don Garcia may be, there rages within his soul a mean passion which tortures and degrades him incessantly. When at last he is banished from the presence of the fair object of his love, he resolves to brave death by devoting himself to the destruction of her foe; but he is forestalled by his presumed rival, Don Alphonso, who turns out to be the brother of his mistress, and she receives him once again and for ever in her favour. The delineation of all these passions is too fine-spun, too argumentative to please the general public; the style is sometimes stilted, yet passages of great beauty may be found in it. Moreover the jealousy expressed by Don Garcia is neither sufficiently terrible to frighten, nor ridiculous enough to amuse the audience; he always speaks and acts as a prince, and hence, he sometimes becomes royally monotonous.

Some scenes of this play have been imitated in *The Masquerade*, a comedy, acted at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, 1719, London, "printed for Bernard Linton, between the Temple Gate," which was itself partly borrowed from Shirley's *Lady of Pleasure*. The comedy was written by Mr. Charles Johnson, who "was originally bred to the law, and was a member of the Middle Temple; but being a great admirer of the Muses, and finding in himself a strong propensity to dramatic writing, he quitted the studious labour of the one, for the more spirited amusements of the other; and by contracting an intimacy with Mr. Wilks, found means, through that gentleman's interest, to get his plays on the stage without much difficulty . . . he, by a polite and modest behaviour formed so extensive an acquaintance and intimacy, as constantly ensured him great emoluments on his benefit night by which means, being

a man of economy, he was enabled to subsist very genteelly. He at length married a young widow, with a tolerable fortune; on which he set up a tavern in Bow Street, Covent Garden, but quitted business at his wife's death, and lived privately on an easy competence he had saved... He was born in 1679 ... but he did not die till March 11, 1748." [Footnote: Biographia Dramatica, by Baker, Reed and Jones, 1812, Vol. I. Part i.]

The Masquerade is a clever comedy, rather free in language and thought, chiefly about the danger of gambling. Some of the sayings are very pointed. It has been stated that the author frequented the principal coffee-houses in town, and picked up many pungent remarks there; however this may be, the literary men who at the present time frequent clubs, have, I am afraid, not the same chance. As a specimen of free and easy – rather too easy – wit, let me mention the remarks of Mr. Smart (Act I.) on the way he passed the night, and in what manner. "Nine persons are kept handsomely out of the sober income of one hundred pounds a year." I also observe the name of an old acquaintance in this play. Thackeray's hero in the *Memoirs of Mr. Charles J. Yellowplush* is "the Honourable Algernon Percy Deuceace, youngest and fifth son of the Earl of Crabs," and in *The Masquerade* (Act III. Sc. i) Mr. Ombre says: "Did you not observe an old decay'd rake that stood next the box-keeper yonder ... they call him *Sir Timothy Deuxace*; that wretch has play'd off one of the best families in Europe – he has thrown away all his posterity, and reduced 20,000 acres of wood-land, arable, meadow, and pasture within the narrow circumference of an oaken table of eight foot." *The Masquerade* as the title of the play is a misnomer, for it does not conduce at all to the plot. We give the greater part of the Prologue to *The Masquerade*, spoken by Mr. Wilks: —

The Poet, who must paint by Nature's Laws,
If he wou'd merit what he begs, Applause;
Surveys your changing Pleasures with Surprise,
Sees each new Day some new Diversion rise;
Hither, thro' all the Quarters of the Sky,
Fresh Rooks in Flocks from ev'ry Nation hie,
To us, the Cullies of the Globe, they fly;
French, Spaniards, Switzers; This Man dines on Fire
And swallows Brimstone to your Heart's Desire;
Another, Handless, Footless, Half a Man,
Does, Wou'd you think it? what no Whole one can,
A Spaniard next, taught an Italian Frown,
Boldly declares he'll stare all Europe down:
His tortured Muscles pleas'd our English Fools;

[Footnote: In the rival House, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields Theatre, Rich was bringing out Pantomimes, which, by the fertility of his invention, the excellency of his own performance, and the introduction of foreign performers, drew nightly crowded houses – hence the allusion.]

Why wou'd the Sot engage with English Bulls?
Our English Bulls are Hereticks uncivil,
They'd toss the Grand Inquisitor, the Devil:
'Twas stupidly contrived of Don Grimace,
To hope to fright 'em with an ugly Face.
And yet, tho' these Exotick Monsters please,
We must with humble Gratitude confess,
To you alone 'tis due, that in this Age,
Good Sense still triumphs on the British Stage:

Shakespear beholds with Joy his Sons inherit
His good old Plays, with good old Bess's Spirit.
Be wise and merry, while you keep that Tether;
Nonsense and Slavery must die together.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DON GARCIA, *Prince of Navarre, in love with Elvira.*

[Footnote: In the inventory taken after Molière's death mention is made of "Spanish dress, breeches, cloth cloak, and a satin doublet, the whole adorned with silk embroideries." This is probably the dress in which Molière played *Don Garcia*.]

DON ALPHONSO, *Prince of Leon, thought to be Prince of Castile, under the name of Don Silvio.*

DON ALVAREZ, *confidant of Don Garcia, in love with Eliza.*

DON LOPEZ, *another confidant of Don Garcia, in love with Eliza.*

DON PEDRO, *gentleman usher to Inez.*

A PAGE.

DONNA ELVIRA, *Princess of Leon.*

DONNA INEZ, *a Countess, in love with Don Silvio, beloved by Mauregat, the usurper of the Kingdom of Leon.*

ELIZA, *confidant to Elvira.*

Scene. – ASTORGA, a city of Spain, in the kingdom of Leon.

ACT I

SCENE I. – DONNA ELVIRA, ELIZA

ELVIRA. No, the hidden feelings of my heart were not regulated by choice: whatever the Prince may be, there is nothing in him to make me prefer his love. Don Silvio shows, as well as he, all the qualities of a renowned hero. The same noble virtues and the same high birth made me hesitate whom to prefer. If aught but merit could gain my heart, the conqueror were yet to be named; but these chains, with which Heaven keeps our souls enslaved, decide me, and, though I esteem both equally, my love is given to Don Garcia.

ELIZA. The love which you feel for him, seems to have very little influenced your actions, since I, myself, madam, could not for a long time discover which of the two rivals was the favoured one.

ELV. Their noble rivalry in love, Eliza, caused a severe struggle in my breast. When I looked on the one, I felt no pangs, because I followed my own tender inclination; but when I thought I sacrificed the other, I considered I acted very unjustly; and was of opinion, that Don Silvio's passion, after all, deserved a happier destiny. I also reflected that a daughter of the late King of Leon owed some obligation to the house of Castile; that an intimate friendship had long knit together the interests of his father and mine. Thus, the more the one made progress in my heart, the more I lamented the ill success of the other. Full of pity, I listened to his ardent sighs, and received his vows politely; thus in a slight degree I tried to make amends for the opposition his love met with in my heart.

EL. But since you have been informed he previously loved another, your mind ought to be at rest. Before he loved you, Donna Inez had received the homage of his heart. As she is your most intimate friend, and has told you this secret, you are free to bestow your love upon whom you wish, and cover your refusal to listen to him under the guise of friendship for her.

ELV. It is true, I ought to be pleased with the news of Don Silvio's faithlessness, because my heart, that was tormented by his love, is now at liberty to reject it; can justly refuse his addresses, and, without scruple, grant its favours to another. But what delight can my heart feel, if it suffers severely from other pangs; if the continual weakness of a jealous prince receives my tenderness with disdain, compels me justly to give way to anger, and thus to break off all intercourse between us?

EL. But as he has never been told that you love him, how can he be guilty if he disbelieves in his happiness? And does not that which could flatter his rival's expectations warrant him to suspect your affection?

ELV. No, no; nothing can excuse the strange madness of his gloomy and unmanly jealousy; I have told him but too clearly, by my actions, that he can indeed flatter himself with the happiness of being beloved. Even if we do not speak, there are other interpreters which clearly lay bare our secret feelings. A sigh, a glance, a mere blush, silence itself, is enough to show the impulses of a heart. In love, everything speaks: in a case like this, the smallest glimmer ought to throw a great light upon such a subject, since the honour which sways our sex forbids us ever to discover all we feel. I have, I own, endeavoured so to guide my conduct, that I should behold their merits with an unprejudiced eye. But how vainly do we strive against our inclinations! How easy is it to perceive the difference between those favours that are bestowed out of mere politeness, and such as spring from the heart! The first seem always forced; the latter, alas! are granted without thinking, like those pure and limpid streams which spontaneously flow from their native sources. Though the feelings of pity I showed for Don Silvio moved the Prince, yet I unwittingly betrayed their shallowness, whilst my very looks, during this torture, always told him more than I desired they should.

EL. Though the suspicions of that illustrious lover have no foundation – for you tell me so – they at least prove that he is greatly smitten: some would rejoice at what you complain of. Jealousy

may be odious when it proceeds from a love which displeases us; but when we return that love, such feelings should delight us. It is the best way in which a lover can express his passion; the more jealous he is the more we ought to love him. Therefore since in your soul a magnanimous Prince...

ELV. Ah! do not bring forward such a strange maxim. Jealousy is always odious and monstrous; nothing can soften its injurious attacks; the dearer the object of our love is to us, the more deeply we feel its offensive attempts. To see a passionate Prince, losing every moment that respect with which love inspires its real votaries; to see him, when his whole mind is a prey to jealousy, finding fault either with what I like or dislike, and explaining every look of mine in favour of a rival!

[Footnote: Molière has expressed the same thoughts differently in *TheBores*, Act ii. scene 4.]

No, no! such suspicions are too insulting, and I tell you my thoughts without disguise. I love Don Garcia; he alone can fascinate a generous heart; his courage in Leon has nobly proved his passion for me; he dared on my account the greatest dangers, freed me from the toils of cowardly tyrants, and protected me against the horrors of an unworthy alliance by placing me within these strong walls. Nor will I deny but that I should have regretted that I owed my deliverance to any other; for an enamoured heart feels an extreme pleasure, Eliza, in being under some obligations to the object beloved; its faint flame becomes stronger and brighter when it thinks it can discharge them by granting some favours. Yes, I am charmed that he assisted me and risked his life for me, for this seems to give his passion a right of conquest; I rejoice that the danger I was in threw me into his hands. If common reports be true, and Heaven should grant my brother's return, I wish fervently, and with all my heart, that his arm may aid my brother to recover his throne, and punish a traitor; that his heroic valour may be successful, and thus deserve my brother's utmost gratitude. But for all this, if he continues to rouse my anger; if he does not lay aside his jealousy, and obey me in whatever I command, he in vain aspires to the hand of Donna Elvira. Marriage can never unite us; for I abhor bonds, which, undoubtedly, would then make a hell upon earth for both of us.

EL. Although one may hold different opinions, the Prince, Madam, should conform himself to your desires; they are so clearly set down in your note that, when he sees them thus explained, he...

ELV. This letter, Eliza, shall not be employed for such a purpose. It will be better to tell him what I think of his conduct. When we favor a lover by writing to him, we leave in his hands too flagrant proofs of our inclination. Therefore take care that that letter is not delivered to the Prince.

EL. Your will is law; yet I cannot help wondering that Heaven has made people's minds so unlike, and that what some consider an insult should be viewed with a different eye by others. As for me I should think myself very fortunate if I had a lover who could be jealous, for his uneasiness would give me satisfaction. That which often vexes me is to see Don Alvarez give himself no concern about me.

ELV. We did not think he was so near us. Here he comes.

SCENE II. – DONNA ELVIRA, DON ALVAREZ, ELIZA

ELV. Your return surprises me. What tidings do you bring? Is Don Alphonso coming, and when may we expect him?

ALV. Yes, Madam; the time has arrived when your brother, brought up in Castile, will get his own again. Hitherto, the cautious Don Louis, to whom the late King, on his death-bed, entrusted the care of Don Alphonso, has concealed his rank from every one, in order to save him from the fury of the traitor Mauregat. Though the miserable but successful tyrant has often inquired after him, under pretence of restoring him to the throne, yet Don Louis, who is full of prudence, would never trust to Mauregat's pretended feelings for justice, with which he tried to allure him. But as the people became enraged at the violence which a usurper would have offered you, generous old Don Louis thought it time to try what could be done after twenty years' expectation. He has sounded Leon; his faithful emissaries have sought to influence the minds of great and small. Whilst Castile was arming ten thousand men to restore that Prince so wished for by his people, Don Louis caused a report to be noised abroad that the renowned Don Alphonso was coming, but that he would not produce him save at the head of an army, and completely ready to launch the avenging thunderbolts at the vile usurper's head. Leon is besieged, and Don Silvio himself commands the auxiliary forces, with which his father aids you.

ELV. We may flatter ourselves that our expectations will be realized, but I am afraid my brother will owe Don Silvio too heavy a debt.

[Footnote: Donna Elvira is afraid that Don Alphonso will owe Don Silvio a debt so heavy, that he will only be able to repay it by the gift of her hand.]

ALV. But, Madam, is it not strange that, notwithstanding the storm which the usurper of your throne hears growling over his head, all the advices from Leon agree that he is going to marry the Countess Inez?

ELV. By allying himself to the high-born maiden, he hopes to obtain the support of her powerful family. I am rather uneasy that of late I have heard nothing of her. But she has always shown an inveterate dislike to that tyrant.

EL. Feelings of honour and tenderness will cause her to refuse the marriage they urge upon her, for...

ALV. The Prince is coming here.

SCENE III. – DON GARCIA, DONNA ELVIRA, DON ALVAREZ, ELIZA

GARC. I come, Madam to rejoice with you in the good tidings you have just heard. Your brother, who threatens a tyrant stained with crimes, allows me to hope that my love may one day be returned, and offers to my arm an opportunity to acquire glory in fresh dangers for the sake of your lovely eyes. If Heaven proves propitious I will gain amidst these dangers a victory, which divine justice owes to you, which will lay treachery at your feet, and restore to your family its former dignity. But what pleases me still more amidst these cherished expectations is that Heaven restores you this brother to be King; for now my love may openly declare itself, without being accused of seeking to gain a crown whilst striving to obtain your hand. Yes, my heart desires nothing more than to show before the whole world that in you it values but yourself; if I may say so without giving offence, a hundred times have I wished you were of less rank. Loving you as I do I could have desired that your divine charms had fallen to the lot of some one born in a humbler station, that I might unselfishly proffer my heart, and thus make amends to you for Heaven's injustice, so that you might owe to my love the homage due to your birth.

[Footnote: The sentence from "Yes, my heart," &c., until "your birth" is nearly the same as the words addressed by Alceste to Celimène in the *Misanthrope*, Act iv. Sc. 3 (see Vol. II.)]

But since Heaven has forestalled me, and deprives me of the privilege of proving my love, do not take it amiss that my amorous flames look for some slight encouragement when I shall have killed the tyrant, whom I am ready to encounter; suffer me by noble services favourably to dispose the minds of a brother and of a whole nation towards me.

ELV. I know, Prince, that by avenging our wrongs you can make a hundred deeds of daring speak for your love. But the favour of a brother and the gratitude of a nation are not sufficient to reward you; Elvira is not to be obtained by such efforts; there is yet a stronger obstacle to overcome.

GARC. Yes, Madam, I know what you mean. I know very well that my heart sighs in vain for you; neither do I ignore the powerful obstacle against my love, though you name it not.

ELV. Often we hear badly when we think we hear well. Too much ardour, Prince, may lead us into mistakes. But since I must speak, I will. Do you wish to know how you can please me, and when you may entertain any hope?

GARC. I should consider this, Madam, a very great favour.

ELV. When you know how to love as you ought.

GARC. Alas! Madam, does there exist anything under the canopy of heaven that yields not to the passion with which your eyes have inspired me?

ELV. When your passion displays nothing at which the object of your love can feel offended.

GARC. That is its greatest study.

ELV. When you shall cease to harbour mean unworthy sentiments of me.

GARC. I love you to adoration.

ELV. When you have made reparation for your unjust suspicions, and when you finally banish that hideous monster which poisons your love with its black venom; that jealous and whimsical temper which mars, by its outbreaks, the love you offer, prevents it from ever being favourably listened to, and arms me, each time, with just indignation against it.

GARC. Alas, Madam, it is true, that, notwithstanding my utmost effort, some trifling jealousy lingers in my heart; that a rival, though distant from your divine charms, disturbs my equanimity. Whether it be whimsical or reasonable, I always imagine that you are uneasy when he is absent, and that in spite of my attentions, your sighs are continually sent in search of that too happy rival. But if such suspicions displease you, alas, you may easily cure them; their removal, which I hope for, depends more on you than on me. Yes, with a couple of love-breathing words you can arm my

soul against jealousy, and disperse all the horrors with which that monster has enshrouded it, by encouraging me to entertain some expectation of a successful issue. Deign therefore to remove the doubt that oppresses me; and, amidst so many trials, let your charming lips grant me the assurance that you love me, – an assurance, of which, I know, I am utterly unworthy.

ELV. Prince, your suspicions completely master you. The slightest intimation of a heart should be understood; it does not reciprocate a passion that continually adjures the object beloved to explain herself more clearly. The first agitation displayed by our soul ought to satisfy a discreet lover; if he wishes to make us declare ourselves more plainly, he only gives us a reason for breaking our promise. If it depended on me alone, I know not whether I should choose Don Silvio or yourself; the very wish I expressed for you not to be jealous, would have been a sufficient hint to any one but you; I thought this request was worded agreeably enough without needing anything further. Your love, however, is not yet satisfied, and requires a more public avowal. In order to remove any scruples, I must distinctly say that I love you; perhaps even, to make more sure of it, you will insist that I must swear it too.

GARC. Well, Madam, I own I am too bold; I ought to be satisfied with everything that pleases you. I desire no further information. I believe you feel kindly towards me, that my love inspires you even with a little compassion; I am happier than I deserve to be. It is over now; I abandon my jealous suspicions; the sentence which condemns them is very agreeable; I shall obey the decision you so kindly pronounce, and free my heart from their unfounded sway.

ELV. You promise a great deal, Prince, but I very much doubt whether you can restrain yourself sufficiently.

GARC. Ah! Madam, you may believe me; it is enough that what is promised to you ought always to be kept, because the happiness of obeying the being one worships ought to render easy the greatest efforts. May Heaven declare eternal war against me; may its thunder strike me dead at your feet; or, what would be even worse than death, may your wrath be poured upon me, if ever my love descends to such weakness as to fail in the promise I have given, if ever any jealous transport of my soul...!

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