

Misanthrope Callback Sides

You will be seen in groups and we will begin with a short warm-up. Please be prepared to read all roles in three of these 4 sides (1, 3, and 4 for women; 2, 3, and 4 for men; but we might get gender-bendy in the casting). Do not memorize the sides. Do read them aloud to feel how the verse works. **DO NOT PUNCH THE RHYMES.** It should not sound like Dr. Seuss. Congdon's translation differs greatly from Richard Wilbur's in this regard; rhyme is secondary to meaning and objectives. There's a lot of enjambment, which means that the thought doesn't end with the rhyme, but continues onto the next line. You will also notice that a lot of the "rhymes" don't really rhyme.

1) Celimene/Arsinoé Side (Act III, scene 4) [2 women. This is a famous catfight scene akin to Gwendolyn and Cecily from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Arsinoé and Célimène get much nastier much faster. I'm looking for style here: can you pretend to be polite while verbally twisting the knife? When does the politeness drop? Is that because you're enjoying the insult as a sport or losing control of your hatred?]

ARSINOE

What I'm saying, Célimène, please hear
In the spirit that it's given, dear.
The many, many men who visit you—
Alarming in the number of them, true?—
Have made some vocal citizens conclude
That they, the men, are here for something rude
(You agree, it has to be admitted,
There are some things that cannot be permitted),
I, your friend, at every turn defended
What I could, until I was quite winded.
I'm sure you're most upset. I know I'd be
If I thought the world thought thus of me.
So, my advice to you? My dear? Be careful.
No need to thank me—just a friendly earful.

CELIMENE

I wasn't going to thank you, there's no need.
I know your visit here is a good deed.
And out of friendship, I'll return the favor,
And tell you how you're seen, so we can savor
This sweet moment, free of acrimony.
So here's the truth: most people think you're phony.
I don't know why. But this is what I hear.
They say appearances are all that you hold dear,
And that face of pious indignation
Barely hides your sexual frustration.
I have to say your walk, that is, your carriage
Has the swing of someone wanting marriage,
But letting envy, anger, judgment, fear
Repel even a desperate man who's near.
But I digress, my opinions do not matter.
We're friends, my friend, so I don't need to flatter.

2) Acaste/Clitandre Side (Act III, scene 1) [2 men. Rival suitors for Célimène. They seem to want to persuade each other to give up.]

CLITANDRE

Since easy conquest is your true domain,
Why linger here, quite obviously in vain?

ACASTE

In vain, you say? Do I look like a man
Who "lingers" anywhere, in the hope he can
Receive some favor from some frigid beauty
Like those who wrongly think it is their duty?

CLITANDRE

If I may clarify, you think she favors you?

ACASTE

I have my reasons, friend, to think that's true.

CLITANDRE

If this is what you think, friend, you are blind,
You're self-deluded and out of your mind.

ACASTE

Oh yes, I'm self-deluded, blind, and--what--insane?

CLITANDRE

What makes you think that you've won this campaign?

ACASTE

Delusion

CLITANDRE

What are you using as a base?

ACASTE

Insanity

CLITANDRE

Just tell me to my face.

ACASTE

The truth my friend is you're the lucky one.
On you doth rise the moon and set the sun
In fact, I know you are her heart's delight.
And so I'm going to hang myself tonight.

3) Philinte/Eliante side (Act IV, scene 1) [Philinte reveals his secret feelings for Eliante]

PHILINTE

Could you be the one to share my wonder
At the awesome spell that he is under?
I'm speaking of his love for Célimène,
Who's doted on by half a dozen men,
Whose character could not be more different,
Who doesn't share, at all, his temperament.
With your cousin Célimène, Alceste
Will suffer love's abuses at their best.
If he felt as I do, his affection
Would have turned his head in your direction,
To the better choice, by far, in my mind.
He'd also know love is returned in kind.

ELIANTE

But how can I oppose his love of her?
With his best vision of her I concur.
She's my cousin. I find her very dear,
And this love of his seems quite sincere.
So I would genuinely rejoice
To see him with the lady of his choice.
However, in love's battle, if he loses,
Because another is the one she chooses,
Then I am here and willing to believe
Whatever love he brings I can receive.
Whatever words of love he's used to woo
First with someone else, I'll hear anew.

PHILINTE

With him, you know, I often plead your case,
Point to your character, beauty and grace.
So love of him I do not oppose.
However, this confession I'll disclose.
If it happens that these two are wed,
Would you consider loving me instead?

ELIANTE

You're just saying that, Philinte. Don't start.

PHILINTE

I'm speaking from the bottom of my heart.

4) Alceste/Célimène side (Act IV, scene 3) [Arsinoé has given Alceste a letter from Célimène that expresses love to another man; Célimène claims the letter was written to a woman. He's super jealous.]

ALCESTE

No, no, no cause to get upset. Just read,
And clear yourself, and satisfy my need.

CELIMENE

Oh, I can't get upset, but you can rage.
And all because of letters on a page.

ALCESTE

Please. I'll be happy, if I can know
It's for a woman. Please, just make it so.

CELIMENE

It's for Oronte. That's what you should see:
Me, receiving him, at nights, lovingly.
Admiring what he says, with passion brimming.
There, your scene's complete. My head is swimming.

ALCESTE

I face her with a list of crimes this long,
She turns around and I'm the one who's wrong.
Traitoress! You know this perfectly well.
You see my weakness to put me in Hell.
My love for you is fatal and you use it.
I've so much love, you know you can abuse it,
And you do. Now be kind and please repent.
Stop pretending to be guilty! Be innocent!
Take this letter, prove to me it's true,
It's written to a woman, and from you.

CELIMENE

When you're this jealous, I can't talk to you.
You don't deserve my love. That's what it true.
Go! No, wait. I'd like you to tell me
What you think could possibly compel me
To descend to these depths of deception
That you think you've traced to their inception?
Men declare their love to win a heart.
When women do the same, lovers depart.
In spite of this, you had my admission.
Yet your reply to me was gross suspicion.
You're the angry one? Well, I'm angry, too.
I wonder why I ever cared for you.
Love, for you, is only in possession.
You don't know how to love, it's just obsession.