More about *Molière’s Hypochondriac*

**Speaker’s Choice: Suggested by Dr. Philippa Sheppard**


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**The Hypochondriac**


A hypochondriac, victimized by pompous physicians, tests the loyalty of a loving daughter and discovers the contempt of his scheming and greedy second wife.


Moliere (1622-73) combined all the traditional elements of comedy - wit, slapstick, spectacle and satire - with a deep understanding of character to create richly sophisticated dramas. In The Hypochondriac, the terminally ill author produced a hilarious expose of the ways doctors use medical mumbo-jumbo to fleece their patients.

*The Imaginary Invalid, a play in three acts*. Samuel French, 1959.

The famous hypochondriac in this classic farce not only complains of a million imaginary ills, but also of his astronomical medical bills. If he marries his daughter to a doctor, he reasons, he will have free medical care.

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Shakespeare:

*Shakespeare and Co.: Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher, and the Other Players in his Story* by Stanley Wells. Allen Lane, 2006. A thorough yet enjoyable examination of the Bard’s various competitors and collaborators written by one of the greatest Shakespeare scholars.

*Shakespeare and Son: A Journey in Writing and Grieving* by Keverne Smith. Praeger, 2011. The first full-length study to explore the possible effects of the death of his only son, Hamnet, this book approaches Shakespeare's works in light of the psychology of grief, combining psychological insights with literary analysis.

Related Reading:

*The Misanthrope, Tartuffe, and other plays* by Molière. Oxford University Press, 2001. This unique volume brings together four of Molière's greatest verse comedies covering the best years of his prolific writing career. Actor, director, and playwright, Molière (1622-73) was one of the finest and most influential French dramatists, adept at portraying human foibles and puncturing pomposity.


*Molière: A Playwright and his Audience* by W.D. Howarth. Cambridge University Press, 1982. Up until the last century there was a tendency, among directors in the theatre and academic critics alike, to stress the philosophical and satirical content of Molière's comedy and to overlook the fact that he was a professional man of the theatre. More recently, certain influential critics have tended to go to the other extreme and to emphasis the theatrical and aesthetic qualities of his plays at the expense of what they may have to offer as plays of ideas.

Go Digital:


*Biography in Context*. A database available from the Toronto Public Library via http://bit.ly/1Kxgees [TPL library card required to login.] Look up Molière’s illustrious career or even Shakespeare’s. Resources will include biographies, images, links to other sources, scholarly and mainstream articles plus much more.

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