

Audition H

Frosine
Harpagon
(script page 26)

Harpagon: So, Frosine, How is our little business coming along?

Frosine: My, my, my. If you aren't the picture of health.

Harpagon: Who, me?

Frosine: I've never seen you with such a glowing complexion.

Harpagon: Really.

Frosine: So fresh, so pert. I've seen twenty-five year olds who look older than you.

Harpagon: Nonetheless, Frosine, I am over sixty.

Frosine: Sixty! The prime of manhood.

Harpagon: Well, actually I wouldn't mind trading back about twenty years.

Frosine: Non, non, non, non. No need of that. You have the stuff to live to be a hundred.

Harpagon: Think so?

Frosine: You show all the signs. Look into the light; yes, there it is: right Between your eyes, the mark of a long life.

Harpagon: You know about about these things?

Frosine: But of course. Give me your hand. Mon Dieu, what a life line. Forget a hundred! I see easily one-twenty, one-thirty.

Harpagon: That's twice my age now.

Frosine: You'll live to bury your children's children.

Harpagon: That'll be a relief. But meanwhile, how is our little business?

Frosine: Need you ask? There are many things I can make, Monsieur Harpagon, but match-making is what I do best of all. In our case I have spoken intimately with both our ladies about you. I told poor Sick mama that you had fallen head over heels for Marianne from The moment you peered through her window.

Harpagon: And mama said...?

Frosine: She was ecstatic! Then she had a coughing fit. And then I told her that you would like Marianne to be present tonight when you sign Your own daughter's marriage warrant. She agreed without hesitation and put Marianne in my charge.

Harpagon: I'm obliged to give a supper for Monsieur Anselme tonight; what Better time for Marianne to meet the family. And me.

Frosine: Perfect timing.

Harpagon: I'll send my coach to pick her up.

Frosine: Ideal.

Harpagon: But, Frosine, you did remind the mother that this a marriage and therefore a dowry is expected? After all, no one, no matter how much in love, is going to marry a girl who doesn't bring a little something to the bargain.

Frosine: A little something! This is a girl who guarantees you twelve thousand francs, *per annum!*

Harpagon: Twelve thousand!

Frosine: *Per annum.* First off, she's a slip of a thing, used to a diet of apples, bread crust, and weak tea. No pate de foie gras, no crepe flambé, no Armagnac for this one, not like other married women. Why this one alone will save you three thousand francs. Then, there's her taste for the simple life; no gowns, no pearls, no Louis Quatorze furnishings – no, no, no; the barest necessities are Enough to please our Marianne, saving you minimum four thousand francs. *Per annum.* And, last but not least, she is morally repulsed by gambling, which, as you know, is a common fixation With married ladies these days; why I know of one wife who drops more than twenty thousand *per annum* at roulette, but let's take only a quarter of that. Five thousand a year at the gaming table, Four thousand in clothes, jewelry, and furnishing, there's nine Which added to your three for food totals twelve thousand francs. For you. *Per annum.*

- Harpagon: Not bad, not bad. But it adds up to nothing tangible.
- Frosine: Pardonnez-moi. Nothing tangible to bring you sparse diet, simple Taste, and a fervent rejection of gambling?
- Harpagon: Tangible, my dear lady: Something I can hold onto. I can't bank a dowry made of expenses she won't spend.
- Frosine: You'll be holding on to plenty; they've spoken to me of some foreign land where they own counties of property – it'll be yours, all yours.
- Harpagon: We'll see about that. But Frosine, there's another thing: while she's no Child, still she's young and the young generally fall in love only with their equals. To be frank, I worry that a man my age might not, well, attract her, and this could lead to, how to put it, marital... Discord.
- Frosine: Aha, are you in luck! Young men completely nauseate her and she is an absolute fool for older men.
- Harpagon: Marianne is?
- Frosine: Our Marianne. You should hear her in the subject. The spite she has for callow boys. But oh how she waxes poetic over older men: Their beards, their little folds of gristle, the hair in their nostrils; there is no part of an older man that does not excite her. The older the better, so I warn you when you meet her look older than you are; anything below sixty and you've had it. In fact, four months ago she broke off an engagement when her paramour boasted that he was fifty-six and did not put on his spectacles to read the marriage warrant.
- Harpagon: Just for that?
- Frosine: Just for that. You should see what the sight of a bespectacled nose does to her.