

**THE SUITORS. A  
COMEDY, IN  
THREE ACTS**

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The suitors. A comedy, in three acts by Jean Racine

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**JEAN RACINE**

**THE SUITORS. A  
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# THE SUITORS.

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A COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS,

BY

(Baptiste)  
JEAN RACINE.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY A MEMBER OF THE DETROIT BAR.

*Geo. H. S. Cooper*

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DETROIT:  
THE DETROIT FREE PRESS STEAM PRINTING HOUSE.

1862.

## TO THE READER.

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A VEXATIOUS and disastrous litigation, to which RACINE was a party, was the occasion of his writing this play.

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“‘LES PLAIDEURS,’ the only comedy written by RACINE, makes us wish that the Author had done more in this department.”

FASQUELLE.

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To the Bar of Michigan, the following translation of one of the plays of RACINE, is most respectfully dedicated, by

THE TRANSLATOR.

# THE SUITORS.

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## PERSONS REPRESENTED:

DANDIE, a Judge.	A COUNTESS.
LEANDER, Son of Dandin.	LITTLE JOHN, Porter to Dandin.
CHICANEAU, a Burgess.	INTIME, Secretary to Dandin.
ISABELLE, Daughter of Chicaneau.	A PROMPTER.

SCENE—A City in Lower Normandy.

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## ACT FIRST.

### Scene I.

*Enter, LITTLE JOHN, drawing a large bag of law papers.*

*Little John.* He is mad who trusts to the future. Those that laugh on Friday cry on Saturday. Last year a judge took me into his service; he brought me from Amiens to be his porter. These Normans wish to make sport of us, but being with wolves, it is said, we soon learn to howl. Though from Picardy, I was no simpleton, and I cracked my whip as well as the best of them. Men of consequence addressed me uncovered, as, Sir—Little—John; ah! such honors! but honor without cash is only a distemper. Faith! I was a true doorkeeper. It was useless for them to knock and take off their hats; for without the porter's fee no one enters. No money, no service; and my door was shut. I furnished candles and hay for the establishment, but I lost nothing in that. True, I sometimes accounted with my master, but on the whole, I should have thrown the straw into the bargain. It was a pity that his heart was so much in his business; he was the first every day at court, and the last to leave it; and strange to say, very often he would even lie down there and sleep, without meat or drink. I now and then said to him, Mr. Per-

rin Dandin, the truth is you rise every day too early. He that would travel far should spare his nag; should eat, drink, sleep, and keep up a spirit that would endure. He took no note of what I said. He has been so laborious and wakeful that some say he is cracked. He is always muttering over something that I do not understand, and he wants to judge us all, one after the other. In spite of us he will sleep in his judicial cap and robe. Once, in a rage, he cut off his rooster's head for not waking him at the usual hour, and declared that an unsuccessful litigant had paid the poor animal hush money. Since that rare judgment his son has allowed no one to speak to him on business, and he has done much better. Sometimes he appears cheerful in order to escape our attention, and it is necessary to watch him night and day, to prevent his running off to the courts. As for myself, I take no sleep: I have become very lean. What a pity! I stretch myself out and only yawn. But whoever watches, here is my pillow. For one night I must indulge. To sleep in the street is no offense. Let us take a sleep, then, *Lie down on the ground.*

*Enter, INTIME.*

*Intime.* Ho! Little John! Little John!

*Little John.* Intime! (*aside*) he is afraid I have taken cold.

*Intime.* What are you doing in the street so early?

*Little John.* Is it necessary to stand and watch a man always, and hear him howl? What lungs! For my own part, I think he is bewitched.

*Intime.* Nonsense!

*Little John.* I told him, scratching my head, that I wanted to sleep. "Present thy request, whereas thou wishest to sleep," said he to me gravely. I fall asleep only in telling it. Good night.

*Intime.* What, good night! But I hear a noise above the door.

*Enter, DANDIN.*

*Dandin, at the window.* Little John! Intime!

*Intime, to Little John.* Keep quiet.

*Dandin.* I am here alone. Thank Heaven, all my jailors are in default, but if we give them time they will appear; so, to get clear of them we will leap out of the window. The court is adjourned. (*He leaps down on to the stage.*)

*Intime.* How he jumps!

*Little John.* Oh, I hold you, Sir.

*Dandin.* Stop thief! Stop thief!



*Little John.* O! We will hold you well.

*Intime.* It is useless to shout.

*Dandin.* Help, ho! They murder me.

*Enter, LEANDER.*

*Leander.* Quick! A light! I hear my father in the street. Father, why do you go out so early? Where do you run to in the night?

*Dandin.* I go to court; to judge.

*Leander.* To judge who? Everybody is asleep.

*Little John.* Faith! I sleep but little.

*Leander.* What bags! (*of law papers.*) They hang down to his very knees.

*Dandin.* I do not wish to enter the house again for three months. I have laid in an abundance of provisions in bags and law suits.

*Leander.* And who will feed you?

*Dandin.* The adjoining innkeeper, I think.

*Leander.* But, father, where will you sleep?

*Dandin.* In court.

*Leander.* No, father, it is better you should not go out. Sleep at your house. Take your meals there. Allow good sense to direct you, and as for your health—

*Dandin.* I wish to be sick.

*Leander.* You already are, only too much; give yourself some repose. You will soon be nothing but skin and bones.

*Dandin.* Some repose! Ah! You wish to regulate your father by yourself. Think you a judge has only to make merry with his friends; to walk about like a set of idlers; to attend balls at night and gaming houses by day? Money comes not quite so easy as that. Each of your ribbons costs me a judgment. My robe shames you. A son of a judge! Ah! Fie, fie! You play the gentleman; but I say! Dandin, my friend, look at the portraits of the Dandins in my chamber and wardrobe: all have worn the robe, and it is a good profession. Compare robe for robe; the presents of a judge with those of a marquis. Wait till Christmas and then see. What is a gentleman? A post in an ante-chamber. How many of them have you seen (I speak of the proudest) blow their fingers in my court, with cloak over the nose, and hands in the pockets; and finally come down and turn a spit in my cook room in order to get warm? Ah! My poor

fellow, is that the lesson of your deceased mother?—the poor Babonette? Alas! When I think of it, she never missed a session; never, no never, did she leave me; and God knows what she often brought away: why, rather than come home empty-handed, she would take the napkins at the inn. That is the way fine houses are furnished. Be gone; you will always be a fool.

*Leander.* Father, you are chilled here. Little John, conduct your master back; put him in his bed; close the door and windows; fasten all so that he may get warm.

*Little John.* At least then put a railing up there.

*Dandin.* What! Shall I be put to bed thus informally? Obtain a decree ordering me to sleep.

*Leander.* Oh, yes! But lie down in the mean time, father.

*Dandin.* I will go, but I am going to make you all angry. I will not sleep.

*Leander.* Well, be it so. Let him not be left alone. You remain with him, Intime. (*Exit, Dandin and Little John.*)

*Leander.* I wish to speak with you alone a moment.

*Intime.* What! is it necessary to watch you also?

*Leander.* I may well need it. I have my weakness as well as my father.

*Intime.* Ah, would you wish to judge?

*Leander, pointing to the house of Isabelle.* There is the mystery. Do you know that house?

*Intime.* At last I understood you. The deuce! love has taken you early. Doubtless you would speak to me of Isabelle. I have said to you a hundred times, that she is wise and handsome; but you should consider that Mr. Chicaneau consumes the best part of his fine property in law. Whom has he not sued? I believe if he should live he would cite all France into court. He has taken chambers close by the Judge. The one wants to be always in litigation, and the other always sitting in judgment. Ten to one, if he concludes your love affair without suing the parson, the notary, and the son-in-law.

*Leander.* I know it all, but in spite of all that, I die for Isabelle.

*Intime.* Well, marry her. Everything is ready; you have only to speak, (*to pop the question.*)

*Leander.* O, sir! such matters move not as quickly as your wit. I fear that savage—her father. No one but a bailiff, sergeant, or solicitor, can speak to his daughter, and the poor Isabelle, imprisoned in her house, sighs unseen. She beholds her youth waste itself in regrets, my love in vapor, and his property in litigation. He will

ruin her if he is allowed to. May you not know some honest forger who serves his friends? Some zealous sergeant? For pay, of course.

*Intims.* Indeed, so many such can be found!

*Leander.* But still?

*Intims.* Oh! if my poor, dear father, was yet alive! He was just the man for you! He could make more in a day than others could in six months. His writs were engraven in the very wrinkles of his face. He would stop the carriage of a prince, and even arrest the prince himself; and if a bailiff got twenty floggings in the service of process, he would pocket the damages for nineteen of them. But what do you want? Was I not a son of his? I will serve you.

*Leander.* You?

*Intims.* Better than a sergeant, perhaps.

*Leander.* Would you carry a forged writ to the father?

*Intims.* Bless my soul!

*Leander.* You would take a note to the daughter?

*Intims.* Why not, I am up to both.

*Leander.* Come, then, I understand you. We will plan the scheme elsewhere. (*Exeunt.*)

## Scene II.

*Enter, CHICANEAU.*

*Chicaneau, going and returning.* Let the house be taken care of, I shall soon return. Let not a soul go up. Take this letter to the post for Maine. Take three rabbits from the warren and carry them this morning to my solicitor. If his clerk comes here, get him to taste my wine. Ah! give him the bag that hangs at my window. Is this all? Perhaps he will call for a certain man, tall and gaunt; my standing witness, who swears when I want him to; you know who I mean; let him wait for me. It has struck four, and I fear least my judge may be gone out. But we will knock. (*Knocks.*)

*Little John, opening the door.* Who is there?

*Chicaneau.* Can one see the master?

*Little John, shutting the door.* No.

*Chicaneau, knocking.* Or speak a word to his honor the Secretary?

*Little John, shutting the door.* No.

*Chicaneau, knocking.* Or to his honor the porter?

*Little John.* That is me.

*Chicaneau, slipping a piece of money into his hand.* Be so good as to drink my health, Sir.