**FOOLS**by Neil Simon *Leon*

Miss Zubritsky! *(He turns aside, dazed.)* Is that my breath that has just been taken away? Is that vision before me human or have I too been cast under the spell? Never have I felt such a stirring beneath my breast Watch yourself, Leon! She is your pupil, not the object of your dormant feelings of passion. *(He turns back to them.)* Excuse me.. Won\*t you please sit down, Miss Zubritsky? Miss Zubritsky—may I call you Sophia? Please, madame. We must allow the girl to speak for herself. *(To* SOPHIA.) I should like very much to be your friend. Would it please you if I called you Sophia? I think she wants to say something. I\*ve come a very long way to help you with you education. I have every reason to believe that under ordinary circumstances, you have the capability of being an extremely bright and intelligent young woman, that deep inside you somewhere is an intellect just crying to be heard, that you have enormous powers of reason. But someone has put a cloud over these powers and it is my intention to remove this cloud so that enlightenment can once more shine through those unbelievably crystal-clear blue eyes once again. But I need your help, Sophia. Will you give me that help? I should like to ask you a few very simple questions. If we are to begin your education, it is important that I know at what point to begin. It won\*t be taxing, I promise you. I would never want to be the cause of a furrow or frown on that fair face . . . Now, then — what is your favorite color? Yes, is it red or blue or green or orange? Any color at all. Which one is your favorite? I\*ll ask you once again, Sophia. What-is-your-favorite-color? Yellow! Her favorite color is yellow! Why, Sophia? Why is yellow your favorite color? Because it doesn\*t stick to your fingers as much? That\*s a very interesting answer, Sophia. There is a certain logic to her response. The fact that that logic escapes me completely doesn\*t alter the fact that she has something in mind. Sophia, I\*m going to ask you something quite simple now. I\*m going to ask you to make a wish. Do you know what a wish is? If you could make a wish that did come true, anything at all, what would you wish for? Sophia, that is the most beautiful wish I have ever heard. *(To the Sophia’s parents)* Don\*t you see what her wish means? To fly like a bird means to sever the bonds that chain her to ignorance. She wants to soar, to grow, she wants knowledge! And with every fiber of my being, from the very depths of my soul. I shall gather all my strength and patience and dedication, and I make this promise that I, Leon Steponovitch Tolchinsky, shall make Sophia Zubritsky\*s wish come true. She touches me so. Your daughter has such a sweet soul and such a pure heart. We must begin as soon as possible. Not another moment must be lost. I shall return in the morning at eight o\*clock sharp. What subject shall we begin our studies with, Sophia? Languages! Of course! Even I should have thought of that. Languages it shall be, my dear, sweet Sophia. . . And what language shall we begin with first? *Rabbit?*