**TARTUFFE 2
by Moliere
CLEANTE**

No, I am not a revered doctor, brother; no, all the knowledge of this world has not found its abode in me. I have merely the science of discerning truth from falsehood. And as I know nothing in the world so noble and so beautiful as the holy fervour of genuine piety, so there is nothing, I think, so odious as the whitewashed outside of a specious zeal; as those downright imposters, those bigots whose sacrilegious and deceitful grimaces impose on others with impunity, and who trifle as they like with all that mankind holds sacred; those men who, wholly given to mercenary ends, trade upon godliness, and would purchase honour and reputation at the cost of hypocritical looks and affected groans; who, seized with strange ardour, make use of the next world to secure their fortune in this; who, with great affectation and many prayers, daily preach solitude and retirement while they themselves live at Court; who know how to reconcile their zeal with their vices; who are passionate, revengeful, faithless, full of deceit, and who, to work the destruction of a fellow-man, insolently cover their fierce resentment with the cause of Heaven. They are so much the more dangerous in that they, in their bitter wrath, use against us those weapons which men revere; and their anger, which everybody lauds, assassinates us with a consecrated weapon. There are too many such mean hypocrites in the world; but from them the truly pious are easy to distinguish. Our age offers us abundant and glorious examples, my brother. Look at Ariston, look at Périande, Oronte, Alcidamus, Polydore, and Clitandre. No one will refuse them this title. They are no pretenders to virtue. You never see in them this unbearable ostentation, and their piety is human and tractable. They never censure the doings of others; they think there is too much pride in such censure; and leaving lofty words to others, they only reprove our actions by their own virtue. They do not trust to the appearance of evil, and are more inclined to judge kindly of others. We find no cabals, no intrigues among them; all their anxiety is to live a holy life. They never persecute the sinner, but they hate the sin. They do not care to display for the interest of Heaven a more ardent zeal than Heaven itself displays. These are people after my own heart; it is thus we should live; this is the pattern for us to follow. Tartuffe is not of this stamp, I know. You speak with the best intention of his goodness, but I fear you are dazzled by false appearances.