

The Country Wife
by William Wycherley

Philadelphia Artists' Collective
Draft, February 2013

ACT 1.

Enter *Horner*, and *Quack* following him at a distance.

Horner

Well, my dear Doctor, hast thou done what I desired?

Quack

I have undone you for ever with the Women, and reported you throughout the whole Town as bad as an Eunuch, with as much trouble as if I had made you one in earnest.

Horner

But have you told all the Midwives you know, and the Wenches at the Playhouses, and the City Husbands? For they'll be the readiest to report it.

Quack

I have told all the Chamber-women, Waiting women, ladies women, and Old women of my acquaintance; nay, and whispered it as a secret to 'em. So you need not doubt 'twill spread, and you will be as odious to the handsome young Women, as—

Horner

As the small Pox.—Well—

Quack

And to the married Women as —

Horner

-- as their own Husbands.

Quack

And they will frighten their Children with your name, especially their Females.

Horner

I am only afraid 'twill not be believ'd. You told 'em 'twas by an English-French disaster, and a Surgeon who has given me not only a Cure, but an Antidote for the future, against that damn'd malady, love?

Quack

Your late journey into France has made it the more credible. Well. I have been hired by young Gallants to belie them the other way; but you are the first would be thought a Man unfit for Women.

Horner

Dear Mr. Doctor, let vain Rogues be contented only to be thought abler Men than they are. Generally 'tis all the pleasure they have. But mine lies another way.

Quack
You take, methinks, a very preposterous way to it.

Horner
Doctor, a good name is seldom got by giving it ones self.

[Enter Boy.]

Boy.
There are two Ladies and a Gentleman coming up.

Horner
A Pox, some unbelieving Sisters of my former acquaintance.

[Enter Sir Jasp. Fidget, Lady Fidget, and Mrs. Dainty Fidget.]

Horner
[aside – to Quack] No—this formal Fool and Women!

Sir Jaspas
My Coach breaking just now before your door Sir, I look upon as an occasional reprimand to me Sir, for not kissing your hands Sir, since your coming out of France Sir; and so my disaster Sir, has been my good fortune Sir; and this is my Wife, and Sister Sir. Wife, this is Master Horner.

Lady Fidget
Master *Horner*, Husband!

Sir Jaspas
My Lady, my Lady Fidget, Sir.

Horner
So, Sir.

Sir Jaspas
Won't you be acquainted with her Sir? *[aside]* So the report is true; but I'll play with him. *[to Horner]* Pray salute my Wife, my Lady, Sir.

Horner

I will kiss no Mans Wife, Sir, for him, Sir; I have taken my eternal leave, Sir, of the Sex already, Sir.

Sir Jaspar

[aside.] Hah, hah, hah; I'll plague him yet. [to H] Not know my Wife, Sir?

Horner

I do know your Wife, Sir, she's a Woman, Sir, and consequently a Monster, Sir, a greater Monster than a Husband, Sir.

Sir Jaspar

A Husband; how, Sir?

Lady Fidget

Pray, Sir Jaspar, let us be gone from this rude fellow.

Dainty Fidget

Who, by his breeding, would think he had ever been in France?

Lady Fidget

Foh, he's but too much a French fellow. But pray, let's be gone.

Horner

You do well, Madam, for I have nothing that you came for: I have brought over not so much as a Bawdy Picture, new Postures, nor the second Part of the *Escole de Filles*; Nor—

Quack

[apart to Horner.] For shame, Sir; you'll ruin your self for ever with the Sex—

Sir Jaspar

Hah, hah, hah, he hates Women perfectly I find!

Dainty Fidget

What pity 'tis he should.

Lady Fidget

Ay, he's a base rude Fellow for it; but affectation makes not a Woman more odious to them, than Virtue.

Horner

Because your Virtue is your greatest affectation, Madam.

Lady Fidget
How, you saucy Fellow, would you wrong my honour?

Horner
If I could.

Lady Fidget
How do you mean, Sir?

Sir Jaspar
Hah, hah, hah, no he can't wrong your Ladyship's honour, upon my honour; he, poor Man, he's — hark you, in your ears — a Eunuch.

Lady Fidget
O filthy French Beast, foh, foh; why do we stay? let's be gone; I can't endure the sight of him.

Sir Jaspar
Nor can I stay longer; 'tis — let me see, a quarter and a half quarter of a minute past eleven; the Council will be sat, I must away: business must be preferr'd always before Love and Ceremony with the wise, Mr. Horner.

Horner
And the Impotent, Sir Jaspar.

Sir Jaspar
Ay, ay, the impotent Master Horner, hah, ha, ha.

Lady Fidget
What leave us with a filthy Man alone in his lodgings?

Sir Jaspar
He's an innocent Man now, you know; — Mr. Horner, [he bows] your Servant, I should be glad to see you at my house; pray, come and dine with me, and play at Cards with my Wife after dinner, you are fit for Women at that game yet, hah, ha! Farewell.

[Exit Sir Jaspar]

Horner
Your Servant Sr. Jaspar!

Lady Fidget
I will not stay with him, foh—

Horner
Nay, Madam, I beseech you stay, I can be as civil to Ladies yet, as they would desire.

Lady Fidget
No, no, foh, you cannot be civil to Ladies.

Dainty Fidget
You as civil as Ladies wou'd desire.

Lady Fidget
No, no, no, foh, foh, foh.

[Exeunt Lady *Fid.* and *Dainty.*]

Quack
Now I think, I, or you yourself rather, have done your business with the Women.

Horner
You are an Ass, don't you see already upon the report and my carriage, this grave Man of business leaves his Wife in my lodgings, invites me to his house and wife, who before would not be acquainted with me out of jealousy?

Quack
By this means, you may be the more acquainted with the Husbands, but the less with the Wives.

Horner
If I can but abuse the Husbands, I'll soon disabuse the Wives. Stay: I'll reckon you up the advantages I am like to have by my Stratagem: Women of Quality are so civil, you can hardly distinguish love from good breeding; and a Man is often mistaken; but now I can be sure: she that shows an aversion to me loves the sport. Your Women of Honour, as you call 'em, are only wary of their reputations, not their Persons, and 'tis scandal they would avoid, not Men. Now may I have, by the reputation of an Eunuch, the privileges of one; and be seen in a Ladies Chamber in a morning as early as her Husband; kiss Virgins before their Parents, or Lovers; and may be in short the *Passe partout* of the Town. Now Doctor. *Probatum est* Doctor.

Quack
Well. I wish you luck, and many Patients, whil'st I go to mine.

[Exit *Quack*.]

Enter *Harcourt*, and *Dorilant*.

Harcourt

Come, your appearance at the Play yesterday has, I hope, hardened you for the future against the Womens contempt and the Mens raillery.

Horner

Did I not bear it bravely?

Dorilant

With a most Theatrical impudence.

Horner

But what say the Ladies, have they no pity?

[Harcourt

What Ladies? the painted ladies never pity a Man when all's gone.

Dorilant

And as for the Women in the boxes, you'd never pity them, when 'twas in your power.

Harcourt

They say 'tis pity, but all that deal with common Women shou'd be serv'd so.]

Dorilant

Nay, I dare swear, they won't admit you to play at Cards with them, go to Plays with 'em, or do the little duties which other Shadows of men, are wont to do for 'em.

Horner

Well a Pox on love and wenching, Women serve but to keep a Man from better Company; though I can't enjoy them, I shall you the more: good fellowship and friendship, are lasting, rational and manly pleasures.

Harcourt

Mistresses are like Books; if you pore upon them too much, they doze you, and make you unfit for Company; but if used discreetly, you are the fitter for conversation by 'em.

Dorilant

A Mistress should be like a little Country retreat near the Town, not to dwell in constantly, but only for a night and away.

Horner

I tell you, 'tis as hard to be a good Friend, and a Lover of Women, as 'tis to be a good Friend, and a Lover of Money. You cannot follow both, then choose your side: wine gives you liberty, love takes it away.

Dorilant

Gad, he's in the right on't.

Horner

Wine gives you joy; love, grief and tortures. Wine makes us witty; love, only sots.

Dorilant

By the world, he has reason.

Horner

Wine makes us—

Dorilant

Ay wine makes us – makes us princes; love makes us beggars... And wine—

Horner

So there's one converted. Love and wine—

Dorilant

--Oil and vinegar.

Harcourt

I grant it: Love will still be uppermost.

Horner

Come, for my part I will have only those glorious, manly pleasures of being very drunk, and very slovenly.

Enter Boy.

Boy.

Mr. Sparkish is below, Sir.

Harcourt

What, my dear Friend! a Rogue that is fond of me, only I think for abusing him.

Dorilant

No, he can no more think the Men laugh at him, than that Women jilt him, his opinion of himself is so good.

Horner

Well, there's another pleasure by drinking, I thought not of; I shall lose his acquaintance, because he cannot drink; and you know 'tis a very hard thing to be rid of him.

Dorilant

He's one that, by being in the Company of Men, would pass for one.

Harcourt

Most Men are the contraries to that they would seem: your bully you see, is a Coward with a long Sword;

Dorilant

Ay, your errantest cheat, is your Trustee; your jealous Man, the greatest Cuckhold; your Church-man, the greatest Atheist;

Horner

And your noisy pert Rogue of a wit, the greatest Fop, dullest Ass, and worst Company as you shall see: For here he comes.

Enter *Sparkish* to them.

Sparkish

How is't, Sparks, how is't? Well Faith, *Harry*, I must railly thee a little, ha, ha, ha, upon the report in Town of thee, ha, ha, ha, I can't hold in Faith; shall I speak?

Horner

Yes, but you'll be so bitter then.

Sparkish

Honest Dick and Frank here shall answer for me, I will not be extreme bitter by the Universe.

Harcourt

We will be bound in ten thousand pound Bond, he shall not be bitter at all.

Dorilant
Nor sharp, nor sweet.

Horner
What, not down right insipid?

Sparkish
Nay then, since you are so brisk, and provoke me, take what follows; you must know, I was discoursing with some Ladies yesterday, and they happened to talk of the fine new signs in Town.

Horner
Very fine Ladies I believe.

Sparkish
I said, "I know where the best new sign is." "Where," says one of the Ladies? "In Covent-Garden," I replied. Said another, "In what street?" "In Russell Street," answered I. "Lord," says another, "I'm sure there was no new sign there yesterday." "Yes, but there was," said I again, "and it came out of France, and has been there a fortnight."

Dorilant
No more, prithee.

Horner
No hear him out; let him tune his crowd a while.

Harcourt
The worst Music, the greatest preparation.

Sparkish
Nay faith, I'll make you laugh. "It cannot be," says a third Lady. "Yes, yes," quoth I again. Says a fourth Lady,

Horner
Look to't, we'll have no more Ladies.

Sparkish
No.—then – mark, mark, now, said I to the fourth, "did you never see Mr. Horner? He lodges in Russell Street, and he's a sign of a Man, you know, since he came out of France!" heh, hah, he.

Horner
But the Devil take me!

Sparkish
With that they all fell a laughing, till they bepiss'd themselves; what, but it do's not move you, methinks? But where do we dine, I have left an Earl at Whitehall to dine with you.

Horner
But go dine with your Earl, Sir, he may be exceptious; we are your Friends, and will not take it ill to be left, I do assure you.

Sparkish
Nay, pray Gentlemen.

Dorilant
We'll thrust you out, if you would not. What, disappoint anybody for us?

Sparkish
Nay, dear Gentlemen hear me.

Horner
No, no, Sir, by no means; pray go Sir.

Sparkish
Why, dear Rogues.

[They all thrust him out of the room.]

[*Sparkish* returns.]

Sparkish
I think wit as necessary at dinner as a glass of good wine, and that's the reason I never have any stomach when I eat alone.—Come, but where do we dine?

Horner
Ever where you will.

Sparkish
At Chateline's.

Dorilant

Yes, if you will.

Sparkish
Or at the Cock.

Dorilant
Yes, if you please.

Sparkish
Or at the Dog and Partridge.

Horner
Ay, if you have a mind to it.

Sparkish
Pshaw, with your fooling we shall lose the new Play; and I would no more miss seeing a new Play the first day, than I would miss sitting in the wits Row; therefore I'll go fetch my Mistress and away.

[Exit Sparkish. Enter Mr. *Pinchwife*.]

Horner
Who have we here, Pinchwife?

Mr. Pinchwife
Gentlemen, your humble Servant.

Horner
Well, Jack, by thy long absence from the Town, the grimness of thy countenance, and the slovenliness of thy habit, I should give thee joy, should I not, of Marriage?

Mr. Pinchwife
[Aside] Death does he know I'm married too? I thought to have concealed it from him. [to Horner] My long stay in the Country will excuse my dress, and I have a suit of Law; that brings me up to Town, that puts me out of humor; besides I must give Sparkish tomorrow five thousand pounds to lie with my Sister.

Horner
Well, I heard thou wert married.

Mr. Pinchwife
What then?

Horner

I did not expect Marriage from such a Whoremaster as you, one that knew the Town so much, and Women so well.

Mr. Pinchwife

Why, I have married no London Wife.

Horner

But she's handsome and young?

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] I'll answer as I should do. [to horner] No, no, she has no beauty, but her youth; no attraction, but her modesty; wholesome, homely, and housewifely, that's all. She's too awkward, ill-favored, and silly to bring to Town.

Harcourt

Then methinks you should bring her, to be taught breeding.

Mr. Pinchwife

To be taught; no, Sir, I thank you, good Wives, and Soldiers should be ignorant.

Horner

Why, if she be ill favour'd, there will be less danger here for you, than by leaving her in the Country; we have such variety of dainties, that we are seldom hungry.

Dorilant

But they have always coarse, constant, swinging stomachs in the Country.

Harcourt

Foul Feeders indeed.

Dorilant

And your Hospitality is great there.

Harcourt

Open house, every Man's welcome.

Mr. Pinchwife

So, so, Gentlemen.

Horner

But prithee, why would'st thou marry her? if she be ugly, ill bred, and silly, she must

be rich then.

Mr. Pinchwife

As rich as if she brought me twenty thousand pound out of this Town; for she'll be as sure not to spend her moderate portion, as a *London* Baggage would be to spend hers, so 'tis all one. And because she's ugly, she's likelier to be my own; and being ill bred, she'll hate conversation; and since silly and innocent, will not know the difference betwixt a Man of twenty, and one of forty.

Horner

Nine, to my knowledge.—But if she be silly, she'll expect as much from a Man of forty nine, as from him of one and twenty. But methinks wit is more necessary than beauty, and I think no young Woman ugly that has it, and no handsome Woman agreeable without it.

Mr. Pinchwife

He's a Fool that marrys, but he's a greater that does not marry a Fool; what is wit in a Wife good for, but to make a Man a Cuckold?

Horner

And what is worse, if she cannot make her Husband a Cuckold, she'll make him jealous, and pass for one, and then 'tis all one.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, well, I'll take care for one, my Wife shall make me no Cuckold, though she had your help Mr. *Horner*; I understand the Town, Sir.

Dorilant

[aside, to harcourt] His help!

Harcourt

[aside, to dorliant] He's come newly to Town it seems, and has not heard how things are with him.

Horner

But tell me, has Marriage cured thee of whoring?

Harcourt

'Tis more than age can do.

Mr. Pinchwife

Gentlemen, you may laugh at me, but I know the Town.

Horner

But prithee, was not the way you were in better?

Mr. Pinchwife

A Pox on it, I could never keep a Whore to my self.

Horner

So then you only married to keep a Whore to yourself. Well, let me tell you, Women, as you say, are like Soldiers: made constant and loyal by good pay, rather than by Oaths and Covenants. Therefore I'd advise my Friends to keep rather than marry. I find by your example too, it does not serve ones turn, for I saw you yesterday in the eighteen penny place with a pretty Country-wench.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] How the devil did he see my Wife then? I sat there that she might not be seen. She shall never go to a play again.

Horner

What, dost thou blush, for having been seen with a Wench?

Dorilant

No Faith, I warrant 'twas his Wife! Which he seated there out of sight... for he's a cunning rogue, and understands the town.

Harcourt

He blushes, then 'twas his Wife! For men are now more ashamed to be seen with them in public than with a wench.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Hell and damnation, I'm undone.

Horner

But prithee, was it thy Wife? She was exceedingly pretty; I was in love with her at that distance.

Mr. Pinchwife

You are like never to be nearer to her. Your Servant Gentlemen.

[Offers to go.]

Horner

Nay, prithee stay.

Mr. Pinchwife
I cannot, I will not.

Horner
Come, you shall dine with us.

Mr. Pinchwife
I have dined already.

Horner
Come, I know thou hast not.

Mr. Pinchwife
I have business at home.

[Exit *Pinchwife*.]

Harcourt
He's as jealous of her as a Cheapside Husband of a Covent-garden Wife.

Horner
'Tis as hard to find an old Whoremaster without jealousy and the gout as a young one without fear or the Pox.

As gout in age from pox in youth proceeds,
So wenching past, then jealousy succeeds;
The worst disease that love and wenching breeds.

ACT 2.

[Mrs. *Margery Pinchwife*, and *Alithea*: Mr. *Pinchwife* peeping behind at the door.]

Margery Pinchwife

Pray, Sister, where are the best fields and woods, to walk in, in London?

Alithea

A pretty Question, Sister! Mulberry Garden, and St. James's Park; and for close walks the New Exchange.

Margery Pinchwife

Pray, Sister, tell me why my Husband looks so grim here in Town? And keeps me so close, and will not let me go a-walking, nor let me wear my best gown yesterday?

Alithea

O he's jealous, Sister.

Margery Pinchwife

Jealous, what's that?

Alithea

He's afraid you should love another man.

Margery Pinchwife

How should he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself?

Alithea

Did he not carry you yesterday to a Play?

Margery Pinchwife

Ay, but we sat amongst ugly People. He would not let me come near the Gentry, who sat under us, so that I could not see 'em. He told me none but naughty women sat there. But I would have ventured, for all that.

Alithea

But how did you like the Play?

Margery Pinchwife

Indeed, I was a-weary of the Play, but I liked hugely the Actors; they are the goodliest properest Men, Sister.

Alithea

O but you must not like the Actors, Sister.

Margery Pinchwife

How should I help it?

[Enter Mr. *Pinchwife* to them.]

Margery Pinchwife

Oh my dear, dear Bud, welcome home; why dost thou look so fropish, who has angered thee?

Mr. Pinchwife

Your a Fool.

[Mrs. *Pinch.* goes aside, & cryes.]

Alithea

Faith, crying for no fault, poor tender Creature!

Mr. Pinchwife

What, you would have her as impudent as yourself, an erran Jilflirt, a Magpy, and a mere notorious Town-Woman?

Alithea

Brother, the honor of your Family shall sooner suffer in your Wife there, than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the Town.

Mr. Pinchwife

Hark you Mistress, do not talk so before my Wife. The innocent liberty of the Town!

Alithea

Who boasts of any intrigue with me? what lampoon has made my name notorious? What ill women frequent my lodgings? I keep no company with any women of scandalous reputations.

Mr. Pinchwife

No, you keep the men of scandalous reputations company.

Alithea

Where? In a Box at the Plays? In the drawing room at Whitehall? in St. James's Park? Mulberry-garden? or—

Mr. Pinchwife

Hold, hold! Do not teach my wife where the men are to be found. I believe she's the worse for your Town documents already; I bid you keep her in ignorance as I do.

Margery Pinchwife

Indeed be not angry with her Bud, she will tell me nothing of the Town, though I ask her a thousand times a day.

Mr. Pinchwife

Then you are very inquisitive to know?

Margery Pinchwife

Not I indeed, Dear, I hate London; our place in the country is worth a thousand of it. Would I were there again!

Mr. Pinchwife

But were you not talking of Plays, and Players, when I came in? You are her encourager in such discourses.

Margery Pinchwife

No indeed, Dear, she chid me just now for liking the Player Men.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Nay, if she be so innocent as to own to me her liking them, there is no hurt in't—

Come my poor Rogue, but thou lik'st none better then me?

Margery Pinchwife

Yes indeed, but I do, the Player Men are finer Folks.

Mr. Pinchwife

But you love none better then me?

Margery Pinchwife

You are mine own Dear Bud.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ay, my Dear, you must love me only, and not be like the naughty Town Women, who hate their Husbands, and love every Man else, love Plays, Visits, fine Coaches, fine Clothes, Fiddles, Balls, Treats, and so lead a wicked Town-life.

Margery Pinchwife

Nay, if to enjoy all these things be a Town-life, London is not so bad a place, Dear.

Mr. Pinchwife

If you love me, you must hate London.

Alithea

[aside] The Fool has forbid me discovering to her the pleasures of the Town, and he is now setting her agog upon them himself.

Margery Pinchwife

But, Husband, do the Town-women love the Player Men too?

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, I warrant you. Why, you do not, I hope?

Margery Pinchwife

No, no, Bud; but why have we no Player-men in the Country?

Mr. Pinchwife

Ha—Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a Play.

Margery Pinchwife

Nay, why, Love? I did not care for going; but when you forbid me, you make me desire it.

Alithea

[aside] So 'twill be in other things, I warrant.

Margery Pinchwife

Pray, let me go to a Play, Dear.

Mr. Pinchwife

Hold your Peace, I will not.

Margery Pinchwife

Why, Love?

Mr. Pinchwife

First, you like the Actors, and the Gallants may like you.

Margery Pinchwife

What, a homely Country Girl? no Bud, no body will like me.

Mr. Pinchwife

I tell you, yes, they may.

Margery Pinchwife

No, no, you jest—I won't believe you, I will go.

Mr. Pinchwife

I tell you then, that one of the lewdest Fellows in Town, who saw you there, told me he was in love with you.

Margery Pinchwife

Indeed! Who, who, pray who was it?

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] I've gone too far!

Margery Pinchwife

Was it any of our Neighbours?

Mr. Pinchwife

I promise you, he would ruin you, as he has done hundreds: he has no other love for Women but to destroy 'em.

Margery Pinchwife

Ay, but if he loves me, why should he ruin me? I would do him no harm.

Mr. Pinchwife

I'll keep him from doing you any harm, or me either.

[Enter *Sparkish* and *Harcourt*.]

But here comes Company, get you in, get you in.

Margery Pinchwife

But pray, Husband, is he a pretty Gentleman, that loves me?

Mr. Pinchwife

In baggage, in.

[Thrusts her in: shuts the door.]

Sparkish

Here Harcourt, do you approve my choice? Dear little Rogue, I told you I'd make you acquainted with all my Friends, the wits; and—

[*Harcourt* salutes her.]

This is one of those, my pretty Rogue, that are to dance at your Wedding to morrow; and to him you must bid welcome ever, to what you and I have.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Monstrous!—

Sparkish

Harcourt how dost thou like her, Faith? Nay, Dear, do not look down; I should hate to have a Wife of mine out of countenance at any thing.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Wonderful!

Sparkish

I say, *Harcourt*, thou hast stared upon her enough, to resolve me. Tell me, how does thou like her?

Harcourt

So infinitely well, that I could wish I had a Mistress too, that might differ from her in nothing, but her love and engagement to you.

Alithea

Sir, Master Sparkish has often told me, that his Acquaintances were all Wits and Raillieurs, and now I find it.

Sparkish

No, by the Universe, Madam, I do assure you, he is the honestest, worthiest, true hearted Gentleman— A man of such perfect honour, he would say nothing to a Lady he does not mean.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Praising another Man to his Mistress!

Harcourt

Sir, you are so beyond expectation obliging, that—

Sparkish

Nay, I gad, I am sure you do admire her extremely, I see it in your eyes.— He does admire you Madam.— By the World, don't you?

Harcourt

Yes, above the World; and till now I never thought I should have envied you, or any Man about to marry; but you have the best excuse for Marriage I ever knew.

Alithea

Now, Sir, I'm satisfied you are of the Society of Wits and Raillieurs, since you cannot spare your Friend, even when he is but too civil to you; but the surest sign is, since you are an Enemy to Marriage, for that I hear you hate as much as business or bad Wine.

Harcourt

Truly, Madam, I never was an Enemy to Marriage, till now, because Marriage was never an Enemy to me.

Alithea

But why, Sir, is Marriage an Enemy to you now? Because it robs you of your Friend?

Harcourt

'Tis indeed, because you marry him. I do confess heartily and openly, I wish it were in my power to break the Match; by Heavens, I would.

Sparkish

Poor Frank!

Alithea

Would you be so unkind to me?

Harcourt

No, no, 'tis not because I would be unkind to you.

Sparkish

Poor Frank, no, 'tis only his kindness to me.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Great kindness to you indeed! Insensible Fop, letting a man make love to his Wife to his face.

Sparkish

By my honor, we Men of wit condole for our deceased Brother in Marriage, as much as for one dead in earnest: I think that was prettily said of me, ha? —But come, be not melancholy for me.

Harcourt

No, I assure you I am not melancholy for you.

Sparkish

Dost think my Wife there a fine Person?

Harcourt

I could gaze upon her, till I became as blind as you are.

Sparkish

How, as I am! how!

Harcourt

Because you are a Lover, and true Lovers are blind, stockblind.

Sparkish

True; but by the World, she has wit too, as well as beauty: go, go with her into a corner, and talk to her, she's bashful before me.

Harcourt

Indeed if a Woman wants wit in a corner, she has it no where.

Alithea

[aside to sparkish] Sir, you dispose of me a little before your time.—

Sparkish

Nay, Madam, let me have your obedience, or — go, go, Madam —

[*Harcourt courts Alithea aside.*]

Mr. Pinchwife

Sir, if you are not concern'd for the honour of a wife, I am for that of a Sister; he shall not debauch her. Be a Pander to your own wife, bring Men to her, let'em make love before your face, thrust 'em into a corner together, then leave 'em in private! is this your Town wit and conduct?

Sparkish

Hah, ha, ha, silly Fool, hah, ha: I shall burst. Nay, you shall not disturb 'em; I'll vex thee, by the World.

[Struggles with *Pinch*. to keep, him from *Harc.* and *Alithea*]

Alithea

The writings are drawn, Sir, settlements made; 'tis too late, Sir, and past all revocation.

Harcourt

Then so is my death.

Alithea

I would not be unjust to him.

Harcourt

Then why to me so?

Alithea

I have no obligation to you.

Harcourt

My love.

Alithea

I had his before.

Harcourt

You never had it; he wants jealousy, the only infallible sign of it.

Alithea

He loves me, or he wou'd not marry me.

Harcourt

Marriage is rather a sign of interest, then love; and he that marries a fortune, covets a Mistress, not loves her: But if you take Marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.

Alithea

Now you have put a scruple in my head; but in short, Sir, to end our dispute, I must marry him, my reputation wou'd suffer in the World else.

Harcourt

No, if you do marry him, with your pardon, Madam, your reputation suffers in the World.

Alithea

Now you are rude, Sir.—Mr. *Sparkish*, pray come hither, your Friend here is very troublesome.

Harcourt

[aside, to alithea] Hold, hold—

Mr. Pinchwife

D'ye hear that?

Sparkish

Why, d'ye think I'll be jealous, like a Country Bumpkin?

Harcourt

Madam, you wou'd not have been so little generous as to have told him.

Alithea

Yes, since you could be so little generous as to wrong him.

Harcourt

Wrong him! No man can do it, he's beneath injury; a bubble, a coward, a senseless idiot, a wretch so contemptible to all the world that—

Alithea

Hold, do not rail at him, for since he is like to be my husband I am resolved to like him. Nay, I think I am oblig'd to tell him, you are not his Friend.— Master Sparkish, Master Sparkish!

Sparkish

What, what; now dear Rogue, has not she wit?

Harcourt

Not so much as I thought, and hoped she had.

Alithea

Mr. Sparkish, do you bring People to rail at you?

Harcourt

Madam—

Sparkish

How! No. But if he does rail at me, 'tis in jest; what we wits do for one another, and never take any notice of it.

Alithea

He spoke so scurrilously of you, I had no patience to hear him; besides he has been making love to me.

Sparkish

Pshaw! To show his parts. We wits rail and make love often but to show our parts; as we have no affections, so we have no malice, we—

Alithea

He said, you were a Wretch, below an injury.

Sparkish

Pshaw.

Harcourt

Damn'd, senseless, impudent, virtuous Jade! Well, since she won't let me have her, she'll do as good, she'll make me hate her.

Alithea

A Common Bubble.

Sparkish

Pshaw.

Alithea

A Coward.

Sparkish

Pshaw.

Alithea

A senseless driveling Idiot.

Sparkish

How, did he disparage my parts? Nay, then my honour's concerned. I can't put up that, Sir, by the World. Brother, help me kill him.

[Offers to draw.]

Alithea
Hold, hold.

Sparkish
What, what.

Alithea
I must not let you kill the Gentleman, either.

Sparkish
[to Harcourt] I'll be thy death.

Alithea
Hold, hold, indeed to tell the truth, the Gentleman said after all, that what he spoke, was but out of friendship to you.

Sparkish
How! To say I am a Fool, that is no wit, out of friendship to me.

Alithea
Yes, to try whether I was concern'd enough for you, and made love to me only to be satisfied of my virtue, for your sake.

Sparkish
Nay, if it were so, my dear Rogue, I ask thee pardon; but why would you not tell me so, faith.

Harcourt
Because I did not think on it, faith.

Sparkish
Come, let's be gone to the new Play!

[Exeunt *Sparkish*, *Harcourt*, and *Alithea*.]

Mr. Pinchwife
Well, go thy ways...

[Enter my Lady *Fidget*, Mistress *Dainty Fidget*, and Mistress *Squeamish*.]

Lady Fidget

Your Servant, Sir, where is your Lady? we are come to wait upon her to the new Play.

Mr. Pinchwife
New Play! Madam, by no means.

Dainty Fidget
Pray, let us see her.

Mr. Pinchwife
No, Madam.

Squeamish
We will not stir, till we see her.

Mr. Pinchwife
[aside] A Pox on you all— [goes to the door, and returns] She has locked the door, and is gone abroad.

Lady Fidget
No, you have locked the door, and she's within.

Dainty Fidget
They told us below, she was here.

Mr. Pinchwife
— Well it must out then, to tell you the truth, Ladies, which I was afraid to let you know before, least it might endanger your lives, my Wife has just now the Small Pox come out upon her, do not be frighten'd; but pray, be gone Ladies, you shall not stay here in danger of your lives; pray get you gone Ladies.

Lady Fidget
No, no, we have all had 'em.

Squeamish
Alack, alack.

Dainty Fidget
Come, come, we must see how it goes with her, I understand the disease.

Lady Fidget
Come.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Well, there is no being too hard with Women at their own weapon, lying; therefore I'll quit the Field.

[Exit *Pinchwife*.]

Squeamish

Here's an example of jealousy.

Lady Fidget

Indeed, as the World goes, I wonder there are no more jealous, since Wives are so neglected.

Dainty Fidget

Pshaw! As the World goes, to what end should they be jealous?

Lady Fidget

Foh! 'Tis a nasty World.

Squeam.

That Men of great acquaintance and quality should take up with, and spend themselves and fortunes in keeping little Play-house Creatures, foh!

Lady Fidget

Nay, that Women of great acquaintance, and quality should fall a-keeping too, of little Creatures, foh!

Squeam.

Why, 'tis the Men of qualities' fault. They never visit Women of honour and reputation as they used to do; and have not so much as common civility for Ladies of our rank, but use us with the same indifference and ill-breeding as if we were all married to 'em.

Lady Fidget

She says true! 'Tis a shame Women of quality should be so slighted. Methinks birth – birth shou'd go for something.

Squeam.

Aye. One wou'd think Men of honour shou'd not love, no more than marry, out of their own rank.

Dainty Fidget

Fie, fie upon 'em! They are come to think cross breeding for themselves best, as well as for their Dogs and Horses.

Lady Fidget
They are Dogs and Horses for it.

Squeam.
One wou'd think if not for love, for vanity a little.

Dainty Fidget
Nay, they do satisfy their vanity upon us sometimes, and are kind to us in their report; they tell all the World they lie with us.

Lady Fidget
To report a Man has had a Person, when he has not had a Person, is the greatest wrong in the whole World, that can be done to a person.

Dainty Fidget
Damn'd Rascals, that we shou'd be wrong'd by 'em!

Squeam.
Well, 'tis an errant shame Noble Persons shou'd be so wrong'd, and neglected.

Lady Fidget
But still 'tis an erranter shame for a Noble Person, to neglect her own honour, and defame her own Noble Person, with little inconsiderable Fellows, foh!

Dainty Fidget
I suppose the crime against our honour, is the same with a Man of quality as with another.

Lady Fidget
How! No, sure, the Man of quality is likely one's Husband, and therefore the fault shou'd be the less.

Dainty Fidget
But then the pleasure shou'd be the less.

Lady Fidget
Fie, fie, fie, for shame Sister!

Dainty Fidget

Besides, an intrigue is so much the more notorious for the man's quality.

Squeam.

'Tis true, nobody takes notice of a private Man, and therefore with him 'tis more secret; and the crime's the less when 'tis not known.

Lady Fidget

You say true. In faith I think 'tis not an injury to a Husband, till it be an injury to our honours; so that a Woman of honour loses no honour with a private Person; and to say truth—

Dainty Fidget

So the little Fellow is grown a private Person — with her—

Lady Fidget

But still my—

[Enter Sir *Jaspar*, *Horner*, *Dorilant*]

Lady Fidget

--my dear dear Honour!

Sir *Jaspar*

Ay, my dear, dear of honour, thou hast still so much honour in thy mouth—

Horner

[aside] She has none elsewhere—

Lady Fidget

Oh, what d'ye mean to bring in these upon us?

Dainty Fidget

Foh!

Squeam.

Foh!

Lady Fidget

Let us leave the Room.

Sir *Jaspar*

Stay! Stay, faith, to tell you the naked truth.

Lady Fidget
Fie, Sir Jaspar, do not use that word. Naked.

Sir Jaspar
Well. Well, in short I have business at Whitehall, and cannot go to the play with you, therefore wou'd have you go—

Lady Fidget
[re: Dainty and Squeamish] With these two to a Play?

Sir Jaspar
No, with Mr. Horner.

Lady Fidget
With that nasty Fellow! No—no.

Sir Jaspar
Nay, prithee Dear, hear me.

[Whispers to Lady Fid.]

Horner
Ladies.

[*Horner, Dorilant drawing near Squeamish, and Daint.*]

Dainty Fidget
Stand off.

Squeam.
Do not approach us.

Dainty Fidget
You are obscenity all over.

Squeam.
I wou'd as soon look upon a Picture of Adam and Eve without fig leaves, as any of you, if I cou'd help it, therefore keep off, and do not make us sick.

Dorilant
Who the devil are these?

Sir Jaspar

Come, Mr. Horner, I must desire you to go with these Ladies to the Play, Sir.

Horner

I! Sir.

Sir Jaspar

Ay, ay, come, Sir.

Horner

I must -beg your pardon, Sir, and theirs, I will not be seen in Women's Company in public again for the World.

Sir Jaspar

Ha, ha, strange Aversion!

Squeam.

No, he's for Womens company in private.

Sir Jaspar

He—poor Man—he! hah, ha, ha.

Dainty Fidget

'Tis a greater shame among lewd fellows to be seen in virtuous Womens company, than for the Women to be seen with them.

Horner

Indeed. Madam, the time was I only hated virtuous Women, but now I hate the other too. I beg your pardon Ladies.

Lady Fidget

You are very obliging, Sir, because we wou'd not be troubled with you.

Dorilant

I am ready to wait upon the Ladies; and I think I am the fitter Man.

Sir Jaspar

You, Sir, no I thank you for that—Master Horner is a privileg'd Man amongst the virtuous Ladies, 'twill be a great while before you are so; heh, he, he, he's my Wive's Gallant, heh, he he; no pray withdraw, Sir, for as I take it, the virtuous Ladies have no business with you.

Dorilant

And I am sure, he can have none with them. 'Tis strange a Man can't come amongst virtuous Women now, but upon the same terms, as Men are admitted into the great Turks Seraglio. But where is Pinchwife?—

[Exit *Dorilant*.]

Sir Jaspar

Come, come, Man; what avoid the sweet society of Woman-kind? that sweet, soft, gentle, tame, noble Creature Woman, made for Man's Companion—

Horner

So is that soft, gentle, tame, and more noble Creature a Spaniel, and has all their tricks, can fawn, lie down, suffer beating, and fawn the more; barks at your Friends, when they come to see you; makes your bed hard, gives you Fleas, and the mange sometimes: and all the difference is, the Spaniel's the more faithful Animal, and fawns but upon one Master.

Sir Jaspar

Heh, he, he.

Squeam.

O the rude Beast.

Dainty Fidget

Insolent brute.

Lady Fidget

Brute! stinking mortified rotten French Weather, to dare—

Sir Jaspar

Hold, an't please your Ladyship. For shame, Master Horner, your Mother was a Woman— Hark you, Madam, take my advice in your anger: you know you often want one to make up your droll pack of card Players; and you may cheat him easily, for he's an ill Gamester, and consequently loves to play.

Lady Fidget

But are you sure he loves to play, and has money?

Sir Jaspar

He loves to play as much as you, and has money as much as I.

Lady Fidget

Then I am contented to make him pay for his scurrillity; money makes up in a measure all other wants in Men.

Sir Jaspar

Master Horner, Come come, Man, you must fall to visiting our Wives, eating at our Tables, drinking Tea with our virtuous Relations after dinner, dealing Cards to'em, reading Plays to 'em, collecting Receipts, New Songs and Pages for 'em—

Horner

Who I? —

Sir Jaspar

Faith, come for my sake only.

Horner

For your sake—

Sir Jaspar

Come, here's a Gamester for you, let him be a little familiar sometimes; nay, what if a little rude; Gamesters may be rude with Ladies, you know.

Lady Fidget

As he behaves himself; and for your sake I'll give him admittance and freedom.

Horner

All sorts of freedom, Madam?

Sir Jaspar

Ay, ay, ay, all forts of freedom thou can'st take, and so go to her, begin thy new employment; wheedle her, jest with her, and be better acquainted with oneanother.

Horner

I think I know her already—

[*Horner*, and *Lady Fidget* whisper.]

Sir Jaspar

Sister, I have provided an innocent Play-fellow for you there.

Dainty Fidget

Who he!

Squeam.

Foh, we'l have no such Play-fellows.

Dainty Fidget

No, Sir, you shan't choose Play-fellows for us, we thank you.

Sir Jaspar

Nay, pray hear me.

[Whispering to them.]

Lady Fidget

But, poor Gentleman, cou'd you be so generous, so truly a Man of honour, as for the sakes of us Women of honour, to cause your self to be reported no Man? No Man! and to suffer your self the greatest shame that could fall upon a Man, that none might fall upon us Women by your conversation? But indeed, Sir, as perfectly, perfectly, the same Man as before your going into *France*, Sir; as perfectly, perfectly, Sir.

Horner

As perfectly, perfectly, Madam. I desire to be tried only, Madam.

Lady Fidget

Well, that's spoken again like a Man of honour; all Men of honour desire to come to the test. But indeed, generally, you Men report such things of your selves, one does not know how, or whom to believe; but I have so strong a faith in your honour, dear, dear, noble Sir, that I'd forfeit mine for yours at any time, dear Sir.

Horner

No, Madam, you shou'd not need to forfeit it for me. I have given you security already to save you harmless, my late reputation being so well known in the World, Madam.

Lady Fidget

But if upon any future falling out, or upon a suspicion of my taking the trust out of your hands, to employ some other, you yourself could betray your trust, dear Sir? I mean, if you'll give me leave to speak obscenely: you might tell, dear Sir.

Horner

If I did, no body wou'd believe me; the reputation of impotency is as hardly recover'd again in the world as that of cowardice, dear Madam.

Lady Fidget

Nay, then, as one may say: do your worst, dear Sir.

Sir Jaspar

Come, is your Ladyship reconciled to him yet? For I must be gone to Whitehall.

Lady Fidget

Why, indeed, Sir Jaspar, Master Horner is a thousand, thousand times a better Man, than I thought him.

[whispers to Dainty and Squeamish]

Sir Jaspar

Well, well!

Dainty Fidget

I believe it.

Squeam.

No doubt on't.

Sir Jaspar

Well, well — that your Ladyship is as virtuous as any, I know; and him all the Town knows—heh, he, he; therefore get you gone to your business, pleasure, whilst I go to my pleasure, business.

Lady Fidget

Come then, dear Gallant.

Horner

Come away, my dearest Mistress.

Sir Jaspar

So, so, why 'tis as I'd have it.

[Exit Sir Jaspar]

Horner

And as I'd have it.

Lady Fidget

Who for his business, from his wife will run,
Takes the best care, to have her business done.

[Exeunt]

ACT 3. SCENE 1.

Alithea, and Mrs. Pinchwife.

Alithea

Sister, what ails you? You are grown melancholy.

Margery Pinchwife

Would it not make any one melancholy, to see you go every day fluttering about, whil'st I must stay at home like a poor lonely Bird in a cage?

Alithea

Ay, Sister, but you came young, and just from the nest to your cage, so that I thought you lik'd it.

Margery Pinchwife

Nay, I confess I was quiet enough, till my Husband told me what pure lives the London Ladies live, with their dancing and meetings, and dressed every day in their best gowns

[Enter Mr. *Pinchwife.*]

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, what's here? You are putting the Town pleasures in her head, and setting her a-longing.

Alithea

You suffer none to give her those longings but your self.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come Mistress Flippant, the liberty you take abroad makes her hanker after it. She never desired, till this afternoon, to go abroad.

Alithea

Was she not at a Play yesterday?

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, but she ne'er ask'd me; I was myself the cause of her going.

Alithea

Then if she ask you again, you are the cause of her asking, and not my example.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, tomorrow I shall be rid of you; and the next day she and I'll be rid of the Town, and my dreadful apprehensions: Come, be not melancholy, for thou shalt go into the Country after tomorrow, Dearest.

Margery Pinchwife
Pish, what d'ye tell me of the Country for?

Mr. Pinchwife
How's this! what, pish at the Country?

Margery Pinchwife
Let me alone, I am not well.

Mr. Pinchwife
What ailes my dearest?

Margery Pinchwife
Truly I don't know; but I have not been well, since you told me there was a Gallant at the Play in love with me.

Mr. Pinchwife
Ha—

Alithea
That's by my example too.

Mr. Pinchwife
Nay, if you are not well because a lewd Fellow chanced to lie, and say he lik'd you, you'll make me sick too.

Margery Pinchwife
Of what sickness?

Mr. Pinchwife
O, of that which is worse than the Plague. Jealousy.

Margery Pinchwife
Pish, you jest, I'm sure there's no such disease.

Mr. Pinchwife
No, thou never met'st with it, poor Innocent.

Margery Pinchwife
But pray Bud, let's go to a Play to night.

Mr. Pinchwife
But why are you so eager to see a Play?

Margery Pinchwife
Faith Dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the Player-men, and wou'd see, if I cou'd, the Gallant you say loves me; that's all dear Bud.

Mr. Pinchwife
Is that all dear Bud?

Alithea
This proceeds from my example.

Margery Pinchwife
But if the Play be done, let's go abroad however, dear Bud.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come have a little patience, and thou shalt go into the Country on Friday.

Margery Pinchwife
Therefore I wou'd see first some sights, to tell my Neighbours of. Nay, I will go abroad, that's once.

Alithea
I'm the cause of this desire too.

Mr. Pinchwife
But now I think on't, who was the cause of Horner's coming to my Lodging today?
That was you.

Alithea
No, you, because you would not let him see your handsome Wife out of your Lodging.

Mrs. Pinchwife
Why, O Lord! did the Gentleman come hither to see me indeed?

Mr. Pinchwife

No, no;— You are not cause of that damn'd question too, Mistress Alithea?

Margery Pinchwife

Come, pray Bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain.

Mr. Pinchwife

So! the obstinacy already of a Town-wife, and I must, whilst she's here, humour her like one. [aside, to alithea] Sister, how shall we do, that she may not be seen, or known?

Alithea

Let her put on her Mask.

Mr. Pinchwife

Pshaw, a Mask makes People but the more inquisitive, and is as ridiculous a disguise as a stage-beard; her shape, stature, habit will be known. And if we should meet with Horner, he wou'd be sure to take acquaintance with us, must wish her joy, kiss her, talk to her, leer upon her, and the Devil and all; no I'll not use her to a Mask, 'tis dangerous.

Alithea

How will you do then?

Margery Pinchwife

Nay, shall we go? the *Exchange* will be shut, and I have a mind to see that.

Mr. Pinchwife

So—I have it—I'll dress her up in the suit we are taking down to her Brother, little Sir James. Come let's go dress her. A mask! No—a Woman mask'd, like a cover'd Dish, gives a Man curiosity and appetite when, uncover'd, 'twou'd turn his stomach.

Alithea

Indeed your comparison is a greasy one. But I had a gentle Gallant used to say, a Beauty mask'd, lik'd the Sun in Eclipse, gathers together more gazers than if it shined out.

[Exeunt.]

Act 3, scene 2

[The New Exchange: Enter Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant.]

Dorilant
Engag'd to women, and not sup with us?

Horner
Ay, a Pox on 'em all.

Harcourt
You were a much more reasonable Man this morning, and had noble resolutions against 'em.

Dorilant
Did I ever think to see you keep company with women in vain?

Horner
In vain? No! — 'Tis, since I can't love 'em, to be reveng'd on 'em.

[Harcourt and Dorilant begin to protest]

Horner
Because I do hate 'em, and to hate 'em even more, I'll frequent 'em. You see by Marriage, nothing makes a Man hate a Woman more, than her constant conversation: I converse with them, as you do with rich Fools, to laugh at'em, and use'em ill.

Harcourt
But do the Ladies drink?

Horner
Faith, I wou'd not leave you for 'em, if they wou'd not drink.

Harcourt
Foh. Wine and Women: good apart, together as nauseous as Sack and Sugar. But hark you, Sir, before you go, a little of your advice; an old maimed General, when unfit for action, is fittest for Counsel. I have other designs upon Women, than eating and drinking with them; I am in love with Sparkish's Mistress, whom he is to marry tomorrow. Now, how shall I get her?

[Enter *Sparkish*, looking about.]

Horner

Why, here comes one will help you to her.

Harcourt

He? He, I tell you, is my rival, and will hinder my love.

Horner

No, a foolish rival and a jealous husband assist their rivals' designs; for they are sure to make their women hate them, which is the first step to their love for another man.

Sparkish

Come, you bubbling Rogues, where do we sup?—Oh, *Harcourt*, my Mistress tells me, you have been making fierce love to her all the Play long, hah, ha—

Harcourt

I make love to her?

Sparkish

Nay, I forgive thee; for I think I know thee, and I know her, but I am sure I know my self.

Harcourt

Did she tell you so? I see all Women are like those of the Exchange, who to enhance the price of their commodities, report to their Customers offers which were never made 'em.

Horner

Ay, Women are as apt to blab before the intrigue, as Men after it, and so show themselves the vainer Sex; but hast thou a Mistress, Sparkish?

Sparkish

O; are you at your raillery, Sir?—But we were some of us beforehand with you today at the Play: the Wits were bold, Sir; did you not hear us laugh?

Harcourt

Yes, But I thought we had gone to Plays to laugh at the Poets wit, not at our own.

Sparkish

No, gad, I go to a Play as to a Country-treat: I carry my own wine to one, and my own wit to t'other, or else I'm sure I shou'd not be merry at either. And the reason why we are so often louder, than the Players is because we think we speak more wit, and so become the Poet's rivals in his audience: for to tell you the truth, we hate the

silly Rogues.

Horner

But, why should'st thou hate the silly Poets? Thou hast too much wit to be one; and thou dost scorn writing, I'am sure.

Sparkish

Yes, I'd have you know, I scorn writing. But women, women, that make men do all foolish things, make'em write songs too. Everybody does it.

Harcourt

Aye, poetry in love is no more to be avoided than jealousy.

Dorilant

But, who comes here, *Sparkish*?

[Enter Mr. *Pinchwife*, and his Wife in Mans Cloaths, *Alithea*, *Lucy* her Maid.]

Sparkish

Oh hide me, there's my Mistress too.

[*Sparkish* hides himself behind *Harcourt*.]

Harcourt

She sees you.

Sparkish

But I will not see her, 'tis time to go to Whitehall.

Harcourt

Pray, first, and reconcile me to her.

Sparkish

Another time, faith.

Horner

Your Servant, *Pinchwife*, — what he knows us not —

Mr. *Pinchwife*

Come along.

Margery *Pinchwife*

Pray, have you any Ballads, give me six-penny worth?

Clasp.

We have no Ballads.

Margery Pinchwife

Then give me Covent-garden-Drollery, and a Play or two — Oh here's Tarugos Wiles, and the Slighted Maiden, I'll have them.

Mr. Pinchwife

No, Plays are not for your reading; come along, will you discover your self?

Horner

Who is that pretty Youth with him, Sparkish?

Sparkish

I believe his Wife's Brother; he's something like her, but I never saw her but once.

Horner

Extremely handsome, I have seen a face like it too; let us follow'em.

[*Exeunt Pinchwife, Mistriss Pinchwife. Alithea, Lucy, Horner, Dorilant following them.*]

Harcourt

Come, Sparkish, your Mistress saw you, and will be angry you go not to her; besides I wou'd be reconcil'd to her, which none but you can do, dear Friend.

Sparkish

Well that's a better reason, dear Friend; I wou'd not go near her now, for her's, or my own sake, but I can deny you nothing.

Harcourt

I am oblig'd to you indeed, dear Friend. I would be well with her only to be well with thee; for these ties to Wives usually dissolve all ties to Friends.

Sparkish

I'll be divorced from her, sooner than from thee, come along—

Harcourt

[*aside*] When all's done, a Rival is the best cloak to steal to a Mistress under, without suspicion; and when we have got to her as we desire, we throw him off like other Cloaks.

[Exit *Sparkish*, and *Harcourt* following him.]

[Re-enter Mr. *Pinchwife*, Mistress *Pinchwife* in Man's Clothes.]

Mr. Pinchwife

[to *Alitheia*] Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you—what a swarm of Cuckold-makers are here? Come, let's be gone Mistress *Margery*.

Margery Pinchwife

Don't you believe that, I haven't half my belly full of sights yet.

Mr. Pinchwife

Then walk this way.

[Exeunt Mr. *Pinchwife*, Mrs. *Pinchwife*.]

[Re-enter *Sparkish*, *Harcourt*, *Alitheia*, *Lucy*]

Sparkish

Come, dear Madam, for my sake you shall be reconciled to him.

Alitheia

For your sake I hate him.

Harcourt

That's something too cruel, Madam, to hate me for his sake.

Sparkish

Ay indeed, Madam, too, too cruel to me, to hate my Friend for my sake.

Alitheia

I hate him because he is your Enemy; and you ought to hate him too, if you love me.

Sparkish

That's a good one, I hate a Man for loving you! 'Tis your fault, not his, if he admires you. I hate a Man for being of my opinion? I'll ne'er do't, by the world.

Alitheia

Is it for your honor or mine, to suffer a Man to make love to me, when I am to marry you to morrow?

Sparkish

Is it for your honor or mine, to have me jealous? That he makes love to you, is a sign you are handsome; and that I am not jealous, is a sign you are virtuous; and that, I

think, is for your honor.

Alithea

'Tis your honor I am concerned for.

Harcourt

But why, dearest Madam, will you be more concern'd for his honor than he is himself? Let his honor alone for my sake and his. He, he, has no honour—

Sparkish

How's that?

Harcourt

But what my dear Friend can guard himself.

Sparkish

O ho—that's right again.

Harcourt

Your care of his honor argues his neglect of it, which is no honor to my dear friend here.

Sparkish

Ay, ay, were it for my honor to marry a Woman, whose virtue I suspected, and cou'd not trust her in a Friends hands?

Alithea

Are you not afraid to lose me?

Harcourt

He afraid to lose you, Madam! No, no—

Sparkish

Right, honest Frank. I have that noble value for her that I cannot be jealous of her.

Alithea

You astonish me, Sir, with your want of jealousy.

Sparkish

And you make me giddy, Madam, with your jealousy and fears and virtue and honor. Gad, I see virtue makes a Woman as troublesome as a little reading or learning.

Alithea

Monstrous! I tell you then plainly, he pursues me to marry me.

Sparkish

Pshaw—

Harcourt

Come, Madam, you strive in vain to make him jealous of me; my dear Friend is the kindest Creature in the World to me.

Sparkish

Poor fellow.

Harcourt

But his kindness only is not enough for me, without your favour; your good opinion, dear Madam, 'tis that must perfect my happiness! I wou'd not wrong him nor you for the World.

Sparkish

Look you there; hear him, hear him, and do not walk away so.

[*Alithea* walks carelessly, to and fro.]

Harcourt

I love you, Madam, so—

Sparkish

Now you begin to go too far.

Harcourt

So much I confess, I say I love you, that I wou'd not have you miserable, and cast your self away upon so unworthy and inconsiderable a thing as you see here—

[Clapping his hand on his breast, and pointing at *Sparkish*.]

Sparkish

Now his meaning is plain! but I knew before thou woud'st not wrong me nor her.

Harcourt

No, no, Heavens forbid, the glory of her Sex shou'd fall so low as into the embraces of such a contemptible Wretch, the last of Mankind—my dear Friend here— I injure him.

[Embracing Sparkish.]

Alithea
Very well.

Sparkish
No, no, dear Friend, I knew it Madam, you see he will rather wrong himself than me, in giving himself such names.

Alithea
Do not you understand him yet?

Sparkish
Yes, how modestly he speaks of himself, poor Fellow.

Alithea
I can no longer suffer his scurrilous abusiveness to you, no more than his love to me.

[Offers to go.]

Sparkish
Nay, Lord, Madam, has he not spoke yet plain enough?

Alithea
Yes indeed, I shou'd think so.

Sparkish
Well then, by the World, a Man can't speak civilly to a Woman now, but presently she says, he makes love to her: Nay, Madam, you shall stay, with your pardon, since you have not yet understood him, till he has made an *eclaircissement* of his love to you, to what kind of love it is. Answer to thy Catechism: Friend, do you love my Mistress here?

Harcourt
Yes, I wish she wou'd not doubt it.

Sparkish
But with what kind of love, *Harcourt*?

Harcourt
With the best, and truest love in the World.

Sparkish

Look you there then, that is with no matrimonial love, I'm sure.

Alithea

How's that, do you say matrimonial love is not best?

Sparkish

Gad, I went too far: But speak for thy self *Harcourt*, you said you wou'd not wrong me, nor her.

Harcourt

No, no, Madam, e'n take him for Heaven's sake—

Sparkish

Look you there, Madam.

Harcourt

--who shou'd in all justice be yours, he that loves you most.

[Claps his hand on his breast.]

Alithea

Look you there, Mr. *Sparkish*, who's that?

Sparkish

Who shou'd it be? go on *Harcourt*.

Harcourt

Who loves you more than Women, Titles, or fortune Fools.

[Points at *Sparkish*.]

Sparkish

Look you there, he means me still, for he points at me.

Alithea

Ridiculous!

Harcourt

Who can only match your Faith, and constancy in love.

Sparkish

Ay.

Harcourt

Who knows, if it be possible, how to value so much beauty and virtue.

Sparkish

Ay.

Harcourt

Who in fine loves you better than his eyes, that first made him love you.

Sparkish

Come pray, Madam, be friends with him.

[Enter Master *Pinchwife*, Mistriss *Pinchwife*.]

Alithea

You must pardon me, Sir, that I am not yet so obedient to you.

Mr. Pinchwife

What, invite your Wife to kiss Men? Monstrous. Are you not ashamed?

Sparkish

Are you not asham'd, that I shou'd have more confidence in the chastity of your Family than you have? He is a humble, menial Friend.

Mr. Pinchwife

You will get a great many menial Friends, by showing your Wife as you do.

Sparkish

Then it may be I have a pleasure in't, as I have to show fine Clothes at a Play-house the first day, and count money before poor Rogues.

Mr. Pinchwife

He that shows his wife or money will be in danger of having them borrowed sometimes.

Sparkish

I love to be envied, and wou'd not marry a Wife, that I alone cou'd love; loving alone is as dull as eating alone. And so I wish you a good night, Madam, and sleep if you can; for tomorrow you know I must visit you early with a Canonical Gentleman. Good night dear *Harcourt*.

[Exit *Sparkish*.]

Harcourt

Madam, I hope you will not refuse my visit to morrow, if it shou'd be earlier, with a Canonical Gentleman, than Mr. *Sparkish*'s.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come away Sister, we had been gone, if it had not been for you, and so avoided these lewd Rakehells, who seem to haunt us.

[Enter *Horner*, *Dorilant* to them.]

Horner

How now *Pinchwife*?

Mr. Pinchwife

Your Servant.

Horner

What, I see a little time in the Country makes a Man turn wild and unsociable.

Mr. Pinchwife

I have business, Sir, and must mind it. Your business is pleasure, therefore you and I must go different ways.

Horner

Well, you may go on, but this pretty young Gentleman—

[Takes hold of Mrs. *Pinchwife*.]

Harcourt

The Lady—

Dorilant

And the Maid—

Horner

--Shall stay with us, for I suppose their business is the same as ours, pleasure.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] 'Sdeath he knows her, she carries it so sillily, yet if he does not, I shou'd be more silly to discover it first.

Alithea
Pray, let us go, Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come, come—

Horner
[to mrs. pinchwife] Had you not rather stay with us? Prithee *Pinchwife*, who is this pretty young Gentleman?

Mr. Pinchwife
One to whom I'm a guardian.

Horner
Who is he? I never saw any thing so pretty in all my life.

Mr. Pinchwife
Pshaw, do not look upon him so much, he's a poor bashful youth. Come away
Brother.

[Offers to take her away.]

Horner
O, your brother!

Mr. Pinchwife
Yes, my wife's brother; come, come, she stays supper for us.

Horner
I thought so, for he is very like her I saw you at the Play with, whom I told you, I was in love with.

Margery Pinchwife
[aside] O Jeminy! is this he that was in love with me, I am glad on't I vow, for he's a curious fine Gentleman, and I love him already too. [to pinchwife] Is this he Bud?

Mr. Pinchwife
Come away, come away.

Horner
Why won't you let me talk with him?

Mr. Pinchwife

Because you'll debauch him, he's yet young and innocent, and I wou'd not have him debauch'd for anything in the World. [aside] How she gazes on him! the Devil—

Horner

Harcourt, Dorilant, look you here, this is the likeness of his wife, did you ever see a lovelier Creature? The Rogue has reason to be jealous of his Wife, since she is like him, for she wou'd make all that see her in love with her.

Harcourt

And as I remember now, she is as like him here as can be.

Dorilant

She is indeed very pretty, if she be like him.

Horner

Very pretty, a very pretty commendation—she is a glorious Creature, beautiful beyond all things I ever beheld.

Mr. Pinchwife

So, so.

Harcourt

More beautiful than a Poets first Mistress of Imagination.

Horner

Or another Mans last Mistress of flesh and blood.

Margery Pinchwife

Nay, now you jeer, Sir; pray don't jeer me—

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, come.

Horner

I speak of your Sister, Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife

Ay, but saying she was handsome, if like him, made him blush. [aside] I am upon a wrack—

Horner

Methinks he is so handsome, he shou'd not be a Man.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] O there 'tis out, he has discovered her, I am not able to suffer any longer. [to his wife] Come, come away, I say—

Horner

Nay, by your leave, Sir, he shall not go yet— [aside to har & dor] Let us torment this jealous Rogue a little.

Harcourt

How?

Dorilant

How?

Horner

I'll show you.

Mr. Pinchwife

I cannot stay fooling any longer; I tell you his Sister stays supper for us.

Horner

Does she! Come then, we'll all go sup with her and thee.

Mr. Pinchwife

No, now I think on't, having stayed so long for us, I warrant she's gone to bed—
Come, I must rise early to morrow, come.

Horner

Well then, if she be gone to bed, I wish her and you a good night. But pray, young Gentleman, present my humble service to her.

Margery Pinchwife

Thank you heartily, Sir.

Horner

Tell her, dear sweet little Brother, that you have reviv'd the love, I had for her at first sight in the Play-house.

Margery Pinchwife

But did you love her indeed, and indeed?

Mr. Pinchwife
Away, I say.

Horner
Nay stay. Yes indeed, and indeed, pray tell her so, and give her this kiss from me.

[Kisses her.]

Mr. Pinchwife
O Heavens! what I suffer!

Horner
And this, and this—

[Kisses her again.]

Mr. Pinchwife
I cannot, nor will stay any longer.

Horner
They shall send your Lady a kiss too; here Harcourt, Dorilant, will you not?

[They kiss her.]

Mr. Pinchwife
[aside] Was I not accusing another just now, for this rascally patience, in permitting his Wife to be kiss'd before his face? Ten thousand ulcers gnaw away their lips.

Horner
Good night dear little Gentleman; Madam goodnight; farewell *Pinchwife*. [aside, as they go] Did not I tell you, I wou'd raise his jealous gall?

[Exeunt *Horner, Harcourt, and Dorilant.*]

Mr. Pinchwife
So they are gone at last. Stay, let me see first if the Coach be at the door.

[Exit.]
[*Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant* return.]

Horner
What not gone yet? will you be sure to do as I desired you, sweet Sir?

Margery Pinchwife
Sweet Sir, but what will you give me then?

Horner
Anything, come away into the next walk.

[Exit *Horner*, haling away Mrs. *Pinchwife*.]

Alithea
Hold, hold, — what d'ye do?

Lucy.
Stay, stay, hold—

Harcourt
Hold Madam, hold, let him present him, he'll come presently; nay, I will never let you go, till you answer my question.

[*Alithea*, *Lucy* struggling with *Harcourt*, and *Dorilant*.]

Lucy.
For God's sake, Sir, I must follow'em.

Dorilant
No, I have something to present you with too, you shan't follow them.

[*Pinchwife* returns.]

Mr. Pinchwife
Where? — how? — what's become of? gone— whither?

Lucy.
He's only gone with the Gentleman, who will give him something, an't please your Worship.

Mr. Pinchwife
A Pox— where are they?

Alithea
In the next walk only, Brother.

Mr. Pinchwife

Only, only; where, where.....?

[Exit *Pinchwife*, and returns presently; then goes out again.]

Harcourt

What's the matter with him? But dearest Madam—

Alithea

Pray, let me go, Sir, I have said, and suffer'd enough already.

Harcourt

Then you will not look upon, nor pity my sufferings?

Alithea

To look upon'em, when I cannot help'em, were cruelty, not pity, therefore I will never see you more.

Harcourt

Let me then, Madam, have my privilege of a banished lover, and give you a farewell reason why, if you cannot condescend to marry me, you shou'd not take that wretch my Rival.

Alithea

He only, since my honour is engag'd to him, can give me a reason why I shou'd not marry him. If he be true, I must be so to him; your Servant, Sir.

Harcourt

Have Women only constancy when 'tis a vice?

Dorilant

[To *Lucy*, who struggles to get from him.] Thou shalt not stir thou robust Creature, you see I can deal with you, therefore you shou'd stay the rather, and be kind.

[Enter *Pinchwife*.]

Mr. Pinchwife

Gone, gone, not to be found. Ten thousand plagues go with'em. Which way went they?

Alithea

But into t'other walk, Brother.

Lucy.

Their business will be done presently sure, an't please your Worship, it can't be long in doing I'm sure on't.

Alithea

Are they not there?

Mr. Pinchwife

No, you know where they are, you infamous Wretch, Eternal shame of your Family—

Alithea

Look you here, she's coming.

[Enter Mistriss *Pinchwife* in Mans cloaths, running with her hat under her arm, full of Oranges and dried fruit, *Horner* following.]

Margery Pinchwife

O dear Bud, look what I have got.

Horner

I have only given your little Brother an Orange, Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife

Thank you, Sir. [aside] Have only squeez'd my Orange, I suppose, and given it me again. [to his wife] Come, come away—

Margery Pinchwife

Stay, till I have put up my fine things, Bud.

[Enter Sir *Jaspar* Fidget.]

Sir Jaspar

O Master Horner, the Ladies stay for you! Your Mistress, my Wife, wonders you make not more hast to her.

Horner

I have staid this half hour for you here, and 'tis your fault I am not now with your Wife.

Sir Jaspar

But pray, don't let her know so much, the truth on't is, I was advancing a certain

Project to his Majesty, about—I'll tell you.

Horner

No, let's go, and hear it at your house: Good night sweet little Gentleman; one kiss more, you'll remember me now I hope.

[Kisses her.]

Dorilant

What, Sir. *Jaspar*, will you separate Friends? he promis'd to sup with us; and if you take him to your house, you'll be in danger of our company too.

Sir Jaspar

Alas Gentlemen my house is not fit for you; there are none but civil Women there, which are not for your turn. He, you know can bear with the society of civil Women, now, ha, ha, ha;—he's— heh, heh, heh.

Dorilant

What is he?

Sir Jaspar

Faith my Eunuch, since you'll have it, heh, he, he.

[Exit Sir *Jaspar Fidget*, and *Horner*.]

Dorilant

Harcourt, what a good Cuckold is lost there, for want of a Man to make him one; thee and I cannot have Horners privilege, who can make use of it.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come.

Margery Pinchwife

Presently Bud.

Dorilant

Come let us go too. [to alithea] Madam, your Servant. [to lacy] Good night Strapper.—

Harcourt

Madam. though you will not let me have a good day, or night, I wish you one.

Alithea

Good night, Sir, for ever.

Margery Pinchwife

I don't know where to put this here, dear Bud, you shall eat it. [she exits.]

Mr. Pinchwife

Indeed I deserve it, since I furnish'd the best part of it. [Strikes away the Orange.]

The gallant treats, presents, and gives the ball;
But 'tis the absent cuckold, pays for all.

ACT 4. SCENE 1.

In *Pinchwife's* house in the morning. *Lucy, Alithea* dress'd in new Clothes.

Lucy.

Well—Madam, now have I dress'd you, and set you out with so many ornaments, and spent upon you ounces of essence. But Madam, I will ask you the reason, why you wou'd banish Master *Harcourt* from your sight?

Alithea

Hold your peace.

Lucy.

How cou'd you be so hard-hearted?

Alithea

'Twas because I was not hard-hearted. I wou'd see him no more, because I love him.

Lucy.

Hey day, a very pretty reason.

Alithea

I am engag'd to marry another man, whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive, or injure.

Lucy.

Can there be a greater wrong done to a Man, than to give him your person without your heart?

Alithea

I'll retrieve it for him after I am married a while.

Lucy.

No; Madam, marrying to increase love is like gaming to become rich; you only lose what little stock you had before.

Alithea

I find by your Rhetoric you have been brib'd to betray me.

Lucy.

Only by his merit, that has brib'd your heart you see against your word, and rigid honour; but what a Devil is this honour? 'Tis sure a disease in the head, that always

hurries People away to do themselves mischief. Men lose their lives by it; Women what's dearer to'em, their love, the life of life.

Alithea
Come, pray talk you no more of honour.

Lucy.
You will marry Master Sparkish then?

Alithea
Certainly. I have given him already my word, and will my hand too, to make it good when he comes.

Lucy.
Well, I wish I may never stick pin more, if he be not an errant Natural.

Alithea
I own he wants the wit of *Harcourt*, which I will dispense withal, for another want he has, which is want of jealousy. 'Tis *Sparkish's* confidence in my truth, that obliges me to be so faithful to him.

Lucy.
You are not sure his opinion may last.

Alithea
I am satisfied. 'Tis impossible for him to be jealous, after the proofs I have had of him. Jealousy in a Husband, Heaven defend me from it, it begets a thousand plagues to a poor Woman: the loss of her honour, her quiet, and her—

Lucy.
Pleasure--

Alithea
What d'ye mean, Impertinent?

Lucy.
Liberty is a great pleasure, Madam.

Alithea
I say: loss of her honour, her quiet, nay, her life sometimes; and what's as bad almost, the loss of this Town; that is, she is sent into the Country, which is the last ill usage of a Husband to a Wife, I think.

Lucy.

Then of necessity, Madam, you think a man must carry his Wife into the Country, if he be wise; the Country is as terrible I find to our young English Ladies, as a Monastery to those abroad. Formerly Women of wit married Fools, for a great Estate, a fine seat, or the like; but now 'tis for a pretty seat only in Lincoln's Inn-fields, St. James's-fields, or the Pall-mall.

[Enter to them *Sparkish*, and *Harcourt* dress'd like a Parson.]

Sparkish

Madam, your humble Servant, a happy day to you, and to us all.

Harcourt

Amen.—

Alithea

Who have we here?

Sparkish

My Chaplain faith—Oh! Madam, poor Harcourt remembers his humble service to you; and in obedience to your last commands, refrains coming into your sight.

Alithea

Is not that he?

Sparkish

No, fie no! But to show that he ne're intended to hinder our match has sent his Brother here to join our hands.

Alithea

His Brother?

Lucy.

[aside, to alithea] And your Chaplain, to preach in your Pulpit then—

Alithea

His Brother!

Sparkish

Nay, I knew you wou'd not believe it; I told you, Sir, she wou'd take you for your Brother Frank.

Alithea
Believe it!

Lucy.
[aside] His Brother hah, ha, he, he—

Sparkish
Come my dearest, pray let us go to Church before the Canonical hour is past.

Alithea
For shame you are abus'd still.

Sparkish
By the World 'tis strange now you are so incredulous.

Alithea
'Tis strange you are so credulous.

Sparkish
Dearest of my life, hear me, I tell you this is Ned Harcourt of Cambridge; by the world, you see he has a sneaking College look. 'Tis true he's something like his Brother Frank, for they were twins.

Lucy.
Hah, ha, he.

Alithea
But come, let's hear, how do you know what you affirm so confidently?

Sparkish
Why, I'll tell you all: Frank Harcourt coming to me this morning, to wish me joy and present his service to you, I ask'd him if he cou'd help me to a Parson; whereupon he told me he had a brother in town who was in orders, and he went straight away, and sent him, you see there, to me.

Alithea
Yes, Frank goes, and puts on a black-coat, then tells you, he is Ned, that's all you have for it.

Spar,
Pshaw, pshaw, I tell you by the same token, the midwife put her garter about Frank's neck, to know 'em asunder, they were so like.

Alithea

Frank tell's you this too.

Sparkish

Ay, and Ned there too; nay, they both tell the story.

Alithea

So, so, very, foolish.

Sparkish

Lord, if you won't believe, you had best try him by your Chamber maid there; for Chamber-maids must needs know Chaplains from other Men, they are so us'd to'em.

Lucy.

Let's see; nay, I'll be sworn he has the Canonical smirk, and the filthy, clammy palm of a Chaplain.

Alithea

Well, most reverend Doctor, pray let us make an end of this fooling.

Harcourt

With all my soul, Divine, Heavenly Creature, when you please.

Alithea

He speaks like a Chaplain indeed.

Sparkish

Why? Was there not, 'soul,' 'divine,' 'heavenly,' in what he said.

Alithea

I have no more patience left.

Harcourt

[aside] I had forgot, I must suite my Style to my Coat, or I wear it in vain.

Alithea

Most impertinent one, cease your persecution, and let us have a Conclusion of this ridiculous love.

Harcourt

So be it, seraphic Lady, when your honour shall think it meet, and convenient so to do.

Sparkish

Gad I'm sure none but a Chaplain cou'd speak so.

Alithea

Let me tell you Sir, this dull trick will not serve your turn. Though you delay our marriage, you shall not hinder it.

Harcourt

Far be it from me, Munificent Patroness, to delay your Marriage. I desire nothing more than to marry you presently, which I might do, if you yourself wou'd. For my Noble, Good-natur'd and thrice Generous Patron here wou'd not hinder it.

Sparkish

No, poor man, not I, faith.

Harcourt

And now, Madam, let me tell you plainly, no body else shall marry you by Heavens, I'll die first, for I'm sure I shou'd die after it.

Lucy.

How his Love has made him forget his Function, as I have seen it in real Parsons.

Alithea

That was spoken like a Chaplain too, now you understand him, I hope.

Sparkish

Poor man, he takes it heinously to be refus'd. I can't blame him, 'tis putting an indignity upon him not to be suffer'd; but you'll pardon me Madam, it shan't be, he shall marry us, come away, pray Madam.

Lucy.

Hah, ha, he, more ado! 'tis late.

Alithea

Invincible stupidity, I tell you he wou'd marry me as your Rival, not as your Chaplain.

Sparkish

Come, Madam.

[Pulling her away.]

Lucy.

I pray Madam, do not refuse this Reverend Divine, the honour and satisfaction of marrying you; for I dare say, he has set his heart upon't, good Doctor.

Sparkish

Come Madam, 'tis e'ne twelve a clock, and my Mother charg'd me never to be married out of the Canonical hours. Lord here's such a deal of modesty, I warrant the first day.

Lucy.

Yes, an't please your Worship, married women show all their Modesty the first day because married men show all their love the first day.

[Exeunt *Sparkish, Alithea, Harlcourt, and Lucy.*]

Act 4 scene 2

The Scene changes to a Bed chamber, where appear *Pinchwife*, Mrs. *Pinchwife*.

Mr. Pinch.
Come tell me, I say.

Mrs. Pinch.
Lord, han't I told it an hundred times over.

Mr. Pinch.
Come how was't Baggage?

Mrs. Pinch.
Lord, what pleasure you take to hear it sure!

Mr. Pinch.
No, you take more in telling it I find, but speak how was't?

Mrs. Pinch.
He carried me up into the house, next to the Exchange.

Mr. Pinchwife
So, and you two were only in the room.

Margery Pinchwife
Yes, for he sent away a youth that was there for some dried fruit, and China Oranges.

Mr. Pinchwife
Did he so?

Margery Pinchwife
But presently came up the Gentlewoman of the house.

Mr. Pinchwife
O 'twas well she did, but what did he do whilst the fruit came?

Margery Pinchwife
He kiss'd me an hundred times, and told me he fancied he kiss'd my fine Sister, meaning me you know, whom he said he lov'd with all his Soul, and bid me be sure to tell her so, and to desire her to be at her window, by eleven of the clock this morning, and he wou'd walk under it at that time, and he said if you were not within,

he wou'd come up to her, meaning me you know, Bud, still.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] So — he knew her certainly, but for this confession, I am oblig'd to her simplicity. [to mrs pinchwife] But, what, you stood very still when he kiss'd you?

Margery Pinchwife

Yes, I warrant you, wou'd you have had me discover'd my self?

Mr. Pinchwife

But you told me he did some beastliness to you, as you call'd it, what was't?

Margery Pinchwife

Why, he put—

Mr. Pinchwife

What?

Margery Pinchwife

Why he put the tip of his tongue between my lips, and so nuzzled me—and I said, I'd bite it.

Mr. Pinchwife

An eternal canker seize it!

Margery Pinchwife

Nay, you need not be so angry with him neither, for to say truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever knew.

Mr. Pinchwife

The Devil!—You were satisfied with it then, and wou'd do it again.

Margery Pinchwife

Not unless he shou'd force me.

Mr. Pinchwife

Force you, changeling! I tell you no woman can be forced.

Margery Pinchwife

Yes, but she may sure, by such a one as he, for he's a proper, goodly strong man, 'tis hard, let me tell you, to resist him.

Mr. Pinchwife
Go fetch Pen, Ink and Paper out of the next room.

Margery Pinchwife
YeYes Bud.

[she goes.]

Pinchwife
[aside] So 'tis plain she loves him, yet she has not love enough to make her conceal it from me. But the sight of him will increase her aversion for me, and love for him; and that love instruct her how to deceive me, and satisfy him: Love, 'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding; out of nature's hands, they came plain, open, silly and fit for slaves, as she and Heaven intended 'em; but damn'd Love — Well — I must strangle that little Monster, whilst I can deal with him. Why should Women have more invention in love than men? It can only be, because they have more desires, more soliciting passions, more lust, and more of the Devil.

[Mistress *Pinchwife* returns.

Pinchwife
Come, Minx, sit down and write.

Margery Pinchwife
Ay, dear Bud, but I can't do't very well.

Mr. Pinchwife
I wish you cou'd not at all.

Margery Pinchwife
But what shou'd I write for?

Mr. Pinchwife
I'll have you write a Letter to your Lover.

Margery Pinchwife
O Lord, to the fine Gentleman a Letter!

Mr. Pinchwife
Yes, to the fine Gentleman.

Margery Pinchwife

Lord, sure you jest.

Mr. Pinchwife

I am not so merry, come write as I bid you.

Margery Pinchwife

What, do you think I am a fool?

Mr. Pinchwife

You had best begin.

Margery Pinchwife

Indeed, and indeed, but I won't, so I won't.

Mr. Pinchwife

Why?

Margery Pinchwife

Because he's in Town, you may send for him if you will.

Mr. Pinchwife

Is it come to this? I say take the pen and write, or you'll provoke me.

Margery Pinchwife

Lord, what d'ye make a fool of me for? Don't I know that Letters are never writ, but from the Country to London, and from London into the Country; now he's in Town, and I am in Town too; therefore I can't write to him you know.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] I am glad it is no worse, she is innocent enough yet. [to mrs. pinchwife] Yes you may, when your Husband bids you write Letters to people that are in Town.

Margery Pinchwife

O may I so! Then I'm satisfied.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come begin — Sir—

Margery Pinchwife

Shan't I say, Dear Sir? You know one says always something more than bare Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife

Write as I bid you, or I will write Whore with this Penknife in your Face.

Margery Pinchwife
Sir—

[She writes.]

Mr. Pinchwife
Though I suffer'd last night your nauseous, loath'd Kisses and Embraces— Write

Margery Pinchwife
Why shou'd I say so? You know I told you he had a sweet breath.

Mr. Pinchwife
Write.

Margery Pinchwife
Let me but put out, loath'd.

Mr. Pinchwife
Write I say.

Margery Pinchwife
Well then.

[Writes.]

Mr. Pinchwife
Let's see what have you writ? [Takes the paper, and reads.] “Though I suffer'd last night your kisses and embraces”— Thou impudent creature, where is nauseous and loath'd?

Margery Pinchwife
I can't abide to write such filthy words.

Mr. Pinchwife
Once more write as I'd have you, and question it not, or I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief.

[Holds up the penknife.]

Margery Pinchwife
O Lord, I will.

Mr. Pinchwife

So—so—Let's see now! [Reads.] “Though I suffer'd last night your nauseous, loath'd kisses, and embraces;” Go on— Yet I would not have you presume that you shall ever repeat them— So—

[She writes.]

Margery Pinchwife

I have writ it.

Mr. Pinchwife

On then—I then conceal'd my self from your knowledge, to avoid your insolencies—

[She writes.]

Margery Pinchwife

So—

Mr. Pinchwife

The same reason now I am out of your hands—

[She writes]

Margery Pinchwife

So—

Mr. Pinchwife

Makes me own to you my unfortunate, though innocent frolic, of being in man's cloths.

[She writes.]

Margery Pinchwife

So—

Mr. Pinchwife

That you may for ever more cease to pursue her, who hates and detests you—

[She writes on.]

Margery Pinchwife

So — hhhhhhhhh —

[Sighs.]

Mr. Pinchwife

Why do you sigh? — detests you — as much as she loves her Husband —

Margery Pinchwife

I vow Husband he'll ne'er believe, I shou'd write such a Letter.

Mr. Pinchwife

What he'd expect a kinder from you? come now your name only.

Margery Pinchwife

What, shan't I say your most faithful, humble Servant till death?

Mr. Pinchwife

No, tormenting Fiend. Come wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle; and write on the back side, for Mr. *Horner*.

[Exit *Pinchwife*.]

Margery Pinchwife

'For Mr. *Horner*' — So, I am glad he has told me his name! Dear Mr. *Horner*! But why should I send thee such a Letter, that will vex thee and make thee angry with me? — Well, I will not send it. — Ay, but then my husband will kill me. — For I see plainly, he won't let me love Mr. *Horner*. — But what care I for my Husband? — I won't, so, I *won't* send poor Mr. *Horner* such a Letter! — But then my Husband. — But, oh! — What if I writ at bottom, 'my Husband made me write it' — Ay but then my Husband wou'd see't — What if I shou'd write a Letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon't too? Ay but then my Husband wou'd see't. — I don't know what to do — But yet I'll try, so I will, for I will not send this Letter to poor Mr. *Horner*, come what will on't.

[She writes, and repeats what she hath writ.]

Dear, Sweet Mr. *Horner*—*so*— my Husband wou'd have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly Letter — but I won't — *so* — and wou'd have me forbid you loving me — but I wont — *so* — and wou'd have me say to you, I hate you poor Mr. *Horner* — but I won't tell a lie for him — *there* — for I'm sure if you and I were in the Countrey at cards together, — *so* — I cou'd not help treading on your Toe under the Table — *so* — or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face, 'till you saw me — *very well* — and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together — *so* — but I must make haste before my Husband come; and now that he has taught me to write letters, you shall have longer ones from me, who am, dear, dear, poor dear Mr. *Horner*, your

most Humble Friend, and Servant to command 'till death, Margery Pinchwife. — Stay I must give him a hint at bottom — *so* — now wrap it up just like t'other — *so* — now write for Mr. Horner, — But oh now what shall I do with it? for here comes my Husband.

[Enter *Pinchwife*.]

Mr. Pinchwife
What, have you done?

Margery Pinchwife
Ay, ay Bud, just now.

Mr. Pinchwife
Let's see't, what d'ye tremble for; what, you wou'd not have it go?

Margery Pinchwife
Here — [aside] No I must not give him that.

[He opens and reads the first letter.]

Margery Pinchwife
So I had been served if I had given him this.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come, where's the Wax and Seal?

Margery Pinchwife
[aside] Lord, what shall I do now? Nay then I have it — [to pinchwife] Pray let me see't Lord you think me so errand a fool, I cannot seal a Letter? I will do't, so I will.

[Snatches the Letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it, and delivers it to him.]

Mr. Pinchwife
'Tis very well, but I warrant, you wou'd not have it go now?

Margery Pinchwife
Yes indeed, but I wou'd, Bud, now.

Mr. Pinchwife
Well you are a good Girl then, come let me lock you up in your chamber, 'till I come back; and be sure you come not within three strides of the window, when I am gone;

for I have a spy in the street.

[Exit Margery Pinchwife *Pinchwife* locks the door.]

At least, 'tis fit she think so, if we do not cheat women, they'll cheat us; and fraud may be justly used with secret enemies, of which a Wife is the most dangerous. — Now I have secur'd all within, I'll deal with the Foe without with false intelligence.

[Holds up the Letter, and exits].

Act 4 scene 3

[*Horner's Lodging. Quack and Horner.*]

Quack.

Well Sir, how fadges the new design? Have you not the luck of all your brother Projectors, to deceive only your self at last.

Horner

No, good *Domine* Doctor, I deceive you it seems, and others too; for the grave Matrons, and old rigid Husbands think me as unfit for love, as they are; but their Wives, Sisters and Daughters, know some of 'em better things already.

Quack.

Already!

Horner

Already, I say, doctor, already.

Quack.

You have made use of your time, Sir.—But do civil persons, and women of Honour drink and sing bawdy Songs?

Horner

O, amongst Friends. For your Bigots in Honour, are just like those in Religion; they fear the eye of the world more than the eye of Heaven, and think there is no virtue, but railing at vice.

[Enter Lady *Fidget*, looking about her.]

Now we talk of women of Honour, here comes one, step behind the Screen there, and

but observe if I have not particular privileges, with the women of reputation already, Doctor, already.

Lady Fidget

Well Horner, am not I a woman of honour? you see I'm as good as my word.

Horner

And you shall see Madam, I'll not be behindhand with you in honour; and I'll be as good as my word too, if you please but to withdraw into the next room.

Lady Fidget

But first, my dear Sir, you must promise to have a care of my dear honour.

Horner

To talk of Honour in the mysteries of Love is like talking of Heaven in an operation of Witchcraft, just when you are employing the Devil. It makes the charm impotent.

Lady Fidget

But you can't blame a Lady of my reputation for being wary.

Horner

Wary — I have been wary of it already, by the report I have caus'd of my self.

Lady Fidget

Ay, but if you shou'd ever let other women know the dear secret, it would come out! Nay, you must have a great care of your conduct; for my acquaintances are so censorious, (oh 'tis a wicked censorious world, Mr. Horner) so censorious, and detracting, that perhaps they'll talk to the prejudice of my Honour.

Horner

Madam, rather than they shall prejudice your Honour, I'll prejudice theirs. To serve you, I'll lie with 'em all, and make the secret their own; and then they'll keep it. I am a Machiavel in love Madam.

Lady Fidget

O, no Sir, not that way.

Horner

Nay, the Devil take me, if censorious women are to be silenc'd any other way.

Lady Fidget

A secret is better kept I hope, by a single person, than a multitude; therefore pray do

not trust anybody else with it, dear, dear Mr. *Horner*.

[Embracing him.]

Enter Sir *Jaspar* Fidget.

Sir Jas.
How now!

Lady Fidget
[aside] O my Husband—prevented—and what's almost as bad, found with my arms about another man— that will appear too much— what shall I say?— Sir Jaspar, come hither. I am trying if Mr. Horner were ticklish, and he's as ticklish as can be, I love to torment the confounded Toad! Let's you and I tickle him.

Sir Jaspar
No, your Ladyship will tickle him better without me, I suppose, but is this your buying China, I thought you had been at the China House?

Horner
[aside] China-House, that's my Cue— [to sir jaspar] A Pox, can't you keep your impertinent Wives at home? some men are troubled with the Husbands, but I with the wives; but I'd have you to know, since I cannot be your Journey-man by night, I will not be your drudge by day, to squire your wife about I shall be shortly the Hackney-Gentleman-Usher of the Town.

Sir Jaspar
Be not angry Horner—

Lady Fidget
No, 'tis I have more reason to be angry, who am left by you, to go abroad indecently alone. Or, what is more indecent, to pin myself upon such ill-bred people of your acquaintance, as this is.

Sir Jaspar
Nay, prithee, what has he done?

Lady Fidget
Nay, he has done nothing.

Sir Jaspar
But why d'ye take ill, if he has done nothing?

Lady Fidget

Hah, hah, hah, Faith, I can't but laugh however. The unmannerly toad wou'd not come down to me to the Coach. I was fain to come up to fetch him, or go without him, which I was resolved not to do.—For he knows China very well, and has himself very good, but will not let me see it, lest I should beg some. But I will find it out, and have what I came for yet.

[Exit Lady *Fidget*, followed by *Horner* to the inner door.]

Horner

[apart to lady fidget] Lock the door Madam—

[she does]

Horner

So, she has got into my chamber, and lock'd me out! Ohhhh, the impertinency of woman-kind! Well Sir Jaspar, if ever you suffer your Wife to trouble me again here, she shall carry you home a pair of Horns, by my Lord Major she shall. Though I cannot furnish you myself, you are sure, yet I'll find a way.

Sir Jas.

[aside] Hah, ha, he, at my first coming in, and finding her arms about him, tickling him it seems, I was half jealous, but now I see my folly. Heh, he, he, poor Horner.

Horner

Nay, though you laugh now, 'twill be my turn e're long: Oh women, more impertinent, more cunning, and more mischievous than— Now is she throwing my things about, and rifling all I have! But—I'll get into her the back way, and so rifle her for it—

Sir Jas.

Hah, ha, ha, poor angry Horner:

Horner

Stay here a little, I'll ferret her out to you presently, I warrant.

[Exit *Horner* at t'other door.]

Sir Jaspar

Wife, my Lady *Fidget*, Wife, he is coming into you the back way.

[Sir *Jaspar* calls through the door to his Wife, she answers from within.]

Lady Fidget
Let him come, and welcome, which way he will.

Sir Jaspar
He'll catch you, and use you roughly, and be too strong for you.

Lady Fidget
Don't you trouble your self, let him if he can.

Quack.
[Behind]
This indeed, I cou'd not have believ'd from him, nor any but my own eyes.

Enter Mistress Squeamish.

Squeamish
Where's this Woman-hater, this Toad? Sir Jaspar, your Servant, where is the odious Beast?

Sir Jas.
He's within in his chamber, with my Wife; she's playing the wag with him.

Squeam.
Is she so.— What, the door's locked?

Sir Jas
Ay, my Wife locked it—

Squeam.
Did she so. Let us break it open then.

Sir Jas.
No, no, he'll do her no hurt.

Squeam.
No — [aside] But is there no other way to get into 'em, whither goes this? I will disturb'em.

[Exit *Squeamish* at another door.]

Sir Jaspar

The women all will have him ugly, methinks he is a comely person. But his wants make his form contemptible to'em. And 'tis even as my wife said yesterday, talking of him, that a proper handsome eunuch was as ridiculous a thing as a gigantic coward.

[Enter Mrs. *Squeamish*.]

Squeam.

I can't find'em — 'tis the prettiest lodging, and I have been staring on the prettiest Pictures.

[Enter Lady *Fidget* with a piece of China in her hand, and *Horner* following.]

Lady Fidget

And I have been toiling and moiling, for the pretti'st piece of China, my Dear.

Horner

Nay she has been too hard for me do what I cou'd.

Squeamish

Oh Lord I'll have some China too, good Mr. Horner, don't think to give other people China, and me none, come in with me too.

Horner

Upon my honour I have none left.

Squeam.

Nay, I have known you deny your China before now, but you shan't put me off so, come —

Horner

This Lady had the last there.

Lady Fidget

Yes indeed Madam, to my certain knowledge he has no more left.

Squeamish

O but it may be he may have some you could not find.

Lady Fidget

What, d'y think if he had had any left, I would not have had it too? For we women of quality never think we have China enough.

Horner

Do not take it ill, I cannot make China for you all. [to Squeamish] But I will have a Roll-wagon for you another time.

Squeamish

Thank you dear Toad.

Sir Jaspar

Poor Mr. Horner, he has enough to do to please you all, I see.

Horner

Ay Sir, you see how they use me.

Squeamish

Come, Beast, and go dine with us, for we shall want a man at *hombre* after dinner.

Horner

That's all their use of me Sir, you see.

Squeamish

Come Sloven, I'll lead you to be sure of you.

[Pulls him by the Cravat]

[Enter Mr. *Pinchwife*.]

Lady Fidget

O Lord here's a man, Sir *Jaspar*, my Mask, my Mask, I would not be seen here for the world.

Sir Jas.

What not when I am with you.

Lady Fidget

No, no my honour — let's be gone.

Squeam.

Oh, let us be gone, make hast, make haste—

[Exeunt Sir *Jas*. Lady *Fidget* Mrs. *Squeamish*.]

Quack.

I will now believe any thing he tells me.

Horner

Well what brings my dear friend hither?

Mr. Pinchwife

Your impertinency.

Horner

My impertinency — why you Gentlemen that have got handsome Wives, think you have a privilege of saying any thing to your friends, and are as brutish, as if you were our Creditors.

Horner

Haven't I been always thy friend honest Jack, always ready to serve thee, in love, or battle, before thou wert married, and am so still.

Mr. Pinchwife

I believe so you wou'd be my second now indeed.

Horner

Well then dear Jack, why so unkind, so grim, so strange to me? I was always I say, and am still as much thy Servant as —

Mr. Pinchwife

As I am yours Sir. What you wou'd send a kiss to my Wife, is that it?

Horner

So there 'tis — a man can't shew his friendship to a married man, but presently he talks of his wife to you. Prithee let thy Wife alone, and let thee and I be all one, as we were wont. Why, thou art shy of my kindness.

Mr. Pinchwife

But you are over kind to me, as kind, as if I were your Cuckold already, yet I must confess you ought to be kind and civil to me, since I am so kind, so civil to you, as to bring you this, look you there Sir.

[Delivers him a Letter.]

Horner

What is't?

Mr. Pinch.
Only a Love Letter Sir.

Horner
From whom — how, this is from your Wife — hum — and hum —

[Reads.]

Mr. Pinchwife
Even from my Wife Sir, am I not wondrous kind and civil to you, now too? [aside]
But you'll not think her so.

Horner
[aside] Ha, is this a trick of his. Or hers.

Mr. Pinchwife
The Gentleman's surprised, I find. What you expected a kinder Letter?

Horner
No faith not I, how cou'd I.

Mr. Pinchwife
Yes yes, I'm sure you did, a man so well made as you are must needs be
disappointed, if the women declare not their passion at first sight or opportunity.

Horner
[aside] But what should this mean? stay the Postscript. Be sure you love me
whatsoever my husband says to the contrary, and let him not see this, lest he should
come home, and pinch me, or kill my Squirrel.

It seems he knows not what the Letter contains.

Mr. Pinchwife
Now I think I have deserv'd your infinite friendship, and kindness, and have showed
my self sufficiently an obliging kind friend and husband, am I not so, to bring a
Letter from my Wife to her Gallant?

Horner
Ay, the Devil take me, art thou, the most obliging, kind friend and husband in the
world, ha, ha.

Mr. Pinchwife

Well you may be merry Sir, but in short I must tell you Sir, my honour will suffer no jesting.

Horner
What do'st thou mean?

Mr. Pinchwife
Does the Letter want a Comment? then know Sir, though I have been so civil a husband, as to bring you a Letter from my Wife, to let you kiss and court her to my face, I will not be a Cuckold Sir, I will not.

Horner
Thou art mad with jealousy, I never saw thy Wife in my life, but at the Play yesterday, and I know not if it were she or no. I, court her, kiss her!

Mr. Pinchwife
I will not be a Cuckold I say, there will be danger in making me a Cuckold.

Horner
Why, wert thou not well cur'd of thy last clap?

Mr. Pinchwife
I wear a Sword.

[he draws.]

Horner
It should be taken from thee, lest thou should do thyself a mischief with it. Thou art mad, Man.

Mr. Pinchwife
As mad as I am, and as merry as you are, I must have more reason from you e're we part. I say again: though you kiss'd, and courted last night my Wife in man's clothes, as she confesses in her Letter—

Horner
[aside] Ha —

Mr. Pinchwife
--Both she and I say you must not deign it again, for you have mistaken your woman, as you have done your man.

Horner

[aside] Ah — I understand something now — [to pinchwife] Was that thy Wife?
Why would'st thou not tell me 'twas she? Faith my freedom with her was your fault,
not mine.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Faith so 'twas —

Horner

Fie, I'd never do it to a woman before her husbands face, sure.

Mr. Pinchwife

But I had rather you should do it to my wife before my face, than behind my back,
and that you shall never do.

Horner

No — you will hinder me.

Mr. Pinchwife

If I would not hinder you,

[withdraws his sword]

--you see by her Letter, she wou'd.

Horner

Well, I must e'en acquiesce then, and be contented with what she writes.

Mr. Pinchwife

I'll assure you 'twas voluntarily writ, I had no hand in't you may believe me.

Horner

I do believe thee, faith.

Mr. Pinchwife

And believe her too, for she's an innocent creature, has no dissembling in her, and so
fare you well Sir.

Horner

Pray however present my humble service to her, and tell her I will obey her Letter to
a tittle, and fulfill her desires be what they will, or with what difficulty soever I do't,
and you shall be no more jealous of me, I warrant her, and you —

Mr. Pinchwife

Well then fare you well, and play with any man's honour but mine, kiss any man's wife but mine, and welcome —

[Exit Mr. *Pinchwife*]

Horner

Ha, ha, ha, Doctor.

Quack.

It seems he has not heard the report of you, or does not believe it.

Horner

Ha, ha, now Doctor what think you?

Quack.

Pray let's see the Letter — hum — for — deare — love you —

[Reads the Letter.]

Horner

I wonder how she cou'd contrive it! what say'st thou to't, 'tis an Original. And I say, 'tis the first love Letter that ever was without Flames, Darts, Fates, Destinies, Lying and Dissembling in't.

Act 4 scene 4

[Scene: *Pinchwife's* house. Mrs. *Pinchwife* alone leaning on her elbow. A Table, Pen, Ink, and Paper.]

Margery Pinchwife

Well 'tis even so, I have got the disease, they call Love, I am sick of my Husband, and for my Gallant. I have heard this distemper call'd a Fever, but methinks 'tis liker an Ague, for when I think of my Husband, I tremble and am in a cold sweat, and have inclinations to vomit; but when I think of my Gallant, dear Mr. Horner, my hot fit comes, and I am all in a Fever, indeed, & as in other Fevers, my own Chamber is tedious to me, and I would fain be remov'd to his, and then methinks I shou'd be well. Ah, poor Mr. Horner! Well I cannot, will not stay here; therefore I'll make an end of my Letter to him, which shall be a finer Letter than my last--

[She takes the Pen and writes.]

Enter Mr. *Pinchwife* who, seeing her writing, steals softly behind her, and looking over her shoulder, snatches the paper from her.

Mr. Pinchwife

What, writing more Letters?

Margery Pinchwife

O Lord Budd, why d'ye fright me so?

[She starts to run out: he stops her, and reads.]

Mr. Pinchwife

How's this! nay you shall not stir Madam.

Deare, Deare, deare, Mr Horner — very well — I have taught you to write Letters to good purpose — but let's see't.

‘First I am to beg your pardon for my boldness in writing to you, which I'd have you to know, I would not have done, had not you said first you lov'd me so extreamly, which if you do, you will never suffer me to lie in the arms of another man, whom I loath. nauseate, and detest’ — Now you can write these filthy words. But what follows? — ‘Therefore I hope you will speedily find some way to free me from this unfortunate match, which was never, I assure you, of my choice, but I'm afraid 'tis already too far gone; however if you love me, as I do you, you will try what you can do, but you must help me away before to morrow, or else alas I shall be for ever out

of your reach, for I can defer no longer our — our’ — What is to follow? ‘Our’ — Speak, what? ‘Our Journey into the Country I suppose’ — Oh Woman, damn'd Woman, and Love, damn'd Love, that old Tempter, for this is one of his miracles, in a moment, he can make those blind that cou'd see, and those see that were blind, those dumb that could speak, and those prattle who were dumb before, nay what is more than all, make these senseless, imbecile animals, Women, too hard for us their Politic Lords and Rulers in a moment! But make an end of your Letter, and then I'll make an end of you thus, and all my plagues together.

[He draws his sword.]

Margery Pinchwife
O Lord, O Lord you are such a Passionate Man, Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife
Come take the Pen and make an end of the Letter, just as you intended. If you are false, I shall soon perceive it, and punish you with this as you deserve.

[Lays hand on his Sword.]

Write what was to follow — let's see — ‘You must make haste and help me away before to morrow, or else I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our’ —] What follows our? —

Margery Pinchwife
Must all out then Budd? — Look you there then.

[Margery takes the Pen and writes.]
Mr. Pinchwife
Let's see — ‘For I can defer no longer our— Wedding — Your slighted *Alithea*.’
What's the meaning of this, my Sisters name to't? Speak, unriddle.

Margery Pinchwife
She'l be angry with me, but I had rather she should be angry with me than you Budd; and to tell you the truth, 'twas she made me write the Letter, and taught me what I should write.

Mr. Pinchwife
Ha — [aside] I thought the style was somewhat better than her own. [to Margery] But how cou'd she come to you to teach you, since I had lock'd you up alone?

Margery Pinchwife

O through the key hole Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife

But why should she make you write a Letter for her to him, since she can write her self?

Mis. Mr. Pinchwife

Why she said because — for I was unwilling to do it.

Mr. Pinchwife

Because what — because.

Margery Pinchwife

Because lest Mr. *Horner* should be cruel, and refuse her, or be vain afterwards, and show the Letter, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] How's this? ha — then I think I shall come to my self again — This changeling cou'd not invent this lie, but if she cou'd, why should she? she might think I should soon discover it — stay — yet why should my sister take this course? But, men in love are fools, women may well be so. — [to Margery] But hark you Madam, your Sister went out in the morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Margery Pinchwife

A lack a day she has been crying all day above it seems in a corner.

Mr. Pinchwife

Where is she, let me speak with her.

Margery Pinchwife

[aside] O Lord then he'll discover all — [to pinchwife] Pray hold Budd, what d'y mean to discover me, she'll know I have told you then! Pray Budd let me talk with her first —

Mr. Pinchwife

I must speak with her to know whether *Horner* ever made her any promise; and whether she be married to *Sparkish* or no.

Margery Pinchwife

Pray dear Budd don't, till I have spoken with her and told her that I have told you all, for she'll kill me else.

Mr. Pinchwife
Go then and bid her come out to me.

Margery Pinchwife
Yes, yes Budd —

Mr. Pinchwife
Well, let's see—

Mrs. Pinchwife
[aside] I'll go, but she is not within to come to him, I have just got time to know of *Lucy* her Maid, who first set me on work, what lie I shall tell next, for I am e'ne at my wits end —

[Exit Mrs. *Pinchwife*.]

Mr. Pinchwife
Well, I'd rather give Horner my Sister than lend him my Wife, and such an alliance will prevent his pretensions to my Wife sure, — I'll make him of kin to her, and then he won't care for her,

[Margery Pinchwife returns.]
Margery Pinchwife
O Lord Budd I told you what anger you would make me with my Sister.

Mr. Pinchwife
Won't she come hither?

Margery Pinchwife
No no, alack a day, she's asham'd to look you in the face, and she says if you go in to her, she'll run away to Mr. *Horner*, who has promis'd her marriage she says, and she will have no other, so she won't —

Mr. Pinchwife
Did he so — promise her marriage — then she shall have no other, go tell her so, and if she will come and discourse with me a little concerning the means, I will about it immediately, go —

[she exits]

His estate is equal to *Sparkish's*, and his extraction much better than his, as his parts are, but my chief reason is, I'd rather be of kin to him by the name of Brother-in-law, than that of

Cuckold —

[she enters]

Well what says she now? —

Margery Pinchwife

Why she says she would only have you lead her to *Horners* lodging — with whom she first will discourse the matter before she talk with you, which yet she cannot do; for alack poor creature, she says she can't so much as look you in the face, therefore she'll come to you in a mask, and you must excuse her if she make you no answer to any question of yours, till you have brought her to Mr. Horner, and if you will not chide her, nor question her, she'll come out to you immediately.

Mr. Pinchwife

Let her come I will not speak a word to her, nor require a word from her.

[starts to go, then--]

Margery Pinchwife

Oh I forgot, besides she says, she cannot look you in the face, though through a mask, therefore wou'd desire you to put out the Candle.

[She exits, putting out the Candle.]

Mr. Pinchwife

I agree to all, let her make haste — there 'tis out — My case is something better, I'd rather fight with *Horner* for not lying with my Sister, than for lying with my Wife, and of the two I had rather find my Sister too forward than my Wife— well — Wife and Sister are names which make us expect Love and duty, pleasure and comfort, but we find 'em plagues and torments, and are equally, though differently, troublesome to their keeper; for we have as much a do to get people to lie with our Sisters as to keep 'em from lying with our Wives.

[Mrs. *Pinchwife* enters Masked, and in Hoods and Scarves, and a night Gown and Petticoat of *Aliltheas* in the dark.]

What are you come Sister? let us go then — but first let me lock up my Wife, Mrs. *Margery* where are you?

Margery Pinchwife

Here Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come hither, that I may lock you up, get you in, Come Sister where are you now?

[Margery gives him her hand, but when he lets her go, she steals softly on t'other side of him. He locks the door, and Margery is led away by him for his Sister *Alithea*.]

Act 5, scene 1

[*Horner's Lodging.*]

Quack.

What, all alone? Not so much as one of your Cuckolds here, nor one of their Wives! they use to take their turns with you, as if they were to watch you.

Horner

A Pox, keeping a Cuckold company after you have had his Wife is as tiresome as the company of a Country Squire to a witty fellow of the Town when he has got all his Money.

Quack.

And as at first a man makes a friend of the Husband to get the Wife; so at last you are fain to fall out with the Wife to be rid of the Husband.

Horner

Ay, most Cuckold-makers are true Courtiers. When once a poor man has crack'd his credit for 'em, they can't abide to come near him.

Quack.

But at first to draw him in are so sweet, so kind, so dear, just as you are to *Pinchwife*. But what became of that intrigue with his Wife?

Horner

A Pox, he's as surly as an Alderman that has been bit, and since he's so coy, his Wife's kindness is in vain, for she's a silly innocent.

Quack.

Did she not send you a Letter by him?

Horner

Yes, but that's a riddle I have not yet solv'd — What here's the man we are talking of I think.

[*Enter Mr. Pinchwife leading in his Wife Masqued, Muffled, and in her Sisters Gown.*]

Horner

Pshaw.

Quack.

Bringing his Wife to you is the next thing to bringing a Love Letter from her.

Horner

What means this?

Mr. Pinchwife

The last time, you know, Sir, I brought you a love Letter; now you see a Mistress. I think you'll say I am a civil man to you.

Horner

Ay the Devil take me I will say thou art the civillest man I ever have known; I fancy, I understand thee now, better than I did the Letter, but hark thee in thy ear —

Mr. Pinchwife

What?

Horner

Nothing but the usual question man, is she sound on thy word?

Mr. Pinchwife

What you take her for a wench, and me for a pimp? Come Sir, in short, I am for no fooling.

Horner

Nor I neither, therefore prithee let's see her face presently.

Mr. Pinchwife

Speak to her, she wou'd never be rul'd by me.

Horner

Madam —

[Margery Pinchwife whispers to *Horner*]

She says she must speak with me in private.

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] She's unwilling it seems I shou'd know all her undecent conduct in this business —

Well then I'll leave you together, and hope when I am gone you'll agree, if not you and I shan't agree Sir. —

Horner

What means the Fool? — if she and I agree 'tis no matter what you and I do.

[Whispers to Mrs *Pin*, who makes signs with her hand for him to be gone.]

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] In the mean time I'll fetch a Parson, and find out Sparkish and disabuse him.

You wou'd have me fetch a Parson, would you not, well then —

[aside] Now I think I am rid of her, and shall have no more trouble with her — Our Sisters and Daughters like Usurers money, are safest, when put out; but our Wives, like their writings, never safe, but in our Closets under Lock and Key.

[Exit Mr. Pinchwife]

[Enter Boy.]

Boy.

Sir Jaspar Fidget Sir is coming up.

Horner

Here's the trouble of a Cuckold, now we are talking of, a pox on him! Has he not enough to do to hinder his Wife's sport, but he must other women's too. — Step in here Madam.

[Exit Margery Pinchwife]

[Enter Sir *Jaspar*]

Sir Jas.

My best and dearest Friend.

Horner

[to Quack] The old style Doctor —

[to jaspar] Well be short, for I am busy, what would your impertinent Wife have now?

Sir Jas.

Well guess'd y' faith, for I do come from her.

Horner

To invite me to supper, tell her I can't come, go.

Sir Jas.

Nay, now you are out faith, for my Lady and the whole knot of the virtuous gang, as they call themselves, are resolv'd upon a frolick of coming to you to night in a Masquerade, and are all drest already.

Horner

I shan't be at home.

Sir Jas.

[aside] Lord how churlish he is to women — Nay prythee don't disappoint 'em, they'll think 'tis my fault, prithee don't. I'll send in the Banquet and the Fiddles, they would come to no mans Ball, but yours.

Horner

Well, well — get you gone, and tell 'em if they come, 'twill be at the peril of their honour and yours.

Sir Jas.

Heh, he, he — we'll trust you for that, farewell —

[Exit Sir JaSpar]

Horner

Doctor anon you too shall be my guest. But now I'm going to a private feast.

Act 5 scene 2

[The Covent Garden Piazza. Sparkish, Pinchwife.]

[*Sparkish* with the Letter in his hand.]

Sparkish

But who would have thought a woman could have been false to me, by the world, I could not have thought it.

Mr. Pinchwife

You were for giving and taking liberty, she has taken it only Sir, now you find in that Letter, you are a frank person, and so is she, you see there.

Sparkish

Nay if this be her hand — for I never saw it.

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis no matter whether that be her hand or no, I am sure this hand at her desire lead her to Mr. *Horner*, with whom I left her just now, to go fetch a Parson to 'em at their desire too, to deprive you of her for ever, for it seems yours was but a mock marriage.

Sparkish

Indeed she wou'd needs have it that 'twas Harcourt himself in a Parsons habit, that married us, but I'm sure he told me 'twas his Brother Ned.

Mr. Pinchwife

O there 'tis out, and you were deceiv'd not she, for you are such a frank person — but I must be gone — you'll find her at Mr. *Horner's*, go and believe your eyes.

[Exit Mr. Pinchwife]

Sparkish

Nay. I'll to her, and call her as many Crocodiles, Syrens, Harpies, and other heathenish names, as a Poet would do a Mistress, who had refus'd to heare his suit, nay more his Verses on her.

But stay, is not that she, following a Torch at t'other end of the Piazza, and from Horners certainly — 'tis so —

[Enter *Alithea* following a Torch, and *Lucy* behind.]

You are well met Madam though you don't think so; What you have made a short visit to Mr. Horner? But I suppose you'll return to him presently, by that time the Parson can be with him.

Alithea
Mr. Horner, and the Parson Sir —

Sparkish
Come Madam no more dissembling, no more jilting for I am no more a frank person.

Alithea
How's this.

Sparkish
Cou'd you find out no easy Country Fool to abuse? None but me, a Gentleman of wit and pleasure about the Town? Unworthy false woman! False as a friend that lends a man money to lose. False as dice, who undo those that trust all they have to 'em.

Alithea
You have been too merry, Sir, at your wedding dinner, sure.

Spar
What, d'y mock me too?

Alithea
Or you have been deluded.

Sparkish
By you.

Alithea
Let me understand you.

Sparkish
Have you the confidence -- I should call it something else, since you know your guilt -- to stand my just reproaches? You did not write an impudent Letter to Mr. *Horner*, who I find now has clubbed with you in deluding me with his aversion for women, that I might not, forsooth, suspect him for my Rival?

Lucy.
[aside] D'y think the Gentleman can be jealous now Madam? —

Alithea

I write a Letter to Mr. *Horner*!

Sparkish

Nay Madam, do not deny it. Your Brother show'd it me just now, and told me likewise he left you at *Horners* lodging to fetch a Parson to marry you to him. And I wish you joy Madam, joy, joy! And to him too, much joy! And to my self more joy for not marrying you!

Alithea

[aside] So I find my Brother would break off the match, and I can consent to't, since I see this Gentleman can be made jealous.

--O *Lucy*, by his rude usage and jealousy, he makes me almost afraid I am married to him, art thou sure 'twas *Harcourt* himself and no Parson that married us?

Sparkish

No Madam I thank you, I suppose that was a contrivance too of Mr. *Horners* and yours, to make *Harcourt* play the Parson. But I would, as little as you, have him one now, no not for the world, for shall I tell you another truth? I never had any passion for you, 'till now, for now I hate you. 'Tis true I might have married your portion, as other men of parts of the Town do sometimes, and so your Servant. [he starts to go, then:] And to show my unconcernedness, I'll come to your wedding, and resign you with as much joy as I would a stale wench to a new Cully. Nay, with as much joy as I would after the first night, if I had been married to you, there's for you, and so your Servant, Servant.

[Exit *Sparkish*]

Alithea

How was I deciv'd in a man!

Lucy.

You'll believe then a fool may be made jealous now?

Alithea

But marry Mr. *Horner*, my brother does not intend it sure; if I thought he did, I would take thy advice.

Lucy

And Mr. *Harcourt* for your Husband?

Alithea
Away impertinent —

Lucy.
Yes Madam.

[*Exeunt Alithea Lucy.*]

Act 5 scene 3

[Scene: Horner's Lodging. *Horner*, *Enter Lady Fidget*, *Mrs. Daynty Fidget*, and *Mrs. Squeamish* with plentiful ale.]

Horner

[aside] A Pox they are come too soon — before I have sent back my new — Mistress. All I have now to do, is to lock her in, that they may not see her —

Lady Fidget

That we may be sure of our welcome we have brought our entertainment with us, and are resolv'd to treat thee, dear Toad.

Now Ladies, supposing we had drank each of us our two Bottles, let us speak the truth of our hearts.

Dainty and Squeam.

Agreed.

Lady Fidget

By this brimmer, [she toasts] for truth is no where else to be found.

[to Horner] Not in thy heart false man.

Horner

You have found me a true man I'm sure.

Lady Fidget

Not every way — But let us sit and be merry.

Lady Fidget

Dear Brimmer: [more toasts] that mak'st our Husbands short sighted.

Dayn.

And our bashful gallants bold.

Squeam.

And for want of a Gallant, the Butler lovely in our eyes. Drink Eunuch!

Lady Fidget

Drink thou representative of a Husband, damn a Husband!

Dainty
And as it were a Husband, an old keeper!

Squeamish
And an old Grandmother!

Horner
And an English Bawd, and a French Surgeon!

Lady Fidget
Ay we have all reason to curse 'em.

Horner
For my sake Ladies.

Lady Fidget
No, for our own.

Dayn.
The filthy Toads use Mistresses now, as they do Stuffs, for having been fancy'd and worn by others.

Squeam.
Whilst women of quality, like the richest Stuffs, lie untumbled, and unask'd for.

Lady Fidget
I wonder at the depraved appetites of witty men. Pray tell me beast, when you were a man, why you rather chose to club with a multitude in a common house, than to be the only guest at a good Table.

Horner
Why faith ceremony and expectation are unsufferable to those that are sharp-bent. People always eat with the best stomach at an ordinary, where every man is snatching for the best bit.

Squeam.
But I have heard people eat most heartily of another man's meat, that is, what they do not pay for.

Horner
When they are sure of their welcome and freedom. For ceremony in love and eating is as ridiculous as in fighting: falling on briskly is all should be done in those

occasions.

Lady Fidget

Well then let me tell you Sir, there is no where more freedom than in our houses; and a person may be as free as he pleases with us, as frolic, as gamesome, as wild as he will.

Horner

Haven't I heard you all declaim against wild men?

Lady Fidget

Yes. But for all that, we think wildness in a man a desirable quality.

Dainty

A tame man, foh.

Horner

But your Reputations frightened me as much as your Faces invited me.

Squeamish

Our Reputations, Lord!

Fidget

Why should you not think that we women make use of our Reputation, as you men of yours: only to deceive the world with less suspicion. Our virtue is like the State-man's Religion, the Quakers Word, the Gamesters Oath, and the Great Man's Honour: but to cheat those that trust us.

Dayn.

You would have found us modest women in our denials only.

Horner

I beg your pardon Ladies: I was deceiv'd in you devilishly. But why that mighty pretence to Honour?

Lady Fidget

Sometimes 'twas for the same reason you men pretend business often: to avoid ill company, to enjoy the better, and more privately those you love.

Horner

But why would you ne'er give a Friend a wink then?

Lady Fidget

Faith, your Reputation frightned us as much as ours did you. You were so notoriously lewd.

Horner

And you so seemingly honest.

Squeamish

Was that all that deterr'd you?

Horner

I was afraid of losing my little money, as well as my little time, both which my other pleasures required.

Lady Fidget

Money, foh—you talk like a little fellow now, do such as we expect money?

Horner

I beg your pardon, Madam, I must confess, I have heard that great Ladies, like great Merchants, set but the higher prizes upon what they have, because they are not in necessity of taking the first offer.

Dainty

Would you not have us assur'd of our Gallants Love?

Squeam.

For Love is better known by Liberality, than by Jealousy.

Lady Fidget

[aside] For one may be dissembled, the other not—but my Jealousy can be no longer dissembled:

Come, here's to our Gallants in waiting, whom we must name, and I'll begin, this is my false Rogue.

[Claps him on the back.]

Squeam.

How!

Horner

[aside] So all will out now—

Squeam.

[aside to horner] Did you not tell me, 'twas for my sake only, you reported your self no man?

Dainty

[aside to horner] Did you not swear to me, 'twas for my Love, and Honour, you pass'd for that thing you do?

Horner

So, so.

Lady Fidget

Come, speak Ladies: this is my false Villain.

Squeam.

And mine too.

Dayn.

And mine.

Horn.

Well then, you are all three my false Rogues too, and there's an end on't.

Lady Fidget

Well then, there's no remedy: Sister Sharers, let us not fall out, but have a care of our Honour. Though we get no Presents, no Jewels of him, we are savers of our Honour: the jewel of most value and use, which shines yet to the world unsuspected, though it be counterfeit.

Horner

Nay, and is even as good as if it were true, provided the world think so; for Honour, like Beauty now, only depends on the opinion of others.

[Enter Sir Jaspar]

Sir Jaspar

Oh, my Lady Fidget, was this your cunning to come to Master Horner without me? But you have been nowhere else I hope.

Lady Fidget

No, Sir Jaspar.

Sir Jaspar
'Tis well, 'tis well.

[Enter Boy.]

Boy.
O Sir, here's the Gentleman come, whom you bid me not suffer to come up without giving you notice, with a Lady too, and other Gentlemen—

Horner
Do you all go in there, whil'st I send 'em away, and Boy, do you desire 'em to stay below 'til I come, which shall be immediately.

[Exeunt Lady Fidget Mistress *Dainty*, *Squeamish*.]

Boy.
Yes Sir.

[Exit.]

[Exit *Horner* at t'other door, and returns with Mistress *Pinchwife*.]

Horner
You wou'd not take my advice to be gone home, before your Husband came back, he'll now discover all. Yet pray my Dearest, be persuaded to go home, and leave the rest to my management, I'll let you down the back way.

Margery Pinchwife
I don't know the way home, so I don't.

Horner
My man shall wait upon you.

Margery Pinchwife
No, don't you believe, that I'll go at all; what are you weary of me already?

Horner
No my life, 'tis that I may love you long. 'Tis to secure my love, and your Reputation with your Husband, he'll never receive you again else.

Margery Pinchwife
What care I? do 'ye think to frighten me with that? I don't intend to go to him again;

you shall be my Husband now.

Horner

I cannot be your Husband, Dearest, since you are married to him.

Margery Pinchwife

O wou'd you make me believe that—don't I see every day at *London* here, women leave their first Husbands, and go, and live with other men as their Wives, pish, pshaw, you'd make me angry, but that I love you so mainly.

Horner

So, they are coming up—In again, in, I hear'em:

[Exit Mistris *Pinchwife*.]

Well, a silly Mistress, is like a weak fortress: soon got, soon lost, a man has scarce time for plunder. She betrays her Husband first, to her Gallant; and then her Gallant to her Husband.

[Enter *Pinchwife*, *Alithea*, *Harcourt*, *Sparkish*, *Lucy*, and a Parson.]

Mr. Pinchwife

Come Madam, 'tis not the sudden change of your dress, the confidence of your asseverations, and your false witness there, shall persuade me I did not bring you hither just now; here's my witness, who cannot deny it, since you must be confronted.—Mr. Horner, did not I bring this Lady to you just now?

Horner

[aside] Now must I wrong one woman for another's sake, but that's no new thing with me; for in these cases I am still on the criminal's side, against the innocent.

Mr. Pinchwife

What, you are studying an evasion, or excuse for her, speak Sir.

Alithea

Pray, speak Sir.

Horner

No faith, I am something backward only, to speak in women's affairs or disputes.

Mr. Pinchwife

She bids you speak.

Alithea

Ay, pray Sir do. Pray satisfy him.

Horner

Then truly, you did bring that Lady to me just now.

Mr. Pinchwife

O ho—

Alithea

How Sir—

Harcourt

How, Horner!

Alithea

What mean you Sir? I always took you for a man of Honour.

Horner

[aside] Ay, so much a man of Honour, that I must save my Mistress, I thank you, come what will on't.

Sparkish

[aside] So, if I had had her, she'd have made me believe the Moon had been made of a Christmas pie.

Lucy.

[aside] Now cou'd I speak, if I durst, and 'solve the Riddle, who am the Author of it.

Alithea

O unfortunate Woman! a combination against my Honour, which most concerns me now, because you share in my disgrace, Sir; and it is your censure which I must now suffer, that troubles me, not theirs.

Harcourt

Madam, then have no trouble, you shall now see 'tis possible for me to love too, without being jealous, I will not only believe your innocence my self, but make all the world believe it— [aside to horner] I must now be concern'd for this Ladies Honour.

Horner

And I must be concern'd for a Ladies Honour too.

Harcourt

This Lady has her Honour, and I will protect it.

Horner

My Lady has not her Honour, but has given it me to keep, and I will preserve it.

Harcourt

I understand you not.

Margery Pinchwife [peeping in behind]

What's the matter with 'em all?

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, come, Mr. *Horner*, no more disputing, here's the Parson, I brought him not in vain.

Harcourt

No Sir, I'll employ him, if this Lady please.

Mr. Pinchwife

How, what d'ye mean?

Spark.

Ay, what does he mean?

Horner

Why, I have resign'd your Sister to him, he has my consent.

Mr. Pinchwife

But he has not mine Sir. A woman's injur'd Honour, no more than a man's, can be repair'd or satisfied by any but him that first wrong'd it; and you shall marry her presently, or—

[Lays his hand on his Sword.]

[Enter to them Mistress *Pinchwife*.]

Mistress Pinchwife

O Lord, they'll kill poor Mr. Horner! Besides he shan't marry her whilst I stand by and look on, I'll not lose my second Husband so.

Mr. Pinchwife

What do I see?

Alithea

My Sister in my clothes!

Spark.

Ha!

Margery Pinchwife

[to pinchwife] Nay, pray now don't quarrel about finding work for the Parson, he shall marry me to Mr. Horner; for now, I believe, you have enough of me.

Horner

Damn'd, damn'd loving Changeling.

Margery Pinchwife

Pray Sister, pardon me for telling so many lies of you.

Harcourt

I suppose the Riddle is plain now.

Lucy.

No, that must be my work, good Sir, hear me.

[Kneels to Mr. *Pinchwife*, who stands doggedly, with his hat over his eyes.]

Mr. Pinchwife

I will never hear woman again, but make 'em all silent, thus—

[Offers to draw upon his Wife.]

Horner

No, that must not be.

Mr. Pinchwife

You then shall go first, 'tis all one to me.

[Offers to draw on *Horner* stopped by *Harcourt*.]

Harcourt

Hold—

Enter Sir *Jaspar Fidget*, Lady *Fidget*, Mrs. *Dainty Fidget*, Mrs. *Squeamish*.

Sir Jas.

What's the matter, what's the matter, pray what's the matter Sir, I beseech you communicate Sir.

Mr. Pinchwife

Why, my Wife has communicated Sir, as your Wife may have done too Sir, if she knows him Sir—

Sir Jas.

Pshaw, with him, ha, ha, he.

Mr. Pinchwife

D'ye mock me Sir, have a care Sir—

Sir Jas.

No sure, you mock me Sir—! it can't be, ha, ha, he, why, I'll tell you Sir.

[Starts to whisper to pinchwife]

Mr. Pinchwife

I tell you again, he has whor'd my Wife, and yours too, if he knows her, and all the women he comes near. 'Tis not his dissembling, his hypocrisy, can wheedle me.

Sir Jas.

How does he dissemble, is he a Hypocrite? nay then—how—Wife—Sister is he an Hypocrite? O thou libidinous Lady! Thou Harloting Harlotry! Hast thou done't then?

Sir Jas.

Speak good Horner, art thou a dissembler, a Rogue? hast thou—

Horner

Soh—

Lucy.

[[apart to horner] I'll fetch you off, and her too, if she will but hold her tongue.

Horner

Canst thou? I'll give thee—

Lucy

[to Mr. Pinchwife]

Pray have but patience to hear me Sir, who am the unfortunate cause of all this confusion. Your Wife is innocent, I only culpable; for I put her upon telling you all these lies, concerning my Mistress, in order to the breaking off the match between Mr. Sparkish and her, to make way for Mr. Harcourt.

Spark.

Did you so, eternal Rotten-tooth? Then it seems my Mistress was not false to me, I was only deceiv'd by you. Brother that shou'd have been, now man of conduct, who is a frank person now?-- to bring your Wife to her Lover?— ha—

Lucy.

I assure you Sir, she came not to Mr. Horner out of love, for she loves him no more—

Margery Pinchwife

Hold, I told lies for you, but you shall tell none for me, for I do love Mr. *Horner* with all my soul, and no body shall say me nay. Pray don't you go to make poor Mr. *Horner* believe to the contrary, 'tis spitefully done of you, I'm sure.

Horner

[aside to Margery] Peace, Dear Idiot.

Margery Pinchwife

Nay, I will not peace.

Mr. Pinchwife

Not 'til I make you.

Enter *Dorilant*, *Quack*.

Dorilant

Horner, your Servant all, I am the Doctors Guest, he must excuse our intrusion.

Quack.

But what's the matter Gentlemen, for Heavens sake, what's the matter?

Horner

Oh 'tis well you are come— 'tis a censorious world we live in, you may have brought me a reprieve, or else I had died for a crime I never committed, and these innocent Ladies had suffer'd with me; therefore, pray, satisfy these worthy, honourable, jealous Gentlemen— that—

[Whispers.]

Quack.

O I understand you, is that all?— *Sir Jasper*, by heavens and upon the word of a Physician Sir, —

[Whispers to *Sir Jasper*.]

Sir Jas.

Nay I do believe you truly — pardon me my virtuous Lady, and dear of honour.

[He whispers with Mr. Pinchwife.]

Mr. Pinchwife

An Eunuch! Pray no fooling with me.

Quack.

I'll bring half the Surgeons in Town to swear it.

Mr. Pinchwife

I'm sure when I left the Town he was the lewdest fellow in't.

Quack.

I tell you Sir he has been in France since, pray ask but these Ladies and Gentlemen, your friend Mr. Dorilant, Gentlemen and Ladies, haven't you all heard the late sad report of poor Mr. Horner.

Lady Fidget, Dainty, Squeamish, etc.

Ay, ay, ay.

Margery Pinchwife

'Tis false Sir, you shall not disparage poor Mr. Horner! For to my certain knowledge

—

Lucy.

O hold —

Squeamish

Stop her mouth —

Lady Fidget

Upon my honour Sir, 'tis true.

Squeamish

D'y think we would have been seen in his company —

Lady Fidget

Trust our unspotted reputations with him!

Horner

[aside to quack] Well, Doctor, is not this a good design that carries a man on unsuspected, and brings him off safe? —

Mr. Pinchwife

[aside] Well, if this were true, but my Wife —

[*Dorilant* whispers with Mrs. *Pinch*.]

Alithea

Come Brother; your Wife is yet innocent, you see. But have a care of too strong an imagination; Women and Fortune are truest still to those that trust 'em.

Lucy.

And any wild thing grows but the more fierce and hungry for being kept up, and more dangerous to the Keeper.

Alithea

There's doctrine for all Husbands Mr. Harcourt.

Harcourt

I edify, Madam, so much that I am impatient till I am one.

Dorilant

And I edify so much by example I will never be one.

Sparkish.

And because I will not disparage my parts I'll ne're be one.

Horner

And I, alas, can't be one.

Mr. Pinchwife

But I must be one — against my will, to a Country-Wife, with a Country-murrain to me.

Margery Pinchwife

[aside] And I must be a Country Wife still too, I find; for I can't, like a City one, be rid of my musty Husband and do what I list.

Horner

Now, Sir, I must pronounce your Wife Innocent, though I blush whilst I do it; and I am the only man by her now expos'd to shame, which I will straight drown in Wine, as you shall your suspicion; and the Ladies' troubles we'll divert with a Ballet, Doctor where are your Maskers?

Lucy.

Indeed she's Innocent Sir, I am her witness, and her end of coming out was but to see her Sister's Wedding; and what she has said to your face of her love to Mr. *Horner* was but the usual innocent revenge on a Husband's jealousy, was it not Madam? Speak —

Margery Pinchwife

[aside to lucy and horner] Since you'll have me tell more lies —

Yes indeed Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife

For my own sake fain I wou'd all believe.
Cuckolds like Lovers shou'd themselves deceive.
But—

[he sighs]—

His honour is least safe, (too late I find)
Who trusts it with a foolish Wife or Friend.

A Dance of Cuckolds.

Horner

Vain Fops but court, and dress, and keep a pother
To pass for Womens' men, with one another.
But he who aims by women to be priz'd,
First by the men you see must be despis'd.

FINIS.