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The Country Wife

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The Country Wife (1675)
A COMEDY
by
Wycherley, William (1640-1716)

The Persons

M^f. Horner, a gentleman

M^f. Harcourt, his acquaintance, enamored of Alitheia

M^f. Dorilant, friend to Mr. Harcourt

M^f. Pinchwife, a newlywed gentleman

M^f. Sparkish, engaged to Alitheia

Sir Jaspar Fidget, a noble gentleman

M^{rs}. Margery Pinchwife, a newlywed country lass

Alitheia, sister to Mr. Pinchwife and engaged to Mr. Sparkish

Lady Fidget, wife of Sir Jaspar

M^{rs}. Dainty Fidget, sister to Sir Jaspar

M^{rs}. Squeamish, granddaughter to Old Lady Squeamish and
cousin to Lady Fidget

Old Lady Squeamish

Horner's Servant

A Quack, conspiring with Mr. Horner

Lucy, Alitheia's Maid

PROLOGUE (*spoken by Mr. Horner*)

Poets, like Cudgeled Bullies, never do
At first or second blow submit to you;
But will provoke you still, and never have done
Till you are weary first with laying on:
But we the Actors humbly will submit,
Now and at any time, to a full Pit;
Nay, often we anticipate your rage
And murder Poets for you on our Stage:
We set no Guards upon our Tiring-Room,
But when with flying Colors there you come,
We patiently, you see, give up to you,
Our Poets, Virgins, nay, our Matrons too.

(The SCENE London.)

ACT I

(Horner's Lodging)

(Early in the morning)

(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 forever with the Women, and reported you throughout the whole Town as a Eunuch, with as much trouble as if I had made you one in earnest.

Horner: But have you told all the Midwives you know, the Orange Wenches at the Playhouses? For they'll be the readiest to report it.

Quack: I have told all the Chambermaids and Old women of my acquaintance, so that you need not doubt 'twill spread, and you will be as odious to the handsome young Women as . . .

Horner: As their own Husbands. I am only afraid 'twill not be believed. You told them 'twas by an English-French disaster and an English-French Chirurgeon, who has given me an Antidote against that damned malady, love?

Quack: Your late journey into France has made it the more credible, and your being here a fortnight before you appeared in public looks as if you apprehended the shame, which I wonder you do not. 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 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 one's self, and Women no more than honor are compassed by bragging.

(Enter Horner's Servant)

Servant: There are two Ladies and a Gentleman coming up. *(Exit Servant)*

Horner: A Pox! Some unbelieving Sisters of my former acquaintance, who I expect their sense should be satisfied of the falsity of the report.

(Enter Sir Jaspar Fidget, Lady Fidget and Mrs. Dainty Fidget)

Sir Jaspar: 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.

Sir Jaspar: My Lady Fidget, Sir.

Horner: So, Sir.

Sir Jaspar: Won't you be acquainted with her, Sir? (*Aside.*) So the report is true, I find by his aversion to the Sex; but I'll play the wag with him. (*Aloud*) Pray salute my Wife, Sir.

Horner: I will kiss no Man's Wife for him, Sir. I have taken my eternal leave of the Sex already, Sir.

Sir Jaspar: 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.

Lady Fidget: Pray, Sir Jasper, let us be gone from this rude fellow.

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

Lady Fidget: Foh, he's but too much a French fellow, such as hate Women of quality and virtue for their love to their Husbands.

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 *Ecole des Filles* . . .

Sir Jaspar: Hah, hah, hah! He hates Women perfectly I find.

Dainty: 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 honor?

Horner: If I could.

Lady Fidget: How do you mean, Sir?

Sir Jaspar: Hah, hah, hah, no he can't wrong your Ladyship's honor, upon my honor. He, poor Man---hark you, in your ear---a mere 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. The Council will have sat. I must away. Business must be preferred always before Love and Ceremony with the wise Mr. Horner.

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

Sir Jaspar: He's an innocent Man now, you know. Pray stay. Mr. Horner, your Servant, I should be glad to see you at my house. Pray, dine with me and play at Cards with my Wife after dinner. You are fit for Women at that game yet hah, ha! *(Aside)* 'Tis a Husband's prudence to provide innocent diversion for a Wife as to hinder her unlawful pleasures. *(Aloud)* Farewell.

Horner: Your Servant, Sr. Jasper.

(Exit Sir Jaspar)

Lady Fidget: I will not stay with him, foh---

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

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

Dainty: You as civil as Ladies would desire?

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

(Exeunt Lady Fidget and Dainty.)

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

Horner: Thou art 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: Nay, 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. Women of Quality are so civil, you can hardly distinguish love from good breeding, but now I can be sure, she that shows an aversion to me loves the sport as those Women that are gone, whom I warrant to be

right. Your Women of Honor are only chary 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.

Quack: Well, I wish you luck.

(Exit. Quack: Enter Servant leading Harcourt and Dorilant to Horner. Exit Servant.)

Harcourt: Come, your appearance at the Play yesterday has, I hope, hardened you for the future against the Women's contempt and the Men's raillery.

Horner: Did I not bear it bravely?

Dorilant: With a most Theatrical impudence. Nay more than the Orange-wenches or a great bellied Actress, or what is yet more impudent, a second-hand Critic.

Horner: But what say the Ladies? Have they no pity?

Harcourt: The vizard-masks never pity a Man when all's gone, though in their Service.

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

Horner: Well, a Pox on love and wenching. Women serve but to keep a Man from better Company.

Harcourt: Mistresses are like Books. If you pore upon them too much, they doze you and make you unfit for Company.

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 Lover of Women as 'tis to be a Lover of Money. You cannot follow both.

Dorilant: Gad, he's in the right on it.

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 Servant)

Servant: Mr. Sparkish is below, Sir.

(Exit Servant)

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

Horner: His Company is as troublesome to us as a Cuckold's when you have a mind to his Wife's.

Harcourt: No, the Rogue will not let us enjoy one another, but ravishes our conversation.

Dorilant: And to pass for a wit in Town, shows himself a fool every night to us.

(Enter Servant leading Sparkish to them. Exit Servant)

Sparkish: How is it, Sparks, how is it? 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 downright insipid?

Sparkish: Nay then, since you are so brisk and provoke me, take what follows. You must know I was discoursing and raillyng with some Ladies yesterday, and they happened to talk of the fine new signs in Town. Said I, "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 never a fine new sign there yesterday." "Yes, but there was," said I again, "and it came out of France, and has been there a fortnight."

Dorilant: A Pox! I can hear no more, prithee.

Sparkish: Nay faith, I'll make you laugh. "It cannot be," says a third Lady. "Yes, yes," quoth I again. "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 bepissed themselves. What, but it does not

move you, methinks? Well, Come, come Sparks, where do we dine? I have left at Whitehall an Earl to dine with you.

Dorilant: Why, I thought thou loved a Man with a title better than a Suit with a French trimming to it.

Harcourt: Go to him again.

Sparkish: No, Sir, a wit to me is the greatest title in the World.

Horner: But go dine with your Earl, Sir, he may be exceptionous. 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.

Sparkish: Nay, dear Gentlemen hear me. Where do we dine?

Horner: Even where you will.

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

(Exit Sparkish. Manent Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant. Enter to them the Servant leading Mr. Pinchwife. Exit Servant)

Horner: Who have we here, Pinchwife?

Pinchwife: Gentlemen, your humble Servant.

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

Pinchwife: *(Aside)*. Death! Does he know I'm married too? *(Aloud)* 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 pound to lie with my Sister.

Horner: Well, I heard thou wert married.

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.

Pinchwife: Why, I have married no London Wife.

Horner: Pshaw, that's all one, that grave circumspection in marrying a Country Wife. Come, come, but she's handsome and young?

Pinchwife: No, no, she has no beauty but her youth, no attraction but her modesty. 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.

Pinchwife: To be taught? No, Sir, I thank you. Good Wives and private Soldiers should be ignorant.

Horner: Why, if she be ill favored, there will be less danger here 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, swingeing stomachs in the Country.

Harcourt: Foul Feeders indeed.

Dorilant: And your Hospitality is great there.

Harcourt: Open house, every Man's welcome.

Pinchwife: So, so, Gentlemen.

Horner: But prithee, why would thou marry her if she be ugly, ill bred and silly? She must be rich then.

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. Because she's ugly, she's the 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 one and 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.

Pinchwife: 'Tis my maxim. He's a Fool that marries, 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: No, 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.

Pinchwife: Well, well, I'll take care. My Wife shall make me no Cuckold, though she had your help Mr. Horner.

Dorilant: (*Aside*) His help!

Harcourt: (*Aside*) 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?

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

Horner: But prithee, was not the way you were in better than Marriage?

Pinchwife: A Pox on it, the Jades would jilt me. I could never keep a Whore to myself.

Horner: So, then, you only married to keep a Whore to yourself. Well, I'd advise my Friends to keep rather than marry, since I find by your example it does not serve one's turn, for I saw you yesterday in the eighteen penny place with a pretty Country-wench.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) How the Devil did he see my Wife then? I sat there that she might not be seen.

Horner: What, dost thou blush at nine and forty for having been seen with a Wench?

Dorilant: No Faith, I warrant 'twas his Wife which he seated there out of sight.

Harcourt: He blushes, then 'twas his Wife. For Men are now more ashamed to be seen with them in public than with a Wench.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) Hell and damnation, I'm undone since Horner has seen her.

Horner: But was it thy Wife? She was exceedingly pretty. I was in love with her at that distance.

Pinchwife: You are like never to be nearer to her. Your Servant, Gentlemen. (*Offers to go.*)

Horner: Nay, prithee stay.

Pinchwife: I cannot.

Horner: Come, you shall dine with us.

Pinchwife: I have dined already.

Horner: Come, I know thou hast not. I'll treat thee, dear Rogue, thou shall spend none of thy Hampshire Money today.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) Treat me! So, he uses me already like his Cuckold. (*Aloud*) I have business at home.

(*Exit Pinchwife*)

Harcourt: To beat his Wife. He's as jealous of her as a Cheapside Husband of a Covent Garden Wife.

Horner: Why, 'tis as hard to find an old Whoremaster without the gout as a young one without fear of 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 II.

(*Mr. Pinchwife's Lodging*)
(*Later that morning*)

(*Mrs. Margery Pinchwife and Alithea.*)

Mrs. Pinchwife: Pray, Sister, where are the best Fields and Woods to walk in London?

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Pray, Sister, tell me why my Husband looks so glum here in Town and keeps me up so close and will not let me go a walking nor let me wear my best Gown yesterday?

Alithea: O he's jealous, Sister.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Jealous, what's that?

Alithea: He's afraid you should love another Man.

Mrs. 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?

Mrs. 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 them. He told me none but naughty Women sat there, whom they toused and moused. But I would have ventured for all that.

Alithea: But how did you like the Play?

Mrs. 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.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Ay, how should I help it, Sister?

Alithea: (*Enter Mr. Pinchwife to them.*) But here comes your Husband.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Oh my dear, dear Bud, welcome home. Why dost thou look so fropish?

Pinchwife: You're a Fool.

(*Mrs. Pinchwife goes aside, & cries.*)

Alithea: Faith, so she is for crying for no fault, poor tender Creature!

Pinchwife: What? You would have her as impudent as yourself? An errant Jilflirt, a gadder, a Magpie 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.

Pinchwife: Hark you, Mistress, do not talk so before my Wife!

Alithea: Why, pray, who boasts of any intrigue with me? I keep no Company with any Women of scandalous reputations.

Pinchwife: No, you keep the Men of scandalous reputations Company.

Alithea: Where? Answer them in a Box at the Plays? In the drawing room at Whitehall? In St. James's Park? Mulberry Garden? Or---

Pinchwife: Hold, hold, do not teach my Wife where the Men are to be found. I bid you keep her in ignorance as I do.

Mrs. 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.

Pinchwife: Then you are very inquisitive to know, I find?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Not I indeed, Dear. I hate London. Our Placehouse in the Country is worth a thousand of it, would I were there again.

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

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

Pinchwife: Come my poor Rogue, but thou likest none better than me?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Yes indeed, but I do. The Player Men are finer Folks.

Pinchwife: But you love none better than me?

Mrs. Pinchwife: You are mine own Dear Bud.

Pinchwife: Ay, my Dear, you must love me only and not be like the naughty Town Women who only 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.

Mrs. Pinchwife: But, Husband, do the Town-women love the Player Men too?

Pinchwife: Ha---Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a Play.

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

Alithea: (*Aside.*) So 'twill be in other things, I warrant.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Pray, let me go to a Play, Dear.

Pinchwife: Hold your Peace, I will not.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Why, Love?

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: What, a homely Country Girl? No Bud, nobody will like me.

Pinchwife: I tell you, yes they may.

Mrs. Pinchwife: No, no, you jest---I won't believe you.

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Indeed! Who, who, pray who was it?

Pinchwife: (*Aside.*) I've gone too far and slipped before I was aware.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Was it any Hampshire Gallant, any of our Neighbors?

Pinchwife: I promise you, he would but ruin you as he has done hundreds.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Ay, but if he loves me, why should he ruin me? Answer me to that. Methinks he should not. I would do him no harm.

Alithea: Hah, ha, ha.

Pinchwife: 'Tis very well. But I'll keep him from doing you any harm or me either. (*Enter Lucy leading Sparkish and Harcourt.*) But here comes Company. Get you in, get you in. (*Exit Lucy*)

Mrs. Pinchwife: But pray, Husband, is he a pretty Gentleman that loves me?

Pinchwife: In baggage, in. (*Thrusts her in: shuts the door*) What, all the lewd Libertines of the Town brought to my Lodging by this easy Coxcomb! S'death I'll not suffer it.

Sparkish: Dear little Rogue, I told you I'd bring you acquainted with all my Friends, the wits, and this is one of those, my pretty Rogue, that are to dance at your Wedding tomorrow, and him you must bid welcome ever to what you and I have.

Pinchwife: (*Aside.*) Monstrous!---

(*Harcourt salutes her.*)

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 anything.

Pinchwife: (*Aside.*) Wonderful!

Sparkish: I say, Harcourt, thou hast stared upon her enough to resolve me.

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 Acquaintance were all Wits and Raillieurs, and now I find it.

Sparkish: No, by the Universe, Madam, he does not raily now. I do assure you, he is a man of such perfect honor, he would say nothing to a Lady he does not mean.

Pinchwife: (*Aside.*) Praising another Man to his Mistress!

Harcourt: Sir, you are so obliging, that---

Sparkish: Nay, I am sure you 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, or the most glorious part of it, her whole Sex. And till now I never thought I should have envied 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 the Wits and Raillieurs, since you cannot spare your Friend even when he is but too civil to you. But the surest sign is 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 before.

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

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.

Alithea: Would you be so unkind to me?

Sparkish: Poor Frank. No gad, 'tis only his kindness to me.

Pinchwife: (*Aside.*) Insensible Fop. Let a Man make love to his Wife to his face.

Sparkish: Prithee, Frank, dost think my Wife that shall be there a fine Person?

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

Sparkish: As I am! how!

Harcourt: Because you are a Lover, and true Lovers are blind, stock blind.

Sparkish: True, true; but by the World, she has wit as well as beauty. Go, go with her into a corner and try if she has wit. Talk to her anything, she's bashful before me.

Alithea: Sir, you dispose of me a little before your time.---

Sparkish: Nay, nay, Madam, let me have an earnest of your obedience.

(Harcourt courts Alithea aside.)

Pinchwife: Sir, if you are not concerned for the honor of a wife, I am for that of a Sister. He shall not debauch her.

Sparkish: *(Struggles with Pinchwife to keep, him from Harcourt and Alithea)* Nay, you shall not disturb them. I'll vex thee, by the World.

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.

Alithea: Love proceeds from esteem. He cannot distrust my virtue, or he would not marry me.

Harcourt: Marrying you is no more sign of his love than bribing your Woman is a sign of his generosity. Marriage is rather a sign of interest than love, and he that marries a fortune covets a Mistress.

Alithea: Now you have put a scruple in my head. But in short, Sir, I must marry him, my reputation would suffer in the World else.

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

Alithea: Nay, now you are rude, Sir.---Mr. Sparkish, pray come hither, your Friend here is very troublesome and very loving.

Pinchwife: Do you hear that?

Sparkish: Why, do you think I'll seem to be jealous like a Country Bumpkin?

Pinchwife: No, rather be a Cuckold, like a credulous Chit.

Alithea: Hold, do not rail at him, for since he is like to be my Husband, I am resolved to like him. Master Sparkish!

Sparkish: What, what, now dear Rogue, has not she wit?

Harcourt: (*Speaks surlily.*) Not so much as I thought and hoped she had.

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

Spar, How! No, but if he does rail at me, 'tis but in jest, I warrant.

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.

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

Sparkish: Pshaw.

Alithea: A Coward.

Sparkish: Pshaw, pshaw.

Alithea: A senseless driveling Idiot.

Sparkish: How, did he disparage my parts? Nay, then my honor's concerned. I can't put up with that, Sir. (*Offers to draw.*)

Alithea: Hold, hold. (*Aside*) I must not let them kill the Gentleman for his kindness to me. I am so far from hating him that I wish my Gallant had his person and understanding. (*Aloud*) Indeed to tell the truth, the Gentleman said that what he spoke was but out of friendship to you.

Sparkish: How! Say I am a Fool out of friendship to me?

Alithea: Yes, to try whether I was concerned 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. Come, Horner does not come. Harcourt, let's be gone to the new Play.---Come, Madam.

Alithea: I will not go if you intend to leave me alone in the Box and run into the pit as you use to do.

Sparkish: Pshaw, I'll leave Harcourt with you in the Box to entertain you, and that's as good. If I sat in the Box, I should be thought no Judge. Come away, Harcourt, lead her down.

(Exeunt Sparkish, Harcourt, and Alithea.)

Pinchwife: Well, go thy ways, for the flower of the true Town Fops, such as spend their Estates before they come to them are Cuckolds before they're married. But let me go look to my own Free-hold---How---

(Enter Lucy leading my Lady Fidget, Mistress Dainty Fidget, and Mistress Squeamish. Exit Lucy.)

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

Pinchwife: New Play!

Lady Fidget: And my Husband will wait upon you presently.

Pinchwife: *(Aside.)* Damn your civility! *(Aloud)* Madam, by no means, I will not see Sir Jaspur here till I have waited upon him at home, nor shall my Wife see you till she has waited upon your Ladyship at your lodgings.

Squeamish: We will not stir till we see her.

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: They told us below she was here.

Pinchwife: *(Aside.)* Will nothing do? *(Aloud.)* Well, it must out then. To tell you the truth,

Ladies, my Wife has just now the Small Pox come out upon her. Do not be frightened, but pray, be gone Ladies, you shall not stay here in danger of your lives.

Lady Fidget: No, no, we have all had them.

Squeamish: Alack, alack.

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

Lady Fidget: Come.

Pinchwife: (*Aside.*) Well, there is no being too hard for 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: Pshaw, as the World goes, to what end should they be jealous?

Lady Fidget: Foh, 'tis a nasty World.

Squeamish: That Men of parts should take up with and spend fortunes in keeping little Playhouse Creatures, foh! Why, the Men never visit Women of honor and reputation as they used to do, but use us with the same indifferency and ill breeding as if we were all married to them.

Lady Fidget: They are Dogs and Horses for it.

Dainty: I suppose the crime against our honor is the same with a Man of quality as with another.

Squeamish: But then the pleasure should be the less.

Lady Fidget: Fie, fie, fie, for shame Sister, whither shall we ramble? Be continent in your discourse, or I shall hate you.

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

Lady Fidget: But still my dear, dear Honor.

(*Enter Lucy leading Sir Jaspar, Horner, Dorilant. Exit Lucy.*)

Lady Fidget: Oh, what do you mean to bring in these upon us?

Dainty: Foh, these are as bad as Wits.

Squeamish: 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 would have you go . . .

Lady Fidget: With those two to a Play?

Sir Jaspar: No, not with the other. But with Mr. Horner there can be no more scandal to go with him than with Mr. Tattle or Master Limberham.

Lady Fidget: With that nasty Fellow! no---no.

Sir Jaspar: Nay, prithee Dear, hear me. (*Whispers to Lady Fidget. Horner and Dorilant drawing near Squeamish and Dainty*)

Horner: Ladies.

Dainty: Stand off.

Squeamish: Do not approach us.

Dainty: You are obscenity all over.

Squeamish: And I would as soon look upon a Picture of Adam and Eve without fig leaves as you. Therefore keep off and do not make us sick.

Dorilant: What a Devil are these?

Horner: Why, these are pretenders to honor, as critics to wit.

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!

Squeamish: No, he's for Women's company in private.

Sir Jaspar: He---poor Man---he? hah, ha, ha.

Dainty: 'Tis a greater shame amongst lewd fellows to be seen in virtuous Women's 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.

Lady Fidget: You are very obliging, Sir.

Sir Jaspar: In sober sadness he shall go.

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 privileged Man amongst the virtuous Ladies, heh, he, he! He's my Wife's Gallant, heh, he, he!

Dorilant: 'Tis strange a Man can't come amongst virtuous Women now but upon the same terms as Men are admitted into the great Turk's Seraglio. But where is Pinchwife?

(Exit Dorilant)

Sir Jaspar: Come, come, Man! What, avoid the sweet society of Womankind? 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.

Squeamish: O the rude Beast.

Dainty: Insolent brute.

Lady Fidget: Brute! Stinking, mortified rotten French Wether, to dare . . .

Sir Jaspar: Hold, and it please your Ladyship. Take my advice in your anger. You know you often want one to make up your drolling pack of hombre Players, and you may cheat him easily, for he's an ill Gamester and consequently loves play.

Lady Fidget: But are you sure he loves play and has money?

Sir Jaspar: He loves play as much as you, and has money as much as I.

Lady Fidget: Then I am contented to make him pay for his scurrility. Money makes up in a measure all other wants in Men.

Sir Jaspar: (*Aside.*) So, so; now to mollify, to wheedle him. (*Aloud.*) Master Horner will you never keep civil Company? 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 them . . .

Horner: I hope they'll afford me better employment, Sir. For your sake . . .

Sir Jaspar: Come, 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: Yes, losing Gamesters have a privilege with Women.

Horner: I always thought the contrary.

Sir Jaspar: Heh, he, he, well, win or lose you shall have your liberty with her.

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 sorts of freedom. Wheedle her, jest with her and be better acquainted one with another.

Horner: (*Aside.*) I think I know her already, therefore may venture with her my secret for hers . . . (*Horner, and Lady Fidget whisper.*)

Sir Jaspar: Sister, Coz, I have provided an innocent Play-fellow for you there.

Dainty: Who he?

Squeamish: Foh, we'll have no such Play-fellows.

Dainty: 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, to cause yourself to be reported no Man? And to suffer yourself 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. Nay, I scorn you should take my word. I desire to be tried only, Madam.

Lady Fidget: All Men of honor desire to come to the test. But indeed, generally you Men report such things of yourselves, one does not know how or whom to believe.

Horner: 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, if you'll give me leave to speak obscenely, you might tell, dear Sir?

Horner: If I did, nobody would believe me. The reputation of impotency is as hardly recovered again in the World as that of cowardice, dear Madam.

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

Sir Jaspar: Come, is your Ladyship reconciled to him yet? Have you agreed on matters? 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.

Sir Jaspar: Well, well---all the Town knows---heh, he, he! Therefore now you like him, get you gone to your business together. Go, go to your business, I say, 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 Sr. 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 omnes)

ACT III
SCENE 1.
(Pinchwife's Lodging)
(Later that day)

(Alithea and Mrs. Pinchwife revealed)

Alithea: Sister, what ails you? You are grown melancholy.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Would it not make any one melancholy to see you go every day fluttering about abroad, while I must stay at home like a poor lonely, sullen Bird in a cage?

Alithea: Ay, Sister, but you came young and just from the nest to your cage, so that I thought you liked it.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Nay, I confess I was quiet enough till my Husband told me what pure lives the London Ladies live abroad with their dancing, meetings and junketings, and dressed in their best gowns, and I warrant you, play at ninepins every day of the week, so they do.

(Enter Mr. Pinchwife.)

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

Alithea: You suffer none to give her those longings, you mean, but yourself.

Pinchwife: I tell her of the vanities of the Town like a Confessor.

Alithea: A Confessor! Just such a Confessor as he that by forbidding a silly Ostler to grease the Horse's teeth, taught him to do it.

Pinchwife: Come Mistress Flippant, she has been this week in Town and never desired till this afternoon to go abroad.

Alithea: Was she not at a Play yesterday?

Pinchwife: Yes, but she never asked 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.

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Let me alone, I am not well.

Pinchwife: O, if that be all---what ails my dearest?

Mrs. 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.

Pinchwife: Ha---

Alithea: That's by my example too.

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Of what sickness?

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Pish, you jeer. Well, but pray Bud, let's go to a Play tonight.

Pinchwife: Why are you so eager to see a Play?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Faith Dear, I like to look upon the Player men and would see, if I could, the Gallant you say loves me, that's all dear Bud.

Alithea: This proceeds from my example.

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Therefore I would see first some sights to tell my Neighbors of.

Alithea: I'm the cause of this desire too.

Pinchwife: But now I think on it, 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: O Lord! Did the Gentleman come hither to see me, indeed?

Pinchwife: No, no.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Come, pray Bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late. For I will go, that's flat and plain.

Pinchwife: (*Aside.*) So! the obstinacy already of a Town-wife, and I must, whilst she's here, humor her like one. (*Aloud*) Sister, how shall we do that she may not be seen or known?

Alithea: Let her put on her Mask.

Pinchwife: Pshaw, a Mask makes People but more inquisitive and is as ridiculous a disguise as a stage-beard, and if we should meet with Horner, he would 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?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Nay, shall we go? The Exchange will be shut, and I have a mind to see that.

Pinchwife: So---I have it---I'll dress her up in the Suit we are to carry down to her Brother, little Sir James. Nay, I understand the Town tricks. Come let's go dress her. A Mask! No---a Woman masked, like a covered Dish, gives a Man curiosity and appetite.

Alithea: Indeed your comparison is a greasy one, but I had a gentle Gallant used to say a Beauty masked, like the Sun in Eclipse, gathers together more gazers than if it shined out.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III
SCENE 2
(*An Exterior Setting*)
(*That Night*)

(*Enter Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant*)

Dorilant: Engaged to Women and not Sup with us?

Horner: Ay, a Pox on them all.

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

Horner: In vain! No, since I can't love them, to be revenged on them. You may see by Marriage, nothing makes a Man hate a Woman more than her constant conversation. In short, I converse with them as you do with rich Fools; to laugh at them and use them ill.

Dorilant: I would no more Sup with Women, unless I could lie with them, than Sup with a rich Coxcomb unless I could cheat him.

Harcourt: But hark you, Sir, before you go, a little of your advice. 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, I tell you, is my Rival and will hinder my love.

Horner: No, a foolish Rival and a jealous Husband assist their Rival's designs, for they are sure to make their Women hate them, which is the first step to their love for another Man.

Harcourt: But I cannot come near his Mistress but in his company.

Horner: Still the better for you, for Fools are most easily cheated when they themselves are accessories, and he is to be bubbled of his Mistress as of his Money by keeping him company.

Sparkish: Who is to be bubbled? Faith, let me snack. I haven't met with a bubble since Christmas. Gad, I think bubbles are like their Brother Woodcocks, go out with the cold weather.

Harcourt: *(Apart to Horner.)* A Pox, he did not hear all, I hope.

Sparkish: Come, you bubbling Rogues you, where do we sup? Oh, Harcourt, my Mistress tells me you have been making fierce love to her all the Play long, hah, ha! But I . . .

Harcourt: I make love to her? Did she tell you so? I see all Women are like these of the Exchange who, to enhance the price of their commodities, report to their fond Customers offers which were never made them.

Horner: Ay, Women are as apt to tell before the intrigue as Men after it, and so show themselves the vainer Sex. But hast thou a Mistress, Sparkish? 'Tis as hard for me to believe it as that thou ever hadst a bubble, as you bragged just now.

Sparkish: O your Servant, Sir. Are you at your raillery, Sir? But we were some of us beforehand with you today at the Play. The Wits were something bold with you, Sir. Did you not hear us laugh?

Harcourt: Yes, But I thought you had gone to Plays to laugh at the Poet's wit, not at your own.

Sparkish: Gad, 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.

Harcourt: But, who comes here, Sparkish?

(Enter Mr. Pinchwife, and his Wife in Man's Clothes, 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 reconcile me to her.

Sparkish: Another time, faith the King will have supped.

Horner: Your Servant, Pinchwife, . . . What? He knows us not---

Pinchwife: *(To his Wife aside.)* Come along.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Pray, have you any Ballads? Give me six-penny worth?

Pinchwife: *(Apart to her.)* No, Plays are not for your reading. Come along, will you discover yourself?

Horner: Who is that pretty Youth with him, Sparkish?

Sparkish: I believe his Wife's Brother because 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 them.

(Exeunt Pinchwife, Mistress 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 would fain be reconciled to her, which none but you can do, dear Friend.

Sparkish: Well, that's a better reason, dear Friend. I would not go near her now for her's or my own sake. But I can deny you nothing.

Harcourt: I am obliged to you indeed, dear Friend. *(Aside)* So we are hard put to it when we

make our Rival our Procurer, but neither she nor her Brother would let me come near her now. When all's done, a Rival is the best cloak to steal to a Mistress under without suspicion. And when we have once 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, Alithea, Lucy)

Pinchwife: *(To Alithea.)* Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you--- *(To Margery)* Come let's be gone Mistress Margery.

Mrs. Pinchwife: I haven't half my belly full of sights yet.

Pinchwife: Then walk this way.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Lord, what a power of brave signs are here! Stay---the Bull's-head, the Rams-head, and the Stags-head, Dear . . .

Pinchwife: Nay, if every Husband's proper sign here were visible, they would be all alike.

Mrs. Pinchwife: What do you mean by that, Bud?

Pinchwife: They would be all Bulls, Stags, and Rams heads.

(Exeunt Mr. Pinchwife, Mrs. Pinchwife. Re-enter Sparkish, Harcourt, Alithea, Lucy at the other door.)

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

Alithea: I hate him because he is your Enemy, and you ought to hate him too for making love to me, if you love me.

Sparkish: That's a good one, I hate a Man for loving you. If he did love you, 'tis but what he can't help, and 'tis your fault not his if he admires you. I hate a Man for being of my opinion? I'll never do it, by the World.

Alithea: Is it for your honor or mine to suffer a Man to make love to me, who am to marry you tomorrow?

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. That I think is for your honor.

Alithea: But 'tis your honor I am concerned for.

Harcourt: But why, dearest Madam, will you be more concerned for his honor than he is himself? Let his honor alone for my sake.

Sparkish: Ay, ay, were it for my honor to marry a Woman whose virtue I suspected and could not trust her in a Friend's hands?

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

Sparkish: And you make me giddy, Madam, with your virtue and honor.

Alithea: Monstrous!

Lucy: (*Behind.*) Well, to see what easy Husbands these Women of quality can meet.

Alithea: I tell you then plainly, he pursues me to marry me.

Sparkish: Pshaw---

Harcourt: Come, Madam, you see 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 is not enough for me without your favor. I would 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 say I love you that I would not have you miserable and cast yourself away upon so unworthy and inconsiderable a thing as what you see here.

Sparkish: No faith, I believe thou would not, now his meaning is plain.

Harcourt: Heavens forbid the glory of her Sex should fall so low as into the embraces of such a contemptible Wretch.

Sparkish: 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? I can no longer suffer his scurrilous abusiveness to you, no more than his love to me. (*Offers to go.*)

Sparkish: Nay, nay, Madam, pray stay, since you have not yet understood him. Answer to thy Catechism, Friend. Do you love my Mistress here?

Harcourt: Yes, I wish she would not doubt it.

Sparkish: But how do you love her?

Harcourt: With all my Soul.

Alithea: Methinks he speaks plain enough now.

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 ere I was aware. But speak for thyself Harcourt, you said you would not wrong me nor her.

Harcourt: Who knows how to value so much beauty and virtue?

Sparkish: Aye . . .

Harcourt: Whose love can no more be equaled in the world than that Heavenly form of yours.

Sparkish: No . . .

Harcourt: Who could no more suffer a Rival than your absence.

Sparkish: No . . .

Harcourt: Who loves you better than his eyes that first made him love you.

Sparkish: Ay---nay, Madam, faith you shan't go till . . .

Alithea: Have a care, lest you make me stay too long . . .

Sparkish: But till he has saluted you, that I may be assured you are friends after his honest advice and declaration. Come pray, Madam, be friends with him.

(Enter Mr. Pinchwife, Mistress Pinchwife.)

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

Pinchwife: What, invite your Wife to kiss Men? Monstrous, are you not ashamed?

Sparkish: Are you not ashamed that I should have more confidence in the chastity of your Family than you have? Sir, I am frank, Sir . . .

Pinchwife: Very frank, Sir, to share your Wife with your friends.

Sparkish: He is a humble, menial Friend.

Pinchwife: A menial Friend! You will get a great many menial Friends by showing your Wife as you do.

Sparkish: What then, it may be I have a pleasure in it, as I have to show fine Clothes at a Playhouse and count money before poor Rogues.

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

Sparkish: I love to be envied and would not marry a Wife that I alone could love. Loving alone is as dull as eating alone. Tell you the truth, it may be I love to have Rivals in a Wife, and so good night, for I must to Whitehall. Madam, I hope you are now reconciled to my Friend, 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 tomorrow if it should be earlier, with a Canonical Gentleman, than Mr. Sparkish's.

Pinchwife: This Gentlewoman is yet under my care, therefore you must yet forbear your freedom with her, Sir. *(Coming between Alithea and Harcourt.)*

Harcourt: Must, Sir . . .

Pinchwife: Yes, Sir, she is my Sister.

Harcourt: 'Tis well she is, Sir---for I must be her Servant, Sir. Madam . . .

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?

Pinchwife: Your Servant.

Horner: What, I see a little time in the Country makes a Man turn wild and unsociable and only fit to converse with his Horses, Dogs and his Herds.

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 with ours, pleasure.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) 'Sdeath he knows her, she carries it so sillily. Yet if he does not, I should be more silly to discover it first.

Alithea: Pray, let us go, Sir.

Pinchwife: Come, come---

Horner: (*to Mrs. Pinchwife.*) Had you not rather stay with us? Prithee Pinchwife, who is this pretty young Gentleman?

Pinchwife: One to whom I'm a guardian. (*Aside.*) I wish I could keep her out of your hands . . .

Horner: Who is he? I never saw anything so pretty in all my life.

Pinchwife: Pshaw, do not look upon him so much, he's a poor bashful youth. You'll put him out of countenance. Come away, Brother. (*Offers to take her away.*)

Horner: O your Brother!

Pinchwife: Yes, my Wife's Brother. Come, come, she'll stay 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.

Mrs. Pinchwife: (*Aside*) O Jeminy! Is this he that was in love with me? I am glad on it I vow,

for he's a curious fine Gentleman, and I love him already too. (*to Mr. Pinchwife.*) Is this he, Bud?

Pinchwife: (*To his Wife.*) Come away, come away.

Horner: Why, what haste are you in? Why won't you let me talk with him?

Pinchwife: Because you'll debauch him. He's yet young and innocent, and I would not have him debauched for anything in the World. (*Aside*) How she gazes on him! The Devil!

Horner: Harcourt, Dorilant, look you here. This is the likeness of that Dowdy he told us 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 would make all that see her in love with her.

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

Harcourt: More beautiful than a Poet's first Mistress of Imagination.

Horner: Or another Man's last Mistress of flesh and blood.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Nay, now you jeer, Sir. Pray don't jeer me . . .

Pinchwife: Come, come. (*Aside*) By Heavens she'll discover herself.

Horner: I speak of your Sister, Sir.

Pinchwife: (*To his Wife.*) Come, come away, I say---

Horner: Nay, by your leave, Sir, he shall not go yet--- (*To them.*) Harcourt, Dorilant, let us torment this jealous Rogue a little.

Harcourt, Dorilant: How?

Horner: I'll show you.

Pinchwife: Come, pray let him go. 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.

Pinchwife: No, now I think on it, having stayed so long for us, I warrant she's gone to bed- (*Aside*) I wish she and I were well out of their hands. (*Aloud*) Come, I must rise early tomorrow, 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.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Thank you heartily, Sir.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) S'death, she will discover herself yet in spite of me.

Horner: Tell her, dear sweet little Gentleman, for all your Brother there, that you have revived the love I had for her at first sight in the Playhouse.

Mrs. Pinchwife: But did you love her indeed, and indeed?

Pinchwife: Away, I say.

Horner: Nay stay. Yes indeed, and indeed, pray do you tell her so and give her this kiss from me. (*Kisses her.*)

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) O Heavens! What do I suffer? Now 'tis too plain he knows her.

Horner: And this, and this--- (*Kisses her again.*)

Mrs. Pinchwife: What do you kiss me for? I am no Woman.

Pinchwife: Come, I cannot nor will stay any longer.

Horner: Nay, they shall send your Lady a kiss too. Here Harcourt, Dorilant, will you not? (*They kiss her.*)

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) How, do I suffer this? Was I not accusing another just now for permitting his Wife to be kissed before his face? Ten thousand ulcers gnaw away their lips. (*Aloud*) Come, come.

Horner: Good night dear little Gentleman. Madam goodnight. Farewell Pinchwife. (*Apart to Harcourt and Dorilant.*) Did not I tell you I would raise his jealous gall?

(*Exeunt Horner, Harcourt and Dorilant.*)

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

(*Exit Pinchwife. Horner, Harcourt, Dorilant return.*)

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Sweet Sir, but what will you give me then?

Horner: Anything. Come away into the next walk.

(Exit Horner, hauling away Mrs. Pinchwife.)

Alithea: Hold, hold,---what do you 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 them.

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

(Pinchwife returns.)

Pinchwife: Where?---how?---what's become of? gone--- whither?

Lucy: He's only gone with the Gentleman who will give him something, and it please your Worship.

Pinchwife: Something! Give him something with a Pox! Where are they?

Alithea: In the next walk only, Brother.

Pinchwife: Only, only; where, where?

(Exit Pinchwife, and returns presently, then goes out again.)

Harcourt: What's the matter with him? Why so much concerned? But dearest Madam . . .

Alithea: Pray, let me go, Sir. I have said and suffered enough already.

Harcourt: Then you will not look upon my sufferings?

Alithea: To look upon them when I cannot help them were cruelty, not pity. Therefore I will never see you more.

Harcourt: Let me then, Madam, have my privilege of a banished Lover. If you cannot condescend to marry me, you should not take that wretch my Rival.

Alithea: He only can give me a reason why I should not marry him. But if he be true, and what I think him to me, I must be so to him. Your Servant, Sir.

Harcourt: Have Women only constancy when 'tis a vice, and like fortune only true to fools?

Dorilant: (*To Lucy, who struggles to get from him*) Thou shall not stir thou robust Creature. You see I can deal with you, therefore you should stay the rather and be kind.

(*Enter Pinchwife.*)

Pinchwife: Gone, gone, not to be found. Quite gone, ten thousand plagues go with them. Which way went they?

Alithea: But into the other walk, Brother.

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

Alithea: Are they not there?

Pinchwife: No, you know where they are, you infamous Wretch, Eternal shame of your Family, which you do not dishonor enough yourself, you think, but you must help her to do it too, thou legion of Bawds.

Alithea: Good Brother.

Alithea: Look you here, she's coming.

(*Enter Mistress Pinchwife in Man's clothes, running with her hat under her arm full of Oranges and dried fruit, Horner following.*)

Mrs. Pinchwife: O dear Bud, look you here what I have got, see. The fine Gentleman has given me better things yet.

Pinchwife: Has he so?

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

Pinchwife: Thank you, Sir. (*Aside*) You have only squeezed my Orange, I suppose, and given it me again. (*To his Wife.*) Come, come away.

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

(*Enter Sir Jasper Fidget.*)

Sir Jaspar: O Master Horner, come, come, the Ladies stay for you. Your Mistress, my Wife, wonders you make not more haste to her.

Horner: I have stayed 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 it 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 promised 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! Besides he's one of my Family;---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: I rather wish thou wert his or my Cuckold. Harcourt, what a good Cuckold is lost there for want of a Man to make him one. Thee and I cannot have Horner's privilege, who can make use of it.

Pinchwife: Come.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Presently Bud.

Dorilant: Come let us go too. (*To Alithea*) Madam, your Servant. (*To Lucy*) Good night, Strapper. (*Exit*)

Harcourt: Madam, though you will not let me have a good day or night, I wish you one. But dare not name the other half of my wish.

Alithea: Good night, Sir, forever. (*Exit*)

Mrs. Pinchwife: I don't know where to put this. Here, dear Bud, you shall eat it.

Pinchwife: Indeed I deserve it, since I furnished 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 IV
SCENE 1
(Pinchwife's Lodging)
(The next morning)

(Lucy, Alithea dressed in new Clothes)

Lucy: Well, Madam, now have I dressed you and set you out with so many ornaments and spent upon you ounces of essence and *pulvilio*, and all this for no other purpose but as People adorn and perfume a Corpse, for a stinking second-hand-grave I think Master Sparkish's bed.

Alithea: Hold your peace.

Lucy: Nay, Madam, I will ask you the reason why you would banish poor Master Harcourt forever from your sight? How could you be so hard-hearted?

Alithea: 'Twas because I was not hard-hearted.

Lucy: No, no; 'twas stark love and kindness, I warrant.

Alithea: I would see him no more, because I love him.

Lucy: Hey day, a very pretty reason.

Alithea: I was engaged to marry, you see, another man whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive or injure.

Lucy: Can there be a greater cheat or 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. Alas you only lose what little stock you had before.

Alithea: I find by your Rhetoric you have been bribed to betray me.

Lucy: Only by his merit that has bribed your heart against your word and rigid honor.

Alithea: Come, pray talk you no more of honor nor Master Harcourt. I wish the other would come to secure my fidelity to him and his right in me.

Lucy: You will marry him then?

Alitheia: '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.

Alitheia: I am satisfied 'tis impossible for him to be jealous. Jealousy in a Husband begets a thousand plagues to a poor Woman, the loss of her honor, her quiet, and her . . .

Lucy: O does the wind lie there?

(Enter to them Sparkish, and Harcourt dressed like a Parson.)

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

Harcourt: Amen.

Alitheia: Who have we here?

Sparkish: My Chaplain faith---O Madam, poor Harcourt remembers his humble service to you, and in obedience to your last commands, refrains coming into your sight.

Alitheia: Is not that he?

Sparkish: No, fie no, but to show that he never intended to hinder our Match has sent his Brother here to join our hands according to the Custom. This is his Brother and my Chaplain.

Lucy: *(Aside)* And your Chaplain to preach in your Pulpit.

Alitheia: His Brother!

Sparkish: Nay, I knew you would not believe it.

Alitheia: Believe it!

Lucy: *(Aside)* His Brother! hah, ha, he! He has a trick left still, it seems---

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

Alitheia: For shame you are abused still.

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 and they differ from each other no more than in their age, for they were Twins.

Lucy: Hah, ha, he.

Alithea: I cannot be so deceived, though you are. But 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 asked him if he could 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.

Sparkish: Pshaw, pshaw, I tell you by the same token, the Midwife put her Garter about Frank's neck to know them asunder, they were so like.

Alithea: Frank tells you this too?

Sparkish: Ay, and Ned there too. Nay, they are both in a Story.

Alithea: So, so, very foolish.

Sparkish: Lord, if you won't believe one, you had best try him by your Chamber-maid there, for Chamber-maids must needs know Chaplains from other Men, they are so used to them.

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. Let us make an end of this troublesome Love, I say.

Harcourt: So be it, Seraphic Lady, when your Honor shall think it meet and convenient so to do.

Sparkish: Gad I'm sure none but a Chaplain could speak so, I think.

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 would, for my Noble, Good-natured and thrice Generous Patron here would not hinder it.

Sparkish: No, poor man, not I faith.

Harcourt: And now, Madam, let me tell you plainly, nobody else shall marry you. I'll die first, for I'm sure I should die after it.

Alithea: That was spoken like a Chaplain too. Now you understand him, I hope.

Sparkish: Poor man, he takes it heinously to be refused, but you'll pardon me, Madam, it shan't be. He shall marry us, come away, pray Madam.

Alithea: Invincible stupidity, I tell you he would marry me as your Rival, not as your Chaplain.

Sparkish: Come, come Madam. (*Pulling her away.*) 'Tis even twelve a clock, and my Mother charged me never to be married out of the Canonical hours. Come, come, Lord here's such a deal of modesty, I warrant, the first day.

Lucy: Yes, and it 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, Harcourt, and Lucy.*)

ACT IV

SCENE 2

(*Pinchwife's Lodging*)

(*Later that morning*)

(*Pinchwife, Mrs. Pinchwife revealed*)

Mr. Pinchwife: Come tell me, I say.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Lord, haven't I told it an hundred times over?

Mr. Pinchwife: Come, how was it, Baggage?

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

Mr. Pinchwife: No, you take more in telling it I find, but speak how was it?

Mrs. Pinchwife: He carried me up into the house next to the Exchange.

Pinchwife: So, and you two were only in the room?

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

Pinchwife: Did he so? Damn him for it---and for---

Mrs. Pinchwife: But presently came up the Gentlewoman of the house.

Pinchwife: O 'twas well she did, but what did he do while the fruit came?

Mrs. Pinchwife: He kissed me a hundred times and told me he fancied he kissed my fine Sister, meaning me you know, whom he said he loved 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 would walk under it at that time.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) And he was as good as his word, very punctual. A pox reward him for it.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Well, and he said if you were not within, he would come up to her, meaning me you know, Bud, still.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) So---he knew her certainly, but for this confession, I am obliged to her simplicity. (*Aloud*) But what you stood very still when he kissed you?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Yes I warrant you, would you have had me discovered myself?

Pinchwife: But you told me he did some beastliness to you, as you called it. What was it?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Why, he put . . .

Pinchwife: What?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Why he put the tip of his tongue between my lips, and so muscled me---and I said I'd bite it.

Pinchwife: An eternal canker seize it, for a dog!

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

Pinchwife: The Devil---you were satisfied with it then and would do it again?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Not unless he should force me.

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

Mrs. 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.

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. (*Aloud* Go fetch Pen, Ink and Paper out of the next room.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Yes Bud.

(*Exit Mrs. Pinchwife.*)

Pinchwife: 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 with tray of writing materials*) Come, Minx, sit down and write.

Mrs. Pinchwife: But what should I write for?

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: O Lord, to the fine Gentleman a Letter!

Pinchwife: Yes, to the fine Gentleman.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Lord, you do but jeer. Sure you jest.

Pinchwife: I am not so merry, come write as I bid you. I say take the pen and write, or you'll provoke me.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Lord, what do you 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.

Pinchwife: Yes you may when your Husband bids you write Letters to people that are in Town.

Mrs. Pinchwife: O may I so! Then I'm satisfied.

Pinchwife: Come begin. (*Dictates*) "Sir"

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

Pinchwife: Write as I bid you, or I will write "Whore" with this knife in your Face.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Nay good Bud. *(She writes)* "Sir."

Pinchwife: "Though I suffered last night your nauseous, loathed Kisses and Embraces . . ." Write!

Mrs. Pinchwife: Nay, why should I say so? You know I told you he had a sweet breath.

Pinchwife: Write.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Let me but put out, "loathed."

Pinchwife: Write I say.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Well then.

Pinchwife: Let's see what have you writ? *(Takes the paper, and reads.)* "Though I suffered last night your kisses and embraces . . ." Thou impudent creature, where is "nauseous" and "loathed?"

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

Pinchwife: Once more write as I'd have you and question it not, or I will spoil thy writing with this. I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief. *(Holds up the knife)*

Mrs. Pinchwife: O Lord, I will.

Pinchwife: So---so---Let's see now! *(Reads.)* "Though I suffered last night your nauseous, loathed kisses and embraces." Go on, "Yet I would not have you presume that you shall ever repeat them"---So---

Mrs. Pinchwife: *(She writes.)* I have writ it.

Pinchwife: On then---"I then concealed myself from your knowledge to avoid your insolencies . . ."

Mrs. Pinchwife: *(She writes.)* So---

Pinchwife: "The same reason now I am out of your hands . . ."

Mrs. Pinchwife: *(She writes.)* So---

Pinchwife: "Makes me own to you my unfortunate, though innocent frolic of being in man's clothes."

Mrs. Pinchwife: (She writes.) So---

Pinchwife: “That you may forevermore cease to pursue her who hates and detests you . . .”

Mrs. Pinchwife: (She writes on.) So---h--- (Sighs)

Pinchwife: What do you sigh? “detests you as much as she loves her Husband and her Honor . . .”

Mrs. Pinchwife: I vow, Husband, he'll never believe such a Letter.

Pinchwife: What, he'd expect a kinder from you? Come now, your name only.

Mrs. Pinchwife: What, shan't I say, “your most faithful, humble Servant till death?”

Pinchwife: No, tormenting Fiend! Come wrap it up now while I go fetch wax and a candle. And write on the back side, “for Mr. Horner.”

(Exit Pinchwife)

Mrs. 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? . . . 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 would see it . . . stay . . . what if I should write a Letter and wrap it up like this and write upon it too . . . ay, but then my Husband would see it . . . 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 it. “Dear, Sweet Mr. Horner,” So . . . “my Husband would have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly Letter, but . . .” (She writes and repeats what she hath written) “I won't” so . . . “and would have me forbid you loving me, but I won't” so . . . “and would 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 Country at cards together” so . . . “I could 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 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.” So . . . now wrap it up just like the other, so . . . now write “for Mr. Horner” . . . But, oh, now what shall I do with it? For here comes my Husband.

(Enter Pinchwife.)

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) I have been detained by a Sparkish Coxcomb who pretended a visit to me. But I fear 'twas to my Wife. (*Aloud*) What, have you done?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Ay, ay Bud, just now.

Pinchwife: Let's see it. What do you tremble for? What, you would not have it go?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Here. (*He opens, and reads the first Letter.*) (*Aside.*) I had been served if I had given him this.

Pinchwife: Come, where's the Wax and Seal?

Mrs. Pinchwife: (*Aside*) Lord, what shall I do now? Nay then I have it. (*Aloud*) Pray let me see it, Lord you think me so errand a fool I cannot seal a Letter? I will do it, so I will. (*Snatches the Letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it, and delivers it to him.*)

Pinchwife: 'Tis very well, but I warrant, you would not have it go now?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Yes indeed, but I would, Bud, now.

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. (*Exit Mrs. Pin. Pinchwife locks the door.*) 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 secured all within, I'll deal with the Foe without with false intelligence. (*Holds up the Letter*)

(*Exit Pinchwife.*)

ACT IV SCENE 3

(*Horner's Lodging*)
(*That Afternoon*)

(*Quack and Horner revealed*)

Quack: Well Sir, how fadges the new design? Have you not the luck of all your brother Projectors to deceive only yourself 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 better things already.

Quack: Already!

Horner: Already, I say. Last night I was drunk with half a dozen of your people of Honor, and so was made free of their Society.

Quack: You have made use of your time, Sir.

Horner: I tell thee, I am now no more interruption to them when they sing or talk bawdy than a little squab French Page who speaks no English.

Quack: But do civil persons and women of Honor drink and sing bawdy Songs?

Horner: O amongst Friends, for your Bigots in Honor are just like those in Religion. They fear the eye of the world more than the eye of Heaven. (*Enter servant leading my Lady Fidget, looking about her. Exit Servant.*) Now we talk of women of Honor, here comes one. Step behind the Screen here and but observe if I have not particular privileges with the women of reputation already, Doctor.

Lady Fidget: Well Horner, am not I a woman of Honor? You see I'm as good as my word.

Horner: And you shall see, Madam, I'll not be behind hand with you in honor, 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 Honor.

Horner: If you talk a word more of your Honor, you'll make me incapable to wrong it.

Lady Fidget: But you can't blame a Lady of my reputation to be chary.

Horner: Chary---I have been chary of it already, by the report I have caused of myself.

Lady Fidget: Ay, but if you should ever let other women know that dear secret, it would come out. Nay, you must have a great care of your conduct, for my acquaintance are so censorious and detracting that perhaps they'll talk to the prejudice of my Honor.

Horner: Nay Madam, rather than they shall prejudice your Honor, I'll prejudice theirs. And to serve you, I'll lie with them all, make the secret their own, and then they'll keep it.

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 servant leading in Sir Jaspar Fidget. Exit Servant.*)

Sir Jaspar: How now!

Lady Fidget: (*Aside*) O my Husband! What shall I say? (*Aloud*) 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 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, I must take it. (*Aloud*) A Pox, can't you keep your impertinent Wives at home? I'd have you to know since I cannot be your Journeyman by night, I will not be your drudge by day to squire your wife about.

Sir Jaspar: heh, he, he, 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 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 what do you take ill, if he has done nothing?

Lady Fidget: Why, the unmannerly toad 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 and locks the door, followed by Horner to the door.*)

Horner: (*Apart to Lady Fidget.*) Lock the door Madam. (*Aloud*) So, she has got into my chamber and locked me out. Oh, the impertinency of woman-kind!

Sir Jaspar: (*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. (*Aloud*) Heh, he, he, poor Horner.

Horner: Oh women, more impertinent, more cunning and more mischievous than their Monkeys, and to me almost as ugly---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 Jaspar: Hah, ha, ha, poor angry Horner.

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

(*Exit Horner at the other door.*)

Sir Jaspar: (*Sir Jaspar calls through the door to his Wife, she answers from within.*) Wife, my Lady Fidget, Wife, he is coming into you the back way.

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 yourself, let him if he can.

Quack: (*Behind screen*) This indeed, I could not have believed from him, nor any but my own eyes.

(*Enter Servant leading Mistress Squeamish. Exit Servant*)

Squeamish: Where's this Woman-hater, this Toad, this ugly, greasy, dirty Sloven? Where is the odious Beast?

Sir Jaspar: He's within in his chamber with my Wife. She's playing the wag with him.

Squeamish: Is she so? He's a clownish beast, he'll give her no quarter, he'll play the wag with her again, let me tell you. Come, let's go help her---What, the door's locked?

Sir Jaspar: Ay, my Wife locked it.

Squeamish: Did she so, let us break it open then!

Sir Jaspar: No, no, he'll do her no hurt.

Squeamish: No---(*Exit Squeamish at another door.*) But is there no other way to get into them? Whither goes this? I will disturb them.

(*Enter Servant leading old Lady Squeamish. Exit Servant*)

Old L. Squeamish: Where is this Harlotry, this Impudent Baggage, this rambling Tomrigg? O Sir Jaspar, I'm glad to see you here. Did you not see my vild Grandchild come in hither just now?

Sir Jaspar: Yes.

Old L. Squeamish: Ay, but where is she then? Where is she? Lord, Sir Jaspar I have rattled myself to pieces in pursuit of her, but can you tell what she makes here? They say below no woman lodges here.

Sir Jaspar: No, nor no man neither. This is Mr. Horner's Lodging.

Old L. Squeamish: Is it so are you sure?

Sir Jaspar: Yes, yes.

Old L. Squeamish: So then there's no hurt in it, I hope. But where is he?

Sir Jaspar: He's in the next room with my Wife.

Old L. Squeamish: Nay if you trust him with your wife, I may with my Bidy. They say he's a merry harmless man now.

(Enter Mrs. Squeamish)

Squeamish: I can't find them---Oh are you here, Grandmother? I followed my Lady Fidget hither. '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 prettiest piece of China, my Dear.

Horner: Nay, she has been too hard for me, do what I could.

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 honor I have none left now.

Squeamish: Nay, 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 do you 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, but I will have a Roll-wagon for you too, another time.

Old L. Squeamish: Poor Mr. Horner, he has enough to do to please you all, I see.

Horner: Ay Madam, you see how they use me.

Old L. Squeamish: Poor Gentleman, I pity you.

Horner: I thank you Madam, I could never find pity but from such reverend Ladies as you are. The young ones will never spare a man.

Squeamish: Come 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, Madam, you see.

Squeamish: Come Sloven, I'll lead you to be sure of you. *(Pulls him by the Cravat.)*

Old L. Squeamish: Alas, poor man, how she tugs him. Kiss, kiss her. That's the way to make such nice women quiet.

Horner: No Madam, they know I dare suffer any thing rather than do it.

Old L. Squeamish: Prithee, kiss her and I'll give you her Picture that you admired so last night.

Horner: Well, nothing but that could bribe me. I love a woman only in Effigy. I'll do it. *(Kisses Mrs. Squeam.)*

Squeamish: Foh, you filthy Toad, nay now I've done jesting.

Old L. Squeamish: Ha, ha, ha, I told you so.

Squeamish: Foh a kiss of his---

Sir Jaspar: Has no more hurt in it than one of my Spaniels.

Quack: *(Behind screen)* I will now believe anything he tells me.

(Enter Servant leading Mr. Pinchwife. Exit Servant)

Lady Fidget: O Lord here's a man, Sir JaSpar. Let's be gone.

Squeamish: Oh, Grandmother, let us be gone. I know not how he may censure us.

Lady Fidget: Found in the lodging of anything like a man, away.

(Exeunt Sir Jaspar, Lady Fidget, Old L. Squeamish, Mrs. Squeamish.)

Quack: *(Behind screen)* What's here, another Cuckold? He looks like one.

Horner: Well, what brings my dear friend hither?

Pinchwife: Your impertinency.

Horner: My impertinency? Why you Gentlemen that have got handsome Wives think you have a privilege of saying anything to your friends, and are as brutish as if you were our Creditors.

Pinchwife: No Sir, I'll never trust you any way.

Horner: Haven't I been always thy friend honest Jack, always ready to serve thee in love or battle?

Pinchwife: I believe so you would be my second now, indeed.

Horner: Well, then dear Jack, why so unkind, so grum, so strange to me? Come, prithee, kiss me dear Rogue.

Pinchwife: What you would send a kiss to my Wife, is that it?

Horner: So there 'tis---a man can't show his friendship to a married man.

Pinchwife: You ought to be kind and civil to me, since I am so kind as to bring you this. Look you there Sir. (*Delivers him a Letter*)

Horner: What is it?

Pinchwife: Only a Love Letter, Sir.

Horner: From whom---(*Reads*) How, this is from your Wife---hum---and hum---(*Aside*) Ha, is this a trick of his or hers? (*Aloud.*) But what should this mean? (*Aside*) 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.

Pinchwife: Come, never wonder at it so much.

Horner: Faith, I can't help it.

Pinchwife: I must tell you, Sir, my honor will suffer no jesting.

Horner: What do you mean?

Pinchwife: Does the Letter want a Comment? Then know, Sir, 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.

Pinchwife: I will not be a Cuckold, I say. There will be danger in making me a Cuckold.

Horner: Why, wert thou not well cured of thy last clap?

Pinchwife: I wear a Sword.

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

Pinchwife: As mad as I am, as she confesses in her Letter, both she and I say you have mistaken your woman as you have done your man.

Horner: (*Aside*) I understand something now. (*Aloud*) Was that thy Wife? Faith, my freedom with her was your fault, not mine. Fie, I'd never do it to a woman before her husband's face, sure. Well, I must be contented with what she writes.

Pinchwife: I'll assure you 'twas voluntarily writ. I had no hand in it, you may believe me.

Horner: I do believe thee, faith.

Pinchwife: And believe her too. 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 it.

Pinchwife: Well, then fare you well, and play with any man's honor but mine, kiss any man's wife but mine, and welcome---

(*Exit Mr. Pinch.*)

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---(*Reads the Letter*) hum---for--- dear---love you---

Horner: I wonder how she could contrive it! What say thou to it?

Quack: I will henceforth believe it not impossible for you to Cuckold the Grand Signior amidst his Guards of Eunuchs.

(Enter Sparkish pulling in Mr. Pinchwife. Quack hides behind screen again.)

Sparkish: Come back, you are a pretty Brother-in-law, neither go to Church nor to dinner with your Sister Bride.

Pinchwife: My Sister denies her marriage, and you see is gone away from you dissatisfied.

Sparkish: Pshaw, upon a foolish scruple that our Parson was not in lawful Orders and did not say all the Common Prayer. But 'tis her modesty only, I believe. In the meantime, Harry Horner, you must dine with me. I keep my wedding at my Aunt's in the Piazza.

Horner: Thy wedding? What stale Maid has lived to despair of a husband?

Sparkish: O your Servant Sir---this Gentleman's Sister, then. No stale Maid.

Horner: I'm sorry for it.

Pinchwife: *(Aside)* How comes he so concerned for her.

Sparkish: You sorry for it? Why, do you know any ill by her?

Horner: No, I know none but by thee. 'Tis for her sake, not yours, and another man that might have hoped, I thought.

Sparkish: Another Man, another man, what is his Name?

Horner: Nay since 'tis past, he shall be nameless.

Pinchwife: *(Aside)* He seems to be much troubled at the match.

Sparkish: Prithee tell me---nay you shan't go Brother.

Pinchwife: I must of necessity, but I'll come to you to dinner.

(Exit Pinchwife.)

Horner: But who dines with thee?

Sparkish: My Friends and Relations, my Brother Pinchwife.

Horner: And his Wife.

Sparkish: No gad, he'll never let her come amongst us good fellows. Your stingy country Coxcomb keeps his wife from his friends as he does his little Firkin of Ale for his own drinking. Ha, ha, ha, gad, I am witty, I think, considering I was married today, by the world, but come---

Horner: No, I will not dine with you unless you can fetch her too.

Sparkish: Pshaw, what pleasure can thou have with women now, Harry?

Horner: My eyes are not gone, I love a good prospect yet and will not dine with you unless she does too. Go fetch her therefore, but do not tell her husband. 'Tis for my sake.

Sparkish: Well I'll go try what I can do. In the meantime, come away to my Aunt's lodging. 'Tis in the way to Pinchwife's. *(Exit)*

Horner: The poor woman has called for aid and stretched forth her hand, Doctor. I cannot but help her over the Pale out of the Briars.

(Exeunt Sparkish, Horner, Quack.)

ACT IV
SCENE 4

(Pinchwife's Lodging)
(Later that afternoon)

(Mrs. Pinchwife revealed alone leaning on her elbow. A Table, Pen, Ink, and Paper)

Mrs. Pinchwife: Well 'tis even so, I have got the London disease they call Love. I am sick of my Husband and for my Gallant. I have heard this distemper called a Fever, 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, and as in other Fevers, my own Chamber is tedious to me and I would fain be removed to his, and then methinks I should 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, because I have studied it like anything. O Sick, Sick! *(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.)

Pinchwife: What, writing more Letters?

Mrs. Pinchwife: O Lord, Bud, why do you fright me so? *(She offers to run out: he stops her, and reads)*

Pinchwife: How's this! Nay, you shall not stir Madam. (*Reads*) "Dear, Dear, dear, Mr. Horner." Very well, I have taught you to write Letters to good purpose. But let's see it. "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 loved me so extremely, which if you do, you will never suffer me to lie in the arms of another man whom I loathe, 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 tomorrow, or else, alas, I shall be forever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our . . ." What is to follow? Speak! What? "our Journey into . . ." the Country I suppose! Oh, Woman, damned Woman, and Love, damned Love! But make an end of your Letter, and then I'll make an end of you thus, and all my plagues together. (*Draws his Sword.*)

Mrs. Pinchwife: O Lord, O Lord you are such a Passionate Man, Bud.

(*Enter Lucy leading Sparkish. Exit Lucy*)

Sparkish: How now, what's here to do?

Pinchwife: This Fool here now!

Sparkish: What drawn upon your Wife? You should never do that but at night in the dark when you can't hurt her. This is my Sister-in-Law, is it not? Ay faith our Country Margery, one may know her. Come, she and you must go dine with me. Dinner's ready, come. But where's my Wife? Where is she?

Pinchwife: Making you a Cuckold, 'tis that they all do as soon as they can.

Sparkish: What, the Wedding day? No, a Wife that designs to make a Cully of her Husband will be sure to let him win the first stake of love, by the world. But come, they stay dinner for us, come I'll lead down our Margery.

Pinchwife: No I'll lead her my way. What, would you treat your friends with mine, for want of your own Wife? (*Leads her to the other door and locks her in and returns.*)

Sparkish: Lord, how shy you are of your Wife. But let me tell you, Brother, Cuckolding, like the small Pox, comes with a fear, and you may keep your Wife as much as you will out of danger of infection, but if her constitution incline her to it, she'll have it sooner or later by the world.

Pinchwife: (*Aside*) What a thing is a Cuckold that every fool can make him ridiculous. (*Aloud*) Well Sir, but let me advise you not to neglect the means to prevent it, for---

Howsoever the kind Wife's Belly comes to swell,
The Husband breeds for her, and first is ill.

ACT V
SCENE 1
(Pinchwife's Lodging)
(That evening)

(Enter Mr. Pinchwife and Mrs. Pinchwife, a Table and a lit Candle)

Pinchwife: Come take the Pen and make an end of the Letter just as you intended. If you are false in a tittle, I shall soon perceive it and punish you with this as you deserve. *(Lays his hand on his Sword.)* Write what was to follow---let's see---*(Reads)* "You must make haste and help me away before tomorrow, or else I shall be forever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our . . ." What follows "our?"

Mrs. Pinchwife: Must all out then Budd? Look you there then. *(Mrs. Pinchwife takes the Pen and writes.)*

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 it? I am stunned! My head turns round, speak!

Mrs. Pinchwife: She'll be angry with me, but I had rather she should be angry with me than you Bud. And to tell you the truth, 'twas she made me write the Letter and taught me what I should write.

Pinchwife: Ha---I thought the style was somewhat better, but how could she come to you to teach you, since I had locked you up alone?

Mrs. Pinchwife: O, through the keyhole, Bud.

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Why, she said because---

Pinchwife: Because what---because?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Because lest Mr. Horner should be cruel and refuse her, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Pinchwife: How's this? Ha! *(Aside)* This changeling could not invent this lie, but why should she? Now I think on it, Horner said he was sorry she had married Sparkish, and her disowning

her marriage to me makes me think she has evaded it for Horner's sake. (*Aloud*) But hark you Madam, your Sister went out in the morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Alack a day, she has been crying all day above, it seems, in a corner.

Pinchwife: Where is she? Let me speak with her.

Mrs. Pinchwife: (*Aside*) O Lord then he'll discover all. (*Aloud*) Pray hold Budd, do you mean to discover me? She'll know I have told you then. Pray, Budd, let me talk with her first . . .

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

Mrs. 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.

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Yes, yes Budd---

Pinchwife: Let me 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, what lie I shall tell next, for I am at my wits' end.

(*Exit Mrs. Pinchwife*)

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

(*Mrs. Pinchwife returns*)

Mrs. Pinchwife: O Lord Budd, I told you what anger you would make me with my Sister.

Pinchwife: Won't she come hither?

Mrs. Pinchwife: No no, alack a day, she's ashamed to look you in the face, and she says if you go in to her, she'll run away downstairs and shamefully go herself to Mr. Horner, who has promised her marriage she says, and she will have no other, so she won't.

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! (*Exit Mrs. Pinchwife.*) His estate is equal to Sparkish's and his extraction as much better than his, but my chief reason is I'd rather be of kin to him by the name of Brother-in-law than

that of Cuckold. (*Enter Mrs. Pinchwife.*) Well what says she now?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Why, she says she would only have you lead her to Horner's 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 question her, she'll come out to you immediately.

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

Mrs. Pinchwife: Oh I forgot. Besides, she says, she cannot look you in the face through a mask, therefore would desire you to put out the Candle.

Pinchwife: I agree to all. Let her make haste. (*Mrs. Pinchwife puts out the Candle and exits*) 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. I expected no other from her free education, as she calls it, and her passion for the Town. Well, Wife and Sister are names which make us expect Love and duty, pleasure and comfort, but we find them plagues and torments and are equally troublesome to their keeper, for we have as much ado to get people to lie with our Sisters as to keep them from lying with our Wives. (*Enter Mrs. Pinchwife Masked and in Hoods and Scarves and a nightgown and Petticoat of Alithea's 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?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Here Budd.

Pinchwife: Come hither, that I may lock you up. Get you in. (*Locks the door.*) Come Sister where are you now? (*Mrs. Pinchwife: gives him her hand, but when he lets her go, she steals softly on the other side of him and is led away by him for his Sister Alithea*)

ACT V SCENE 2

(*Horner's Lodging.*)

(*Later that evening*)

(*Quack and Horner revealed*)

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: But what becomes of that intrigue with Pinchwife's Wife? Did she not send you a Letter by him?

Horner: Yes, but that's a riddle I have not yet solved. What, here's the man we are talking of, I think.

(Enter Servant leading Mr. Pinchwife, leading in his Wife Masked, Muffled and in her Sister's Gown. Exit Servant.)

Horner: What means this?

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: I know thou art an honest fellow and hast a great acquaintance among the Ladies. Make her show, man. Art thou sure I don't know her?

Pinchwife: I am sure you do know her.

Horner: A Pox, why dost thou bring her to me then?

Pinchwife: Because she's a Relation of mine.

Horner: Is she, man? Then thou art still more civil and obliging, dear Rogue.

Pinchwife: You'll make her welcome for my sake, I hope.

Horner: I hope she is handsome enough to make herself welcome.

Pinchwife: Do you speak to her. She would never be ruled by me.

Horner: Madam—*(Mrs. Pinchwife: whispers to Horner)* She says she must speak with me in private. Withdraw, prithee.

Pinchwife: *(Aside)* She's unwilling it seems I should know all her undecent conduct in this business. *(Aloud)* 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: 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.)*

Pinchwife: In the meantime I'll fetch a Parson and find out Sparkish and disabuse him. You would have me fetch a Parson, would you not? *(Aside)* Well then, now I think I am rid of her and shall have no more trouble with her.

(Exit Pinchwife: Enter Servant)

Servant: Sir Jaspar Fidget, Sir, is coming up.

Horner: 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 Mrs. Pinchwife. Enter Sir Jaspar. Exit servant).

Sir Jaspar: My best and dearest Friend.

Horner: *(Aside to Quack)* The old style, Doctor. Well, be short for I am busy. What would your impertinent Wife have now?

Sir Jaspar: Well guessed in faith, for I do come from her.

Horner: To invite me to supper. Tell her I can't come, go.

Sir Jaspar: Nay, my Lady and the whole knot of the virtuous gang, as they call themselves, are resolved upon a frolic of coming to you tonight.

Horner: I shan't be at home.

Sir Jaspar: Lord, how churlish he is to women. Nay, prithee don't disappoint them. They'll think 'tis my fault, prithee don't. But make no noise on it, for the poor virtuous Rogues would not have it known for the world that they come to no man's Ball but yours.

Horner: Well, well, get you gone and tell them if they come, 'twill be at the peril of their honor and yours.

Sir Jaspar: 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.

(Horner and Quack exit.)

ACT V
SCENE 3

(An exterior setting)
(Later that evening)

(Enter 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.

Pinchwife: You are a frank person, and so is she, you see there.

Sparkish: Nay, if this be her hand, for I never saw it.

Pinchwife: 'Tis no matter whether that be her hand or no. I am sure this hand at her desire led her to Mr. Horner, with whom I left her just now to go fetch a Parson to them to deprive you of her forever, for it seems yours was but a mock marriage.

Sparkish: Indeed she would 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.

Pinchwife: O there 'tis out and you were deceived, not she. 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, Sirens, Harpies, and other heathenish names as a Poet would do a Mistress who had refused to hear his suit. But stay, is not that she following a Torch at the other end of the Piazza, and from Horner's? Certainly---'tis so--- *(Enter Alithea and Lucy behind with a Torch)* You are well met, Madam. 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.

Alithea: How's this?

Lucy: *(Aside)* So 'twill work I see---

Sparkish: Could you find out no easy Country Fool to abuse? None but me, a Gentleman of wit and pleasure? But it was your pride to be too hard for a man of parts, unworthy false woman! False as dice who undo those that trust all they have to them.

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

Sparkish: Have you the confidence 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 suspect him for my Rival?

Lucy: (*Aside*) Do you 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 showed it me just now and told me likewise he left you at Horner's 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 myself more joy for not marrying you.

Alithea: (*Aside*) I see this Gentleman can be made jealous. (*Aloud*) 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: I suppose that was a contrivance too of Mr. Horner's and yours to make Harcourt play the Parson. 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. 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. There's for you, and so your Servant.

(*Exit Spar.*)

Alithea: How was I deceived 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 and Mr. Harcourt for my Husband. Away, impertinent!

Lucy: Yes, Madam. (*Aside*) And here I hope we shall find Mr. Harcourt---

(*Exeunt Alithea, Lucy.*)

ACT V
SCENE 4

(*Horner's Lodging*)
(*Later that night*)

(*Horner, Lady Fidget, Mrs. Dainty Fidget, Mrs. Squeamish revealed, a Table, Banquet, and Bottles. Ladies singing "Three Blind Mice."*)

Horner: (*Aside*) A Pox they are come too soon---before I have sent back my new Mistress.

Lady Fidget: That we may be sure of our welcome, we have brought our entertainment with us and are resolved to treat thee, dear Toad.

Dainty: And that we may be merry, have left Sir Jaspar and my old Lady Squeamish quarrelling at home.

Squeamish: Therefore let us make use of our time, lest they should chance to interrupt us.

Horner: First that you may be private, let me lock this door, and I'll wait upon you presently.

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

Dainty and Squeamish: Agreed.

Squeamish: Lovely Brimmer, let me enjoy him first.

Lady Fidget: I never part with a Gallant till I've tried him. Dear Brimmer, that makest our Husbands short-sighted.

Dainty: And our bashful gallants bold.

Squeamish: 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: The filthy Toads choose Mistresses now as they do Stuffs, for having been fancied and worn by others.

Lady Fidget: Whilst women of quality, like the richest Stuffs, lie untumbled and unasked for. Let me tell you, Sir, there is nowhere more freedom than in our houses, and we take freedom from a young person as a sign of good breeding. And a person may be as free as he pleases with us, as frolick, 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. A tame man, foh.

Horner: I know not, but your Reputations frightened me as much as your Faces invited me.

Lady Fidget: Our Reputation, Lord! 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.

Squeamish: And that Demureness, Coyness, and Modesty, that you see in our Faces in the Boxes at Plays is as much a sign of a kind woman as a Vizard-mask in the Pit.

Dainty: For I assure you, women are least masked when they have the Velvet Vizard on.

Lady Fidget: You would have found us modest women in our denials only.

Horner: I beg your pardon, Ladies, I was deceived in you devilishly. But why that mighty pretence to Honor?

Lady Fidget: We have told you. '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 never give a Friend a wink then?

Lady Fidget: Faith, your Reputation frightened us as much as ours did you, you were so notoriously lewd.

Horner: And you so seemingly honest.

Lady Fidget: Was that all that deterred you?

Horner: And so expensive. I was afraid of losing my money as well as my time, both which my other pleasures required.

Lady Fidget: Money, foh---you talk like a little fellow now. Do such as we expect money?

Dainty: Such as we make sale of our hearts?

Squeamish: We, bribed for our Love? Foh.

Horner: With your pardon, Ladies, we must let you win at Cards or we lose your hearts. And if you make an assignation, 'tis at a Goldsmiths, Jewelers or China house.

Dainty: Would you not have us assured of our Gallant's Love?

Squeamish: For Love is better known by Liberality than by Jealousy.

Lady Fidget: 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*).

Squeamish: How!

Squeamish: (*Aside to Horner*) Did you not tell me, 'twas for my sake only you reported yourself no man?

Dainty: (*Aside to Horner*) Oh Wretch! did you not swear to me, 'twas for my Love and Honor you passed for that thing you do?

Horner: So, so.

Lady Fidget: Ladies, this is my false Villain.

Squeamish: And mine too.

Dainty: And mine.

Horn. Well then, you are all three my false Rogues too, and there's an end on it.

Lady Fidget: Well then, there's no remedy, Sister Sharers. Let us not fall out, but have a care of our Honor.

Horner: Come, faith Madam, let us pardon one another, for all the difference I find betwixt we men and you women, we forswear ourselves at the beginning of an Amour, you, as long as it lasts.

(*Enter Servant leading Sir Jaspar Fidget, and old Lady Squeamish. Exit Servant*)

Sir Jaspar: Oh my Lady Fidget, was this your cunning to come to Mr. Horner without me? But you have been nowhere else I hope?

Lady Fidget: No, Sir Jaspar.

Old L. Squeamish: And you came straight hither Biddy?

Squeamish: Yes indeed, Lady Grandmother.

Sir Jaspar: 'Tis well, 'tis well. I knew when once they were thoroughly acquainted with poor Horner, they'd never be from him, and I warrant her Reputation safe.

(*Enter Servant*).

Servant: O Sir, here's the Gentleman come whom you bid me not suffer to come up without giving you notice, with a Lady and other Gentlemen.

Horner: Do you all go in there, while I send them away, and, Boy, do you desire them to stay below 'til I come, which shall be immediately.

(*Exeunt Sir Jaspar, Lady Fidget, Old Lady Squeamish, Mistress Dainty, Squeamish.*)

Servant: Yes Sir.

[Exit Servant. Exit Horner at the other door and returns with Mistress Pinchwife.]

Horner: Pray, my Dearest, be persuaded to go home and leave the rest to my management. I'll let you down the back way.

Mrs. Pinchwife: I don't know the way home, so I don't.

Horner: My man shall wait upon you.

Mrs. Pinchwife: 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.

Mrs. Pinchwife: What care I? 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.

Mrs. Pinchwife: O would you make me believe that? Don't I see every day at London here, women leave their first Husband 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: In again, in, I hear them. *(Places Mistress Pinchwife behind the screen).* Well, a silly Mistress betrays her Husband first to her Gallant and then her Gallant to her Husband.

(Enter Pinchwife, Alithea, Harcourt, Sparkish, Lucy)

Pinchwife: Come, Madam, 'tis not 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.

Alithea: Pray, speak Sir.

Pinchwife: What, you are studying an evasion or excuse for her? She bids you speak.

Alithea: Ay, pray Sir, do, pray satisfy him.

Horner: Then truly, you did bring that Lady to me just now.

Pinchwife: O ho---

Alithea: How, Sir?

Harcourt: How, Horner!

Alithea: What mean you, Sir? I always took you for a man of Honor?

Sparkish: So if I had had her, she'd have made me believe the Moon had been made of a Christmas pie.

Lucy: (*Aside*) Now could I speak, if I durst, and solve the Riddle, who am the Author of it.

Alithea: 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 without being jealous. I will not only believe your innocence myself, but make all the world believe it. Horner, I must now be concerned for this Lady's Honor.

Horner: And I must be concerned for a Lady's Honor, too.

Harcourt: I understand you not

Horner: I would not have you.

Mrs. Pinchwife: What's the matter with them all? (*Mistress Pinchwife peeping from behind the screen.*)

Pinchwife: Come, come, Mr. Horner, no more disputing. I have a Parson below. I brought him not in vain.

Harcourt: No Sir. I'll employ him, if this Lady please.

Pinchwife: How, what do you mean?

Spark: Ay, what does he mean?

Horner: Why, I have resigned your Sister to him. He has my consent.

Pinchwife: But he has not mine Sir! A woman's injured Honor can be repaired or satisfied by any but him that first wronged it. And you shall marry her presently, or . . . (*Lays his hand on his Sword. Enter to them Mistress Pinchwife.*)

Mistress Pinchwife: (*Aside*) O Lord, they'll kill poor Mr. Horner. Besides he shall not marry her while I stand by and look on. I'll not lose my second Husband so. (*She comes out to them.*)

Pinchwife: What do I see?

Alithea: My Sister in my clothes!

Spark: Ha!

Mrs. Pinchwife: Nay, pray now don't quarrel about finding work for the Parson. (*To Mr. Pinchwife.*) He shall marry me to Mr. Horner, for now I believe you have enough of me. 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.*)

Pinchwife: I will never hear woman again, but make them all silent thus. (*Offers to draw upon his Wife.*)

Horner: No, that must not be.

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, Old Lady Squeamish, Mrs. Dainty Fidget, Mrs. Squeamish.*)

Sir Jaspar: What's the matter, what's the matter, pray what's the matter Sir? I beseech you communicate, Sir.

Pinchwife: Why, my Wife has communicated Sir, as your Wife may have done too, Sir, if she knows him, Sir.

Sir Jaspar: Pshaw, with him, ha, ha, he.

Pinchwife: Do you mock me, Sir? A Cuckold is a kind of a wild Beast. Have a care, Sir.

Sir Jaspar: No, sure you mock me, Sir. He cuckold you! It can't be, ha, ha, he, why, I'll tell you Sir. (*Offers to whisper.*)

Pinchwife: I tell you again, he has whored 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 Jaspar: How does he dissemble? Is he a Hypocrite? Nay, then---how---Wife---Sister is he a Hypocrite?

Old L. Squeamish: A Hypocrite, a dissembler? Speak young Harlotry, speak how?

Sir Jaspar: Speak good Horner, art thou a dissembler, a Rogue? Hast thou . . .

Horner: Soh---

Lucy: (*Aside to Horner*) I'll fetch you off and her too, if she will but hold her tongue.

Horner: (*Aside to Lucy*) Canst thou? I'll give thee . . .

Lucy (to Mr. Pin.) 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 break off the match between Mr. Sparkish and her to make way for Mr. Harcourt.

Sparkish: Did you so, eternal Rotten-tooth? Then it seems my Mistress was not false to me. I was only deceived by you, brother that should have been. Now, man, 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 . . .

Mrs. 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 nobody 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 Mrs. Pin.*) Peace, Dear Idiot.

(*Enter Dorilant, Quack.*)

Dorilant: Horner, your Servant, I am the Doctor's Guest. He must excuse our intrusion.

Quack: But what's the matter, Gentlemen, for Heaven's 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 suffered with me. Therefore pray satisfy these worthy, honorable, jealous Gentlemen (*Whispers.*) that . . .

Quack: O I understand you. Is that all? Sir Jasper, by heavens and upon the word of a Physician (*Whispers to Sir Jasper.*) Sir, . . .

Sir Jaspar: Nay, I do believe you truly. Pardon me, my virtuous Lady and dear of honor.

Old L. Squeamish: What, then all's right again?

Sir Jaspar: Ay, ay, and now let us satisfy him too. (*They whisper with Mr. Pinch.*)

Pinchwife: A Eunuch! Pray, no fooling with me.

Quack: I'll bring half the Chirurgions in Town to swear it.

Pinchwife: They---they'll swear a man that bled to death through his wounds died of an Apoplexy.

Quack: Pray, hear me, Sir. Why, all the Town has heard the report of him.

Pinchwife: But does all the Town believe it?

Quack: Pray inquire a little, and first of all these.

Pinchwife: I'm sure when I left the Town he was the lewdest fellow in it.

Quack: I tell you, Sir, he has been in France since. Pray ask your friend, Mr. Dorilant. Gentlemen and Ladies, haven't you all heard the late sad report of poor Mr. Horner?

All Ladies: Ay, ay, ay.

Dorilant: Why, thou jealous Fool dost thou doubt it? He's an errant French Capon.

Mrs. Pinchwife: 'Tis false Sir, you shall not disparage poor Mr. Horner, for to my certain knowledge--

Lucy: O hold---

Squeamish: (*Aside to Lucy.*) Stop her mouth---

Dainty: Do you think we would have been seen in his company---

Squeamish: Trust our unspotted reputations with him!

Pinchwife: 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. There's doctrine for all Husbands, Mr. Harcourt.

Harcourt: I am impatient till I am one.

Dorilant: And I by example will never be one.

Sparkish: And because I will not disparage my parts, I'll never be one.

Horner: And I, alas, can't be one.

Pinchwife: But I must be one, against my will, to a Country Wife.

Mrs. Pinchwife: (*Aside*) And I must be a Country Wife still, 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 am the only man by her now exposed to shame, which I will straight drown in Wine, as you shall your suspicion. And the Ladies' troubles we'll divert with a dance.

Lucy: Indeed she's Innocent, Sir. I am her witness and her 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 Husbands jealousy, was it not Madam? Speak.

Mrs. Pinchwife: (*Aside to Lucy and Horner*) Since you'll have me tell more lies. (*Aloud*) Yes indeed Budd.

Pinchwife: For my own sake fain I would all believe.
Cuckolds like Lovers should themselves deceive.
But His honor is least safe, (too late I find)
Who trusts it with a foolish Wife or Friend.

(*A Dance of Cuckolds.*)

EPILOGUE (*spoken by Lady Fidget*)

Now you the Vigorous, who daily here
Over Vizard-Mask in public domineer,
Nay have the confidence to cry come out,
Yet when she says lead on, you are not stout;
In fine, you Essensed Boys, both Old and Young,
Who would be thought so eager, brisk, and strong,
Yet do the Ladies, not their Husbands, wrong:
Whose Purses for your manhood make excuse,
And keep your Flanders Mares for show, not use;
But Gallants have a care, faith, what you do.
The World, which to no man his due will give,

You by experience know you can deceive,
And men may still believe you Vigorous,
But then we Women,---there's no cozening us.

FINIS.