

The Tübingen Text

of

Love for Love

by

William Congreve

Adapted by David Hegarty

This version is based on the Project Gutenberg Etext of Love for Love by William Congreve (lv4lv10.txt), which was prepared from the 1895 Methuen and Co edition by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk.

Much help was sought and found from the annotations in the second New Mermaid edition and the OED. The purpose of the exercise was to remove the need for footnotes in performance and modernise the language for an audience that is for the most part not comprised of native speakers with an intimate knowledge of 17th century London...

Love for Love

A Comedy

*Nudus agris, nudus nummis paternis,
Insanire parat certa ratione modoque.*

- HOR.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

MEN (9).

SIR SAMPSON LEGEND, father to Valentine and Ben.

VALENTINE, who has fallen into his father's displeasure due to his expensive way of living; in love with Angelica.

SCANDAL, his friend, a free speaker.

TATTLE, a half-witted beau, vain of his amours, yet valuing himself for secrecy.

BEN, Sir Sampson's younger son, half home-bred and half sea-bred, designed to marry Miss Prue.

FORESIGHT, an illiterate old fellow, peevish and positive, superstitious, and pretending to understand astrology, palmistry, physiognomy, omens, dreams, etc; uncle to Angelica.

JEREMY, servant to Valentine.

TRAPLAND, a loan-shark.

BUCKRAM, a lawyer.

WOMEN (6).

ANGELICA, niece to Foresight, of a considerable fortune in her own hands.

MRS FORESIGHT, second wife to Foresight.

MRS FRAIL, sister to Mrs Foresight, a woman of the town.

MISS PRUE, daughter to Foresight by a former wife, a silly, awkward country girl.

NURSE to MISS.

JENNY.

A STEWARD, OFFICER, SERVANT.

Musicians, Singers, Dancers, Sailors.

The Scene in London.

	Act I						Act II						Act III						
	Sc. 1	Sc. 2	Sc. 3	Sc. 4	Sc. 5	Sc. 6	Sc. 1	Sc. 2	Sc. 3	Sc. 4	Sc. 5	Sc. 6	Sc. 1	Sc. 2	Sc. 3	Sc. 4	Sc. 5	Sc. 6	Sc. 7
Sir Sampson																			
Valentine																			
Scandal																			
Tattle																			
Ben																			
Foresight																			
Jeremy																			
Trapland																			
Buckram																			
Angelica																			
Mrs Foresight																			
Mrs Frail																			
Miss Prue																			
Nurse																			
Jenny																			
Steward																			
Officer																			
Servant																			
Music																			
	Valentine's						Foresight's						Foresight's						

	Act IV							Act V						
	Sc. 1	Sc. 2	Sc. 3	Sc. 4	Sc. 5	Sc. 6	Sc. 7	Sc. 1	Sc. 2	Sc. 3	Sc. 4	Sc. 5	Sc. 6	Sc. th.
Sir Sampson														
Valentine														
Scandal														
Tattle														
Ben														
Foresight														
Jeremy														
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Officer														
Servant														
Music														
	Valentine's							Foresight's						

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ACT I.

SCENE 1.

VALENTINE *in his chamber, reading. JEREMY waiting.*
Several books upon the table.

VAL. Jeremy.

JERE. Sir?

VAL. Take this away. I'll take a walk and digest what I have read.

JERE. [*Aside, and taking away the books.*] You'll grow devilish fat on this paper diet.

VAL. Take my advice, you could do with a bit of breakfast yourself. There's a page turned down in Epictetus that is a feast for an emperor.

JERE. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write recipes?

VAL. Read, read, my man, and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind and humble your flesh; read, and take your nourishment in through your eyes; shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding. That is what Epictetus advises.

JERE. O Lord! I heard lots about him, when I waited upon a gentleman at Cambridge. He has made a very fine feast, where there is nothing to be eaten?

VAL. Yes.

JERE. Sir, you're a gentleman, and probably understand this fine food: but if you please, I would rather have a basic wage. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? Or Diogenes, because he understands confinement, and lived in a tub, go to prison for you? Sir, what do you mean to do, to confine yourself up here with three or four musty books that recommend starving and poverty?

VAL. I have no money, as you well know; and therefore I have resolved to denounce all that have. And in that I but follow the examples of the wisest and wittiest men in all ages: these playwrights and philosophers whom you hate, for another reason; because they abound in sense, and you are a fool.

JERE. Ay, sir, I am a fool, I know it: and yet, heaven help me, I'm as poor as a wit. But I was always a fool when I told you where your expenses would get you; your coaches and your costumes; your treats and your balls; your being in love with a lady that did not care a farthing for you in your prosperity; and keeping company with wits that cared for nothing but your prosperity; and now, when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another.

VAL. Well, and now that I am poor I have an opportunity to be revenged on them all. I'll pursue Angelica with more love than ever, and appear even more her admirer because of this restriction, than when I openly rivalled the rich fops that courted her. This way my poverty will be a shame to her pride, and, perhaps, make her appreciate the love that has been responsible for reducing me to this lowness of fortune. And for the wits, I'm sure I am in a condition to be even with them.

JERE. Hah, your condition is pretty even with theirs, that's the truth of it.

VAL. I'll take some of their trade out of their hands.

JERE. Now heaven of mercy, continue the tax upon paper. You don't mean to write?

VAL. Yes, I do. I'll write a play.

JERE. Hem!
Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines – just to certify to those whom it may concern, that the bearer of it, Jeremy Fetch by name, has for the last seven years truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend, Esq., and that he has not now been turned away for any misdemeanour, but voluntarily dismisses his master from any future authority over him...

VAL. No, my man; you will live with me still.

JERE. Sir, that's impossible. I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works. But I do not intend to live the life of a playwrights man..
I no more intend it than to be canonised as a muse after my death.

VAL. You are witty, you rogue. I shall need your help.
You can learn how to make the couplets to tag the ends of acts. Do you hear?
Get the maids to play rhyming games in the evenings, and learn the knack of poetry from them: you may pick up a song from some unknown hand, or a coffeehouse satire.

JERE. But, sir, is this the way to recover your father's favour? Why, Sir Sampson will be irreconcilable. If your younger brother comes back from sea, he'd never look at you again.
You're undone, sir; you're ruined; you won't have a friend left in the world if you turn playwright.
It may be a very appetising thought, but I can't think of it without the spirit of famine appearing to me, sometimes like a decayed courier, worn out with pimping, and carrying love letters and songs: not like other couriers, for hire, but for the fun of it.

VAL. Very well, sir; can you proceed?

JERE. Or, in the form of a worn-out prostitute, with verses in her hand, which her vanity had preferred to money, without a decent coat to cover her, but as ragged as one of the muses; carrying her linen to the paper-mill, to be turned into paper for books to warn young maids not to prefer poetry to good sense, or to choose lying in the arms of a wealthy fool instead of the embraces of a poor wit.

SCENE 2.

VALENTINE, JEREMY
Enter SCANDAL.

SCAN. What, Jeremy holding forth?

VAL. The rogue has (with all the wit he could gather) been denouncing wit.

SCAN. Ay? Why, then, I'm afraid Jeremy has wit: for wherever it is, it's always contriving its own ruin.

JERE. Why, that is what I have been telling my master, sir: Mr Scandal, for heaven's sake, sir, try to dissuade him from becoming a playwright.

SCAN. Playwright! He shall turn soldier first, and rather depend upon the outside of his head than the lining.
Why, what the devil, has your poverty not made you enough enemies? Must you get more by showing off your wit?

JERE. Ay, more indeed: for who likes anybody that has more wit than himself?

SCAN. What Jeremy says is true. Don't you see that worthless great men and dull rich rogues avoid a witty man of small fortune?
Why, he looks like an investigation into their titles and estates, and seems made by heaven to seize the better half.

VAL. That is why I want to sound off in my writings, and be revenged.

SCAN. Rail? At whom? The whole world? Impotent and vain!
Who wants to die a martyr to sense in a country where folly is the religion?
You may defend yourself for a while; but when the full cry is against you, you will not have fair play for your life: If you can't be fairly run down by the hounds, you will be treacherously shot by the huntsmen.
No, turn pimp, flatterer, quack, lawyer, parson, be a chaplain to an atheist, or a stallion to an old woman, anything but a playwright.
A modern playwright is worse, more toadying, timorous, and fawning, than any of these disreputable occupations: unless you can retrieve the ancient honours of the name, recall the theatre of Athens, and be allowed the force of open honest satire.

VAL. You are as hardened against our playwrights as if your character had been exposed upon the stage recently. Nay, I am not violently bent upon the trade.

A knock at the door.

Jeremy, see who's there.

JERE. goes to the door.

But tell me what you would have me do?
What does everyone say of me, and my forced confinement?

SCAN. The world behaves itself as it is used to doing on such occasions; some pity you, and condemn your father; others excuse him, and blame you; only the ladies are merciful, and wish you well, since love and pleasurable expense have been your greatest faults.

JERE. returns.

VAL. What is it?

JERE. Nothing new, sir; I have despatched some half a dozen debt collectors with the skill of a hungry judge downing courses at dinner-time.

VAL. What answer did you give them?

SCAN. Patience, I suppose, the old receipt.

JERE. No, indeed, sir; I have put them off so long with patience and forbearance, and other fair words, that I was forced now to tell them in plain downright English...

VAL. What?

JERE. That they should be paid.

VAL. When?

JERE. Tomorrow.

VAL. And how the devil do you mean to keep your word?

JERE. Keep it? Not at all; it has been stretched so much that I reckon it will break on its own by tomorrow, and nobody will be surprised.

Knocking.

Again!

Sir, if you don't like my style of negotiation, would you rather answer these yourself?

VAL. See who it is.

Exit JEREMY

VAL. This, Scandal, shows you what it is like to be great; secretaries of state, presidents of the council, and generals of an army lead the same sort of life as I do; they have just such crowds of visitors in the morning, all laying claiming to old promises; though they are more civil debt collectors, that lay claim to voluntary debts.

SCAN. And having got them here, and promised more than you ever intended to fulfil, you, like a true great man, use more energy trying to evade them than you would need to find an honest way of keeping your word, and satisfying your creditors.

VAL. Scandal, go easy on your friends, and do not provoke your enemies.

Enter JEREMY.

JERE. Sir, there's Trapland the notary, with two suspicious fellows who look like bailiffs. And there's your father's steward, and the nurse with one of your children from Twickenham.

VAL. Pox on her, could she not find another time to fling my sins in my face? Here, give her this, [*gives money*] and tell her not to trouble me any more; a thoughtless hulking whore, she knows my condition well enough, and should have smothered the child a fortnight ago if he had any foresight.

SCAN. What, is it bouncing Margery, with my godson?

JERE. Yes, sir.

SCAN. My blessing to the boy, with this token [*gives money*] of my love. And do you hear, bid Margery put more stuffing in her bed, change twice a week, and not work so hard, so that she does not smell so strongly. I shall take the air shortly.

VAL. Scandal, don't spoil my boy's milk. Bid Trapland come in.

Exit JEREMY.

If I can give that hellhound a bribe, I shall have some peace for a day.

SCENE 3.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL
Enter TRAPLAND and JEREMY

VAL. Oh, Mr Trapland! My old friend! Welcome.
Jeremy, a chair quickly: a bottle of wine and a toast...quickly – a chair first.

TRAP. A good morning to you, Mr Valentine, and to you, Mr Scandal.

SCAN. Indeed it is a very good morning, if you don't spoil it.

VAL. Come, sit you down, you know what he is like.

TRAP. [*sits.*] There is a debt, Mr Valentine, of 1500 pounds of pretty long standing...

VAL. I cannot talk about business with a thirsty palate. Jeremy, the wine.

TRAP. And I desire to know what course you have taken for the payment?

VAL. Bless me, I am heartily glad to see you. My service to you. Fill, fill to honest Mr Trapland – fuller.

TRAP. No more: this will not help our business. My service to you, Mr Scandal. [*Drinks.*] I have forborne as long...

VAL. One more glass, and then we'll talk. Fill, Jeremy.

TRAP. No more, in truth. I have forborne, I say...

VAL. My man, fill when I bid you. And how is your handsome daughter? That she might get herself a good husband. [*Drinks.*]

TRAP. Thank you. I have been out of this money...

VAL. Drink first. Scandal, why don't you drink? [*They drink.*]

TRAP. And, in short, I can be put off no longer.

VAL. I was much obliged to you for your contribution. It was of great use to me in my time of need. But then you delight in doing good. Scandal, drink to my friend Trapland's health. There does not live an honest man, nor one who is more ready to look after his friend in distress: though I say it to his face. Come, let each man fill his glass.

SCAN. I know Trapland has been a whoremaster, and is still fond of a wench. And I never knew a whoremaster that was not an honest fellow.

TRAP. Excuse me, Mr Scandal, but you cannot be serious...

SCAN. I have never been more serious!
For example, I know the buxom black widow in Cheapside. 800 pounds a year jointure, and 20,000 pounds in money.
Aha! old Trap.

VAL. Is that so, indeed? Come, let us remember the widow. I can see what your getting at; come, to the widow...

TRAP. No more, please.

VAL. What? To the widow's health; give it to him — bottoms up. *[They drink.]*
A lovely girl, indeed, black sparkling eyes, soft pouting ruby lips! Better security there than a bond for a million, ha?

TRAP. No, no, there's no such thing; let us get down to our business. No more joking.

VAL. No, indeed, let us get down to the widow's business: fill again.
Pretty round heaving breasts, a luscious shape, and a swing of those hips would revive a hermit: and the prettiest foot! Oh, if a man could but fasten his eyes to her feet as they sneak in and out, and play at peek-a-boo under her petticoats, ah! Mr Trapland?

TRAP. Oh, give me a glass. You're a joker, — and here's to the widow. *[Drinks.]*

SCAN. He begins to chuckle; keep it going, or he'll relapse into being a debt collector.

Enter OFFICER.

OFF. Excuse me, gentlemen:
Mr Trapland, can you please tell us if there is anything here for us to do. We have half a dozen gentlemen to arrest in Pall Mall and Covent Garden; and if we aren't quick about it they will close up the coffee-houses for the day, and then we won't be able to do our job.

TRAP. Sorry, you are right: Mr Valentine, enough enjoyment, but business must be done. Are you ready to...

JERE. Sir, your father's steward says he is here to make proposals concerning your debts.

VAL. Ask him to come in:
Mr Trapland, send your officer away; you will have an answer now.

TRAP. Mr Snap, stay within call.

Exit OFFICER,

Enter STEWARD who whispers to VALENTINE.

SCAN. Have you no sense of respect, you traitor: return our wine.
Jeremy, fetch him some warm water, or I'll rip open his stomach, and take the shortest route to his conscience.

TRAP. Mr Scandal, you are uncivil; I did not ask for your wine; but you cannot expect it again when I have drunk it.

SCAN. And how do you expect to have your money again when a gentleman has spent it?

VAL. You need say no more, I understand the conditions; they are very hard, but my need is great: I agree to them. Take Mr Trapland with you, and let him draw up the contract.
Mr Trapland, you know this man: he shall satisfy you.

TRAP. Sincerely, I am reluctant to put you under pressure, but my necessity...

VAL. No apology, good Mr Money-shark, you will be paid.

TRAP. I hope you can forgive me; but my business requires...

Exit TRAPLAND, STEWARD, JEREMY

SCENE 4.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL.

SCAN. He begs pardon like a hangman at an execution.

VAL. But I have got a reprieve.

SCAN. I am surprised; has your father softened?

VAL. No; he has sent me the hardest conditions in the world. You have heard of that booby brother of mine that was sent to sea three years ago? This brother, my father hears, is back in the country; so he very affectionately proposes that if I will renounce all of my claims to his estate after his death, in favour of my younger brother, that he will immediately provide me with four thousand pounds to pay my debts and make my fortune. He proposed this once before, and I refused it; but the present impatience of my creditors for their money, and my own impatience at being confined here, and my absence from Angelica, force me to consent.

SCAN. A very desperate demonstration of your love for Angelica; and I don't think she has ever given you any assurance of hers.

VAL. You know what she is like; she never gave me any great reason either for hope or despair.

SCAN. Women like her seldom think before they act, so they rarely give us any clue to help us guess what they mean. But you can have little reason to believe that a woman of her age, who has been indifferent to when you were prosperous, will fall in love with you when you are poor; besides, Angelica has a great fortune of her own; and great fortunes either expect another great fortune, or a fool.

Enter JEREMY.

JERE. More misfortunes, sir.

VAL. What, another debt collector?

JERE. No, sir, but Mr Tattle is here to see you.

VAL. Well, there is little I can do about it, you will have to bring him up; he knows I don't go out.

Exit JEREMY.

SCAN. Pox, I'll be gone.

VAL. No, please stay: Tattle and you should never be apart; you are light and shadow, and show one another to perfection; he is your perfect opposite both in humour and understanding; and where you ruin reputations, he is a mender.

SCAN. A mender of reputations! Ay, like he is a keeper of secrets, another virtue that he also likes to pretend to. The rogue will speak aloud in the posture of a whisper, and deny knowing a woman's name while he describes the characteristics of her body. He will swear he never received a letter from her, and at the same time show you her handwriting in the address: or he has quite possibly forged the handwriting, and has not

been lying; but he hopes not to be believed, and denies receiving a lady's favour, like a Doctor says no to a Bishopric so that it may be granted to him. In short, he is public professor of secrecy, and proclaims that he holds private intelligence. — He's here.

SCENE 5.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL
Enter TATTLE.

- TATT. Valentine, good morning;
Scandal, I am yours: — that is, when you speak well of me.
- SCAN. That is, when I am yours; for while I am my own, or anybody's else, that will never happen.
- TATT. How inhuman!
- VAL. Why Tattle, don't concern yourself with anything that he says: for to talk with Scandal, is to play a losing game; you must lose a good name to him before you can win it for yourself.
- TATT. But how barbarous that is, and how unfortunate for him, that the world shall think the better of any person that he has slandered! I thank heaven, that it has always been a part of my character to handle the reputations of others very tenderly indeed.
- SCAN. Ay, such rotten reputations as you have to deal with are to be handled tenderly indeed.
- TATT. No, but why rotten? Why should you say rotten, when you don't know the persons of whom you speak? How cruel that is!
- SCAN. Not know them? Why, you never had anything to do with anybody who did not stink to all the town.
- TATT. Ha, ha, ha; now I know you must be joking. For nobody knows better than myself what I am truly like.
As I hope to be saved, Valentine, I never exposed a woman, since I knew what woman was.
- VAL. And yet you have 'known' several.

TATT. I have to admit, I have. I don't care if I admit that. But I must add (I'm going to be daring now) I would never meddle with a woman that had to do with anybody else.

SCAN. What?

VAL. Nay indeed, I tend to believe him.
Except her husband, Tattle.

TATT. Oh, that...

SCAN. What think you of that noble citizen, Mrs Drab?

TATT. Pooh, I know Madam Drab has claimed on three or four occasions, that I said this and that, and wrote to her, and I don't know what — but, upon my reputation, she did me wrong — well, well, that was malice — but I know what was behind it. She was bribed to do it by someone we all know — a man too. Only to bring me into disgrace with a certain woman of quality...

SCAN. Whom we all know.

TATT. Let's not go into that. Yes, yes, everybody knows. No doubt about it, everybody knows my secrets. But I soon satisfied the lady of my innocence; for I said to her: Madam, says I, there are some persons who make it their business to tell stories, and say this and that of one and the other, and everything in the world; and, says I, if your grace...

SCAN. Grace!

TATT. O Lord, what have I said? My cursed tongue!

VAL. Ha, ha, ha.

SCAN. Why, Tattle, you are cheekier than anyone would reasonably expect: I could get to like you, well, and, ha, ha, ha, well, go on, and what did you say to her grace?

VAL. I confess, this is extraordinary.

TATT. Don't repeat a word of this, as I hope to be saved; an errant slip of the tongue. Come, let's talk of something else.

VAL. Well, but how did you clear yourself?

TATT. Pooh, pooh, nothing at all; I was only joking with you — a woman of ordinary rank was a little jealous of me, and I told her something or other, I don't know what. — Let's talk of something else. [*Hums a song.*]

SCAN. Leave him alone, he wants us to enquire.

TATT. Valentine, I supped last night with your mistress, and her uncle, old Foresight: I think your father is staying at Foresight's.

VAL. Yes.

TATT. Upon my soul, Angelica's a fine woman. And so is Mrs Foresight, and her sister, Mrs Frail.

SCAN. Yes, Mrs Frail is a very fine woman, we all know her.

TATT. Oh, that is not fair.

SCAN. What?

TATT. To tell.

SCAN. To tell what? Why, what do you know of Mrs Frail?

TATT. Who, I? Upon my honour I wouldn't know whether she is a man or woman, were it not for the smoothness of her chin and roundness of her hips.

SCAN. No?

TATT. No.

SCAN. She says otherwise.

TATT. Impossible!

SCAN. Yes, indeed. Ask Valentine.

TATT. Why then, as I hope to be saved, I believe a woman only makes a man promise to secrecy so that she may have the pleasure of telling herself.

SCAN. No doubt about it. Well, but has she done you wrong, or no? You have had her? Ha?

TATT. Though I have more honour than to tell first, I have more manners than to contradict what a lady has declared.

SCAN. Well, you admit it?

TATT. I am strangely surprised! Yes, yes, I can't deny it if she accuses me of it.

SCAN. She'll be here soon enough, she sees Valentine every morning.

TATT. What?

VAL. She does me the favour, I mean, of a visit sometimes. I did not think she had granted any more to anyone else.

SCAN. Nor I, indeed. But Tattle would never misrepresent a lady; it is contrary to his character. How one can be wrong about a woman, Valentine?

TATT. Sorry, what do you mean, gentlemen?

SCAN. I will have to ask her.

TATT. O barbarous! Why, didn't you tell me?

SCAN. No, you told us.

TATT. But you told me to ask Valentine?

VAL. What did I say? I hope you won't make me confess to an answer when you never asked me the question?

TATT. But, gentlemen, this is the most inhuman proceeding..

VAL. If you have known Scandal this long, and cannot avoid such an obvious ploy as this was, then the ladies whose reputations are in your keeping will have a fine time.

Enter JEREMY.

JERE. Sir, Mrs Frail has asked if you will see her.

VAL. Show her up.

Exit JEREMY.

TATT. I'll be gone.

VAL. You'll stay here and meet her.

TATT. Is there no back way?

VAL. What if there is, surely you have more discretion than to give Scandal such an advantage. Why, your running away would prove everything that he could tell her.

TATT. Scandal, you will not be so ungenerous. Oh, I shall lose my reputation of secrecy forever. I shall never be received but upon public days, and my visits will never be admitted beyond a drawing- room. I'll never see a bedroom again, never be locked in a closet, nor hidden behind a screen, or under a table: never more be known among the waiting-women as trusty Mr Tattle. You would not be so cruel?

VAL. Scandal, have pity on him; he'll yield to any conditions.

TATT. Any, any terms.

SCAN. Then, tell me about half a dozen women of good reputation. Where are you familiar? And be sure that they are women of quality, too — the highest quality.

TATT. This are very hard terms. Won't a baronet's lady pass?

SCAN. No, nothing under a 'right honourable'.

TATT. Oh, inhuman! You don't expect their names?

SCAN. No, their titles will do.

TATT. But, that's the same thing. Pray spare me their titles. I'll describe them.

SCAN. Well, begin then; but if you are so bad a painter that I don't recognise the person by the picture you paint of her, you must be condemned, like other bad painters, to write the name at the bottom.

TATT. Well, first then...

SCENE 6.

VALENTINE, SCANDAL, TATTLE
Enter MRS FRAIL.

TATT. Oh, unfortunate! She's here already; can you wait until another time? I'll double the number.

SCAN. Well, on that condition. Make sure you don't forget.

MRS FRAIL. I shall get a fine reputation by coming to see fellows in a morning. Scandal, you devil, are you here too? Oh, Mr Tattle, everything is safe with you, we know.

SCAN. Tattle...

TATT. Quiet.
O madam, you do me too much honour.

VAL. Well, Lady Galloper, how is Angelica?

MRS FRAIL. Angelica? Manners!

VAL. Surely you will allow an absent lover...

MRS FRAIL. No, I'll allow a lover who is with his mistress to be particular; but otherwise, I think his passion ought yield to his manners.

VAL. But what if he has more passion than manners?

MRS FRAIL. Then let him marry and reform.

VAL. Marriage may indeed tame the fury of his passion, but it very rarely mends a man's manners.

MRS FRAIL. You are the most mistaken in the world; there is no creature more civil than a husband. For after a little while he will only be rude to his wife, and that is the highest good breeding, for it means he is polite to other people. Well, I'll tell you news; but I suppose you have heard that your brother Benjamin has landed? And my brother Foresight's daughter has arrived from the country: I assure you, there's a match talked about by the old people. Well, if he is as great a sea-beast as she is a land-monster, we will have a most amphibious brood. The progeny will be all otters. He has been bred at sea, and she has never been out of the country.

VAL. Pox take them, their union does me no good, I'm sure.

MRS FRAIL. Now you talk of union, my brother Foresight has charted both their futures, and forecasts an admiral and an eminent justice of the peace to be the male children of their two bodies; he is the most superstitious old fool! He tried to persuade me that this was an unlucky day, and would not let me go out. But I invented a dream, and sent him off for interpretation, and sneaked out to see you. Well, and what will you give me now? Come, I must have something.

VAL. Step into the next room, and I'll give you something.

SCAN. Ay, we'll all give you something.

MRS FRAIL. Well, what will you all give me?

VAL. Mine's a secret.

MRS FRAIL. I thought you would give me something that would be a trouble to you to keep.

VAL. And Scandal will give you a good name.

MRS FRAIL. That's more than he has for himself. And what will you give me, Mr Tattle?

TATT. I? My soul, madam.

MRS FRAIL. Pooh! No, thank you, I have enough to do to take care of my own. Well, but I'll come and see you one of these mornings. I hear you have a great many pictures.

TATT. I have a pretty good collection, at your service, some originals.

SCAN. Hang him, he has nothing but popular prints, badly represented. He himself is the only original you will see there.

MRS FRAIL. Ay, but I hear he has a closet of beauties.

SCAN. Yes; all that have done him favours, if you believe him.

MRS FRAIL. Ay, let me see those, Mr Tattle.

TATT. Oh, madam, those are reserved for love and contemplation. No man but the painter and myself has ever seen them.

MRS FRAIL. Well, but a woman...

TATT. Nor woman, till she consented to have her picture there too — for then she's obliged to keep the secret.

SCAN. No, no; come to me if you want to see pictures.

MRS FRAIL. You?

SCAN. Yes, indeed; I can show you your own picture, and most of your acquaintances, true to the life.

MRS FRAIL. O lying creature! Valentine, isn't he a liar? I can't believe a word he says.

VAL. No indeed, he speaks truth now. For as Tattle has pictures of all that have granted him favours, he has the pictures of all that have refused him: if satires, descriptions, caricatures, and lampoons are pictures.

Enter JEREMY.

JERE. Sir, your father's steward is here again.

VAL. I'll come down to him — will you excuse me? I'll be back in a minute,

MRS FRAIL. No; I'll be gone. Come, who will escort me to the Exchange? I must call on my sister Foresight there.

SCAN. I will: I have designs on your sister.

TATT. I will be: because I am fond of your ladyship.

MRS FRAIL. That's a far better reason, in my opinion.

SCAN. Well, if Tattle entertains you, I have the better opportunity to engage your sister.

VAL. Tell Angelica I am in the process of making a bargain to end my confinement, and will soon be at liberty to see her.

SCAN. I'll tell her about you and your proceedings. If indiscretion is a sign of love, you are the greatest lover that I know: you think that parting with your inheritance will help you get your mistress.

In my mind he is a thoughtless adventurer who hopes to purchase wealth by selling land;

Or win a mistress with a losing hand.

Exeunt.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.

A room in FORESIGHT's house.

Enter FORESIGHT and SERVANT.

FORE. Hey day! What, are all the women of my family out? Is my wife not come home? Nor my sister, nor my daughter?

SERV. No, sir.

FORE. Mercy on us, what can this mean? Sure the influence of the moon is at its strongest. Is my niece Angelica at home?

SERV. Yes, sir.

FORE. I believe you lie, sir.

SERV. Sir?

FORE. I say you lie, sir. it is impossible that anything should be as I would have it; for I was born, sir, when the crab was ascending, and all my affairs go backward.

SERV. I can't tell indeed, sir.

FORE. No, I know you can't, sir: but I can tell, and foretell, sir.

Enter NURSE.

FORE. Nurse, where's your young mistress?

NURSE. Sorry to say, I don't know, none of them have come home yet. Poor child, I must say she's fond of seeing the town. Why, pray heaven they have given her a dinner. Good lack-a-day, ha, ha, ha, Oh, strange! I'll vow and swear now, ha, ha, ha, why, and did you ever see the like!

FORE. Why, now, what's the matter?

NURSE. Pray heaven send your worship good luck, what, and amen with all my heart, for you have put on one stocking with the wrong side outward.

FORE. Ha, how? Bless me I'm glad of it; and so I have: that may be good luck in truth, in truth it may, very good luck. Aye, I have had some omens: I got out of bed backwards too this morning, without premeditation; pretty good that too; but then I stumbled coming down stairs, and met a weasel; bad omens those: some bad, some good, our lives are chequered. Mirth and sorrow, want and plenty, night and day, make up our time. But in truth I am pleased at my stocking; very well pleased at my stocking. Oh, here's my niece!

Enter ANGELICA.

My man, go tell Sir Sampson Legend I'll wait on him if he's at leisure: — it is now three o'clock, a very good hour for business: Mercury governs this hour.

Exit SERVANT

ANG. Is it not a good hour for pleasure too, uncle? Pray lend me your coach; mine's out of order.

FORE. What, would you be gadding too? Sure, all females are mad today. It is of evil portent, and bodes mischief to the master of a family. I remember an old prophecy written by Messahalah the Arabian, and thus translated by a reverend Buckinghamshire bard:-

'When housewives all the house forsake,
And leave goodman to brew and bake,
Withouten guile, then be it said,
That house doth stand upon its head;
And when the head is set in ground,
No wonder, if it be fruitful found.'

Fruitful, the head fruitful, that bodes horns; the fruit of the head is horns. Dear niece, stay at home — for by the head of the house is meant the husband; the prophecy needs no explanation.

ANG. Well, but I can neither make you a cuckold, uncle, by going out, nor secure you from being one by staying at home.

FORE. Yes, yes; while there's one woman left, the prophecy is not in full force.

ANG. But my *inclinations* are in force; I have a mind to go out, and if you won't lend me your coach, I'll take a hackney or a chair, and leave you to *erect* a scheme, and find out who's in *conjunction* with your wife. Why don't you keep her at home, if you're jealous of her when she's out? You know my aunt is a little retrograde (as you call it) in her nature. Uncle, I'm afraid you are not lord of the *ascendant*, ha, ha, ha!

FORE. Well, Jill-flirt, you are very smart, and always ridiculing the celestial science.

ANG. Now, uncle, don't be angry — if you are, I'll list all your false prophecies, ridiculous dreams, and idle divinations. I'll swear you are a nuisance to the neighbourhood. What a fuss you made against the last invisible eclipse, laying in provision as if it were for a siege. What a load of fire and candles, matches and tinder-boxes you purchased! One would have thought we were going to live under ground forever after, or at least making a voyage to Greenland, to live there the whole dark season.

FORE. Why, you cheeky slut...

ANG. Will you lend me your coach, or I'll go on — aye, I'll declare how you prophesied popery was coming only because the butler had mislaid some of the apostle spoons, and thought they were lost. Away went religion and spoon-meat together. Indeed, uncle, I'll indict you for a wizard.

FORE. How, hussy! Was there ever such a provoking minx?

NURSE. O merciful father, how she talks!

ANG. Yes, I can make oath of your unlawful midnight practices, you and the old nurse there...

NURSE. Why, heaven defend! I at midnight practices? O Lord, what's here to do? I in unlawful doings with my master's worship — why, did you ever hear the like now? Sir, did ever I do anything of your midnight concerns but warm your bed, and tuck you up, and set the candle and your tobacco-box and your urinal by you, and now and then rub the soles of your feet? O Lord, !!

ANG. Yes, I saw you together through the key-hole of the closet one night, like Saul and the witch of Endor, divining, and pricking your thumbs, to write poor innocent servants' names in blood, about a little nutmeg which she had forgot in the gruel. Aye, I know something worse, if I would speak of it.

FORE. I defy you, hussy; but I'll remember this, I'll be revenged on you, serpent. I'll hamper you. You have your fortune in your own hands, but I'll find a way to make your lover, your prodigal spendthrift gallant, Valentine, pay for this, I will.

ANG. Will you? I don't care, but I shall go out. Watch out, nurse: I have witnesses that you have a great unnatural teat under your left arm, and he another; and that you suckle a young devil in the shape of a tabby-cat, by turns, I can.

NURSE. [*Crying.*] A teat, a teat — I an unnatural teat! Oh, the false, slanderous thing; feel, feel here, and see if I have anything that no other Christian has.

FORE. I will have patience, since it is the will of the stars that I should be thus tormented. This is the effect of the malicious conjunctions and oppositions in the third house of my

nativity; there the curse of kindred was foretold. But I will have my doors locked up; — I'll punish you: not a man shall enter my house.

ANG. Do, uncle, lock them up quickly before my aunt comes home. You'll have a letter for alimony tomorrow morning. But let me be gone first, and then let no mankind come near the house, but converse with spirits and the celestial signs, the bull and the ram and the goat. Bless me! There are a great many horned beasts among the twelve signs, uncle. Only cuckolds go to heaven.

FORE. But there's only one virgin among the twelve signs, spitfire, only one virgin.

ANG. There wouldn't even have been that one, if she had known more than just astrologers, uncle. That's what makes my aunt go out.

FORE. How, how? Is that the reason? Come, you know something; tell me and I'll forgive you. Do, good niece. Come, you shall have my coach and horses — bless me you shall. Does my wife complain? Come, I know women tell one another. She is young and sanguine, has a wanton hazel eye, and was born under Gemini, which may incline her to society. She has a mole upon her lip, with a moist palm, and an open liberality on the mount of Venus.

ANG. Ha, ha, ha!

FORE. Do you laugh? Well, gentlewoman, I'll — but come, be a good girl, don't perplex your poor uncle, tell me — won't you speak? Well, I'll...

Enter SERVANT.

SERV. Sir Sampson is coming down to see you.

ANG. Good-bye, uncle — call me a chair. I'll find my aunt, and tell her she must not come home.

Exit ANGELICA and SERVANT.

FORE. I'm so perplexed and vexed, I'm not fit to receive him; I shall scarce recover myself before the hour be past.
Go nurse, tell Sir Sampson I'm ready to see him.

NURSE. Yes, sir,

Exit NURSE

FORE. Well — why, if I was born to be a cuckold, there's no more to be said — he's here already.

SCENE 2.

FORESIGHT

Enter SIR SAMPSON LEGEND with a paper.

SIR SAMP. Nor no more to be done, old boy; that's plain — here it is, I have it in my hand, old Ptolomey, I'll make the ungracious prodigal know who begat him; I will, old Nostrodamus. What, I'm sure my son thought nothing belonged to a father but forgiveness and affection; no authority, no correction, no arbitrary power; nothing to be done, but for him to offend and me to pardon. I'll bet, if he danced till doomsday he thought I was going to pay the piper. Well, but here it is in black and white, signatum, sigillatum, and deliberatum; that as soon as my son Benjamin is arrived, he's to make over to him his right of inheritance. Where's my daughter to be? — Hah! old Merlin! I'm so glad I'm revenged on this undutiful rogue.

FORE. What, let me see; let me see the paper.
Ay, bless me, here it is, if it will but wait. I wish things were done, and the contract made. When was this signed, what hour? But, you should have consulted me about the time. Well, but we'll make haste...

SIR SAMP. Haste, ay, ay; haste enough. My son Ben will be in town tonight. I have ordered my lawyer to draw up contracts of settlement — it shall all be done tonight. Don't bother with the time; brother Foresight, forget superstition. Pox on the time; there's no time but the time present, there's no more to be said of what's past, and all that is to come will happen. If the sun shines by day, and the stars by night, why, we shall know one another's faces without the help of a candle, and that's all the stars are good for.

FORE. What, what? Sir Sampson, is that all? Give me leave to contradict you, and tell you that you are ignorant.

SIR SAMP. I tell you I am wise; and sapiens dominabitur astris; there's Latin to prove it for you, and an argument to confound your almanac. — Ignorant! I tell you, I have travelled old fellow, and know the globe. I have seen the antipodes, where the sun rises at midnight, and sets at noon.

FORE. But I tell you, I have travelled, and travelled in the celestial spheres, know the signs and the planets, and their houses. Can judge of motions direct and retrograde, of sextiles, quadrates, trines and oppositions, fiery-trigons and aquatical-trigons. Know whether life shall be long or short, happy or unhappy, whether diseases are curable or incurable. If journeys shall be prosperous, undertakings successful, or goods stolen recovered; I know...

SIR SAMP. I know the length of the Emperor of China's foot; have kissed the Great Mogul's slippers, and rode a-hunting upon an elephant with a Cham of Tartary. Why, I have made a cuckold of a king, and the present majesty of Bantam is the issue of these loins.

FORE. I know when travellers lie or speak truth, when they don't know it themselves.

SIR SAMP. I have known an astrologer made a cuckold in the twinkling of a star; and seen a conjurer that could not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

FORE. *[Aside.]* What, does he twit me with my wife too? I must find out about this.

Do you mean my wife, Sir Sampson? Though you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet by the body of the sun...

SIR SAMP. By the horns of the moon, you would say, brother Capricorn.

FORE. Capricorn in your teeth, you modern Mandeville; you liar of the first magnitude. Take back your paper of inheritance; send your son to sea again. I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, before she shall incorporate with a scorner of sciences, and a defamer of virtue.

SIR SAMP. *[Aside.]* Ah, I have gone too far; I must not provoke honest Albumazar: —

an Egyptian mummy is an illustrious creature, my trusty hieroglyphic; and may have significations of futurity about him; what what, I would my son were an Egyptian mummy for your sake. What, you are not angry over a jest, my good Haly? I revere the sun, moon and stars with all my heart. What, I'll make you a present of a mummy: now I think about it, I have a shoulder of an Egyptian king that I purloined from one of the pyramids, powdered with hieroglyphics, I will have it brought home to your house, and it can make an entertainment for all the philomaths, and students in physic and astrology in and about London.

FORE. But what do you know of my wife, Sir Sampson?

SIR SAMP. Your wife is a constellation of virtues; she's the moon, and you are the man in the moon. Nay, she is more illustrious than the moon; for she has her chastity without her inconstancy: I was only in jest.

SCENE 3.

*FORESIGHT, SIR SAMPSON
Enter JEREMY.*

SIR SAMP. What's this, who sent for you? Ha! What do you want?

FORE. But, if you were only in jest...
Who's that fellow? I don't like his physiognomy.

SIR SAMP. My son, sir; what son, sir? My son Benjamin?

JERE. No, sir, Mr Valentine, my master; it is the first time he has been out since his confinement, and he comes to pay his duty to you.

SIR SAMP. Well, sir.

Enter VALENTINE.

JERE. He is here, sir.

VAL. Your blessing, sir.

SIR SAMP. You've had it already, sir; I think I sent it to you today in a bill of four thousand pound: a great deal of money, brother Foresight.

FORE. Ay, indeed, Sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man; I wonder what he can do with it!

SIR SAMP. Indeed, so do I. Hark ye, Valentine, if there is too much, refund the superfluity; do you hear, boy?

VAL. Superfluity, sir? It will scarcely pay my debts. I hope you will have more indulgence than to oblige me to those hard conditions to which I signed in my necessity.

SIR SAMP. Sir, what, I beseech you, what were you pleased to intimate, concerning indulgence?

VAL. Why, sir, that you would not go to the extremity of the conditions, but release me at least from some part.

SIR SAMP. Oh, sir, I understand you — that's all, ha?

VAL. Yes, sir, all that I presume to ask. But what you, out of fatherly fondness, will be pleased to add, shall be doubly welcome.

SIR SAMP. No doubt of it, sweet sir; but your filial piety, and my fatherly fondness would cancel one another out.
Here's a rogue, brother Foresight, makes a bargain under hand and seal in the morning, and would be released from it in the afternoon; here's a rogue, dog, here's conscience and honesty;
this is your wit now, this is the morality of your wits! You are a wit, and have been a beau, — why my man, is it not here under hand and seal — can you deny it?

VAL. Sir, I don't deny it.

SIR SAMP. My man, you'll be hanged.
Has he not a rogue's face? Speak brother, you understand physiognomy, a hanging look to me — of all my boys the most unlike me; he has a damned gallows face, without the chance of a pardon.

FORE. Hum — truly I don't care to discourage a young man, — he has a violent death in his face; but I hope no danger of hanging.

VAL. Sir, is this a way to treat your son? — As for that old weather-headed fool, I know how to laugh at him; but you, sir...

SIR SAMP. You, sir; and you, sir: why, who are you, sir?

VAL. Your son, sir.

SIR SAMP. That's more than I know, sir, and I don't believe it.

VAL. Indeed, I hope not.

SIR SAMP. What, would you have your mother a whore? Did you ever hear the like? Did you ever hear the like?

VAL. I would have an excuse for your barbarity and unnatural usage.

SIR SAMP. Excuse! Impudence! Why, my man, may I not do what I please? Are not you my slave? Did not I beget you? And might I not have chosen whether I would have begot you or not? 'Huh, who are you? Where did you come from? What brought you into the world? How did you get to be here, sir? Here, to stand here, upon those two legs, and look erect with that audacious face, ha? Answer me that! Did you come voluntarily into the world? Or did I, with the lawful authority of a parent, press you into service?

VAL. I no more know why I came than you do why you called me. But here I am, and if you don't mean to provide for me, I wish you would leave me as you found me.

SIR SAMP. With all my heart: come, uncase, strip, and go naked out of the world as you came into it.

VAL. My clothes are soon put off. But you must also divest me of reason, thought, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of appetites that you begot along with me.

SIR SAMP. What a manyheaded monster have I propagated!

VAL. Myself, I am a plain, easy, simple creature, and to be kept at small expense; but the tastes that you gave me are craving and invincible; they are so many devils that you have raised, and they will have employment.

SIR SAMP. 'Huh, what had I to do to get children, — can't a private man be born without all these longings? Why, nothing under an emperor should be born with appetites. Why, at this rate, a fellow that has but a groat in his pocket may have a stomach capable of a ten shilling eating house.

JERE. Aye, that's as clear as the sun; I'll make oath of it before any justice in Middlesex.

SIR SAMP. Here's a glutton too. This fellow was not born with you? I did not beget him, did I?

JERE. According to the provision that's made for me, you might have begot me too. Aye, and to tell your worship another truth, I believe you did, for I find I was born with those same whoreson appetites too, that my master speaks of.

SIR SAMP. Why, look here, now. By the rule of right reason, this fellow ought to have been born without a palate. What should he do with a distinguishing taste? I'm sure now he'd rather eat a pheasant, than a piece of salted fish; and smell, now, why I'm sure he can smell, and loves perfumes above a stink. Why there's it; and music, don't you love music, scoundrel?

JERE. Yes; I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jigs and country dances, and the like; I don't much matter your solos or sonatas, they give me indigestion.

SIR SAMP. Indigestion, ha, ha, ha; a pox confound you — solos or sonatas? Whose son are you? How were you engendered, muckworm?

JERE. I am by my father, the son of a chair-man; my mother sold oysters in winter, and cucumbers in summer; and I came upstairs into the world; for I was born in a cellar.

FORE. By your looks, you should go upstairs out of the world too, friend.

SIR SAMP. And if this rogue were dissected now, we would find that he has his vessels of digestion, and so forth, large enough for the inside of a cardinal, this son of a cucumber. — These things are unaccountable and unreasonable. Why wasn't I a bear, that my cubs might have lived upon sucking their paws? Nature has been provident only to bears and spiders; the one has its nutriment in his own hands; and the other spins his habitation out of his own entrails.

VAL. Fortune was provident enough to supply all the necessities of my nature, if I only had my right of inheritance.

SIR SAMP. Again! 'Huh, hadn't you four thousand pounds? If I had it again, I would not give you a groat. — What, would you have me turn pelican, and feed you out of my own vitals? For heaven's sake, live by your wits: you were always fond of the wits, now let's see, if you have wit enough to keep yourself. Your brother will be in town tonight or tomorrow morning, and then make sure that you perform your agreements, and so your friend and servant: — come, brother Foresight.

Exit FORESIGHT and SIR SAMPSON.

JERE. I told you what your visit would come to.

VAL. It is as much as I expected. I did not come to see him, I came to see Angelica: but since she was gone out, it was easily turned another way, and at least looked well on my side. What's this? Mrs Foresight and Mrs Frail, they are earnest. I'll avoid them. Come this way, and go and enquire when Angelica will return.

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

Enter MRS FORESIGHT and MRS FRAIL.

MRS FRAIL. What business is it of your. I'll do what I please.

MRS FORE. You will?

MRS FRAIL. Yes, I reckon I will. A great piece of business to go to Covent Garden Square in a hackney coach, and take a stroll with one's friend.

MRS FORE. Hah, two or three strolls, I'll swear.

MRS FRAIL. Well, what if I took twenty — I'm sure if you had been there, it would only have been innocent recreation. Lord, where's the comfort of this life if we can't have the happiness of conversing where we like?

MRS FORE. But can't you converse at home? I admit it, I think there's no happiness like conversing with an agreeable man; I won't quarrel with that, nor do I think your conversation was any thing but innocent; but the place is public, and to be seen with a man in a hackney coach is scandalous. What if anybody else should have seen you alight, as I did? How

can anybody be happy while they're in perpetual fear of being seen and censured? Besides, it would not only reflect upon you, sister, but me.

MRS FRAIL. Pooh, here's a clutter: why should it reflect upon you? I don't doubt but you have thought yourself happy in a hackney coach before now. If I had gone to Knight's Bridge, or to Chelsea, or to lost my way with some young gentleman in the Spring Garden, or Barn Elms with a man alone, something might have been said.

MRS FORE. Why, was I ever in any of those places? What do you mean, sister?

MRS FRAIL. Was I? What do you mean?

MRS FORE. You have been in worse places.

MRS FRAIL. I in worse places, and with a man!

MRS FORE. I suppose you would not go alone to a seedy hotel at the World's End.

MRS FRAIL. The World's End! What, do you mean to make fun of me?

MRS FORE. Poor innocent! You don't know that there's a place called the World's End? I'll swear you can keep your face under control: you'd make an admirable actress.

MRS FRAIL. I'll swear you have a great deal of confidence, and in my mind too much for the stage.

MRS FORE. Very well, we'll see who has most; were you never at the World's End?

MRS FRAIL. No.

MRS FORE. You deny it positively to my face?

MRS FRAIL. Your face, what's your face?

MRS FORE. My face is not what we are talking about, it's as good a face as yours.

MRS FRAIL. Not by a dozen years' wearing. But I do deny it positively to your face, then.

MRS FORE. I'll allow you to find fault with my face; for I'll swear your impudence has put me out of countenance. But look here, where did you lose this gold brooch? Oh, sister, sister!

MRS FRAIL. My brooch!

MRS FORE. Aye, it is yours, look at it.

MRS FRAIL. Well, if it comes to that, where did you find this brooch? Oh, sister, sister! Sister every way.

MRS FORE. [*Aside.*] Oh, devil on it, that I could not discover her without betraying myself.

MRS FRAIL. I have heard gentlemen say, sister, that one should take great care, when one makes a thrust in fencing, not to open oneself.

MRS FORE. It's very true, sister. Well, since it's all out, and as you say, since we are both wounded, let us do what is often done in duels, take care of one another, and grow better friends than before.

MRS FRAIL. With all my heart: ours are but slight flesh wounds, and if we keep them from the air, not at all dangerous. Well, give me your hand in token of sisterly secrecy and affection.

MRS FORE. Here it is, with all my heart.

MRS FRAIL. Well, as an earnest of friendship and confidence, I'll tell you my plans. To tell you the truth, and speak openly one to another, I'm afraid the world has observed us more than we have observed one another. You have a rich husband, and are provided for. I am at a loss, and have no great stock either of fortune or reputation, and therefore must be careful. Sir Sampson has a son that is expected tonight, and by the account I have heard of his education, he cannot be all that clever. The estate you know is to be made over to him. Now if I could capture him, sister, ha? You understand me?

MRS FORE. I do, and will help you to the utmost of my power. And I can tell you one thing that will help us enough; my awkward step-daughter, who you know is intended to be his wife, is grown fond of Mr Tattle; now if we can work on that, and make her have an aversion for Sir Sampson's booby, it may go a great way towards his liking you. Here they come together; and let us contrive some way or other to leave them together.

SCENE 5.

MRS FORESIGHT, MRS FRAIL.

Enter TATTLE and MISS PRUE.

MISS. Mother, mother, mother, look here!

MRS FORE. No, no, Miss, how you scream! Besides, I have told you, you must not call me mother.

MISS. What must I call you then, are you not my father's wife?

MRS FORE. Madam; you must say madam. By my soul, I shall fancy myself old indeed to have this great girl call me mother. Well, but Miss, what are you so overjoyed at?

MISS. Look, madam, then, what Mr Tattle has given me.
Look, cousin, here's a snuff-box; aye, there's snuff in it. Here, will you have any? Oh, good!
How sweet it is. Mr Tattle is sweet all over, his wig is sweet, and his gloves are sweet, and his handkerchief is sweet, pure sweet, sweeter than roses. Smell him, mother — madam, I mean. He gave me this ring for a kiss.

TATT. O no, Miss, you must not kiss and tell.

MISS. Yes; I may tell my mother. And he says he'll give me something to make me smell so. Oh, pray lend me your handkerchief.
Smell, cousin; he says he'll give me something that will make my smocks smell this way. Is it not pure? It's better than lavender, mun. I'm resolved I won't let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks — ha, cousin?

MRS FRAIL. No, Miss; amongst your linen, you must say. You must never say smock.

MISS. Why, it is not bawdy, is it, cousin?

TATT. Oh, madam; you are too severe upon Miss; you must not find fault with her pretty simplicity: it becomes her strangely.
Pretty Miss, don't let them persuade you out of your innocence.

MRS FORE. Oh, demm you, toad. I hope you don't persuade her out of her innocence.

TATT. Who, I, madam? O Lord, how can your ladyship have such a thought? Sure, you don't know me.

MRS FRAIL. Ah devil, sly devil. He's as secretive, sister, as a confessor. He thinks we haven't noticed him.

MRS FORE. A cunning cur, how soon he could find out a fresh, harmless creature; and leave us, sister.

MRS FORE. They're all like that, sister, these men. They love to have the spoiling of a young thing, they are as fond of it, as of being first in the fashion, or of seeing a new play the first day. I'm sure it would break Mr Tattle's heart to think that anybody else should be ahead of him.

TATT. O Lord, I swear I would not for the world...

MRS FRAIL. O hang you; who'll believe you? You'd be hanged before you'd confess. We know you — she's very pretty! Lord, what pure red and white! — she looks so wholesome; I don't know, but I fancy, if I were a man...

MISS. How you love to jeer, cousin.

MRS FORE. Listen, sister, by my soul the girl is spoiled already. Do you think she'll ever endure a great lubberly tarpaulin? Gad, I'm sure you she won't let him come near her after Mr Tattle.

MRS FRAIL. O my soul, I'm afraid not — eh! — filthy creature, that smells all of pitch and tar. Devil take you, you confounded toad — why did you see her before she was married?

MRS FORE. Nay, why did we let him — my husband will hang us. He'll think we brought them together.

MRS FRAIL. Come, indeed, let us be gone. If my brother Foresight should find us with them, he'd think so, sure enough.

MRS FORE. So he would — but then leaving them together is as bad: and he's such a sly devil, he'll never miss an opportunity.

MRS FRAIL. I don't care; I won't be associated with it.

MRS FORE. Well, if you should, Mr Tattle, you'll have a world to answer for; remember I wash my hands of it. I'm thoroughly innocent.

Exit MRS FRAIL, MRS FORESIGHT

SCENE 6.

TATTLE, MISS PRUE.

MISS. What makes them go away, Mr Tattle? What do they mean, do you know?

TATT. Yes my dear; I think I can guess, but hang me if I know the reason for it.

MISS. Come, mustn't we go too?

TATT. No, no, they don't mean that.

MISS. No! What then? What shall you and I do together?

TATT. I must make love to you, pretty Miss; will you let me make love to you?

MISS. Yes, if you please.

TATT. *[Aside.]* What a pox does Mrs Foresight mean by this civility? Is it to make a fool of me? Or does she leave us together out of good morality, and do as she would be done by? — Gad, I'll understand it so.

MISS. Well; and how will you make love to me — come, I long to have you begin, — must I make love too? You must tell me how.

TATT. You must let me speak, Miss, you must not speak first; I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

MISS. What, is it like the catechism? Come then, ask me.

TATT. Do you think you can love me?

MISS. Yes.

TATT. Pooh, pox, you must not say yes already; I shan't care a farthing for you then in a twinkling.

MISS. What must I say then?

TATT. Why you must say no, or you believe not, or you can't tell...

MISS. Why, must I tell a lie then?

TATT. Yes, if you'd be well bred. All well bred persons lie. — Besides, you are a woman, you must never say what you think: your words must contradict your thoughts; but your actions may contradict your words. So when I ask you if you can love me, you must say no, but you must love me too. If I tell you that you are handsome, you must deny it, and say I flatter you. But you must think yourself more charming than I say: and like me, for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself. If I ask you to kiss me, you must be angry, but you must not refuse me. If I ask you for more, you must be more angry, — but more complying; and as soon as ever I make you say you'll cry out, you must be sure to hold your tongue.

MISS. O Lord, I swear this is pure. I like it better than our old- fashioned country way of speaking one's mind; — and must not you lie too?

TATT. Hum — yes — but you must believe I speak truth.

MISS. O Gemini! Well, I always had a great mind to tell lies; but they scared me, and said it was a sin.

TATT. Well, my pretty creature; will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

MISS. No, indeed; I'm angry at you. *[Runs and kisses him.]*

TATT. Wait, wait, that's pretty good, but you should not have given it me, but have suffered me to have taken it.

MISS. Well, we'll do it again.

TATT. With all my heart. — Now then, my little angel. [*Kisses her.*]

MISS. Pish.

TATT. That's right, — again, my charmer. [*Kisses again.*]

MISS. O no, nay, now I can't abide you.

TATT. Admirable! That was as good as if you had been born and bred in Covent Garden. And won't you shew me, pretty miss, where your bed-chamber is?

MISS. No, indeed won't I; but I'll run there, and hide myself from you behind the curtains.

TATT. I'll follow you.

MISS. Ah, but I'll hold the door with both hands, and be angry; — and you shall push me down before you come in.

TATT. No, I'll come in first, and push you down afterwards.

MISS. Will you? Then I'll be more angry and more complying.

TATT. Then I'll make you cry out.

MISS. Oh, but you shan't, for I'll hold my tongue.

TATT. O my dear apt scholar!

MISS. Well, now I'll run and make more haste than you.

TATT. You shall not fly as fast as I'll pursue.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.

NURSE alone.

NURSE. Miss, Miss, Miss Prue!
Mercy on me. Why, what's become of the child?
Why Miss, Miss Foresight!
Sure she has locked herself up in her chamber, and gone to sleep, or to prayers:
Miss, Miss, —
I hear her. —
Come to your father, child; open the door. Open the door, miss. I hear you cry husht.
O Lord, who's there? [*peeps*] What's happening? O the Father! A man with her!
Why, miss, I say;
God's my life, here's fine goings on — O Lord, we're all undone.
O you young harlotry [*knocks*]. O'd's my life, won't you open the door? I'll come in the back way.

Enter TATTLE, MISS PRUE.

MISS. O Lord, she's coming, and she'll tell my father; what shall I do now?

TATT. Pox take her; if she had waited two minutes longer, I should have wished for her coming.

MISS. O dear, what shall I say? Tell me, Mr Tattle, tell me a lie.

TATT. This is no occasion for a lie; I could never tell a lie for no reason. But since we have done nothing, we must say nothing. I hear her, — I'll leave you together, and fare as you can. [*Thrusts her in, and shuts the door.*]

Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, ANGELICA.

ANG. You can't accuse me of inconstancy; I never told you that I loved you.

VAL. But I can accuse you of uncertainty, for not telling me whether you did or not.

ANG. You mistake indifference for uncertainty; I was never concerned enough to ask myself the question.

SCAN. Nor good-natured enough to answer him that did ask; I'll say that for you, madam.

ANG. What, are you talking about good-nature?

SCAN. Only about the affectation of it, as women do about ill- nature.

ANG. Persuade your friend that it is all affectation.

SCAN. I shall receive no benefit from the opinion; for I know no effectual difference between continued affectation and reality.

TATT. *[coming up]. [Aside to SCANDAL.]* Scandal, are you in private discourse? Anything secret?

SCAN. Yes, but I dare to trust you; we were talking of Angelica's love for Valentine. You won't speak of it.

TATT. No, no, not a syllable. I know that's a secret, for it's whispered everywhere.

SCAN. Ha, ha, ha!

ANG. What is, Mr Tattle? I heard you say something was whispered everywhere.

SCAN. Your love for Valentine.

ANG. How!

TATT. No, madam, his love for your ladyship. Gad take me, I beg your pardon, — for I never heard a word of your ladyship's passion till this instant.

ANG. My passion! And who told you of my passion, pray sir?

SCAN. Why, is the devil in you? Did not I tell it you as a secret?

TATT. Indeed; but I thought she might have been trusted with her own affairs.

SCAN. Is that your idea of discretion? Trust a woman with herself?

TATT. You are right, I beg your pardon. I'll rescue the situation.
It was impossible, madam, for me to imagine that a person of your ladyship's wit and gallantry could have so long received the passionate addresses of the accomplished Valentine, and yet remain unmoved; therefore you will pardon me, if, from a just weight of his merit, with your ladyship's good judgment, I formed the balance of a reciprocal affection.

VAL. O the devil, what damned constipated playwright has taught you such pompous and empty talk?

ANG. I am sure you wrong him, it is his own. And Mr Tattle only judges the success of others, from the effects of his own merit. For certainly Mr Tattle was never denied anything in his life.

TATT. O Lord! Yes, indeed, madam, several times.

ANG. I swear I don't think it is possible.

TATT. Yes, I vow and swear I have; Lord, madam, I'm the most unfortunate man in the world, and the most cruelly used by the ladies.

ANG. Hah, now you're ungrateful.

TATT. No, I hope not, it is as much ingratitude to admit some favours as to conceal others.

VAL. There, now it's out.

ANG. I don't understand you now. I thought you had never asked anything except what a lady might modestly grant, and you confess.

SCAN. So indeed, your business is done here; now you may go brag somewhere else.

TATT. Brag! O heavens! Why, did I name anybody?

ANG. No; I suppose that is not in your power; but you would if you could, no doubt about it.

TATT. Not in my power, madam! What, does your ladyship mean that I have no woman's reputation in my power?

SCAN. *[Aside.]* 'Huh, why, you won't admit it, will you?

TATT. Indeed, madam, you're in the right; no more I have, as I hope to be saved; I never had it in my power to say anything to a lady's detriment in my life. For as I was telling you, madam, I have been the most unsuccessful creature living, in things of that nature; and never had the good fortune to be trusted once with a lady's secret, not once.

ANG. No?

VAL. Not once, I dare answer for him.

SCAN. And I'll answer for him; for I'm sure if he had, he would have told me; I find, madam, you don't know Mr Tattle.

TATT. No indeed, madam, you don't know me at all, I find. For sure my intimate friends would have known...

ANG. Then it seems you would have told, if you had been trusted.

TATT. O pox, Scandal, that was too far.
I have never told particulars, madam. Perhaps I might have talked as of a third person; or have introduced an amour of my own, in conversation, by way of an anecdote; but I have never explained particulars.

ANG. But where does Mr Tattle's reputation for secrecy come from, if he was never trusted?

SCAN. Why, that is how it arises — the thing is proverbially spoken; but may be applied to him — as if we should say in general terms, only he who was never trusted can keep a secret; a satirical proverb upon our sex. There's another upon yours — she is chaste, who was never asked the question. That's all.

VAL. A couple of very civil proverbs, truly. It is hard to tell whether the lady or Mr Tattle is the more obliged to you. For you found her virtue upon the backwardness of the men; and his secrecy upon the mistrust of the women.

TATT. Gad, it's very true, madam, I think we are obliged to acquit ourselves. And for my part — but your ladyship is to speak first.

ANG. Am I? Well, I freely confess I have resisted a great deal of temptation.

TATT. And i'Gad, I have given some temptation that has not been resisted.

VAL. Good.

ANG. I call on Valentine here, to declare to the court, how fruitless he has found his endeavours, and to confess all his solicitations and my denials.

VAL. I am ready to plead not guilty for you; and guilty for myself.

SCAN. So, why this is fair, here's demonstration with a witness.

TATT. Well, my witnesses are not present. But I confess I have had favours from persons. But as the favours are numberless, so the persons are nameless.

SCAN. Pooh, this proves nothing. But you'll tell us no more. Come, I'll recommend a song to you upon the hint of my two proverbs, and I see one in the next room that will sing it.
[Goes to the door.]

SCAN. Pray sing the first song in the last new play.

SONG.

Set by Mr John Eccles.

I.

A nymph and a swain to Apollo once prayed,
The swain had been jilted, the nymph been betrayed:
Their intent was to try if his oracle knew
E'er a nymph that was chaste, or a swain that was true.

II.

Apollo was mute, and had like t'have been posed,
But sagely at length he this secret disclosed:
He alone won't betray in whom none will confide,
And the nymph may be chaste that has never been tried.

SCENE 2.

TATTLE, ANGELICA, VALENTINE, SCANDAL
Enter SIR SAMPSON, MRS FRAIL, MISS PRUE, and SERVANT.

SIR SAMP. Is Ben come? What-o, my son Ben come? Well, I'm glad. Where is he? I long to see him.
Now, Mrs Frail, you shall see my son Ben. He's the hopes of my family. I han't seen him these three years — I'm sure he's grown.
Call him in, bid him make haste. I'm ready to cry for joy.

Exit SERVANT

MRS FRAIL. Now Miss, you shall see your husband.

MISS. *[Aside to Frail.]* Pish, he shall not be my husband.

MRS FRAIL. Hush. Well he shan't; leave that to me. I'll beckon Mr Tattle to us.

ANG. Won't you stay and see your brother?

VAL. We are the Castor and Pollux, and cannot shine in one sphere; when he rises I must set. Besides, if I should stay, I think my father, in a good mood, may press me to the immediate signing of the deed of conveyance of my estate; and I'll defer that as long as I can. Well, you'll come to a resolution.

ANG. I can't. Resolution must come to me, or I shall never have one.

SCAN. Come, Valentine, I'll go with you; I've thought of something I need to tell you.

Exit VALENTINE, SCANDAL

SIR SAMP. What, is my son Valentine gone? What, is he sneaked off, and would not see his brother? There's an unnatural whelp! There's an ill-natured dog! What, were you here too, madam, and could not keep him? Could neither love, nor duty, nor natural affection oblige him? What what, madam, have no more to say to him, he is not worth your consideration. The rogue has not a dram of generous love about him — all interest, all interest; he's an undone scoundrel, and courts your estate: he does not care a bit for your person.

ANG. I'm pretty even with him, Sir Sampson; for if ever I could have liked anything in him, it should have been his estate too; but since that's gone, the bait's off, and the naked hook appears.

SIR SAMP. What what, well spoken, and you are a wiser woman than I thought you were, for most young women now-a-days are to be tempted with a naked hook.

ANG. If I marry, Sir Sampson, I'm for a good estate with any man, and for any man with a good estate; therefore, if I were obliged to make a choice, I declare I'd rather have you than your son.

SIR SAMP. Bless me, you're a wise woman, and I'm glad to hear you say so; I was afraid you were in love with the reprobate. Well, I was sorry for you with all my heart. Hang him, mongrel, cast him off; you shall see the rogue show himself, and make love to some desponding hag of fourscore for sustenance. Well, I love to see a young spendthrift forced to cling to an old woman for support, like ivy round a dead oak; indeed I do, I love to see them hug and cotton together, like down upon a thistle.

SCENE 3.

*TATTLE, ANGELICA, SIR SAMPSON, MRS FRAIL, MISS PRUE.
Enter BEN LEGEND and SERVANT.*

BEN. Where's father?

SERV. There, sir, his back's toward you.

SIR SAMP. My son Ben! Bless you, my dear body. You are heartily welcome.

BEN. Thank you, father, and I'm glad to see you.

SIR SAMP. What what, and I'm glad to see you; kiss me, boy, kiss me again and again, dear Ben.
[Kisses him.]

BEN. So, so, enough, father, I say, I'd rather kiss these gentlewomen.

SIR SAMP. And so you shall. Mrs Angelica, my son Ben.

BEN. Forsooth, if you please. [Salutes her.] Nay, mistress, I'm not for dropping anchor here; about ship, indeed. [Kisses Frail.] Aye, and you too, my little cock-boat — so [Kisses Miss].

TATT. Sir, you're welcome ashore.

BEN. Thank you, thank you, friend.

SIR SAMP. You have been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw you.

BEN. Ay, ay, been! Been far enough, an' that be all. Well, father, and how do all at home? How does brother Dick, and brother Val?

SIR SAMP. Dick — what — Dick has been dead these two years. I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.

BEN. I say, that's true! I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say. Well, and how? I have a many questions to ask you. Well, you aren't married again, father, are you?

SIR SAMP. No; I intend you shall marry, Ben; for your sake I would not marry.

BEN. Hey, what do you mean by that? And you, marry again — why then, I'll go to sea again, so then what would you do. Pray don't let me be your hindrance — marry, if that's the way the wind blows. As for my part, I don't think I have a mind to marry.

FRAIL. That would be pity — such a handsome young gentleman.

BEN. Handsome! he, he, he! nay, forsooth, and if you are one for joking, I'll joke with you, for I love my jest, even if the ship were sinking, as we say at sea. But I'll tell you why I don't much stand towards matrimony. I love to roam about from port to port, and from land to land; I could never abide to be port-bound, as we call it. Now, a man that is married has, as it were, do you see, his feet in the fetters, and might not get them out again when he wants.

SIR SAMP. Ben's a wag.

BEN. A man that is married, do you see, is no more like another man than a galley-slave is like one of us free sailors; he is chained to an oar all his life, and might even be forced to tug a leaky vessel into the bargain.

SIR SAMP. A very wag — Ben's a very wag; only a little rough, he wants a little polishing.

MRS FRAIL. Not at all; I like his humour mightily: it's plain and honest — I should like such a humour in a husband extremely.

BEN. Is that so? And I should like such a handsome gentlewoman for a bed-fellow hugely. What do you say, mistress, would you like going to sea? I say, you're a tight vessel, and well rigged, and you were but as well manned.

MRS FRAIL. I should not doubt that if you were master of me.

ANG. I swear, Mr Benjamin is the veriest wag in nature — an absolute sea-wit.

SIR SAMP. Aye, Ben has his different facets, but as I told you before, they want a little polishing. You must not take offence, madam.

BEN. No, I hope the gentlewoman is not angry; I mean all in good sport, for if I give a jest, I'll take a jest, and so you may be as free with me.

ANG. I thank you, sir, I am not at all offended.
But I think, Sir Sampson, you should leave him alone with his mistress.
Mr Tattle, we must not hinder lovers.

TATT. *[Aside to Miss.]* Well, Miss, I have your promise.

SIR SAMP. Why, madam, you're right. See here, Ben, this is your mistress.
Come, Miss, you must not be shame-faced; we'll leave you together.

MISS. I can't abide to be left alone; can't my cousin stay with me?

SIR SAMP. No, no. Come, let's away.

BEN. See here, father, maybe the young woman won't take a liking to me.

SIR SAMP. I'll guarantee it, boy: come, come, we'll be gone; I'd put money on it.

Exit all but BEN and MISS PRUE.

SCENE 4.

BEN, and MISS PRUE.

BEN. Come mistress, will you please sit down? for if you stand a stern like that, we shall never grapple together. Come, I'll haul in a chair; there, an you please sit, I'll sit by you.

MISS. You need not sit so near, if you have anything to say, I can hear you farther off, I am not deaf.

BEN. Why that's true, as you say, nor am I dumb, I can be heard as far as another, — I'll heave off, to please you. [*Sits farther off.*] If we were a league asunder, I'd undertake to hold discourse with you, unless it was a main high wind indeed, and full in my teeth. Look you, forsooth, I am, as it were, bound for the land of matrimony; it is a voyage, do you see, that was not of my seeking. I was commanded by father, and if you like, maybe I may steer into your harbour. How say you, mistress? The short of the thing is, that if you like me, and I like you, we may chance to swing in a hammock together.

MISS. I don't know what to say to you, nor do I care to speak with you at all.

BEN. No? I'm sorry for that. But why are you so scornful?

MISS. As long as one must not speak one's mind, one had better not speak at all, I think, and truly I won't tell a lie for the matter.

BEN. Aye, that's true, it's but a folly to lie: for to speak one thing, and to think just the contrary way is, as it were, to look one way, and to row another. Now, for my part, do you see, I'm for carrying things above board, I'm not for keeping anything under hatches, — so that if you aren't as willing as I am, say so: there's no harm done; maybe you are shy; some maidens, though they love a man well enough, don't care to tell him so to his face. If that's the case, why, silence gives consent.

MISS. But I'm sure it is not so, for I'll speak sooner than you should believe; and I'll tell you the truth, though one should always tell a lie to a man; and I don't care, let my father do what he will; I'm too big to be whipped, so I'll tell you plainly, I don't like you, nor love you at all, nor never will, what's more: so there's your answer for you; and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing.

BEN. Look you, young woman, you may learn to be polite, however. I spoke fair of you, do you see, and civil. As for your love or your liking, I don't value it any more than a thrashing; and maybe I like you as little as you do me: what I said was in obedience to father. Gad, I fear a whipping no more than you do. But I tell you one thing, if you should give such language at sea, you'd have a cat o' nine tails laid cross your shoulders. Flesh! who are you? You heard the other handsome young woman speak civilly to me

of her own accord. Whatever you think of yourself, gad, I don't think you are any more to compare to her than a can of weak-beer to a bowl of punch.

MISS. Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here that loves me, and I love him; and if he sees you speak to me any more, he'll thrash your hide for you, he will, you great sea-calf.

BEN. What, do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? Will he thrash my hide? Let him, — let him. But if he comes near me, maybe I'll show him the end of a rope, for all that.

What does father mean to leave me alone as soon as I come home with such a dirty dowdy? Sea-calf?

I amn't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd you: — marry you? I'll marry a Lapland witch as soon, and live upon selling contrary winds and wrecked vessels.

MISS. I won't be called names, nor will I be abused like this, so I won't. If I were a man [*cries*] — you wouldn't dare talk like this. No, you wouldn't dare, you stinking tar-barrel.

Enter MRS FORESIGHT and MRS FRAIL.

MRS FORE. They have quarrelled, just as we would wish it.

BEN. Tar-barrel? Let your sweetheart there call me so, if he'll take your part, and I'll say something to him; gad, I'll lace his musk-doublet for him, I'll make him stink: he shall smell more like a weasel than a civet-cat, before I have done with him.

MRS FORE. Bless me, what's the matter, Miss? What, does she cry?
Mr Benjamin, what have you done to her?

BEN. Let her cry: the more she cries the less she'll... she has been gathering foul weather in her mouth, and now it rains out at her eyes.

MRS FORE. Come, Miss, come along with me, and tell me, poor child.

MRS FRAIL. Lord, what shall we do? There's my brother Foresight and Sir Sampson coming. Sister, do you take Miss down into the parlour, and I'll carry Mr Benjamin into my chamber, for they must not know that they are fallen out. Come, sir, will you venture yourself with me? [*Looking kindly on him.*]

BEN. Venture, and that I will, even if it was to sea in a storm.

Exeunt

SCENE 5.

Enter SIR SAMPSON and FORESIGHT.

SIR SAMP. I left them here together; what, are they gone?
Ben's a brisk boy: he has got her into a corner; his father's own son, indeed, he'll tussle her, and nuzzle her.
The rogue's got an appetite, coming from sea; if he could not wait, old Foresight, but get to it without the help of a parson, ha?
I fancy, if that's the case, I cannot be angry with him; it would be just like me, a chip of the old block.
Ha! you are melancholic, old Prognostication; as melancholic as if you had spilt the salt, or cut your nails on a Sunday. Come, cheer up, look around you: look up, old stargazer. Now is he searching the ground for a crooked pin, or an old horse-nail, with the head towards him.

FORE. Sir Sampson, we'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

SIR SAMP. With all my heart.

FORE. At ten o'clock, punctually at ten.

SIR SAMP. To a minute, to a second; you shall set your watch, and the bridegroom shall obey its motions; they shall be married to a minute, go to bed to a minute; and when the alarm strikes, they shall keep time like the figures of St. Dunstan's clock, and consummatum est will ring all over the parish.

Enter SCANDAL.

SCAN. Sir Sampson, sad news.

FORE. Bless us!

SIR SAMP. Why, what's the matter?

SCAN. Can't you guess at what ought to afflict you and him, and all of us, more than anything else?

SIR SAMP. Well, I don't know any universal grievance, except a new tax, or the loss of the Canary fleet. Unless popery should be landed in the West, or the French fleet were at anchor on the Thames.

SCAN. No. Undoubtedly, Mr Foresight knew all this, and might have prevented it.

FORE. It is no earthquake!

SCAN. No, not yet; nor whirlwind. But we don't know what it may come to. But it has had a consequence already that touches us all.

SIR SAMP. Why, out with it.

SCAN. Something has appeared to your son Valentine. He's gone to bed, and is very ill. He speaks little, yet he says he has a world to say. Asks for his father and the wise Foresight; talks of mystics, and the ghosts of astrologers. He has secrets to impart, I suppose, to you two. I can get nothing out of him but sighs. He wants to see you in the morning, but would not be disturbed tonight, because he has some business to do in a dream.

SIR SAMP. Hoity toity, what have I to do with his dreams or his divination? This is a trick to defer signing the contract. I'm sure the devil will tell him in a dream that he must not part with his estate. But I'll bring him a parson to tell him that the devil's a liar: — or if that won't do, I'll bring a lawyer that shall out-lie the devil. And so I'll see whether my blackguard or his shall get the better of the day.

Exit SIR SAMPSON

SCAN. Alas, Mr Foresight, I'm afraid all is not right. You are a wise man, and a conscientious man, a searcher into obscurity and futurity, and if you commit an error, it is with a great deal of consideration, and discretion, and caution...

FORE. Ah, good Mr Scandal...

SCAN. Nay, nay, it is obvious; I do not flatter you. But Sir Sampson is hasty, very hasty. I'm afraid he is not scrupulous enough, Mr Foresight. He has been wicked, and heaven grant he may mean well in his affair with you. But my mind tells me, that these things cannot be wholly insignificant. You are wise, and should not be over-reached, I think you should not...

FORE. Alas, Mr Scandal, — humanum est errare.

SCAN. You are right, man will err; mere man will err — but you are something more. There have been wise men; but they were such as you, men who consulted the stars, and were observers of omens. Solomon was wise, but how? — by his judgment in astrology. So says the Jesuit scholar Pineda in his third book and eighth chapter...

FORE. You are learned, Mr Scandal.

SCAN. A trifler — but a lover of art. And the Wise Men of the East owed their instruction to a star, which is rightly observed by Gregory the Great in favour of astrology. And Albertus Magnus makes it the most valuable science, because, as he says, it teaches us to consider the causation of causes, in the causes of things.

FORE. I declare I honour you, Mr Scandal. I did not think you were read in these matters. Few young men are inclined...

SCAN. I thank the stars that have inclined me. But I fear this marriage and making over this estate, this transferring of a rightful inheritance, will bring judgments upon us. I prophesy it, and I would not have the fate of Cassandra not to be believed. Valentine is disturbed; what can be the cause of that? And Sir Sampson is hurried on by an unusual violence. I fear he does not act wholly from himself; I fancy he does not look like he used to do.

FORE. He was always of an impetuous nature. But as to this marriage, I have consulted the stars, and all appearances are prosperous...

SCAN. Come, come, Mr Foresight, let not the prospect of worldly lucre carry you beyond your judgment, nor against your conscience. You are not satisfied that you act justly.

FORE. How?

SCAN. You are not satisfied, I say. I am loth to discourage you, but it is palpable that you are not satisfied.

FORE. How does it appear, Mr Scandal? I think I am very well satisfied.

SCAN. Either you are deceiving yourself, or you do not know yourself.

FORE. Pray explain yourself.

SCAN. Do you sleep well o' nights?

FORE. Very well.

SCAN. Are you certain? You do not look so.

FORE. I am in health, I think.

SCAN. So was Valentine this morning; and looked just so.

FORE. How? Am I altered any way? I don't notice it.

SCAN. That may be, but your beard is longer than it was two hours ago.

FORE. Indeed! Bless me!

SCENE 6.

SCANDAL, FORESIGHT
Enter MRS FORESIGHT.

MRS FORE. Husband, will you go to bed? It's ten o'clock.
Mr Scandal, your servant.

SCAN. Pox on her, she has interrupted my design — but I must work her into the project.
You keep early hours, madam.

MRS FORE. Mr Foresight is punctual; we sit up after him.

FORE. My dear, pray lend me your glass, your little looking-glass.

SCAN. Pray lend it him, madam. I'll tell you the reason.
[*She gives him the glass: SCANDAL and she whisper.*] My passion for you is grown so violent, that I am no longer master of myself. I was interrupted in the morning, when you were good enough to give me your attention, and I had hopes of finding another opportunity of explaining myself to you, but was disappointed all this day; and the uneasiness that has attended me ever since brings me here at this unseasonable hour.

MRS FORE. Was there ever such impudence, to make love to me before my husband's face? I'll swear I'll tell him.

SCAN. [*Whisper. FORESIGHT looking in the glass.*] Do. I'll die a martyr rather than disclaim my passion. But come a little farther this way, and I'll tell you what project I had to get him out of the way; that I might have an opportunity of waiting upon you.

FORE. I do not see any revolution here; I think I look serene and benign— pale, a little pale — but the roses of these cheeks have been gathered many years; — ha! I do not like that sudden flushing. Gone already! hem, hem, hem! faintish. My heart is pretty good; yet it beats; and my pulses, ha! — I have none — mercy on me — hum. Yes, here they are — gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, hey! Where will they hurry me? Now they're gone again. And now I'm faint again, and pale again, and hem! and my hem! breath, hem! grows short; hem! hem! he, he, hem!

SCAN. He's caught: pursue it in the name of love and pleasure.

MRS FORE. How do you do, Mr Foresight!

FORE. Hum, not as well as I thought I was. Lend me your hand.

SCAN. There you are now. Your lady says your sleep has been unquiet of late.

FORE. Very likely.

MRS FORE. Oh, mighty restless, but I was afraid to tell him. He has been subject to talking and starting.

SCAN. And did not use to be so?

MRS FORE. Never, never, till within these three nights; I cannot say that he has once broken my rest since we have been married.

FORE. I will go to bed.

SCAN. Do so, Mr Foresight, and say your prayers. He looks better than he did.

MRS FORE. Nurse, nurse!

FORE. Do you think so, Mr Scandal?

SCAN. Yes, yes. I hope this will be gone by morning, taking it in time.

FORE. I hope so.

Enter NURSE.

MRS FORE. Nurse; your master is not well; put him to bed.

SCAN. I hope you will be able to see Valentine in the morning. You had best take a little poppy syrup and cowslip-water, and lie upon your back: maybe you will dream.

FORE. I thank you, Mr Scandal, I will. Nurse, let me have a watch- light, and lay the prayer book by me.

NURSE. Yes, sir.

FORE. And — hem, hem! I am very faint.

SCAN. No, no, you look much better.

FORE. Do I?

And, listen, bring me, let me see — within a quarter of twelve, hem — he, hem! — just upon the turning of the tide, bring me the urinal; and I hope, neither the lord of my ascendant, nor the moon will be in the house of the sun; and then I may do well.

SCAN. I hope so. Leave that to me; I will erect a scheme; and I hope I shall find both Sol and Venus in the sixth house.

FORE. I thank you, Mr Scandal, indeed that would be a great comfort to me. Hem, hem! good night.

Exit FORESIGHT, NURSE

SCENE 7.

SCANDAL, MRS FORESIGHT.

SCAN. Good night, good Mr Foresight; and I hope Mars and Venus will be in conjunction; — while your wife and I are together.

MRS FORE. Well; and what use do you hope to make of this project? You don't think that you are ever like to succeed in your design upon me?

SCAN. Yes, indeed I do; I have a better opinion both of you and myself than to despair.

MRS FORE. Did you ever hear such a toad? Listen, devil: do you think any woman honest?

SCAN. Yes, several, very honest; they'll cheat a little at cards, sometimes, but that's nothing.

MRS FORE. Pshaw! but virtuous, I mean?

SCAN. Yes, indeed, I believe some women are virtuous too; just as I believe some men are valiant, through fear. For why should a man court danger or a woman shun pleasure?

MRS FORE. Oh, monstrous! What are conscience and honour?

SCAN. Why, honour is a public enemy, and conscience a domestic thief; and he that would secure his pleasure must pay a tribute to one and go halves with the other. As for honour, you have secured that, for you have purchased a perpetual opportunity for pleasure.

MRS FORE. An opportunity for pleasure?

SCAN. Ay, your husband, a husband is an opportunity for pleasure: so you have taken care of honour, and it is the least I can do to take care of conscience.

MRS FORE. And so you think we are free for one another?

SCAN. Yes, I think so; I love to speak my mind.

MRS FORE. Why, then, I'll speak my mind. Now as to this affair between you and me. Here you make love to me; I'll confess it does not displease me. Your appearance is good enough, and your understanding is not amiss.

SCAN. I have no great opinion of myself, but I think I'm neither deformed nor a fool.

MRS FORE. But you have a villainous character: you are a libertine in speech, as well as practice.

SCAN. Come, I know what you would say: you think it more dangerous to be seen in conversation with me than to allow some other men the last favour; you mistake: the liberty I take in talking is purely affected for the service of your sex. He that first cries out stop thief is often he that has stolen the treasure. I am a juggler, that act by confederacy; and if you please, we'll put a trick upon the world.

MRS FORE. Ay; but you are such an universal juggler, that I'm afraid you have a great many confederates.

SCAN. Indeed, I'm clean.

MRS FORE. Oh, no — I'll swear you're impudent.

SCAN. I'll swear you're handsome.

MRS FORE. Pish, you'd tell me so, though you did not think so.

SCAN. And you'd think so, though I should not tell you so. And now I think we know one another pretty well.

MRS FORE. O Lord, who's here?

Enter MRS FRAIL and BEN.

BEN. I love to speak my mind. Father has nothing to do with me. Nay, I can't say that either; he has something to do with me. But what does that signify? If I don't have a mind to be steered by him; it is as though he should strive against wind and tide.

MRS FRAIL. Ay, but, my dear, we must keep it secret till the estate be settled; for you know, marrying without an estate is like sailing in a ship without ballast.

BEN. He, he, he; why, that's true; just so for all the world it is indeed, as like as two cable ropes.

MRS FRAIL. And though I have a good portion, you know one would not venture all in one bottom.

BEN. Why, that's true again; for maybe one bottom would spring a leak. You have hit it indeed: you've nicked the channel.

MRS FRAIL. Well, but if you should forsake me after all, you'd break my heart.

BEN. Break your heart? I'd rather the Mary-gold should break her cable in a storm, as much as I love her. Flesh, you don't think I'm false-hearted, like a landman. A sailor will be honest, though maybe he has never a penny of money in his pocket. Maybe I do not have as fair a face as a citizen or a courtier; but, for all that, I've as good blood in my veins, and a heart as sound as a biscuit.

MRS FRAIL. And will you love me always?

BEN. Aye, if I love once, I'll stick like pitch; I'll tell you that. Come, I'll sing you a song of a sailor.

MRS FRAIL. Wait, there's my sister, I'll call her to hear it.

MRS FORE. Well; I won't go to bed to my husband tonight, because I'll retire to my own chamber, and think of what you have said.

SCAN. Well; you'll give me permission to wait for you at your chamber door, and leave you my last instructions?

MRS FORE. Wait, here's my sister coming towards us.

MRS FRAIL. If it won't interrupt you I'll entertain you with a song.

BEN. The song was made up for the wife of one of our ship's-crew's. Our boatswain made the song. Maybe you know her, sir. Before she was married she was called buxom Joan of Deptford.

SCAN. I have heard of her.

BEN. *[Sings]:-*

BALLAD.

I.

A soldier and a sailor,
A tinker and a tailor,
Had once a doubtful strife, sir,
To make a maid a wife, sir,
Whose name was buxom Joan.
For now the time was ended,
When she no more intended
To lick her lips at men, sir,
And gnaw the sheets in vain, sir,
And lie o' nights alone.

II.

The soldier swore like thunder,
He loved her more than plunder,
And showed her many a scar, sir,
That he had brought from far, sir,
With fighting for her sake.
The tailor thought to please her
With offering her his measure.
The tinker, too, with mettle
Said he could mend her kettle,
And stop up ev'ry leak.

III.

But while these three were prating,
The sailor slyly waiting,
Thought if it came about, sir,
That they should all fall out, sir,
He then might play his part.
And just e'en as he meant, sir,
To loggerheads they went, sir,
And then he let fly at her
A shot 'twixt wind and water,
That won this fair maid's heart.

BEN. If some of our crew that came to see me are not gone, you shall see that we sailors can dance sometimes as well as other folks. [*Whistles.*] That will bring them, if they are within hearing.

Enter Seamen.

Oh, here they be — and fiddles along with them.
Come, my lads, let's have a round, and I'll make one.

Dance.

BEN. We're merry folks, we sailors: we don't have much to care for. Thus we live at sea; eat biscuit, and drink flip, put on a clean shirt once a quarter; come home and lie with our landladies once a year, get rid of a little money, and then put off with the next fair wind. How do you like us?

MRS FRAIL. Oh, you are the happiest, merriest men alive.

MRS FORE. We're grateful to Mr Benjamin for this entertainment. I believe it's late.

BEN. Why, if you think so, you had best go to bed. For my part, I mean to toss a can, and remember my sweet-heart, before I turn in; maybe I will dream of her.

MRS FORE. Mr Scandal, you had best go to bed and dream too.

SCAN.

Why, I have a good lively imagination, and can dream as much as another, if I put my mind to it. But dreaming is the poor retreat of a lazy, hopeless, and imperfect lover; it is the last glimpse of love to worn-out sinners, and the faint dawning of bliss to wishing girls and growing boys.

There's nought but willing, waking love, that can
Make blest the ripened maid and finished man.

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.

Valentine's lodging.

SCANDAL and JEREMY.

SCAN. Well, is your master ready? does he look madly and talk madly?

JERE. Yes, sir; you need have no great doubt of that. He that was so near turning playwright yesterday morning doesn't need much to play the madman today.

SCAN. Does he want Angelica to know of the reason for his plan?

JERE. No, sir, not yet. He wants to see if his playing the madman will make her play the fool, and fall in love with him; or at least admit that she has loved him all this time and concealed it.

SCAN. I saw her take coach just now with her maid, and think I heard her bid the coachman to drive here.

JERE. Good enough, sir, for I told her maid this morning, that my master had turned stark mad only for love of her mistress. — I hear a coach stop; if that should be her, sir, I believe he will not see her, till he hears how she takes it.

SCAN. Well, I'll test her: — it is her — here she comes.

Enter ANGELICA with JENNY.

ANG. Mr Scandal, I suppose you don't think it a novelty to see a woman visit a man at his own lodgings in a morning?

SCAN. Not upon a kind occasion, madam. But when a lady comes tyrannically to insult a ruined lover, and make the cruel triumphs of her beauty obvious, the barbarity of it surprises me somewhat.

ANG. I don't like raillery from a serious face. Pray tell me what is the matter?

JERE. No strange matter, madam; my master's mad, that's all. I suppose your ladyship has thought him so a long time.

ANG. How do you mean, mad?

JERE. Why, indeed, madam, he's mad for want of his wits, just as he was poor for want of money; his head is as light as his pockets, and anybody that has a mind to a bad bargain could hardly do better than to beg him for his estate.

ANG. If you are telling the truth, your endeavouring at wit is very unseasonable.

SCAN. *[Aside.]* She's concerned, and loves him.

ANG. Mr Scandal, you can't think me guilty of so much inhumanity as to not be concerned for a man to whom I must admit I am obliged? Pray tell me the truth.

SCAN. Indeed, madam, I wish telling a lie would mend the matter. But this is no new effect of an unsuccessful passion.

ANG. *[Aside.]* I don't know what to think. Yet, I would be vexed to have a trick played upon me.

May I not see him?

SCAN. I'm afraid the physician does not think that you should see him yet. Jeremy, go in and enquire.

Exit JEREMY

ANG. *[Aside.]* Ha! I saw him wink and smile. I fancy it is a trick.

— I would disguise to the entire world a failing that I must admit to you: I fear my happiness depends upon Valentine's recovery. Therefore I beg you, as you are his friend, and as you have compassion upon one who is fearful of affliction, to tell me what I am to hope for — I cannot speak — but you may tell me, tell me, for you know what I would ask?

SCAN. *[Aside.]* So, this is pretty plain.

Don't be too concerned, madam; I hope his condition is not desperate. An acknowledgment of love from you, perhaps, may work a cure, as the fear of your aversion caused his distemper.

ANG. *[Aside.]* Say you so; aye, then, I'm convinced. And if I don't play trick for trick, may I never taste the pleasure of revenge. —

Acknowledgment of love! I think you have mistaken my compassion, and think me guilty of a weakness to which I am a stranger. But I have too much sincerity to deceive you, and too much charity to cause him to be deluded with vain hopes. Good nature and humanity oblige me to be concerned for him; but to love is neither in my power nor inclination, and if he can't be cured unless I suck the poison from his wounds, I'm afraid he won't recover his senses till I lose mine.

SCAN. Won't you see him, then, if he desires it?

ANG. What do a madman's desires signify? Besides, it would make me uneasy: — if I don't see him, perhaps my concern for him may lessen. If I forget him, it is no more than he has done by himself; and now that the surprise is over, I don't think that I am half as sorry as I was.

SCAN. [*Aside.*] So, indeed, good nature works apace; You were confessing just now an obligation to his love.

ANG. But I have considered that passions are unreasonable and involuntary; if he loves, he can't help it; and if I don't love, I can't help it; no more than he can help his being a man, or me my being a woman: or no more than I can help my want of inclination to wait here any longer. Come, Jenny.

Exit ANGELICA, JENNY

SCANDAL.

SCAN. Humh! An admirable composition, indeed, this same womankind.

Enter JEREMY

JERE. What, is she gone, sir?

SCAN. Gone? Why, she was never here, nor anywhere else; nor will I know her if I see her, nor you neither.

JERE. Good lack! What's the matter now? Are more of us to be mad? Why, sir, my master longs to see her, and is almost mad in good earnest with the joyful news of her being here.

SCAN. We are all mistaken. Ask no questions, for I can't answer you; but I'll inform your master. In the meantime, if our project with his father is as successful as it is with his mistress, he may descend from his exaltation of madness into the road of common sense, and be content only to be made a fool with other reasonable people. I hear Sir Sampson. You know your cue; I'll go to your master.

Exit SCANDAL

SCENE 2.

JEREMY

Enter SIR SAMPSON LEGEND, with a LAWYER.

SIR SAMP. Do you see, Mr Buckram, here's the paper signed with his own hand.

BUCK. Good, sir. And the contract is already written up in this box, if he is ready to sign and seal it.

SIR SAMP. Ready? He must be ready. His sham-sickness will be no excuse. Oh, here's his scoundrel. My man, where's your master?

JERE. Ah sir, he's quite gone.

SIR SAMP. Gone! What, he is not dead?

JERE. No, sir, he's not dead.

SIR SAMP. What, is he gone out of town, run away, ha? Has he tricked me? Speak, varlet.

JERE. No, no, sir, he's safe enough, sir, if only he were as sound, poor gentleman. He is indeed here, sir, and not here, sir.

SIR SAMP. Hey, rascal, are you taunting me? My man, are you taunting me? Speak, my man, where is he? For I will find him.

JERE. If only you could, sir, for he has lost himself. Indeed, sir, I have almost broke my heart about him — I am in tears when I think of him, sir: I'm as melancholy for him as a funeral-bell, sir.

SIR SAMP. A pox confound your similes, sir. Speak to be understood, and tell me in plain terms what is the matter with him, or I'll crack your fool's skull.

JERE. Ah, you've hit it, sir; that's the matter with him, sir: his skull's cracked, poor gentleman; he's stark mad, sir.

SIR SAMP. Mad!

BUCK. What, is he non compos?

JERE. Quite non compos, sir.

BUCK. Why, then, all's ruined, Sir Sampson, if he be non compos mentis; his act and deed will be of no effect, it is not good in law.

SIR SAMP. Huh, I won't believe it; let me see him, sir. Mad — I'll make him find his senses.

JERE. Mr Scandal is with him, sir; I'll knock at the door.

*[Goes to the scene, which opens: VALENTINE, SCANDAL.
VALENTINE upon a couch disorderly dressed.]*

SIR SAMP. What's this, what's happening here?

VAL. Ha! Who's that? *[Starting.]*

SCAN. For heaven's sake softly, sir, and gently; don't provoke him.

VAL. Answer me: who is that, and that?

SIR SAMP. Gads bobs, does he not know me? Is he foolish? I'll speak gently. Val, Val, do you not know me, boy? Not know your own father, Val? I am your own father, and this is honest Brief Buckram, the lawyer.

VAL. It may be so — I did not know you — the world is full. There are people that we do know, and people that we do not know, and yet the sun shines upon all alike. There are fathers that have many children, and there are children that have many fathers. It is strange! But I am Truth, and come to give the world the lie.

SIR SAMP. I don't know what to say to him.

VAL. Why does that lawyer wear black? Does he carry his conscience on the outside? Lawyer what are you? Do you know me?

BUCK. O Lord, what should I say?
Yes, sir,

VAL. You are lying, for I am Truth. It is hard that I cannot make my livelihood among you. I have been sworn out of the law courts the first day of every term — let me see — no matter how long. But I'll tell you one thing: it's a question that would puzzle an arithmetician, if you should ask him, whether the Bible saves more souls in Westminster Abbey, or damns more in Westminster Hall. For my part, I am Truth, and can't tell; I have very few acquaintances.

SIR SAMP. He talks sensibly in his madness. Has he no intervals?

JERE. Very short, sir.

BUCK. Sir, I can do you no service while he's in this condition. Here's your paper, sir — he may do me a mischief if I stay. The contract is ready, sir, if he recover his senses.

Exit BUCKRAM.

SIR SAMP. Wait, wait, don't go yet.

SCAN. You'd better let him go, sir, and send for him if there is a need; for I fancy his presence provokes him more.

VAL. Is the lawyer gone? it is well, then we may drink about without arguing — heigh ho! What time is it? My father here! Your blessing, sir.

SIR SAMP. He recovers — bless you, Val; how are you, boy?

VAL. Thank you, sir, pretty well. I have been a little out of order, Won't you please sit, sir?

SIR SAMP. Ay, boy. Come, you shall sit down by me.

VAL. Sir, it is my duty to wait.

SIR SAMP. No, no; come, come, sit down, honest Val. How are you? Let me feel your pulse. Oh, pretty well now, Val. I was worried to see you ill; but I'm glad you are better, honest Val.

VAL. Thank you, sir.

SCAN. *[Aside.]* Miracle! The monster grows loving.

SIR SAMP. Let me feel your hand again, Val. It does not shake; I believe you can write, Val. Ha, boy? You can write your name, Val.
[In whisper to JEREMY.] Jeremy, go and catch Mr Buckram, tell him to hurry back with the contract; quick, quick.

Exit JEREMY

SCAN. *[Aside.]* That I could ever suspect such a heathen of any remorse!

SIR SAMP. Do you know this paper, Val? I know you are honest, and will perform articles. *[Shows him the paper, but holds it out of his reach.]*

VAL. Pray let me see it, sir. You hold it so far off that I can't tell whether I know it or not.

SIR SAMP. See it, boy? Ay, ay; why, you do see it — it is your own hand, Vally. Why, let me see, I can read it as plain as can be. Look. *[Reads.]* THE CONDITION OF THIS OBLIGATION — Look, as plain as can be, so it begins — and then at the bottom — AS WITNESS MY HAND, VALENTINE LEGEND, in great letters. Why, it is as plain as the nose in one's face. What, are my eyes better than yours? I believe I can read it even farther off; let me see. *[Stretches his arm as far as he can.]*

VAL. Will you please let me hold it, sir?

SIR SAMP. Let you hold it, you say? Ay, with all my heart. What does it matter who holds it? Why does anybody need to hold it? I'll put it up in my pocket, Val, and then nobody needs to hold it. *[Puts the paper in his pocket.]* There, Val; it's safe enough, boy. But you shall have it as soon as you have held another paper, little Val.

Enter JEREMY with BUCKRAM.

VAL. What, is my bad genius here again! Oh no, it is the lawyer with an itching palm; and he's come to be scratched. My nails are not long enough. Let me have a pair of red-hot tongs quickly, quickly, and you shall see me act St. Dunstan, and lead the devil by the nose.

BUCK. O Lord, let me be gone: I'll not risk myself with a madman.

Exit BUCKRAM.

VAL. Ha, ha, ha; you don't need to run so fast, honesty will not overtake you. Ha, ha, ha, the rogue discovered that I was unable to pay.

SIR SAMP. Huh! What a vexation is here! I don't know what to do, or say, nor which way to go.

VAL. Who's that that's out of his way? I am Truth, and can set him right. Listen, friend, the straight road is the worst way you can go. He that follows his nose always, will often be led into a stink. *Probatum est.* But what are you for? religion or politics? There's a couple of topics for you, no more like one another than oil and vinegar; and yet those two, beaten together by a state-cook, make sauce for the whole nation.

SIR SAMP. What the devil had I to do, ever to beget sons? Why did I ever marry?

VAL. Because you were a monster, old boy! The two greatest monsters in the world are a man and a woman! What's your opinion?

SIR SAMP. Why, my opinion is, that those two monsters joined together, make yet a greater, that's a man and his wife.

VAL. Aha! Old True-penny, do you say so? You have worked it out. But it's wonderful strange, Jeremy.

JERE. What is, sir?

VAL. That gray hairs should cover a green head — and I make a fool of my father. What's here! A walking almanac: or a bearded sibyl? If Prophecy comes, Truth must make space.

Exit VALENTINE with JEREMY

SCENE 3.

SIR SAMPSON, SCANDAL,
Enter FORESIGHT, MRS FORESIGHT, MRS FRAIL.

FORE. What is he saying? What, did he prophesy? Ha, Sir Sampson, bless us! How are we?

SIR SAMP. Are we? A pox on your prediction. Why, we are fools, just as we use to be. Huh, that you could not foresee that the moon would predominate, and my son would be mad. Where's your oppositions, your trines, and your quadrates? What did all your mathematicians and your astronomers tell you? Your harmony of palmistry with astrology. Ah! pox on it, that I that know the world and men and manners, that don't believe a syllable in the sky and stars, and sun and almanacs and trash, should be directed by a dreamer, an omen-hunter, and defer business in expectation of a lucky hour, when, there never was a lucky hour after the first opportunity.

Exit SIR SAMPSON

FORE. Ah, Sir Sampson, heaven help your head. This is not your lucky hour; Nobody is wise all the time. What, is he gone, and in contempt of science? Ill stars and unconvertible ignorance attend him.

SCAN. You must excuse his passion, Mr Foresight, for he has been very vexed. His son is non compos mentis, and thereby incapable of making any contract in law; so that all his plans are disappointed.

FORE. Ha! do you say?

MRS FRAIL. [*Aside to MRS FORESIGHT.*] What, has my sea-lover lost his anchor of hope, then?

MRS FORE. O sister, what will you do with him?

MRS FRAIL. Do with him? Send him to sea again in the next bad weather. He's used to inconstant elements, and won't be surprised to see the tide turned.

FORE. Where was I mistaken, that I did not foresee this? [*Considers.*]

SCAN. [*Aside to MRS FORESIGHT.*] Madam, you and I can tell him something else that he did not foresee, and more particularly relating to his own fortune.

MRS FORE. What do you mean? I don't understand you.

SCAN. Hush, softly, — the pleasures of last night, my dear, are too considerable to be forgotten so soon.

MRS FORE. Last night! And what would your impudence infer from last night? Last night was like the night before, I think.

SCAN. What, do you make no difference between me and your husband?

MRS FORE. Not much, — he's superstitious, and you are mad, in my opinion.

SCAN. You make me mad. You are not serious. Pray recollect yourself.

MRS FORE. Oh yes, now I remember, you were very impertinent and impudent, — and would have come to bed to me.

SCAN. And did not?

MRS FORE. Did not! With that face you can ask the question?

SCAN. I have heard of this before, but I never believed it. I have been told, that she had the admirable quality of forgetting to a man's face in the morning that she had lain with him all night, and denying that she had done favours with less shame than she would grant them. Madam, I'm your humble servant, and honour you. — You look pretty well, Mr Foresight: how did you rest last night?

FORE. Truly, Mr Scandal, I was so taken up with broken dreams and distracted visions that I remember little.

SCAN. It was a very forgetting night. But will you please talk with Valentine? Perhaps you can understand him; I'm apt to believe there is something mysterious in his discourses, and sometimes rather think he is more inspired than mad.

FORE. You speak with singular good judgment, Mr Scandal, truly. I am inclining to your opinion in this matter, and do revere a man whom the vulgar think mad. Let us go to him.

Exit FORESIGHT, MRS FORESIGHT, SCANDAL

MRS FRAIL. Sister, stay with them; I'll find my lover, and discharge him, and follow you. On my conscience, here he comes.

SCENE 4.

MRS FRAIL
Enter BEN.

BEN. All mad, I think. I believe all the fevers of the sea are come ashore, for my part.

MRS FRAIL. Mr Benjamin in choler!

BEN. No, I'm pleased enough, now that I have found you. I say, I have had such a hurricane upon your account.

MRS FRAIL. My account; pray what's the matter?

BEN. Why, father came and found me squabbling with that baby-faced thing that he would have me marry, so he asked what was the matter. He asked in a surly sort of a way — it seems brother Val is gone mad, and so that put him into a passion; but how could I know that? What's that to me? — so he asked in a surly sort of manner, and gad I answered him as surlily. What if he is my father, I am't bound as an apprentice to him; so indeed I told him in plain terms, if I intended to marry, I'd marry to please myself, not him. And for the young woman that he provided for me, I thought it more fitting for her to learn her embroidery and make dirt-pies than to look after a husband; for my part I was not the man for her. I had another voyage to make, let him take it as he will.

MRS FRAIL. So, then, you intend to go to sea again?

BEN. Nay, nay, I was thinking of you, but I would not tell him as much. So he said he'd make my heart ache; and if he could get a woman that suited him, he'd marry himself. Gad, says I, if you play the fool and marry at your age, there's more danger of your head's aching than my heart. He was right angry when I gave him that wipe. He hadn't a word to say, and so I left him and the green girl together; maybe the bee may bite, and he'll marry her himself, with all my heart.

MRS FRAIL. And were you this undutiful and graceless a wretch to your father?

BEN. Then why was he graceless first? If I am undutiful and graceless, why did he beget me so? I did not get myself.

MRS FRAIL. O impiety! How have I been mistaken! What an inhuman, merciless creature have I set my heart upon? Oh, I am happy to have discovered the shelves and quicksands that lurk beneath that faithless, smiling face.

BEN. Hey toss! What's the matter now? Why, you aren't angry, are you?

MRS FRAIL. Oh, see me no more, — for you were born amongst rocks, suckled by whales, cradled in a tempest, and whistled to by winds; and you are here with fins and scales, and three rows of teeth, a most outrageous fish of prey.

BEN. O Lord, O Lord, she's mad, poor young woman: love has turned her senses, her brain is quite upset. What shall I do to set her to rights?

MRS FRAIL. No, no, I am not mad, monster; I am wise enough to find you out. Did you have the impudence to aspire to be a husband with that stubborn and disobedient temper? You that know not how to submit to a father, presume to have a sufficient stock of duty to undergo a wife? I should have been finely cheated indeed, very finely cheated.

BEN. Listen; if you are in your right senses, for I think I'm about to be finely cheated, — if I have got aggravation here for your sake, and you are tacked about already. What do you mean, after all your fair speeches, and stroking my cheeks, and kissing and hugging, what would you sheer off so? Would you, and leave me aground?

MRS FRAIL. No, I'll leave you adrift, and you can go whatever way you will.

BEN. What, are you false-hearted, then?

MRS FRAIL. Only the wind's changed.

BEN. More shame on you, — the wind's changed? It's an ill wind blows nobody good, — maybe I am better off without you, if these are your tricks. What, did you mean all this time to make a fool of me?

MRS FRAIL. Any fool but a husband.

BEN. Husband! Gad, I would not be your husband if you would have me, now I know your mind: if you had your weight in gold and jewels, and if I loved you never so well.

MRS FRAIL. Why, can you not love, porpoise?

BEN. No matter what I can do; don't call names. I don't love you so much as to bear that, whatever I did. I'm glad you show yourself, mistress. Let them marry you as don't know you. Gad, I know you too well, by sad experience; I believe he that marries you will go to sea in a hen-pecked frigate — I believe that, young woman-...and maybe can come to an anchor at Cuckolds-Point; so there's a dash for you, take it as you will: maybe you can holler after me when I won't come to.

Exit BEN

MRS FRAIL. Ha, ha, ha, no doubt about it. — MY TRUE LOVE IS GONE TO SEA. [*Sings*]

SCENE 5.

MRS FRAIL
Enter MRS FORESIGHT.

MRS FRAIL. O sister, if had you come a minute sooner, you would have seen the end of a lover: — honest Tar and I are parted; — and with the same indifference that we met. On my life I am half vexed at the insensibility of a brute that I despised.

MRS FORE. What then, he bore it most heroically?

MRS FRAIL. Most tyrannically; for you see he has got the better of me, and I, the poor forsaken maid, am left complaining on the shore. But I'll tell you an idea that he has given me: Sir Sampson is enraged, and talks desperately of committing matrimony himself. If he has a mind to throw himself away, he can't do it more effectually than upon me, if we could bring it about.

MRS FORE. Oh, hang him, old fox, he's too cunning; besides, he hates both you and me. But I have a project in mind for you, and I have gone a good way towards it. I have almost made a bargain with Jeremy, Valentine's man, to sell his master to us.

MRS FRAIL. Sell him? How?

MRS FORE. Valentine raves upon Angelica, and mistook me for her, and Jeremy says will take anybody for her that he presents to him. Now, I have promised him mountains, if in one of his mad fits he will bring you to him instead of her, and get you married and put to bed together; and after consummation, girl, there's no revoking. And if he should recover his senses, at the very least he'll be glad to make you a good settlement. Here they come: stand aside a little, and tell me how you like the design.

Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, and JEREMY.

SCAN. *[To JEREMY.]* And have you given your master a hint of their plot?

JERE. Yes, sir; he says he'll favour it, and mistake her for Angelica.

SCAN. It may make sport for us.

FORE. Mercy on us!

VAL. Hush — don't interrupt — I'll whisper a prediction to you, and you shall prophesy. I am Truth, and can teach your tongue a new trick. I have told you what is past, — now I'll tell what's to come. Do you know what will happen tomorrow? — Don't answer me — for I will tell you. Tomorrow, knaves will thrive through craft, and fools through

fortune, and honesty will go as it did, frost-nipped in a summer suit. Ask me questions concerning tomorrow.

SCAN. Ask him, Mr Foresight.

FORE. Pray what will be done at court?

VAL. Scandal will tell you. I am Truth; I never go there.

FORE. In the city?

VAL. Oh, prayers will be said in empty churches at the usual hours. Yet you will see such zealous faces behind counters, as if religion were to be sold in every shop. Oh, things will go methodically in the city: the clocks will strike twelve at noon, and the horned herd buzz in the exchange at two. Wives and husbands will drive distinct trades, and care and pleasure separately occupy the family. Coffee-houses will be full of smoke and stratagem. And the cropped apprentice, that sweeps his master's shop in the morning, may ten to one dirty his sheets before night. But there are two things that you will see very strange: which are wanton wives with their legs at liberty, and tame cuckolds with chains about their necks. But wait, I must examine you before I go further. You look suspiciously. Are you a husband?

FORE. I am married.

VAL. Poor creature! Is your wife of Covent Garden parish?

FORE. No; St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

VAL. Alas, poor man; his eyes are sunk, and his hands shrivelled; his legs dwindled, and his back bowed: pray, pray, for a metamorphosis. Change your shape and shake off age; get you Medea's kettle and be boiled anew; come forth with labouring callous hands, a spine of steel, and Atlas shoulders. Let a surgeon trim the calves of twenty chairmen, and make pedestals for you to stand erect upon, and look matrimony in the face. Ha, ha, ha! That a man should have a stomach for a wedding supper, when the pigeons ought rather to be laid to his feet, ha, ha, ha!

FORE. His frenzy is very high now, Mr Scandal.

SCAN. I believe it is a spring tide.

FORE. Very likely, truly. You understand these matters. Mr Scandal, I shall be very glad to confer with you about these things that he has uttered. His sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical.

VAL. Oh, why would Angelica be absent from my eyes so long?

JERE. She's here, sir.

MRS FORE. Now, sister.

MRS FRAIL. O Lord, what should I say?

SCAN. Humour him, madam, by all means.

VAL. Where is she? Oh, I see her — she comes, like riches, health, and liberty at once, to a despairing, starving, and abandoned wretch. Oh, welcome, welcome.

MRS FRAIL. How are you, sir? Can I serve you?

VAL. Listen; I have a secret to tell you: Endymion and the moon shall meet us upon Mount Latmos, and we'll be married in the dead of night. But don't say a word. Hymen shall put his torch into a dark lantern, that it may be secret; and Juno shall give her peacock poppy-water, that he may fold his ogling tail, and Argos's hundred eyes be shut, ha! Nobody shall know but Jeremy.

MRS FRAIL. No, no, we'll keep it secret, it shall be done presently.

VAL. The sooner the better. Jeremy, come hither — closer — that none can overhear us. Jeremy, I can tell you news: Angelica is turned nun, and I am turning friar, and yet we'll marry one another in spite of the pope. Get me a cowl and beads, that I may play my part, — for she'll meet me two hours from now in black and white, and a long veil to cover the project, and we won't see one another's faces, till we have done something to be ashamed of; and then we'll blush for once and for all.

SCENE 6.

MRS FORESIGHT, MRS FRAIL, VALENTINE, SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, and JEREMY.

Enter TATTLE and ANGELICA.

JERE. I'll take care, and...

VAL. Whisper.

ANG. Nay, Mr Tattle, if you make love to me, you'll spoil my plan, for I intend to make you my confidant.

TATT. But, madam, to throw away your person — such a person! — and such a fortune on a madman!

ANG. I never loved him till he was mad; but don't tell anybody.

SCAN. How's this! Tattle making love to Angelica!

TATT. Tell, madam? Alas, you don't know me. I have much work to tell your ladyship how long I have been in love with you — but encouraged by the impossibility of Valentine's making any more addresses to you, I have ventured to declare the very inmost passion of my heart. O madam, look at us both. There you see the ruins of a poor decayed creature — here, a complete and lively figure, with youth and health, and all his five senses in perfection, madam, and to all this, the most passionate lover...

ANG. O no, for shame, hold your tongue. A passionate lover, and five senses in perfection! When you are as mad as Valentine, I'll believe you love me, and the maddest shall take me.

VAL. It is enough. Ha! Who's here?

FRAIL. *[To JEREMY.]* O Lord, her coming will spoil everything.

JERE. No, no, madam, he won't know her; if he should, I can persuade him.

VAL. Scandal, who are these? Foreigners? If they are, I'll tell you what I think, — *[Whisper.]* get away all the company but Angelica, that I may uncover my plan to her.

SCAN. I will — I have discovered something of Tattle that he has in common with Mrs Frail. He courts Angelica; if we could contrive to couple them together. — *[Whisper.]* Listen —

MRS FORE. He won't know you, cousin; he knows nobody.

FORE. But he knows more than anybody. O niece, he knows things past and to come, and all the profound secrets of time.

TATT. Look, Mr Foresight, it is not in my manner to make many words of matters, and so I shan't say much, — but in short, do you see, I will bet you a hundred pounds now, that I know more secrets than he.

FORE. How! I cannot read that knowledge in your face, Mr Tattle. Pray, what do you know?

TATT. Why, do you think I'll tell you, sir? Read it in my face? No, sir, it is written in my heart; and safer there, sir, than letters written in lemon juice, for no fire can fetch it out. I am no blab, sir.

VAL. *[To SCANDAL.]* Acquaint Jeremy with it, he may easily bring it about. They are welcome, and I'll tell them so myself.

What, do you look strange upon me? Then I must be plain. *[Coming up to them.]* I am

Truth, and hate an old acquaintance with a new face. [*SCANDAL goes aside with JEREMY.*]

TATT. Do you know me, Valentine?

VAL. You? Who are you? No, I hope not.

TATT. I am Jack Tattle, your friend.

VAL. My friend, what for? I am no married man, and you can not lie with my wife. I am very poor, and you can not borrow money from me. Then what use have I for a friend?

TATT. Ha! a good open speaker, and not to be trusted with a secret.

ANG. Do you know me, Valentine?

VAL. Oh, very well.

ANG. Who am I?

VAL. You're a woman. One to whom heaven gave beauty, when it grafted roses on a briar. You are the reflection of heaven in a pond, and he that leaps at you is sunk. You are all white, a sheet of lovely, spotless paper, when you first are born; but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose's quill. I know you; for I loved a woman, and loved her so long, that I found out a strange thing: I found out what a woman was good for.

TATT. Ay, what's that?

VAL. Why, to keep a secret.

TATT. O Lord!

VAL. Oh, exceedingly good to keep a secret; for although she might tell, she is not to be believed.

TATT. Hah! good again, indeed.

VAL. I would have music. Sing me the song that I like.

SONG

Set by MR FINGER.

I tell thee, Charmion, could I time retrieve,
And could again begin to love and live,
To you I should my earliest off'ring give;

I know my eyes would lead my heart to you,
And I should all my vows and oaths renew,
But to be plain, I never would be true.

II.

For by our weak and weary truth, I find,
Love hates to centre in a point assign'd?
But runs with joy the circle of the mind.
Then never let us chain what should be free,
But for relief of either sex agree,
Since women love to change, and so do we.

No more, for I am melancholy. [*Walks musing.*]

JERE. [*To SCANDAL.*] I'll do it, sir.

SCAN. Mr Foresight, we had best leave him. He may grow outrageous, and do mischief.

FORE. I will be directed by you.

JERE. [*To MRS FRAIL.*] You'll agree, madam? I'll take care everything will be ready.

MRS FRAIL. You shall do what you will; in short, I will deny you nothing.

TATT. [*To ANGELICA.*] Madam, shall I wait upon you?

ANG. No, I'll wait with him; Mr Scandal will protect me. Aunt, Mr Tattle desires you would give him leave to wait on you.

TATT. Pox on it, there's no getting out of it, now she has said that. Madam, will you do me the honour?

MRS FORE. Mr Tattle might have used less ceremony.

Exit TATTLE, MRS FORESIGHT, FORESIGHT, MRS FRAIL

SCAN. Jeremy, follow Tattle.

Exit JEREMY

ANG. Mr Scandal, I am only waiting till my maid comes, and because I had a mind to be rid of Mr Tattle.

SCAN. Madam, I am very glad that I overheard the better reason that you gave to Mr Tattle; for his impertinence forced you to acknowledge a kindness for Valentine, which you denied to all his sufferings and my solicitations. So I'll leave him to make use of the discovery, and your ladyship to the free confession of your inclinations.

ANG. O heavens! You won't leave me alone with a madman?

SCAN. No, madam; I only leave a madman to his remedy.

Exit SCANDAL

SCENE 7.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE.

VAL. Madam, you do not need to be very much afraid, for I fancy I begin to come to myself.

ANG. *[Aside.]* Ay, but if I don't fit you, I'll be hanged.

VAL. You see what disguises love makes us put on. Gods have been in camouflaged shapes for the same reason; and the divine part of me, my mind, has worn this mask of madness and this motley livery, only as the slave of love and menial creature to your beauty.

ANG. Mercy on me, how he talks! Poor Valentine!

VAL. Nay, indeed, now let us understand one another, hypocrisy apart. The comedy draws toward an end, and let us think of leaving acting and being ourselves; and since you have loved me, you must admit I have at length deserved that you should confess it.

ANG. *[Sighs.]* I wish I had loved you — for heaven knows I pity you, and if I could have foreseen the bad effects, I would have tried; but now it's too late. *[Sighs.]*

VAL. What sad effects? — what's too late? My apparent madness has deceived my father, and procured me time to think of means to reconcile myself to him, and preserve the right of my inheritance to his estate; which otherwise, by articles, I should have resigned this morning. And this I would have informed you of this today, but you were gone before I knew you had been here.

ANG. What! I thought your love for me had caused this transport in your soul; which, it seems, you only pretended, for mercenary ends and sordid interest.

VAL. Nay, now you do me wrong; for if any interest was considered it was yours, since I thought I needed more than love to make me worthy of you.

ANG. Then you thought me mercenary. But how am I deluded by this interval of sense to reason with a madman?

VAL. Oh, it is barbarous to misunderstand me longer.

Enter JEREMY.

ANG. Oh, here's a reasonable creature — sure he will not have the impudence to persevere. Come, Jeremy, acknowledge your trick, and confess your master's madness pretend.

JERE. Pretend, madam! I'll maintain him to be as absolutely and substantially mad as any freeholder in the asylum; aye, he's as mad as any projector, fanatic, chymist, lover, or playwright in Europe.

VAL. My man, you are; I am not mad.

ANG. Ha, ha, ha! you see he denies it.

JERE. O Lord, madam, did you ever know any madman mad enough to admit it?

VAL. Sot, can't you apprehend?

ANG. Why, he talked very sensibly just now.

JERE. Yes, madam; he has intervals. But you see he begins to look wild again now.

VAL. Why, you thick-skulled rascal, I tell you the farce is done, and I will be mad no longer.
[Beats him.]

ANG. Ha, ha, ha! is he mad or not, Jeremy?

JERE. Partly, I think, — for he does not know his own mind two hours. I'm sure I left him just now in the humour to be mad, and I think I have not found him very quiet at the present. *[One knocks.]* Who's there?

VAL. Go see, you sot. — I'm very glad that I can move your mirth though not your compassion.

ANG. But madmen show themselves most by over-pretending to a sound understanding, as drunken men do by over-acting sobriety. I was half inclining to believe you, till I accidentally touched upon your soft spot: but now you have restored me to my former opinion and compassion.

JERE. Sir, your father has sent to know if you are any better yet. Will you please to be mad, sir, or what?

VAL. Stupidity! You know the penalty for the confession of my senses is all I'm worth; I'm mad, and will be mad to everybody but this lady.

JERE. So — just the very reverse of truth, — but lying is a figure of speech that makes up the greatest part of my conversation. Madam, your ladyship's woman.

Enter JENNY.

ANG. Well, have you been there? — Come here.

JENNY. *[To ANGELICA.]*Yes, madam; Sir Sampson will see you presently.

VAL. You are not leaving me in this uncertainty?

ANG. Would anything but a madman complain of uncertainty? Uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life. Security is an insipid thing, and the catching and possessing of a wish uncovers the folly of the chase. Never let us know one another better, for the pleasure of a masquerade is done when we come to show our faces; but I'll tell you two things before I leave you: I am not the fool you take me for; and you are mad and don't know it.

Exit ANGELICA, JENNY

VAL. From a riddle you can expect nothing but a riddle. There's my instruction and the moral of my lesson.

JERE. What, is the lady gone again, sir? I hope you understood one another before she went?

VAL. Understood! She is harder to be understood than a piece of Egyptian antiquity or an Irish play: you may examine till you spoil your eyes and not improve your knowledge.

JERE. I have heard them say, sir, that they read hard Hebrew books backwards; maybe you begin to read at the wrong end.

VAL. They say so of a witch's prayer, and dreams and Dutch almanacs are to be understood by opposites. But there's regularity and method in that; she is a medal without a reverse or inscription, for indifference has both sides alike. Yet, while she does not seem to hate me, I will pursue her, and know her if it be possible, in spite of the opinion of my satirical friend, Scandal, who says...

That women are like tricks by sleight of hand,
Which, to admire, we should not understand.

ACT V.

SCENE 1.

A room in Foresight's house.

ANGELICA and JENNY.

ANG. Where is Sir Sampson? Did you not tell me he would be here before me?

JENNY. He's at the great mirror in the dining-room, madam, setting his cravat and wig.

ANG. What! That's good. If he intends that I should like him, it's a sign he likes me; and that's more than half my plan.

JENNY. I hear him, madam.

ANG. Leave me; and, do you hear, if Valentine should come, or send, I am not to be spoken with.

Enter SIR SAMPSON.

SIR SAMP. I have not been honoured with the commands of a fair lady for a long time, — well, madam, you have revived me, — not since I was five-and-thirty.

ANG. Why, you have no great reason to complain, Sir Sampson, that is not long ago.

SIR SAMP. Zooks, but it is, madam, a very long time: to a man that admires a fine woman as much as I do.

ANG. You're an absolute courtier, Sir Sampson.

SIR SAMP. Not at all, madam,— I am not so old neither, to just be a courtier, only a man of words. I have warm blood about me yet, and can serve a lady any way. Come, come, let me tell you, you women think a man old too soon, bless me you do. Come, don't despise fifty; why, fifty, in a hale constitution, is not such a contemptible age.

ANG. Fifty a contemptible age! Not at all; a very fashionable age, I think. I assure you, I know very considerable beaus that look good at fifty. Fifty! I have seen fifty in a side box by candle-light out-blossom five-and-twenty.

SIR SAMP. Appearances, appearances; a pestilence take them, mere appearances. Hang your side-box beaus; no, I'm none of those, none of your forced trees, that pretend to blossom in the fall, and bud when they should bring forth fruit: I am of a long-lived race, and inherit vigour; none of my ancestors married till fifty, yet they begot sons and daughters till eighty: I am of your patriarchs, I, a branch of one of your antediluvian families, fellows that the flood could not wash away. Well, madam, what are your commands? Has any young rogue affronted you, and shall I cut his throat? Or...

ANG. No, Sir Sampson, I have no quarrel upon my hands. I have more call for your conduct than your courage at this time. To tell you the truth, I'm weary of living single and want a husband.

SIR SAMP. [*Aside.*] What what, and it is pity you should. Well, would she would like me, then I should hamper my young rogues. I believe she could; bless me she's devilish handsome.

Madam, you deserve a good husband, and it would be a pity if you should be thrown away upon any of these young idle rogues about the town. Pestilence on them, they never think of anything; and if they commit matrimony, it is as they commit murder, out of a frolic, and are ready to hang themselves, or to be hanged by the law, the next morning. What-o, take care, madam.

ANG. Therefore I ask your advice, Sir Sampson. I have fortune enough to make any man easy that I can like: if there were such a thing as a young agreeable man, with a reasonable stock of good nature and sense — for I would neither have an absolute wit nor a fool.

SIR SAMP. Well, you are hard to please, madam: to find a young fellow that is neither a wit in his own eye, nor a fool in the eye of the world, is a very hard task. But, bless me, you speak very discreetly; for I too hate both a wit and a fool.

ANG. She that marries a fool, Sir Sampson, forfeits the reputation of her honesty or understanding; and she that marries a very witty man is a slave to the severity and insolent conduct of her husband. I should like a man of wit for a lover, because I would like to have such a one in my power; but I would no more be his wife than his enemy. For his malice is not as certain a terrible consequence of his aversion as his jealousy is of his love.

SIR SAMP. None of old Foresight's sibyls ever uttered such a truth. What what, you have won my heart; I hate a wit: I had a son that was spoiled among them, a good hopeful lad, till he learned to be a wit; and might have risen in the state. But, a pox on it, his wit run him out of his money, and now his poverty has run him out of his wits.

ANG. Sir Sampson, as your friend, I must tell you, you are very much mistaken in that matter: he's no more mad than you are.

SIR SAMP. What, madam! I wish I could prove it.

ANG. I can tell you how that may be done. But it is a thing that would make me appear to be too much concerned in your affairs.

SIR SAMP. [*Aside.*] What what, I believe she likes me.

Ah, madam, all my affairs are scarce worthy to be laid at your feet; and I wish, madam, they were in a better state, that I might make a more becoming offer to a lady of your incomparable beauty and merit. If I had Peru in one hand, and Mexico in the other, and the Eastern Empire under my feet, it would make me only a more glorious victim to be offered at the shrine of your beauty.

ANG. Bless me, Sir Sampson, what's the matter?

SIR SAMP. Well, madam, I love you. And if you would take my advice in a husband...

ANG. Wait, wait, Sir Sampson. I asked your advice about a husband, and you are giving me your consent. I was indeed thinking to propose something like it in jest, to satisfy you about Valentine: for if a match were seemingly carried on between you and me, it would oblige him to throw off his disguise of madness, in apprehension of losing me: for you know he has long professed a passion for me.

SIR SAMP. Gadzooks, a most ingenious contrivance — if we were to go through with it. But why must the match only be seemingly carried on? Well, let it be a real contract.

ANG. Oh, no, Sir Sampson, what would the world say?

SIR SAMP. Say? They would say you were a wise woman and I a happy man. Well, madam, I would love you as long as I live, and leave you a good fortune when I die.

ANG. Ay; but that is not in your power, Sir Sampson: for when Valentine confesses himself in his senses, he must make over his inheritance to his younger brother.

SIR SAMP. Well, you're cunning, a wary minx! Bless me, I like you the better. But, I tell you, I have a proviso in the obligation in favour of myself. I have a trick to turn the settlement upon the issue male begotten of our two bodies. What what, let us have children and I'll have an estate!

ANG. Will you? Well, have the estate and leave the other to me.

SIR SAMP. O rogue! But I'll trust you. And will you consent? Is it a match then?

ANG. Let me consult my lawyer concerning this obligation, and if I find what you propose to be practical, I'll give you my answer.

SIR SAMP. With all my heart: come in with me, and I'll lend you the papers. You shall consult your lawyer, and I'll consult a parson. What-hey, I'm a young man — what-hey, I'm a young man, and I'll make it obvious, — well, you're devilish handsome. Bless me, you're very handsome, and I'm very young and very lusty. What what, hussy, you know how to choose, and so do I. Well, I think we are very well matched. Give me your hand, well, let me kiss it; it is as warm and as soft — as what? Well, as the other hand — give me the other hand, and I'll mumble them and kiss them till they melt in my mouth.

ANG. Wait, Sir Sampson. You're overly vigourous before your time. You'll spend your estate before you come to it.

SIR SAMP. No, no, I'm only giving you an inventory of my possessions. Ah, wench, I want you for little Sampson. Sampson's a very good name for an able fellow: your Sampsons were strong dogs from the beginning.

ANG. Take care and don't over-act your part. If you remember, the strongest Sampson of the name pulled an old house over his head in the end.

SIR SAMP. Do you say so, hussy? Come, let's go then; well, I long to be pulling too; come on. What-o, here's somebody coming.

Exit SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA

SCENE 2.

Enter TATTLE, JEREMY.

TATT. Is that not her gone out just now?

JERE. Ay, sir; she's just going to the agreed place. Ah, sir, if you are not very faithful and secretive in this business, you'll certainly be the death of a person that has a most extraordinary passion for your honour's service.

TATT. Ay, who's that?

JERE. Even my unworthy self, sir. Sir, I have had an appetite to be fed with your commands a long time; and now, sir, my former master having much troubled the fountain of his understanding, it is a very plausible occasion for me to quench my thirst at the spring of

your bounty. I thought I could not recommend myself better to you, sir, than by the delivery of a great beauty and fortune into your arms, whom I have heard you sigh for.

TATT. I'll make your fortune; say no more. You are a pretty fellow, and can carry a message to a lady, in a pretty soft kind of phrase, and with a good persuading accent.

JERE. Sir, I have the seeds of rhetoric and oratory in my head: I have been at Cambridge.

TATT. Ay; it is well enough for a servant to be bred at a university: but the education is a little too pedantic for a gentleman. I hope you are secretive in your nature: private, close, ha?

JERE. Oh, sir, for that, sir, it is my chief talent: I'm as secret as the head of the Nilus.

TATT. Ay? Who's he, though? A privy counsellor?

JERE. *[Aside.]* O ignorance!

A cunning Egyptian, sir, that with his arms would overrun the country, yet nobody could ever find out his head-quarters.

TATT. Secretive dog! A good whoremaster, I bet: — the time draws near, Jeremy. Angelica will be veiled like a nun, and I must be hooded like a friar, ha, Jeremy?

JERE. Ay, sir; hooded like a hawk, to seize at first sight upon the quarry. It is the whim of my master's madness to be dressed like this, and she is so in love with him that she is willing to comply with anything to please him. Poor lady, I'm sure she'll have reason to pray for me, when she finds what a happy exchange she has made, between a madman and so accomplished a gentleman.

TATT. Ay, indeed, so she will, Jeremy: you're a good friend to her, poor creature. I swear I do it hardly so much in consideration for myself as out of compassion for her.

JERE. It is an act of charity, sir, to save a fine woman with thirty thousand pound from throwing herself away.

TATT. So it is, indeed; I might have saved several others in my time, but, gad, I could never find in my heart to marry anybody before.

JERE. Well, sir, I'll go and tell her my master's coming, and meet you in a quarter of an hour with your disguise at your own lodgings. You must talk a little madly: she won't recognise the tone of your voice.

TATT. No, no; leave that to me. I'll be ready for you.

Exit JEREMY

SCENE 3.

TATTLE
Enter MISS PRUE.

MISS. O Mr Tattle, are you here? I'm glad I have found you; I have been looking up and down for you like anything, till I'm as tired as anything in the world.

TATT. [*Aside.*] Oh, pox, how shall I get rid of this foolish girl?

MISS. Oh, I have superb news, I can tell you, superb news. I must not marry the seaman now — my father says so. Why won't you be my husband? You say you love me, and you won't be my husband. And I know you may be my husband now, if you please.

TATT. Oh, no, miss; who told you so, child?

MISS. Why, my father. I told him that you loved me.

TATT. Oh, no, miss; why did you do so? And who told you so, child?

MISS. Who? Why, you did; did you not?

TATT. Oh, pox, that was yesterday, miss, that was a long time ago, child. I have been asleep since; slept a whole night, and did not so much as dream of the matter.

MISS. Pshaw — oh, but I dreamt that it was so, though.

TATT. Ay, but your father will tell you that dreams come by opposites, child. Oh, no; what, we must not love one another now. That would be a foolish thing indeed. No, no, you're a woman now, and must think of a new man every morning and forget him every night. No, no, to marry is to be a child again, and always play with the same rattle. Oh, no, marrying is an obscene thing.

MISS. Well, but don't you love me like you did last night then?

TATT. No, no, child, you would not have me.

MISS. No? Yes, but I would, though.

TATT. But I tell you that you would not. You forget you're a woman and don't know your own mind.

MISS. But here's my father, and he knows my mind.

Enter FORESIGHT.

FORE. O Mr Tattle, your servant, you are a secretive man; but I think your love for my daughter was a secret I might have been trusted with. Or had you a mind to see if I could discover it by my art? Ha? I think there is something in your physiognomy that resembles her; and the girl is like me.

TATT. *[Aside.]* And so you would infer that you and I are alike? What does the old prig mean? I'll tease him, and laugh at him, and leave him.

I fancy you have a wrong idea of faces.

FORE. How? What? A wrong idea? How so?

TATT. In the way of art: I have some taking features, not obvious to vulgar eyes, that are indications of a sudden turn of good fortune in the lottery of wives, and promise a great beauty and great fortune reserved alone for me, by a private intrigue of destiny, kept secret from the piercing eye of perspicuity, from all astrologers, and the stars themselves.

FORE. How! I will prove that what you say is impossible.

TATT. Sir, I beg your pardon, I'm in a hurry...

FORE. For what?

TATT. To be married, sir, married.

FORE. Ay, but pray take me along with you, sir...

TATT. No, sir; it is to be done privately. I never make confidants.

FORE. Well, but my consent, I mean. You won't marry my daughter without my consent?

TATT. Who? I, sir? I'm an absolute stranger to you and your daughter, sir.

FORE. Hey! What time of the moon is this?

TATT. Very true, sir, and I intend to continue so. I have no more love for your daughter than I look like you, and I have a secret in my heart which you would be glad to know and shan't know, and yet you shall know it, too, and be sorry about it afterwards. I'd have you to know, sir, that I am as knowing as the stars, and as secret as the night. And I'm going to be married just now, yet did not know of it half an hour ago; and the lady waits for me, and does not know it yet. There's a mystery for you: I know you love to untie difficulties. Or, if you can't solve this, wait here a quarter of an hour, and I'll come and explain it to you.

Exit TATTLE

MISS. O father, why do you let him go? Won't you make him be my husband?

FORE. Mercy on us, what do these lunacies portend? Alas! he's mad, child, stark wild.

MISS. What, and should I never have a husband, then? What, must I go to bed to nurse again, and be a child as long as she's an old woman? Indeed but I won't. For now my mind is set upon a man, I will have a man some way or other. Oh, I think I'm sick when I think of a man; and if I can't have one, I would go to sleep all my life: for when I'm awake it makes me wish and long, and I don't know for what. And I'd rather be always asleep than sick with thinking.

MISS. I'll have a husband; and if you won't get me one, I'll get one for myself. I'll marry our Robin the butler; he says he loves me, and he's a handsome man, and shall be my husband: Yes, he'll be my husband, and thank me too, for he told me so.

SCENE 4.

FORESIGHT, MISS PRUE
Enter SCANDAL, MRS FORESIGHT, and NURSE.

FORE. Did he so? I'll deal with him presently. Rogue! O nurse, come hither.

NURSE. What is your worship's pleasure?

FORE. Here, take your young mistress and lock her up presently, till farther orders from me. Not a word, Hussy; do what I bid you, no reply, away. And bid Robin make ready to give an account of his plate and linen, do you hear: begone when I bid you.

Exit NURSE, MISS PRUE

MRS FORE. What's the matter, husband?

FORE. It is not convenient to tell you now. Mr Scandal, heaven keep us all in our senses — I fear there is a contagious frenzy about. How is Valentine?

SCAN. Oh, I hope he will be well again. I have a message from him for your niece Angelica.

FORE. I don't think she has returned since she went out with Sir Sampson.

Enter BEN.

MRS FORE. Here's Mr Benjamin, he can tell us if his father has come home.

BEN. Who? Father? Ay, he's come home with a vengeance.

MRS FORE. Why, what's the matter?

BEN. Matter! Why, he's mad.

FORE. Mercy on us, I was afraid of this. And there's the handsome young woman, the one they say that brother Val went mad for, she's mad too, I think.

FORE. Oh, my poor niece, my poor niece, is she gone too? Well, I shall run mad next.

MRS FORE. Well, but how mad? How do you mean?

BEN. Aye, I'll let you guess. I'd sail as far as Leghorn and back again before you would guess at what is going on, even if you did nothing else. I say, you may try all the points of the compass, and not get it right.

MRS FORE. Your experiment will take up a little too much time.

BEN. Why, then, I'll tell you; there's a new wedding upon the stocks, and they two are a-going to be married to rights.

SCAN. Who?

BEN. Why, father and — the young woman. I can't hit of her name.

SCAN. Angelica?

BEN. Ay, the same.

MRS FORE. Sir Sampson and Angelica? Impossible!

BEN. That may be — but I'm sure it is as I tell you.

SCAN. What, it's a joke. I can't believe it.

BEN. Look, friend, it's nothing to me whether you believe it or not. What I say is true, do you see, they are married, or just going to be married, I don't know which.

FORE. Well, but they are not mad, that is, not lunatic?

BEN. I don't know what you may call madness. But she's mad for a husband, and he's horn mad, I think, or they would never make a match together. Here they come.

SCENE 5.

FORESIGHT, SCANDAL, MRS FORESIGHT, BEN.

Enter SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, BUCKRAM.

SIR SAMP. Where is this old soothsayer, this uncle of mine elect? Aha, old Foresight, Uncle Foresight, wish me joy, Uncle Foresight, double joy, both as uncle and astrologer; here's a conjunction that was not foretold in all your almanacs. The brightest star in the blue firmament — IS SHOT FROM ABOVE, IN A JELLY OF LOVE, and so forth; and I'm lord of the ascendant. Well, you're an old fellow, Foresight; uncle, I mean, a very old fellow, Uncle Foresight: and yet you shall live to dance at my wedding; bless me, you shall. Well, we'll have the music of the sphere's for you, that we will, and you shall lead up a dance in the Milky Way.

FORE. I'm thunderstruck! You are not married to my niece?

SIR SAMP. Not absolutely married, uncle; but very near it, within a kiss of the matter, as you see. *[Kisses ANGELICA.]*

ANG. It is very true, indeed, uncle. I hope you'll be my father, and give me.

SIR SAMP. That he shall, or I'll burn his globes. He shall be your father, I'll make him your father, and you shall make me a father, and I'll make you a mother, and we'll beget sons and daughters enough to distort the census.

SCAN. Death and hell! Where's Valentine?

Exit SCANDAL.

MRS FORE. This is so surprising.

SIR SAMP. How! What does my aunt say? Surprising, aunt? Not at all for a young couple to make a match in winter: not at all. It's a plot to undermine cold weather, and destroy that usurper of a bed called a warming-pan.

MRS FORE. I'm glad to hear you have so much fire in you, Sir Sampson.

BEN. I say, I fear his fire's little better than tinder; maybe it will only serve to light up a match for somebody else.
The young woman's a handsome young woman, I can't deny it: but, father, if I might be your pilot in this case, you should not marry her. It's just the same as sailing as far as the Straits without supplies.

SIR SAMP. Who gave you authority to speak, my man? To your element, fish, be mute, fish, and to sea, rule your helm, my man, don't direct me.

BEN. Well, well, you take care of your own helm, or you might not keep your new vessel steady.

SIR SAMP. Why, you impudent tarpaulin! My man, do you use your forecastle jests upon your father? But I shall be even with you, I won't give you a groat. Mr Buckram, is the contract worded so that nothing can possibly descend to this scoundrel? I would not so much as have him have the prospect of an estate, even if there was no way to get to it, but by the North-East Passage.

BUCK. Sir, it is drawn according to your directions; there is not the least cranny of the law unstopped.

BEN. Lawyer, I believe there's many a cranny and leak unstopped in your conscience. If we had a pump to your bosom, I believe we should discover a foul hold. They say a witch will sail in a sieve: but I don't believe the devil would venture aboard your conscience. And that's for you.

SIR SAMP. Hold your tongue, my man. What's this, who's here?

SCENE 6.

*FORESIGHT, MRS FORESIGHT, BEN, SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, BUCKRAM.
Enter TATTLE and MRS FRAIL.*

MRS FRAIL. O sister, the most unlucky accident.

MRS FORE. What's the matter?

TATT. Oh, we are the two most unfortunate poor creatures in the world.

FORE. Bless us! How so?

MRS FRAIL. Ah, Mr Tattle and I, poor Mr Tattle and I are — I can't say it.

TATT. Nor I. But poor Mrs Frail and I are...

MRS FRAIL. Married.

MRS FORE. Married! How?

TATT. Suddenly — before we knew where we were — that villain Jeremy, with the help of disguises, tricked us into one another.

FORE. Why, you told me just now you went hence in haste to be married.

ANG. But I believe Mr Tattle meant the favour to me: I thank him.

TATT. I did, as I hope to be saved, madam; my intentions were good. But this is the most cruel thing, to marry one does not know how, nor why, nor wherefore. The devil take me if I was ever so much concerned at anything in my life.

ANG. It is very unhappy, if you don't care for one another.

TATT. The least in the world — that is for my part: I speak for myself. Gad, I never had the least thought of serious kindness. — I never liked anybody less in my life. Poor woman! Gad, I'm sorry for her too, for I have no reason to hate her either; but I believe I shall lead her a damned sort of a life.

MRS FORE. [*To FRAIL.*] He's better than no husband at all — though he's a coxcomb.

MRS FRAIL. [*to her.*] Ay, ay, it's well it's no worse. —

Aye, for my part I always despised Mr Tattle of all things; nothing but his being my husband could have made me like him less.

TATT. Look you there, I thought as much. Pox on it, I wish we could keep it secret; why, I don't believe any of these people would speak of it.

MRS FRAIL. But, my dear, that's impossible: the parson and that rogue Jeremy will publish it.

TATT. Ay, my dear, so they will, as you say.

ANG. Oh, you'll agree very well in a little time; habit will make it easy for you.

TATT. Easy! Pox on it, I don't believe I shall sleep tonight.

SIR SAMP. Sleep, quotha! No; why, you would not sleep on your wedding-night? I'm an older fellow than you, and don't intend to sleep.

BEN. Why, there's another match now, as though a couple of pirates were looking for a prize and bumped into one another. I'm sorry for the young man with all my heart. Look you, friend, if I may advise you, when she's going — for I have experience of her — when she's going, let her go. There is no matrimony tough enough to hold her; and if she can't drag her anchor along with her, she'll break her cable, I can tell you that. Who's here? The madman?

SCENE the Last.

*FORESIGHT, MRS FORESIGHT, BEN, SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, BUCKRAM, TATTLE, MRS FRAIL.
Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, JEREMY.*

VAL. No; here's the fool, and if it must be, I'll sign to it.

SIR SAMP. What's this?

VAL. Sir, I'm come to acknowledge my errors, and ask your pardon.

SIR SAMP. What, have you found your senses at last then? In good time, sir.

VAL. You were mistaken, sir: I never was distracted.

FORE. How! Not mad! Mr Scandal...

SCAN. No, really, sir. I'm his witness; it was all pretend.

VAL. I thought I had reasons — but it was a poor trick, the effect has shown it to be so.

SIR SAMP. Trick! What, to cheat me? to cheat your father? My man, how could you hope to prosper?

VAL. Indeed, I thought, sir, when the father endeavoured to undo the son, it was a reasonable return of nature.

SIR SAMP. Very good, sir. Mr Buckram, are you ready? Come, sir, will you sign and seal?

VAL. If you please, sir; but first I would ask this lady one question.

SIR SAMP. Sir, you must ask my permission first. Sir, you shall ask that lady no questions till you have asked her blessing, sir: that lady is to be my wife.

VAL. I have heard as much, sir; but I would have it from her own mouth.

SIR SAMP. That's as much as to say I lie, sir, and you don't believe what I say.

VAL. Pardon me, sir. But I remember that very recently I pretended madness; I don't know but the frolic may go round.

SIR SAMP. Come, dear, satisfy him, answer him. Come, come, Mr Buckram, the pen and ink.

BUCK. Here it is, sir, with the deed; all is ready. [*VALENTINE goes to ANGELICA.*]

ANG. It is true, you have professed love to me a long time; what if you were sincere? Still you must pardon me if I think my own inclinations have a better right to dispose of my person than yours.

SIR SAMP. Are you answered now, sir?

VAL. Yes, sir.

SIR SAMP. Where's your plot, sir? and your contrivance now, sir? Will you sign, sir? Come, will you sign and seal?

VAL. With all my heart, sir.

SCAN. What, are you truly mad, to ruin yourself?

VAL. I have been disappointed of my only hope, and he that loses hope may part with anything. I never valued fortune for itself but as subservient to my pleasure, and my only pleasure was to please this lady. I have made many vain attempts, and find at last that nothing but my ruin can effect it; which, for that reason, I will sign to — give me the paper.

ANG. *[Aside.]* Generous Valentine!

BUCK. Here is the deed, sir.

VAL. But where is the bond by which I am obliged to sign this?

BUCK. Sir Sampson, you have it.

ANG. No, I have it, and I'll use it as I would use everything that is an enemy to Valentine.
[Tears the paper.]

SIR SAMP. What's this?

VAL. Ha!

ANG. *[To VALENTINE.]* Had I the world to give you, it could not make me worthy of so generous and faithful a passion. Here's my hand: — my heart was always yours, and struggled very hard to make this utmost trial of your virtue.

VAL. I am lost between pleasure and amazement. But I take the blessing on my knees.

SIR SAMP. Huh, what is the meaning of this?

BEN. I say, here's the wind changed again. Father, you and I may make a voyage together now.

ANG. Well, Sir Sampson, since I have played you a trick, I'll advise you how you may avoid such another. Learn to be a good father, or you'll never get a second wife. I always loved your son, and hated your unforgiving nature. I was resolved to try him to the utmost; I have tried you too, and know you both. You have no more faults than he has virtues, and that I can make him and myself happy is hardly more pleasure to me than that I can punish you.

VAL. If my happiness could bear increase, this kind surprise would make it double.

SIR SAMP. Huh, you're a crocodile.

FORE. Really, Sir Sampson, this is a sudden eclipse.

SIR SAMP. You're an illiterate old fool, and I'm another.

Exit SIR SAMPSON

TATT. If the gentleman is in disorder for want of a wife, I can spare him mine. —
[To JEREMY.] Oh, are you there, sir? I'm indebted to you for my happiness.

JERE. Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons: it was an mistake. You see, sir, my master was never mad, nor anything like it. Then how could it be otherwise?

VAL. Tattle, I thank you; you would have interposed between me and heaven, but Providence laid purgatory in your way. You have but justice.

SCAN. I hear the fiddles that Sir Sampson provided for his own wedding; I think it is pity they should not be employed when the match is so much mended. Valentine, though it be morning, we may have a dance.

VAL. Anything, my friend, everything that looks like joy and transport.

SCAN. Call them, Jeremy.

ANG. I have done dissembling now, Valentine; and if that coldness which I have always worn before you should turn to an extreme fondness, you must not be suspicious of it.

VAL. I'll prevent that suspicion: for I intend to dote so much that your fondness shall never be enough to be noticeable. If ever you seem to love too much, it must be only when I can't love enough.

ANG. Be careful of promises; you know you are apt to run more in debt than you are able to pay.

VAL. Therefore I yield my body as your prisoner, and make your best of it.

SCAN. The music waits for you. [*Dance.*]

SCAN. Well, madam, you have done exemplary justice in punishing an inhuman father and rewarding a faithful lover. But there is a third good work which I, in particular, must thank you for: I was an infidel to your sex, and you have converted me. For now I am convinced that all women are not like fortune, blind in bestowing favours, either on those who do not merit or who do not want them.

ANG. It is an unreasonable accusation that you lay upon our sex: you tax us with injustice, only to cover your own want of merit. You would all have the reward of love, but few have the patience to wait till it becomes your due. Men are generally hypocrites and infidels: they pretend to worship, but have neither zeal nor faith. How few, like Valentine, would persevere even to martyrdom, and sacrifice their interest to their patience! In admiring me, you misplace the novelty.

The miracle today is, that we find
A lover true; not that a woman's kind.

Exeunt

End