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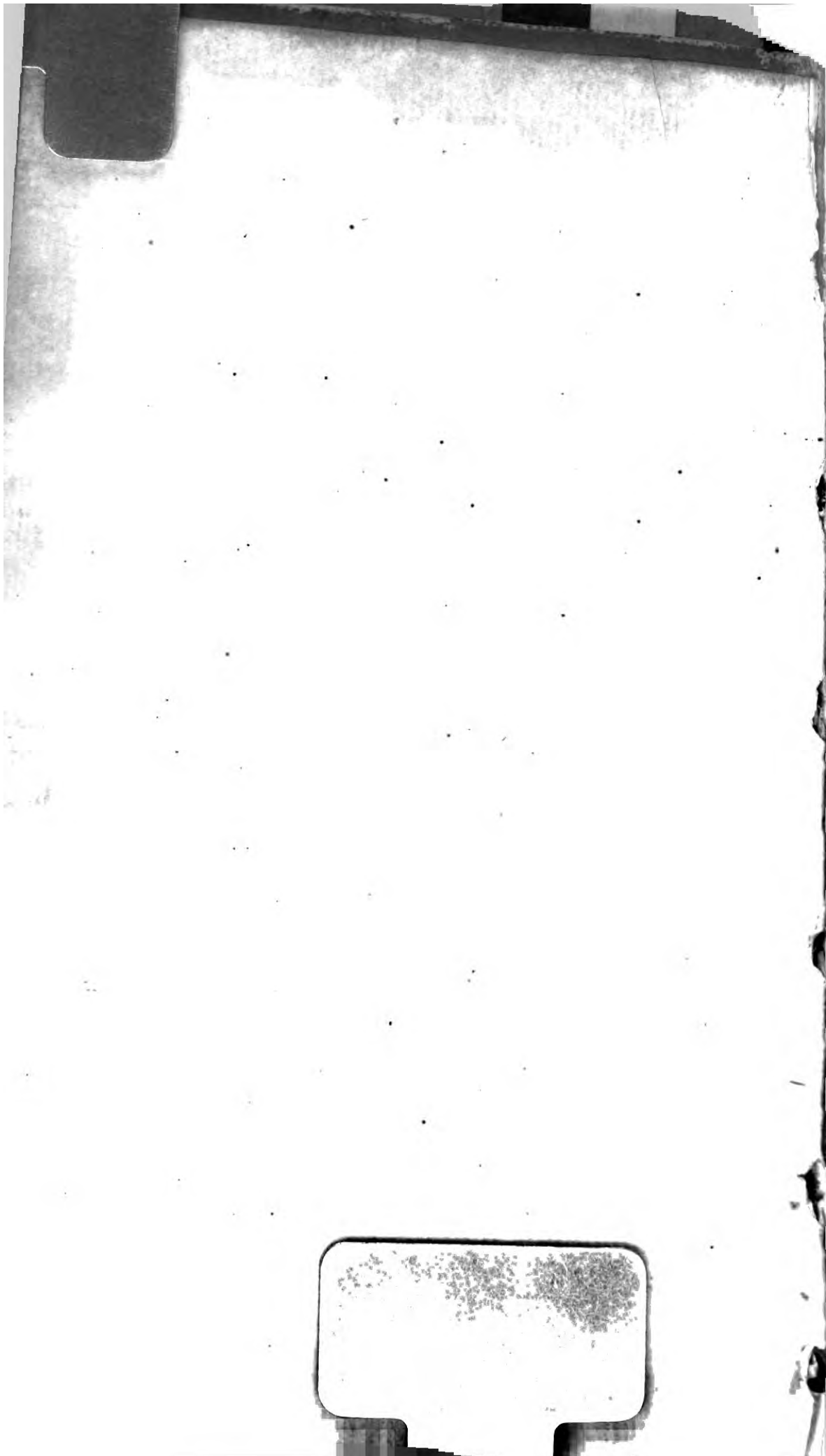


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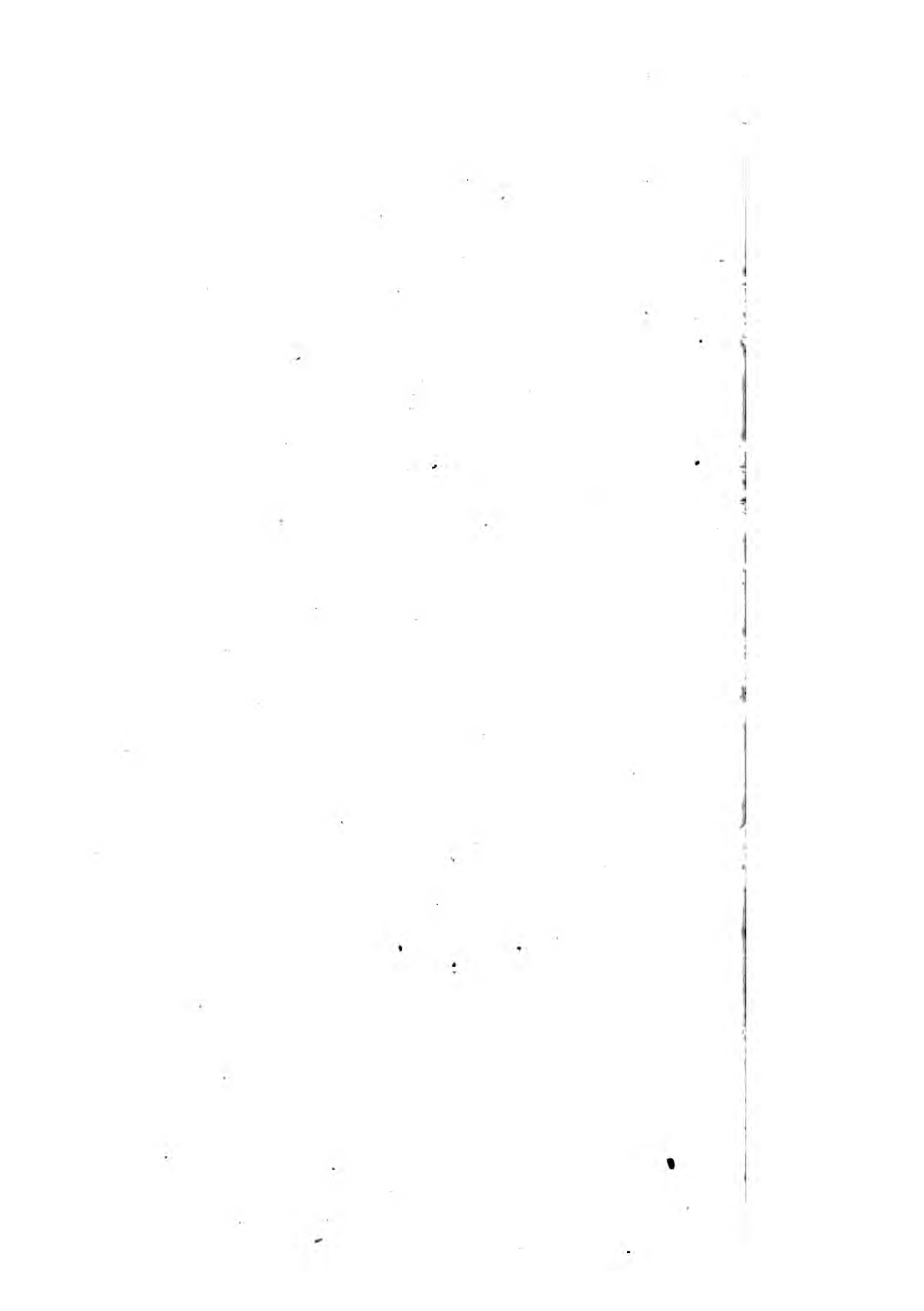
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STAKE
A COMEDY

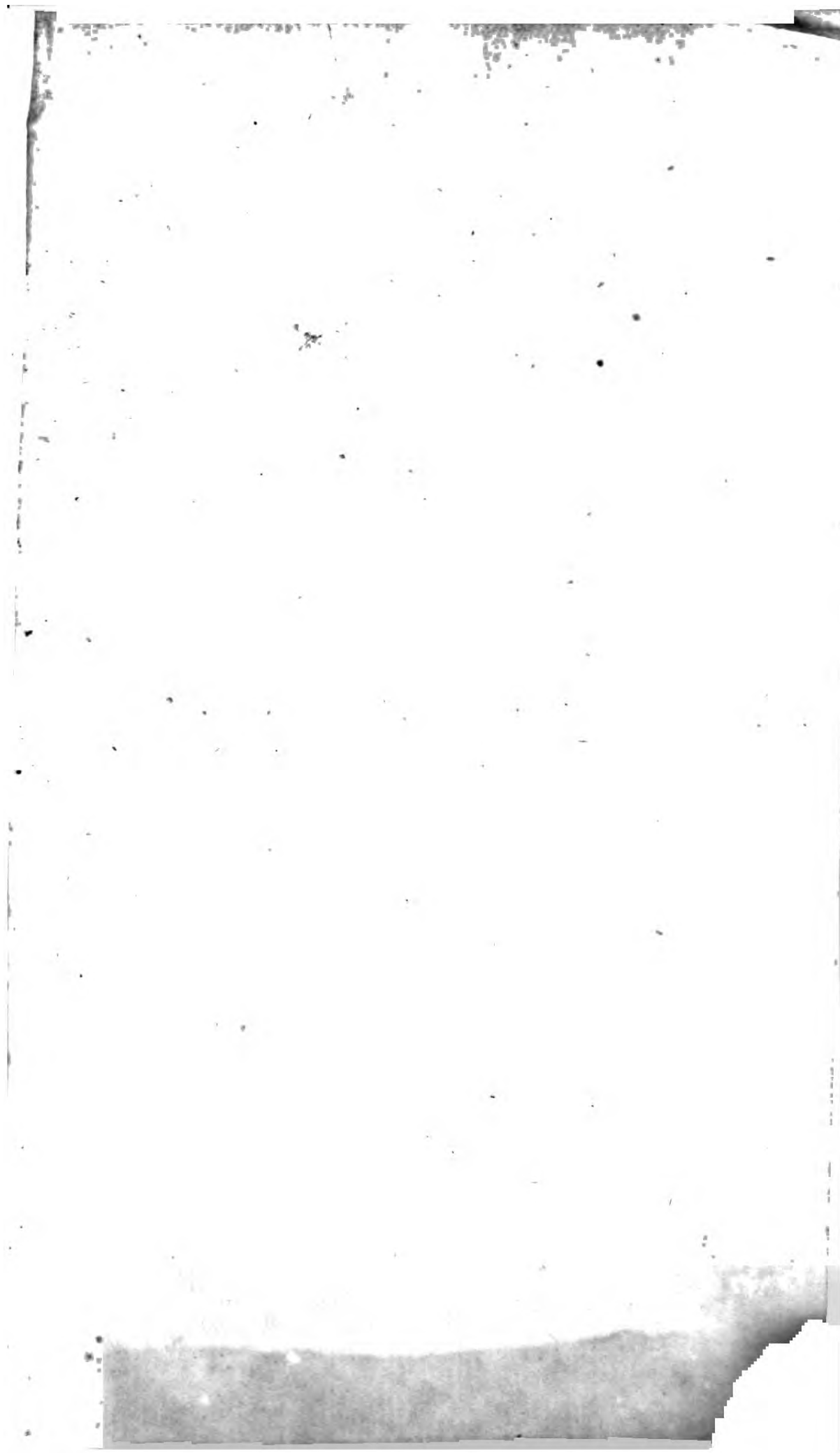
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L B De Leon

LADY'S LAST STAKE:

OR, THE

Wife's Resentment.

A

COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the

QUEEN'S THEATRE

IN THE

HAY-MARKET,

By Her MAJESTY'S Servants.

Written by COLLEY CIBBER, *Esq;*

LONDON:

Printed for HENRY LINTOT. 1747.

M. add. 1.8. 4. 1. 1.





To the most Noble the

MARQUIS of KENT,

Lord Chamberlain of Her MAJESTY'S
Household, &c.

THE utmost Success I ever propos'd from this Play, was, that it might reach the Taste of a few good Judges, and from thence plead a sort of Title to your Lordship's Protection: And, if the most just and candid Criticks are not the greatest Flatterers, I have not fail'd in my Proposal. As for those Gentlemen that thrust themselves forward upon the Stage before a croud'd Audience, as if they resolv'd to play themselves, and save the Actor the Trouble of presenting them; they indeed, as they are above Instruction, so they scorn to be diverted by it, and will as soon allow me a good Voice, as a Genius. I did not intend it should entertain any, that never come with a Design to sit out a Play; and therefore without being much mortified, am content such Persons shou'd dislike it. If I would have been less instructive, I might easily have had a louder, tho' not a more valuable Applause. But I shall always prefer a fixt and general Attention before the noisy Roars of the Gallery. A Play without a just Moral, is a poor and trivial Undertaking; and 'tis from the Success of such Pieces, that Mr. Collier was furnish'd with an Advantageous Pretence of laying his unmerciful Axe to the Root of the Stage. Gaming is a Vice, that has undone more innocent Principles, than any one Folly that's in Fashion, therefore I chose to expose it to the Fair Sex in its most hideous Form, by reducing a Woman of Honour to stand the presumptuous Addresses of a Man, whom neither her Virtue or Inclination wou'd let her have the least Taste to: Now 'tis not im-
possible

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

possible but some Man of Fortune, who has a handsome Lady, and a great deal of Money to throw away, may from this startling hint think it worth his while to find his Wife some less hazardous Diversion. If that should ever happen, my End of writing this Play is answer'd ; and if it may boast of any Favours from the Town, I now must own they are entirely owing to your Lordship's Protection of the Theatre. — For, without a Union of the best Actors, it must have been impossible for it to have receiv'd a tolerable Justice in the Performance.

The Stage has for many Years, till late, groan'd under the greatest Discouragements, which have been very much, if not wholly owing to the Mismanagement or Avarice of those that have awkwardly govern'd it. Great Sums have been ventur'd upon empty Projects, and Hopes of immoderate Gains ; and when those Hopes have fail'd, the Loss has been tyrannically deducted out of the Actors Salary. And if your Lordship had not redeem'd 'em, they were very near being wholly laid aside, or at least, the Use of their Labour was to be swallow'd up, in the pretended Merit of Singing and Dancing. I don't offer this as a Reflection upon Musick (for I allow and feel its Charms) but it has been the Misfortune of that, as well as Poetry, to have been too long in the Hands of those, whose Taste and Fancy are utterly insensible of their Use and Power. And tho' your Lordship foresaw, and Experience tells us, that both Diversions wou'd be better encourag'd under their separate Endeavours, yet this was a Scheme, that cou'd never be beat into the impenetrable Heads of those that might have honestly paid the Labourers their Hire, and put the Profits of both into their own Pockets. Nay, even the Opera, tho' the Town has neither grudg'd it Pay nor Equipage, from either the Wilfulness or Ignorance of the same General, we see, was not able to take the Field till *December*.

My Lord, there is nothing difficult to a Body of *English* People, when they are unanimous, and well commanded : And tho' your Lordship's Tenderness of oppressing is so very just, that you have rather stay'd to convince a Man of your good Intentions to him, than to do him ev'n a Service against his Will : Yet since your Lordship has so happily begun the Establishment of the separate Diversions, we
live

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

live in Hope, that the same Justice and Resolution will still persuade you to go as successfully through with it.

But while any Man is suffer'd to confound the Industry and Use of 'em, by acting publicly, in Opposition to your Lordship's equal Intentions, under a false and intricate Pretence of not being able to comply with 'em; the Town is likely to be more entertain'd with the private Dissensions, than the publick Performance of either, and the Actors in a perpetual Fear and Necessity of petitioning your Lordship every Season for new Relief.

To succour the Distress'd is the first Mark of Greatness, and your Lordship is eminently distinguish'd for a Virtue that certainly claims the next Place to it. The disinterested Choice and Manner of your Lordship's disposing Places in your Gift, are Proofs that you always have the Claims of Merit under your first and tenderest Consideration. And from the Assurance of this Thought, my Lord, the Stage, the Poets, and the Players, lay their Cause, their Hopes, and utmost Expectations at Your Lordship's Feet for Support and Protection. I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most Humble,

and most Obedient Servant,

Colley Cibber.

P R O L O G U E.

SINCE Plays are but the Mirrors of our Lives,
 And soon or late Mankind are chain'd to Wives;
 Since those dissolueless Fetters too, must be
 Our greatest Happiness or Misery;
 What Subject ought, in Reason, more to please ye,
 Than an Attempt to make those Chains sit easy?
 Tho' in the Noose so many Souls seem'd curst,
 Pray who's in Fault?—For when you've said your worst,
 You all did feel its Happiness——at first,
 Therefore our Author drew you once the Life
 Of Careless Husband, and Enduring Wife,
 Who by her Patience (tho' much out of Fashion)
 Retriev'd, at last, her Wanderer's Inclination.
 Yet some there are, who still arraign the Play,
 At her tame Temper shock'd, as who shou'd say——
 The Price, for a dull Husband, was too much to pay.
 Had he been strangled sleeping, who shou'd hurt ye?
 When so provok'd——Revenge had been a Virtue.
 ——Well then——to do his former Moral Right,
 Or set such Measures in a fairer Light,
 He gives you now a Wife, he's sure in Fashion,
 Whose Wrongs use modern Means for Reparation.
 No Fool, that will her Life in Sufferings waste,
 But furious, proud, and insolently chaste;
 Who more in Honour jealous, than in Love,
 Resolves Resentment shall her Wrongs remove:
 Not to be cheated with his civil Face,
 But scorns his Falshood, and to prove him base,
 Mobb'd up in Hack triumphant dogs him to the Place.
 These modish Measures, we presume, you'll own,
 Are oft what Wives of Gallantry have done;
 But if their Consequence shou'd meet the Curse
 Of making a provok'd Aversion worse,
 Then you his former Moral must allow,
 Or own the Satyr just he shews you now.
 Some other Follies too, our Scenes present,
 Some warn the Fair from Gaming, when extravagant.
 But when undone, you see the dreadful Stake,
 That hard-press'd Virtue is reduc'd to make;
 Think not the Terrors you behold her in,
 Are rudely drawn t' expose what has been seen;
 But, as the friendly Muse's tender'st way,
 To let her Dangers warn you from the Depth of Play.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. CIBBER.

I'M thinking, when poor Plays are quite cry'd down,
 (As nothing's strange in this revolving Town,
 Tho' what the latter Age had thought amazing,)
 What we poor Slaves shall do when turn'd a Grazing.
 Perhaps great Cæsar, who the World commanded,
 May snuff the Opera Candles when disbanded;
 And proud Roxana, from her high Disdain,
 Most vilely stoop to spread Toftissa's Train,
 Not but our Women may see better Lives,
 And make some honest Cits—(troth!)—comfortable Wives.
 Let no fair Damsel think this said t' affront her,
 (For howsoe'er the Stage's Hopes may mount her)
 Beauty may drive as good a Trade behind the Counter. }
 As here * some Chapmen, * there some Heads with Sorrow,
 May give, and feel, sore Proofs before this Time to-morrow.
 But I, whose Beauty only is Grimace,
 Have no such Prospects from this hatchet Face.
 All I can do must be —————
 With humble Ale, and Toast, round Sea-Coal Fire, }
 At Night my penfive Spouse, and Brats t' inspire,
 With Tags of Crambo Rhimes, and tack 'em to th' Italian Lyre. }
 Nay, e'en when Hunger prompts 'em for Relief,
 I'll make 'em ask for Food in Recitative:
 As thus, [Sings in Recitative.] “ Mamma! — Well! what,
 [what is't you mutter?
 “ Pray cut me a great Piece of Bread and Butter.
 [Then this to the Air of Yes, yes, 'tis all I want, &c.]
 There's all you are like to have,
 Nor can you ask for Supper;
 'Tis cut quite round the Loaf,
 'Tis under side, and upper.
 Who knows in Time, but this in Bills inserted,
 May croud a House, when Shakespear is deserted.
 Or say that I myself —————
 Since painted Nature no Recruits will bring in,
 Shou'd e'en, in Spite of Nature, stick to Singing,
 My Voice, 'tis true, the Gippy's but unkind to,
 Tho' that's a Fault you ev'ry Day are blind to.

* The Pit and Gallery.

EPILOGUE.

*But if I change my Name, that half will win ye,
O! the soft Sound of Seignior Cibberini.
Imagine then, that thus with amorous Air
I give you Raptures, while I squall Despair. [Sings Italian.
If this won't do, I'll try another Touch,
Half French, some English, and a spice of Dutch. [Sings in bro-
Now, Sirs, you've seen the utmost I can do, [ken English.
As Poet, Player, and as Songster too;
But if you can't allow my Voice inviting,
E'en let me live by Acting, and by Writing.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Lord Wronglove,	Mr. Wilks.
Lord George Brilliant,	Mr. Cibber.
Sir Friendly Moral,	Mr. Keene.

W O M E N.

Lady Wronglove,	Mrs. Barry.
Lady Gentle,	Mrs. Rogers.
Mrs. Conquest,	Mrs. Oldfield.
Miss Notable,	Mrs. Cross.



THE
LADY'S LAST STAKE:
OR, THE
Wife's Resentment.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Lord Wronglove's Apartment.*

Lord Wronglove alone, musing.

Ld. Wrong.



Y Wife—as abundance of other Men of Quality's Wives are—is a miserable Woman: Ask her the Reason, she'll tell you—Husband: Ask me, I say, Wife—

all's entirely owing to her own Temper.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn,

Mrs. Hartf. My Lady desires to know if your Lordship pleases to spare her the Chariot this Morning?

Ld. Wrong. Hah! That's as much as to say, I have a mind to guess when, and how you go out this Morning. [*Afide.*] Well, the Chariot is at her Service. [*Exit. Hartf.*] This continual Jealousy is insupportable. ————What's to be done with her? What's her Complaint:

plaint? Who's the Aggressor? I'll e'en refer the Matter fairly to my own Conscience, and if she casts me there, I'll do her Justice; if not, though the Cost were ten times hers, I'll make myself easy for the rest of my Life.——Let me see,——as to the Fact I'm charg'd with, *viz.* That I have feloniously embezzled my Inclinations among the rough and smooth Conversation of several undaunted Gentlewomen, and so forth.——That, I think, since it must be prov'd against me, I had best plead guilty to.——Be it so.——Very well!——A terrible Charge indeed: And now——

Enter Brush.

Brush. My Lady desires to know if your Lordship pleases to dine at home to-day?

Ld. Wrong. Right! Another gentle Enquiry. [*Aside.*] Why, tell her 'tis impossible to guess, but her Ladyship may do as she pleases. [*Exit Brush.*] But go on.——Now let's hear the Defendant, and then proceed to Judgment and Damages. Well! the Defendant says, That 'tis true he was in love with Madam up to her proud Heart's Wishes, but hop'd that Marriage was his End of Servitude, that then her wise Reserve, her Pride, and other fine Lady's Airs wou'd be all laid aside.——No,——her Ladyship was still the same unconquer'd Heroine: If being endur'd cou'd give me Happiness, 'twas mine; if not, she knew herself, and shou'd not bend below her Sex's Value.——I bore this long, then urg'd her Duty; that this Reserve of Humour was inconsistent with her being a Friend, a Wife, or a Companion.——She said 'twas Nature's Fault, and I but talk'd in vain.——Upon this I found my Patience began to have enough on't: so I e'en made her Invincibleship a low Bow, and told her, I wou'd dispose of my time in Pleasures, which, were a little more comeatable; which Pleasures I have found, and she——has found out, but truly she won't bear it: And tho' she scorn'd to love, she'll condescend to hate; she'll have Redress, Revenge, and Reparation; so that if I have a mind to be easy at home, I need but tremble at her Anger, down on my Knees, confess, beg Pardon, promise Amendment, keep my Word, and Bus'ness is done,——Now venerable, human Conscience,

the WIFE'S RESENTMENT. 13

science, speak, must I do this only to purchase what the Greatness of her Soul has taught me to be indifferent to? Am I bound to fast, because her Ladyship has no Appetite? Shall Threats and Brow-beatings fright me into Justice, where my own Will's a Law?——No, no, no! positively no:——I'm Lord of my own Heart sure, and whoever thinks to enter at my Humour, shall speak me very fair.——Most generous Conscience, I give you Thanks for this Deliverance! And since I'm positive, I've little Nature on my side too, Madam may now go on with her noble Resentment if she pleases.

Enter Brush.

Brush. Lord George Brilliant gives his Service, and if your Lordship's at leisure he'll wait upon you.

Ld. Wrong. Give my Service, say I shall be glad to see him. *[Exit Brush.]*

D'ye hear! *Brush!* *[Brush returns.]*

Brush. My Lord!

Ld. Wrong. Is the Footman come back yet?

Brush. Yes, my Lord, he call'd at *White's*, but there's no Letter for your Lordship.

Ld. Wrong. Very well. *[Exit Brush.]*

I can't imagine the Meaning of it,——Sure I havn't play'd with this Babyfac'd Girl 'till I'm in love with her; and yet her disappointing me Yesterday does not slip so easily through my Memory, as Things of this gentle Nature us'd to do.——A very Phlegmatick Symptom——And yet, if she had come, 'tis ten to one, the greatest Relief she cou'd have given me, wou'd have been a fair Excuse to get rid of her.——Hum! ay, ay, all's safe.——She has only stirr'd my Pride I find, my Heart's as sound as my Constitution,—and yet her not coming, nor excusing it, puzzles me.

Enter Brush.

Brush. A Letter for your Lordship.

Ld. Wrong. Who brought it?

Brush. Snug the Chairman.

Ld. Wrong. O! 'tis right, now we shall be let into the Secret.

(Reads.)

I Wo'n't beg your Pardon for not coming Yesterday, because it was not my Fault, but indeed I'm sorry I could not.

Kind

14 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE ; OR,*

Kind however, tho' 'tis possible she may lye too.

To be short, old Teizer smoaks the Business, poss—
By her Stile, the Child seems to have a great Genius for Iniquity: But who the Duce is old *Teizer*? O! that must be her Uncle Sir *Friendly Moral*! *Smoaks the Business, poss!*
Very well.

For he watch'd me all Day, as if he had been in love with me himself: But you may depend upon me this Afternoon about five, at the same Place, till when, dear Dismal, adieu.

[Tears the Letter.

Well said! I-gad, this Girl will debauch me! what pity 'tis, her Person does not spread like her Understanding— But she is one of *Eve's* own Sisters, born a Woman: Bid the Fellow stay for an Answer. [Exit Brush.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Hartf. My Lady desires to know, if your Lordship pleases to drink any Tea?

Ld. Wrong. [*Aside.*] What a Mefs of Impertinence have I had this Morning! But I'll make my Advantage of this. Pray thank your Lady, and tell her I desire she'll be pleas'd to come and drink some with me. [Exit *Hartf.*] When a Man has a little private Folly upon his Hands, 'tis prudent to keep his Wife in good Humour, at least, till the Frailty's thoroughly committed. [Exit.

Enter Lady Wronglove and Brush.

La. Wrong. Where's my Lord?

Brush. I believe he's writing in his Clofet, Madam; if your Ladyship pleases I'll go and see.

La. Wrong. No, stay—I'll—I'll—wait without.

Brush. Jealous by *Jupitur*, I must look sharp, I see.

[Retires.

La. Wrong. Writing! then I am confirm'd! Not a Day passes without some fresh Discovery of his Perfidiousness—This Usage is beyond Patience—Sure Men think that Wives are Stocks or Stones, without all Sense of Injuries, or only born, and bound to bear 'em! But since his Villanies want the Excuse of my deserving them, I'll let him see I dare resent 'em, as I ought. I'll prove 'em first, and then revenge 'em with my Scorn—

Hum!

Hum! what's here, a torn Letter! ha! this Hand is new!
O! my Patience! some fresh, some undiscover'd Slut!
Here! *Hartborn!*

Enter Hartborn.

Go to the Door this Minute, and tell the impudent Fellow there, that my Lord says the Letter requires no Answer; and if he offers to bring any more, he'll have his Limbs broke.

Brush. [*Behind.*] Ha! this was a lucky Discovery! between my Lord, or my Lady, it's hard if I don't mend my Place by it.

La. Wrong. It is not yet so torn, but I may read it——
'Twill cost his Wit some Trouble to evade this Proof, I'm sure——I'll have it piec'd and send it him——I'll let him see I know him still——A base, a mean——Huh!
——now he's nauseous to me.

[*Exit Lady Wrong.*

Re-enters Lord Wronglove with a Letter.

Ld. Wrong. Here give this to the Porter.

Brush. My Lord, the Porter's gone. [*Smiling.*

Ld. Wrong. Gone! how so! What does the Fellow sneer at?

Brush. My Lord, I beg your Lordship's Pardon for my Boldness, but perhaps it may be more useful to you than my Silence; I saw something that happen'd just now——

Ld. Wrong. What's the Matter?

Brush. While your Lordship was writing within, my Lady, I fancy'd by her Looks, suspected something by *Snug's* being at the Door (for she enquires every Mortal's Business that comes to speak with your Lordship) but here she came, and bid me go out of the Room. Upon which I made bold to watch her at the Door, where I saw her pick up the Pieces of that Letter your Lordship tore just now; and then she flew into a violent Passion, and order'd the Porter to be sent away without his Answer.

Ld. Wrong. No matter, you know where to find him?

Brush. Yes, my Lord, he plies at *White's*.

Ld. Wrong. Run after him quick, tell him it was a Mistake, and that's his Answer. [*Gives a Letter.*] [*Exit*
Brush.] Let me see——I shall certainly hear of th
Le

16 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

Letter from my Wife; and 'tis probable her Pride will have as much Pleasure in reproaching me, as her Good-nature wou'd in finding me innocent——I must take care not to let her grow upon me——To bear the open Insolence of a Wife is a Punishment, that exceeds both the Crime and the Pleasure of any Favours the Sex can give us——But why am I so apprehensive of a poor Woman's being out of Humour? My Gravity for the Matter wou'd be as Ridiculous as her Passion.——The worst on't is, that in our Matrimonial Squabbles, one Side's generally forced to make a Confidence with their Servants; I am reduc'd now to trust this Fellow——But I can make it his Interest to be secret.——

Enter Hartshorn with Tea.

Hartf. Here's your Lordship's Tea.

Ld. Wrong. O! thank you, Mrs. *Hartshorn*——Where's your Lady?

Hartf. My Lord, she is not very well, and desir'd me to give your Lordship this. [Gives a Letter.]

Ld. Wrong. So! Now it comes——let's see——Ha! The Child's Letter, Faith, carefully piec'd together again; how——here's some of her own Hand too.

(Reads.)

*S*omething has happen'd that makes me unfit for Tea, I wou'd tell you what, but that I find 'tis the Fashion for married People to have separate Secrets.

Humph! This is speaking pretty plain.——Now if I take no Notice of it, I shall have her walk by me in the House with a dumb, gloomy Insolence for a Fort-night together——Suppose I let her——No——better talk with her——The most violent Jealousy is often subject to the grossest Credulity——I'll make one Push for't however, 'tis certainly more prudent to come off if I can——Mrs. *Hartshorn*, pray tell your Lady I must needs see her, I have something to say to her that will make her laugh, though she was dying of the Vapours.

Hartf. My Lord, I'll tell her. [Exit Hartf.]

Ld. Wrong. Or suppose her Jealousy is too wise for my Wit, say she won't be impos'd upon: At worst, I'll carry it on with such an Excess of Assurance, that I'll give her the Mortification of thinking, that I believe I
have

have deceiv'd her: She shan't have the Pleasure of knowing she insults me, I'll crush the very Hope of her Resentment; and by seeming always easy myself, make her Jealousy a private Plague to her Insolence! She shall never catch me owning any thing. Her Pride would have its End indeed, if she cou'd once bring me to the humble Shame of Confession. ——— Oh she's here!

Enter Lady Wronglove very Grave.

La. *Wrong.* D'ye want me for any thing?

Ld. *Wrong.* Ay, Child, sit down: *Hartshorn* told me you were not well, so I had a mind to divert you a little. Such a ridiculous Adventure sure ——— Ha! ha! ha!

La. *Wrong.* I am as well as I expect to be, tho' perhaps not so easy to be diverted,

Ld. *Wrong.* Ha! ha! ha! no matter for that, if I don't divert you——Here take your Dish, Child——Ha! ha! ha!

La. *Wrong.* I shan't drink any.

Ld. *Wrong.* Ha! ha! ha! Do you know now, that I know what makes you so out of humour? Ha! ha!

La. *Wrong.* By my Soul, you have a good Assurance.

[Turning away.]

Ld. *Wrong.* Ha! ha! ha! Do you know too, that I am now insulting you with the most ridiculous Malice, and yet with all the comical Justice in the World? Ha! ha! ha!

La. *Wrong.* My Lord, all this is mightily thrown away upon me, I never had any great Genius to Humour; besides that little I have, you know I have now Reason to be out of: And to spare you the vain Trouble of endeavouring to impose upon me, I must tell you, that this Usage is fit only for the common Wretches you converse with.

Ld. *Wrong.* By my Soul I don't believe the like ever happen'd in all the Accidents of Human Life! Such an Incredible, such a Romantick Complication of Blunders, that, let me perish, if I think *Moliere's Cocu Imaginaire* has half so many Turns in it, as you shall hear Child——In the first Place, the Porter makes a Blunder by mistaking the Place for the Person, and enquires
for

18 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

for me, instead of one at my House; my Blockhead *Brush* here carries it on, and with his own blundering Hand gives his Mistress's Letter to me: No sooner was that Mistake set to rights, but the Pieces of the Letter fall into your Hands, and (as if Fortune resolv'd the Jest should not be lost) you really fancy'd it came from a Mistress of mine, and so by way of Comical Repentment, fall out of Humour with your Tea, and send it to me again. Ha, ha, ha!

La. Wrong. This Evasion, my Lord, is the worst Stuff, that ever any fure was made of.

Ld. Wrong. [*Afide.*] 'Twon't do, I find; but 'tis no Matter, I'll go on. Ha! ha! and so upon this, what does me I, but instead of making you easy, let's you go on in the Fancy, till I was thoroughly convinc'd your Suspicion was real, and then comes me about with the most unexpected Catastrophe, and tells you the whole Truth of the Matter; Ha, ha, ha!

La. Wrong. A very pretty Farce indeed, my Lord; but by the Thinness of the Plot, I see you have not given yourself much Contrivance.

Ld. Wrong. No, upon my Soul 'twas all so directly in Nature, that the least Fiction in the World had knockt it all to pieces.

La. Wrong. It's very well, my Lord! I am as much diverted with the Entertainment, I suppose, as you expect I should be.

Ld. Wrong. Ha, ha, why did I not tell you I shou'd divert you?

La. Wrong. You have indeed, my Lord, to astonishment. Tho' there's one Part of the Design you left out in the Relation, and that was the Answer, that you wrote (by mistake I suppose) to your Man's Mistress.

Ld. Wrong. O that!—why that was—that was—the—the—the Answer? Ay, ay, the Answer was sent after the Porter, because you know, if he had gone away without it, 'twas Fifty to One the poor Fellow's Mistress wou'd not have been reconcil'd to him again this Fortnight—But did you observe, Child, what a coarse familiar Style the Pufs writes?

La. Wrong. Coarseness of Style is no Proof that the Pufs might not be Mistress to a Man of Quality:
And

And I must tell you, my Lord, when Men of Quality can find their Account in engaging with Women, whose highest Modesty is Impudence, methinks they shou'd not wonder if Men of their own Principles, whose Impudencé is so oft-
en mistaken for Wit, should talk their Wives into the same Failing.

Ld. *Wrong*. Let me die, Child, if you han't a great deal of good Sense. [*Sipping his Tea.*]

La. *Wrong*. 'Tis not the first Time that an affronted Wife has convinc'd the World of her personal Merit, to the severe Repentance of her Husband.

Ld. *Wrong*. Abundance of good Sense.

Enter Brush.

Brush. Lord George, my Lord.

Ld. *Wrong*. Desire him to walk in——Nay, you need not go, Child.

La. *Wrong*. I am not in an Humour now for Company ——There's a Couple of you.

[*Exit Lady Wronglove.*]

Ld. *Wrong*. What Pains this silly Woman takes to weary me, always widening the Breach between us, as if 'twere her Interest to have no Hopes of Accommodation; as if she felt no pain in making her own Life wretched, so she cou'd but imbitter mine ——Let her go on ——Here's one that always sweetens it.

**Enter Lord George.*

Ah, my Georgy! Kifs.

Ld. *Geo*. And kifs, and kifs again, my Dear——
By *Ganymede* there's Nectar on thy Lips. O the pleasure of a Friend to tell the Joy!——O *Wronglove!*
Such Hopes!

Ld. *Wrong*. Hey-day! What's the Matter?

Ld. *Geo*. Such soft Ideas! ——Such thrilling Thoughts of aching Pleasure! ——In short, I have too much on't.

Ld. *Wrong*. Thou strange Piece of wild Nature!

Ld. *Geo*. Death! I tell thee, Man, I'm above half Seas over.

Ld. *Wrong*. One wou'd rather think half the Seas were over you; for, in my Mind, you don't talk like a Man above Water.

20 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

Ld. *Geo.* Prithee forgive me: How is it possible I shou'd, when all my Faculties are drown'd in Joy?

Ld. *Wrong.* Then prithee, my Dear, float about, shut down the Sluice of your Rapture, before the Nothingness of your Words gets over the Banks of your Understanding. In plain common Sense let's know the Business.

Ld. *Geo.* Why the Business, in one Word——it's impossible to tell you.

Ld. *Wrong.* Impossible! —— Will you drink any Tea?

Ld. *Geo.* Tea! Thou soft, thou sober, sage, and venerable Liquid, thou innocent Pretence for bringing the Wicked of both Sexes together in a Morning; thou Female Tongue-running, Smile-smoothing, Heart-opening, Wink-tipping Cordial, to whose glorious Infipidity I owe the happiest Moment of my Life, let me fall prostrate thus, and f—p, f—p, f—p, thus adore thee.

[*Kneels and sips the Tea.*]

Ld. *Wrong.* Come, come, you silly affected Rogue get up, and talk at least like a Fool to be understood.

Ld. *Geo.* Don't you think there's Pleasure in Affectation, when one's heartily in good Humour. [*Very affectedly.*]

Ld. *Wrong.* Impertinent Puppy——Drink your Tea.

Ld. *Geo.* O *Wronglove!* I have been drinking Tea.——
[*Transported.*]

Ld. *Wrong.* With some laughing Ladies, I presume, whose incessant concussion of Words wou'd not let you put in a Syllable, and so you are come to ease yourself upon me.

Ld. *Geo.* Then prithee be a Friend, and let me speak.

Ld. *Wrong.* Not only Blank Verse, but Rhime, if you please; in the Name of Nonsense go on.

Ld. *Geo.* Swear then.

Ld. *Wrong.* Swear!

Ld. *Geo.* Ay, swear.

Ld. *Wrong.* ——Blood!

Ld. *Geo.* Pfah! Prithee.

Ld. *Wrong.* Nay, pray, Sir, give me leave to play the Fool in my turn; the Moment you speak to be understood, I'll secure you a reasonable Answer.

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* Swear then never (to any Mortal) to trust from you, to hint, or speak of what I shall discover.

Ld. *Wrong.* Upon Honour.

Ld. *Geo.* Honour! the common Hackney-Oath of Fops, Rakes, and Sharpers; swear me by something dearer, than thy Eyes, than Life or Liberty.

Ld. *Wrong.* Indeed!

Ld. *Geo.* Swear me by all thy tenderest Hopes in Love; by thy soft Sighs of Pain, proceeding from thy Pleasure; swear —

Ld. *Wrong.* I do by something dearer to me yet — By my short stay after Possession! by my Chaise after hard Riding; by my Easy Chair after Dinner, and by t'other Bottle after the Bill's paid, I will be secret.

Ld. *Geo.* Ay, now be perjur'd if thou dar'st — Know then — at last, that generous lovely Creature has said behind my Back, that I am the most Sober, Good-humour'd, and Agreeably Inoffensive Young Fellow, that ever came into a Civil Family, to be short, she has made me a general Invitation to her House, upon which I have taken Lodgings, that look full into her Back Closet Window, and drank Tea with her alone this Morning.

Ld. *Wrong.* Some humble Sinner, whose only Charm is being another Man's Mistress, I'll lay my Life on't: [*Aside.*] Well, and what did you give her?

Ld. *Geo.* A Bleeding-Heart, all studded o'er with Wounds of her Eyes own making.

Ld. *Wrong.* That is, you pull'd out your Watch as you were going away, and she took a Fancy to one of the Seals: Tho' by the Device, I presume it was only a modern Bauble, so 'tis probable you might not have come off much cheaper at Mother *Davis's*.

Ld. *Geo.* Profanation! — To be serious then at once, I have solid Hopes of my Lady *Gentle*.

Ld. *Wrong.* Hoh! Hoh! O thou vain, thou senseless Fop! Is all this mighty Rapture then only from a fine Woman's being commonly Civil to thee? The mere innocent Effect of her Good-humour and Breeding.

Ld. *Geo.* Pshah, tell not me of whence it is born, let it suffice, I've form'd it into Hope; let your Tame, Civil, Secret-Sighers, such as never think the Fair

22 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

One sure, till they hear the Tag of her Lace click, think it no Cause for Joy; but I've a Soul, that wakes, that starts me up at the least dawning Cranny of a Hope, and sets my every Faculty on Fire —— she must —— she must —— she shall be won —— For since I have resolv'd to hope, my Fancy double paints her Beauties —— O! she's all one Fragrant Field of Charms, to pamper up the Blood of wild Desire.

Ld. Wrong. Ah *George!* What luscious Morfels then must her Husband take of her?

Ld. Geo. Why didst thou mention him? —— Death! I can't bear that Thought —— Can she love him? —— O the Verdant Vales, the Downy Lawns of Fruitful Blifs! The ever-flowing Springs of Cool Refreshing Beauty, that happy Dog must revel, range, and sport in!

Ld. Wrong. Nay, the Woman's a Fine Creature, that's certain, it's a thousand Pities one can't laugh her out of that unfashionable Folly of liking her Husband, when here's a Man's of undisputed Honour too, that knows the World, that understands Love and Ruin to a Tittle; that would at the least Tip of a Wink rid her of all her Incumbrances, set her at the very Top of the Mode, and qualify her for a separate Maintenance, in the twinkling of an Hackney Coach Window.

Ld. Geo. Can you be a Moment serious?

Ld. Wrong. Faith, Sir, if I am not, 'tis only to make you so.

Ld. Geo. You seem to think this Business impracticable.

Ld. Wrong. Why truly for any great Progress I see you have made, I don't think but it is: And if you'll take my Opinion of the Woman, I do think, provided you'll allow there's any such Thing in Nature, she's one of impregnable Virtue: That you can no more make a Breach in her Honour, than find a Flaw in her Features: Bate but a little of her Over-fondness for Play, she's the Perfection of a good Wife.

Ld. Geo. O your Servant, Sir, you own she has a Passion for Play then.

Ld. Wrong. That I can't deny; and what's worse, I doubt she likes it a great deal better than she understands it. I hear she has lost considerably to the Count of late.

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* You must know then, that the Count is my In-gineer; he and I have a right Understanding; whenever she plays, we are sure of her Money: Now he has already stript her of all her Running Cash, besides eight Hundred Pound upon Honour. For Payment of which, I made him send her a downright pressing Letter, by me this Morning: I observ'd her a little startled when she read it, and took that Opportunity to skrew myself into the Secret, and offer'd my Assistance; to be short, I address'd myself with so tender a Regard to her Confusion, that before we parted, I engag'd this Afternoon to lend her a Thousand Pound of her own Money to pay him.

Ld. *Wrong.* I confess your Battery's rais'd against the only weak Side of her Virtue. But how are you sure you can work her to push her ill Fortune? she may give over Play: What will all your Advantages signify, if she does not lose to you more than she can pay?

Ld. *Geo.* O, I have an Expedient for that too—— look you, in short, I won't spoil my Plot by discovering it; a few Hours will make it ripe for Execution, and then —— but

*There is no fear that I shou'd tell
The Joys that are unspeakable.*

Ld. *Wrong.* Ha, ha, and so you are really in Love to the last Extremity of Passion.

Ld. *Geo.* Prithee don't laugh at me. [*Affectedly.*]

Ld. *Wrong.* Don't you think I have heard you with a great deal of Patience?

Ld. *Geo.* Nay, I know we Puppies in Love are tiresome.

Ld. *Wrong.* And so you think that all this Extravagance of your Style and Gesture must have convinc'd me, that you really care Sixpence for this Woman?

Ld. *Geo.* Wou'd you have me swear?

Ld. *Wrong.* Ay, come, do a little.

Ld. *Geo.* Why then, by all the sacred Ties of Honour, Friendship, and Restless Love, had I but Five thousand Pound in the whole World, and nothing else could purchase her ——

Ld. *Wrong.* I dare swear you'd give it every Shilling, that you really cou'd love her, tho' it were only to get rid of your Passion for Mrs. *Conquest.*

Ld. *Geo.* Why then, look you ——

Ld.

Ld. *Wrong*. You may swear till you are black in the Face; but you love her, her only, indeed you do: Your Passion for Lady *Gentle* is affected: Not but I grant you'll pursue it, for when nothing's in view, you're Indefatigable. You are a little uneasy at the smallness of Mrs. *Conquest's* Fortune, and would fain persuade yourself you are in love in another Place—but hark'e, you'll marry her.—And so if your Chariot's at the Door, you shall carry me to *White's*.

Ld. *Geo*. Why then (except myself) thou art positively the most impudent Fellow upon the Face of the Earth.

[*Exeunt*.

The End of the First A C T.



A C T II. *Scene continues.*

Lady Wronglove alone.

La. *Wrong*. **W**H Y am I thus uneasy? Sure I am unreasonable in my Temper, I over-rate myself.—For if the Husband's Violation of his Marriage-Vow is in its self so foul an Injury, whence is it that the Law's so sparing in its Provision of Redress! And yet 'tis sure an Injury, because just Nature makes the Pain of bearing it outrageous.—O hard Condition! For if e'en that Pain provokes the Wife to move for Reparation, the World's gross Custom makes her perhaps a Jest to those that shou'd assist her.—If she offends, the Crime's unpardonable, yet if injur'd has no right to Compensation: it may be usual this, but sure 'tis unnatural.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Mrs. *Hartf*. Madam, the Porter's come back.

La. *Wrong*. Bring him in.

Enter Porter.

Well, Friend, how far have you follow'd 'em?

Port. Why, and it please your Honour, first they both went in Lord *George's* Chariot to *White's*.

La. *Wron*. How long did they stay?

Port.

Port. Why, and it please your Honour, they stay'd, as near as I can guess, about—a very little time.

La. Wrong. Whither did they go then?

Port. Why then they stopt a little at the Coach-Maker's at *Charing Cross*, and look'd upon a small Thing there, they call a Booby-Hutch, and did not stay; and so then stopt again at the Fruit-Shop in *Covent-Garden*, and then just went up to *Tom's Coffee-House*, and then went away to the Toy-Shop at the *Temple-Gate*, and there they stay'd I can't tell how long, and please you.

La. Wrong. Did they buy any thing?

Port. Yes, a number of things, truly.

La. Wrong. Were they mostly for Men's Use, or how?

Port. Nay, I don't know; such sort of *Trangams* as the Gentry use:—I remember one was such a kind of a small Scizzar-Cafe as that by your Honour's side, my Lord *Wranglove* bought it.

La. Wrong. So! that was not for me, I am sure. [*Aside.*] Do you know what he paid for't?

Port. Troth, I can't say I do—They came away, an't like your Honour, but I did not see them pay for any thing.—And so after that—

Enter Hartshorn.

Hartf. Young Mrs. *Notable* is come to wait upon your Ladyship.

La. Wrong. Here, come into the next Room, Friend, I must employ you farther. — Desire her to walk in, I'll wait upon her presently.

[*Exit La. Wrong. and Porter.*]

Re-enter Mrs. Hartshorn with Miss Notable.

Mrs. Hartf. If your Ladyship pleases to walk in, my Lady knows you are here, Madam — Dear Madam! how extremely your Ladyship's grown within this half Year?

Miss Notable. O fie, Mrs. *Hartshorn*, you don't think me taller, do you?

Mrs. Hartf. O dear Madam, to an Infinity! Nay, and so plump too, so fresh-look'd, so round-hipp'd. and full-chested—That—I am sure, Madam, he! he! If I were a young Gentleman of Quality, Madam, he! he! Your Ladyship will pardon my Freedom.—I protest, he! he!—

[*Curt'lying and simpering.*]

26 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

Miss Not. I vow, *Mrs. Hartshorn*, you have a great deal of good Humour; is not your Lady very fond of you?

Mrs. Hartf. Truly, Madam, I have no reason to complain of my Lady; but you must know, Madam, of late there have been some Concerns in the Family between my Lord and she, that I vow, my poor Lady is seldom in Humour with any body.

Miss Not. I'm mighty sorry for that—What does my Lord give her any Occasion for Jealousy, think you?

Mrs. Hartf. Occasion, quoth'a! O Lard! Madam—But 'tis not fit for me to speak.

Miss Not. [*Afide.*] I'm glad to hear this—'Tis possible her Ladyship may be convinc'd that fifteen is as fit an Age for Love, as six and twenty.—And if her Jealousy's kinkled already, I'll blow it into a Blaze before I part with her.

Mrs. Hartf. Madam, I hear my Lady's coming—I humbly take my Leave of your Ladyship: Your Ladyship's most obedient Servant. [*Impertinently cringing.*]

Miss Not. Your Servant good *Mrs. Hartshorn*; if you'll call to see me, I have a very pretty new Crass, that would become your Neck extremely—You'll pardon me.

Mrs. Hartf. Dear Madam! your Ladyship's so obliging—I shall take an Opportunity to thank your Ladyship—

[*Exit Mrs. Hartshorn.*]

Enter Lady Wronglove.

Miss Not. My dear, dear *Lady Wronglove!* You'll forgive me; I always come unseasonably, but now 'tis pure Friendship, and my Concern for you, that brought me.

La. Wrong. My Dear, you know I am always glad to see you—but you'll excuse me, if I am not the Company I wou'd be! I am mightily out of Order of late. I hope *Sir Friendly's* well.

Miss Not. After the old Rate, past the Pleasures of Life himself, and always snarling at us that are just come into 'em.—I do make such work with him.—He reads me every Morning a Lecture against lightness, and gadding abroad, as he calls it; then do I teize him to Death, and threaten him, if he won't let me do what I please, I'll chuse a new Guardian that will.

La. Wrong. Come, don't disoblige him, my Dear; for if you'll let me speak as a Friend, you have a good natural Town-Wit, I own, and a great many pretty Qualities; but,
take

take my Word, your Interest and Reputation will find a better account in trusting 'em under your Uncle's Conduct, than your own.

Miss Not. I don't know that; for all his tedious self-denying Course of Philosophy is only to make me a good old Woman: Just the Condition of the Miser's Horse, when he had taught him to live upon one Oat a Day, the poor Creature died. So I am to spend all my Youth in learning to avoid Pleasures, that Nature won't let me be able to taste when I'm old.—Which is just as much as to say, Don't drink while you are thirsty; because if you will but stay till you are choak'd, you won't care whether you drink or no.

La. Wrong. [*Aside.*] What an improving Age is this? But, my Dear, pray let me talk to you a little seriously, and I hope it won't be lost upon you; for you have an Understanding that's uncommon at your Age. I have observ'd among all the Unfortunate of our Sex, more Women have been undone by their Wit, than their Simplicity: Wit makes us vain, and when we are warm in our opinion of it, it sometimes hurries us through the very Bounds of Prudence, Interest, and Reputation; have a Care of being singled by the Men. Women, like Deer, are safest in the Herd; she that breaks-away from her Acquaintance, may be most follow'd indeed; but the End of the Chace is very often fatal.

Miss Not. But pray, Madam! Now with Submission, I think your Argument won't hold; for a Deer's Business is to escape, but a Woman's is to be caught, or else the World's strangely alter'd.

La. Wrong. Honourably, I grant you.

Miss Not. Honourably! That is to stand still like a poor dumb Thing, and be tamely shot out of the Herd—— Now I think a young Creature, that fairly trusts to her Heels, and leads you twenty or thirty Couple of brisk young Fellows after her helter-skelter, over Hills, Hedges, Bogs, and Ditches, has ten times a fairer Chance for her Life; and if she is taken at last, I hold twenty to one, among any People of Taste, they'll say she's better Meat by half.

La. Wrong. Well said, Child! Upon my word you have a good Heart: Th' Address of a Lover uses to be more terrible at your Age.—You seem to have resolv'd upon not dying a Maid already.

Miss Not. Between you and I, Lady *Wronglove*, I have been positive in that this Twelvemonth.

La. Wrong. Why then, since we are upon Secrets, my Dear, I must tell you, the Road you are in is quite out of the Way to be marry'd: Husbands and Lovers are not caught with the same Bait.

Miss Not. With all my Heart, let me but catch Lovers plenty, I'm satisfy'd: For if having one's Will is the Pleasure of Life, I'm sure catching a Husband is catching a Tartar. No, give me dear, precious Liberty——Content, and a Cottage.

La. Wrong. And wou'd not a good Husband content you?

Miss Not. And why must I expect a better than any of my Neighbours? Do but look into the private Comforts of the Dear, Fond, Honourable Couples about this Town; and you'll find there's generally two Beds, two Purfes, two Tables, two Coaches——two Ways——And so in most of their Pleasures an unmolested Separation is the only Chain that keeps 'em together——Now pray, Madam, will you give me leave to be free, and ask you one Question?

La. Wrong. Freely, my Dear.

Miss Not. Then did you yourself, never, upon no occasion, repent your being marry'd?

La. Wrong. That Question's very particular, my Dear.

Miss Not. Perhaps you'll pardon me, when I give you my Reasons for asking; but if you never did repent it, I am resolv'd I won't be the first that shews you occasion to do it.

La. Wrong. I don't know, my Dear, that ever I gave any body Reason to think me uneasy at Home; but you speak, Child, as if you knew something that ought to make me so.

Miss Not. Then depend upon't, unless I were sure you were uneasy already, I'd as soon be lock'd up as tell you any thing.

La. Wrong. Well! suppose I am uneasy.

Miss Not. Pardon——I can't suppose it——But suppose you are not, then I shou'd play a Fool's part, I'm sure, to make you so.

La. Wrong. I am sure you know something of my Lord; pray tell me.

Miss

Mifs Not. Since I see you are uneasy, and I know you love him but too well; upon condition you'll think I only do it to help your Cure, I will tell you: for when a Woman is once sure she has a substantial Reason to hate her Husband, I shou'd think the Business must be half over.

La. Wrong. You make me impatient.

Mifs Not. Let me think a little to soften it, as well as I can—What great Fools these wife over-grown Prudes are—to tell the greatest Secret of her Life to a Girl! To own her Husband false, and all her sober Charms neglected—But if she knew that young *Pill Garlick* were the Occasion of it too—Lurd! how her Blood wou'd rise! What a disfigurable Condition wou'd my poor Head clothes be in? [*Aside.*] Well, Madam, to begin then with the end of my Story. In one Word, my Lord is grossly false to you, and to my Knowledge has an Appointment from a Mistress this very Afternoon, to meet her in a Hackney-Coach in the Road to *Chelsea*.

La. Wrong. All this, my Dear, except their Place of Meeting, I knew before; but how you come to know it, I confess amazes me.

Mifs Not. Look you, Madam, all I know is this—While my Lord *Wronglove*, and Lord *George* stay'd at our House, to speak with my Lady *Gentle* this Morning, I happen'd to sit in the next Room to 'em, reading the last new Play: Where, among the rest of their precious Discourse, I over-heard my Lord *Wronglove* tell Lord *George*, the very Appointment Word for Word, as I have now told it to you.

La. Wrong. You did not hear her Name?

Mifs Not. No, nor what she was; only that she's pretty young: For I remember Lord *George* ridicul'd his Fancy, and call'd her *Green Fruit*——Little, if you please, says t'other, but ripe, I'll warrant her: And I had rather gather my Fruit myself, than have it (like you) through the several Hands that bring it to *Covent-Garden*——

La. Wrong. The brutal Thought!

Mifs Not. When my Lady came down, she made 'em stay Dinner; which was no sooner done, but I immediately slipt away to tell you of it: For methought I was as much touch'd with the Wrong done to your Ladyship, as if it had been to myself.

La. Wrong. My Dear, I am extremely oblig'd to you.

Mifs Not. I'm sure I meant it well——For to know the worst, is not half so bad as to mistrust it.

La. Wrong. Infinitely oblig'd to you.

Mifs Not. Oh! she's deliciously uneasy. [*Afide, and pleas'd.*] I'll tell you what I wou'd advise your Ladyship to do: Call for your Hood and Scarf, and an Hackney-Coach to the Door this minute——In the mean time I'll step home again, (for I am sure they are not gone yet, the Tea was but just call'd for when I came away) and the moment my Lord *Wronglove* takes his leave, I'll send you word: Then may you clap on your Mask, drive after him, and in five Minutes I'll lay my life you catch 'em together.

La. Wrong. Why then if you'll do me the favour to send me that word, my Dear, I shall have leisure in the mean time, perhaps, to improve upon your Advice.

Mifs Not. If you'll let one of your People send my Servant for a Chair, I'll go this minute.

La. Wrong. Here——Who's there?

[*Mrs. Hartshorn at the Door.*

Mifs Not. Now I think I shall be even with his Honour, I'll teach him to tell of Favours before he has 'em at least: If I had not discover'd him, in my conscience he had let Madam discover me. [*Afide.*

La. Wrong. I wou'd not but have known this for the world.

Mifs Not. I am over-joy'd I can serve your Ladyship: You'll excuse my running away.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Mrs. Hartf. Here's a Chair, Madam.

Mifs Not. Well, I'll take no leave, for I'll call again by and by, to know your Success.

La. Wrong. My Dear, I shall be extremely glad to see you; your Servant.

Mifs Not. Your Servant, Servant. [*Runs off.*

La. Wrong. Get me a Hood and Scarf, and a Mask, and bid one of the Footmen call an Hackney-Coach to the Door immediately. [*Exit Mrs. Hartshorn.*] What will become of me? Shou'd not I strive to hate him?——I think I almost do——Is he not contemptible? Fogh!——What odious thing must this be, that he converses with! A Woman without Modesty has something sure of Horror in her Nature! What is it then in Men, that over-looks so foul a coarseness in the Heart, and makes 'em infamously fond of Shame and Out-side?

side?—I blush to think on't.—How tame must he suppose me, if I bear this Usage? I'll let him see I have a Spirit daring as his own, and as resentful too: Since he dares be base, I cannot bear but he should see I know him so. To sigh in secret o'er my Wrongs, and pay his Falshood the Regards I only owe his Truth, is more than Nature can submit to.

*When once the Nuptial Bond's by him destroy'd,
The Obligations of the Wife are void.* [Exeunt.

SCENE changes to the Lady Gentle's House.

*Lady Gentle, Lord Wronglove, and Lord George, at
a Tea-Table.*

La. Gen. [To Lord Wronglove.] Come! come, my Lord, you must stay another Dish, indeed.

Ld. Wrong. Upon my faith, Madam, my Business is of the last Concern; your Ladyship knows I don't use to start from good Company. [Aside.

La. Gent. Well! I e'en give you over, you grow perfectly good for nothing.

La. Wrong. The truth on't is, Madam, we fond Husbands are fit for nothing——but our Wives.

La. Gent. Come! none of your Raillery upon one that's too good for you.

La. Wrong. Why, she has some high Qualities indeed, Madam, that I confess are far above my Merit; but I'm endeavouring every Day to deserve 'em, as fast as I can.

La. Gent. Go, go! you deserve nothing at all, now you disoblige me.

Ld. Wrong. I shall take a better opportunity to make myself amends for going so soon; I am your Ladyship's most humble Servant——*Mrs. Conquest*, pray take care of Lord *George*.

Mrs. Con. O! he shall want for nothing, my Lord, pray do you take the same care of the Lady you are going to.

Ld. Wrong. Ha! ha! ha! [Exit Lord Wronglove.

Ld. Geo. My Lord *Wronglove* is a very pretty Gentleman, and yet how unaccountable 'tis to hear good Sense jest upon Marriage!

La. Gent. My Lord has so much good Sense, that he does not mean what he says, I dare swear for him.

Ld. Geo. Indeed, Madam, I can't think he does; I never saw any thing amiss in his Actions, either at home or abroad.

La. Gent. Nor I indeed : And I think your Lordship very much to be commended ; you love to put the fairest Construction upon things ; it's a certain sign of good Sense, and good Principles.

Ld. Geo. Your Ladyship has so much of both, that I can't help being proud of any thing that recommends me to your Esteem.

La. Gent. Upon my Word, my Lord, you have a great share on't, and I think very deservedly : 'Tis not a common thing in this Town, to find a Gentleman of your Figure, that has Courage enough to keep Marriage in countenance, especially when it's so much the Mode to be severe upon't.

Ld. Geo. Now that to me is an intolerable Vanity, to see a Man ashamed of being honourably happy, because 'tis the Fashion to be viciously wretched—I don't know how it may be with other People, but if I were marry'd, I shou'd as much tremble to speak lightly of my Wife, as my Religion.

Mrs. Con. O ! the hypocritical Monster—When he knows I know, [*aside*] if he were to be hang'd, he'd scarce think it a Reprieve to be married—There's Roguery at the bottom of all this, I'm sure—The Devil does not use to turn Saint for nothing.

La. Gent. I am in hopes your Lordship's good Opinion of Marriage will persuade you not to be long out of it : We that feel the Happiness of a Condition ourselves, naturally wish our Friends in it.

Mrs. Con. What do you think of me, my Lord, you know I have been about you a great while ?

Ld. Geo. Fy ! fy ! you marry ! A meer Rake !

Mrs. Con. O but I fancy now, a Man of your Sobriety, and stay'd Temper, wou'd soon reform me.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside*] This subtle Devil smokes me !—W'are Mortals, Faith—It shews her a little jealous however.

Mrs. Con. I'll be whipp'd if ever you marry more to your mind ; what signifies two or three thousand Pounds in one's Fortune, where you are sure it wou'd be made up in Good-Humour and Obedience ?

Ld. Geo. And considering how intimate a foot you and I have always convers'd upon ; What a venerable Figure shou'd I make in the solemn Authority of an Husband, pretending to command you ?

La. Gent. O ! if you were married, there would be but Will between you.

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* There's the Danger, Madam, being but one, we shou'd certainly squabble, who shou'd have it. I shou'd like Mrs. *Conquest*, perhaps, for my Wife's Companion; one as a light Allay to the Softness of the other's Temper: But if I were once fix'd in love, and shou'd unfortunately bolt upon the least Glimpse of Jealousy, I am such a Slave to Tenderness, I know 'twou'd break my Heart.

Mrs. *Con.* Now cou'd I wash his Face with my Tea. [*Aside.*]

La. *Gent.* Well, I'm confident my Lord wou'd make an extreme good Husband.

Ld. *Geo.* I don't know but I really might, Madam, if I cou'd persuade any Woman beside your Ladyship to think so.

Mrs. *Con.* [*Aside.*] How artfully the Monster skrews himself into her good Opinion; I must take him down a little— Pray, my Lord, how many Women have you had of late, by way of *Balm*, to heal the slight Wound I gave you?

Ld. *Geo.* Upon my Faith, Madam, I had my Wound and Cure from the same Person: My Passion for you went forward like *Penelope's* Web; whatever your Eyes did in the Day, a very short Reflexion upon your Temper unravell'd at Night; so that if you will needs know the Truth, I have not been reduc'd of late to apply myself for Relief to any body but your Ladyship. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

[*Affects an insulting Laugh.*]

Mrs. *Con.* Well, he has a glorious Assurance!

Ld. *Geo.* I fancy, Mrs. *Conquest*, you measure my Principles by your own; for by your Question you seem to think me a very wild Creature.

Mrs. *Con.* O fy, my Lord! so far from it, that I never saw any thing so astonishingly modest.

Ld. *Geo.* Not so modest neither, Madam; but if my Lady *Gentle* will give me leave, I dare use you most intolerably for this.

La. *Gent.* Ev'n as you please, my Lord, for I confess her Assurance is enough to dash any out of countenance.

Ld. *Geo.* Does your Ladyship hear that, Madam? Remember now, that I am allow'd the modester Person; but to let you see, that in a just Cause I scorn to take the advantage of my Character; I'll lay it aside for once, and with an honest Freedom tell you, your Attempts upon me are vain; you are homely, downright homely; and if she were not a-kin to me, I wou'd as soon marry my Grand-mother.

34 *The* LADY'S LAST STAKE: *or,*

Mrs. *Con.* Ah! poor Soul! every body knows, as well as myself, I am more than tolerably handsome: And (which you are ready to tear your Flesh at) the whole Town knows you think so.

Ld. *Geo.* Madam—did your Ladyship ever hear so transcendant an Assurance?

La. *Gent.* Nay, I'm on your side, my Lord—I think you can't be too free with her.

Ld. *Geo.* I'll tell your Ladyship what this Creature did once; Such an Instance of her intrepid Self-Sufficiency—

La. *Gent.* Pray let's hear it. Ha, ha.

Mrs. *Con.* With all my heart, I'll be heard too.

Ld. *Geo.* I'll tell you, Madam—About two Years ago, I happen'd to make a Country Visit to my Lady *Conquest*, her Mother, and one Day, at the table, I remember, I was particularly pleas'd with the Entertainment, and upon enquiry found that the Bill of Fare was under the direction of *Mademoiselle* here: Now it happen'd at that time, I was myself in want of a House-Keeper; upon which account I thought it wou'd not be amiss, if I now and then paid her a little particular Civility: To be short, I fairly told her, I had a great mind to have a plain good House-wife about me, and dropt some broad Hints, that the Place might be her's for asking—Wou'd you believe it, Madam, if I'm alive, the Creature grew so vain upon't, so deplorably mistook my meaning, that she told me, her Fortune depended upon her Mother's Will, and therefore she could receive no Proposals of Marriage without her Consent: Ha, ha! Now after that unfortunate Blunder of her's, whether I ever gave my Lady the least trouble about the Business, I leave to the small Remainder of her own Conscience.

Mrs. *Con.* Madam, as I hope to be married, the poor Wretch fell downright in love with me! for tho' he design'd only to make two Days stay with us, it was above three Months before I was able to get rid of him: When he came first indeed, he was a pretty sort of a tolerable impudent young Fellow; but before he left us, (O the Power of Beauty!) I most barbarously reduc'd him to a sighing, humble, downright Dulness and Modesty.

La. *Gen.* Ha, ha! Pray which of you two am I to believe all this while?

Ld. *Geo.* Madam, if there's any Faith in my Senses, her only Charms then were, and are still not in raising of Passion, but Paste. I own I did voraciously admire her prodigious Knack of making Cheesecakes, Tarts, Custards, and Syllabubs; Ha, ha, ha!

La. *Gent.* Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. *Con.* You see, Madam, what 'tis to let him be never so little out of one's hands: Now his very Modesty is Impudence: For to deny his being in love with me to another, is ten times more insolent, than his first owning it to me.

La. *Gent.* Pshah, Words signify nothing——Did he ever own it under his Haud?

Mrs. *Con.* His Hand! Ha, ha, ha, Madam—as I am a living Creature, if I have one, I have five hundred *Billet-doux* of his, where he has confess'd such things of my Wit, and Parts, and my Eyes, and my Air, and my Shape, and my Charms, that—Nay, he tells me in one, I have more natural Beauties the moment I rise out of my Bed in the Morning, than the whole Drawing-Room upon a Birth-day by Candle-light. There's for you.

Ld. *Geo.* And she believ'd it, Madam——Ha, ha, ha! That's well enough.

Mrs. *Con.* Why, I believe still you think so——Then every Line of 'em is so cramm'd with Sincerity, Sighs, Hopes, Fears, Flames, Darts, Pains, Pangs, and Passion, that in my Conscience, if a Body were to set 'em on fire, the Flame wou'd never go out.

La. *Gent.* Well, if you are in love, ho, this is certainly the newest way of Wooing that ever was.

Ld. *Geo.* Whether I'm in love or no, I leave to your Ladyship.

Mrs. *Con.* And if your Ladyship should give it against him, whether or no I have reason to be vain upon't, let the World judge.

La. *Gent.* The World, I believe, will think better of you both, when you're married.

Ld. *Geo.* In the mean time, I believe, our surest Comfort will be to think well of ourselves, and let it alone.

[*All rise.*]

Mrs. *Con.* I am glad to find you have Modesty enough to suppose Marriage wou'd make us think worse of one another.

Ld. Geo. O fy! Mrs. Conquest, the more
you are known, the more you must be
lik'd. } *Both affectedly.*

Mrs. Con. Is it then possible that you
cou'd like me?

La. Gent. Ha, ha! *[Going to the Tea-Table.*

Ld. Geo. If it were possible I cou'd like any thing out of
Matrimony, it wou'd be you.

Mrs. Con. Well, but tell me, do you like me as I am;
how do you know but you may persuade me into it?

Ld. Geo. Like you—Umh! I can't tell—let's see—*[Look-
ing on her.]*—give me your Hand.

Mrs. Con. There—— *[Strikes it into his.*

Ld. Geo. Now I must press it gently, to know if touching
you keeps any Correspondence with my Heart—Humh!——
A well flesh'd Hand indeed!—— *[Ogling her.*

Mrs. Con. O Lud! not so hard tho'.

Ld. Geo. Now try your other Forces—look upon me.

Mrs. Con. There—— *[Staring wildly on him.*

Ld. Geo. *[Aside.]* She dares not, tho' in raillery, look kind-
ly on me—I like her for't——This over acted Boldness to
save her Modesty at this time, looks like secret Inclination.

Mrs. Con. Well, how do you find yourself? Have I
Power——Do you burn much?

Ld. Geo. Umh! No, I'm a little too low for a Fever—
There's a small Pulse indeed——Different Sexes, like Steel
and Flint, can't well meet without a sort of striking Light
between 'em; not but it goes out as fast as it comes in——
One farther trial of your Power, and I'll tell you more.

Mrs. Con. Come, come, what is't? I'll do't.

Ld. Geo. Turn away your Face, hold your Fan before it.
Now draw your Hand slowly from me, and if you wou'd not
have me think this Lightness of your Humour a direct Indif-
ference, let me perceive a gentle Hold at parting, as tho' you
left a tender Heart upon the Pressure.

[She does as directed, and runs from him.

Mrs. Con. Has your Ladyship any Tea left?

Ld. Geo. Death! that softning Touch has shot me to the
Soul.

Mrs. Con. *[Aside.]* Let me observe him well, for faith! I
try'd my utmost Force, and even pleas'd myself in hopes to
touch him.

Ld.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] How vain a Coxcomb am I? This Girl has fool'd me to believe she likes me——That there should be such Pleasure in the Flattery of another's good Opinion! —There's something in the open Freedom of her Humour, so much beyond the close Reserves of formal Prudery, that ——Death, if she were of any Price but Marriage——But I'm a Fool to think of her—— [*Walks a-part.*]

Mrs. Con. Humh! The Symptoms are right——Hah——*Courage ma Fille*, the Gentleman has a Hole in his Heart yet.

Enter a Servant, who gives Lord George a Letter.

Ld. Geo. Oh! There, come in good time——Now to drive out one Poison with another——[*Goes to Lady Gentle.*] Madam, if your Ladyship's at leisure——I have the Bills ready.

La. Gent. I am asham'd to give your Lordship this trouble.

Ld. Geo. A Trifle, Madam, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, if your Ladyship pleases to look upon 'em, I think they are all hundred Pounds. The rest I have about me in Gold.

La. Gent. If your Lordship pleases, we'll reckon in the next Room——Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

[*Exit Lady Gentle and Lord George.*]
——Eight Hundred Pounds, and the rest in Gold, upon her bare Word of Honour! He'd hardly make that Compliment, only to give me Jealousy——The Mortal's in earnest, that's certain——And what wicked way he proposes to find his Account with her; I am afraid to think——Let me see, I know there will be deep Play here to night——I have a Thought in my Head, that perhaps may lay a Block in his Way to her——Not but if there is such a thing as impregnable Virtue, I dare swear my Lady Gentle is Mistress of it; but then, on the other side, he has a consummate assurance, that's full as unfurmountable. And when the impudent Hopes of a Lover are like his, cover'd with Modesty, it alters the Case strangely——No Woman can then be positive what will become of her——Her not suspecting his Design puts him but in a fairer Way of carrying it on——Ah lud! I don't like it.——He'll certainly——Well! let him do what he will, he can't marry her, that's one Comfort, however.

[*Exit.*]

The End of the Second Act.

A C T



A C T III.

SCENE *Lord Wronglove's House.*

Enter Miss Notable alone.

Miss Not. SO! this has been a Day of Business—I think now I am pretty even with his Lordship; and if I cou'd but draw in Lord *George* to be his Rival now, I should touch the very tip of Happiness—For then to have the Noise of these two Lovers draw two or threescore more after me, which it certainly wou'd: For when once a Woman's the Fashion, every body follows her; she fills like a Musick-Subscription, tho' there's nothing in't, nobody will be out on't—And then to have the full Pleasure of mortifying Mrs. *Conquest* too, that's always holding her Nose over me, as if I was not fit to be out of my Bib and Apron. If I don't make as good a Rout in the Town as she, 'tis very hard—Sure!—I'll forbid 'em all to toast her, that's positive!

Enter Lord George.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] Here she is, faith, and alone; now, if I can but flatter her into my Party, my Business is half over, —So! my little *Venus*!

Miss Not. Bless me—This is lucky—I vow, my Lord, you frightned me.

Ld. Geo. Well, and what makes your pretty Ladyship here, now none of the Family's at home?

Miss Not. O! my Lady will be at home presently! but pray how came your Lordship here then?

Ld. Geo. Why, my Life, I charc'd to be driving by, and perhaps saw you go in [*Takes her by the Hand.*]

Miss Not. Well, and what then?

Ld. Geo. Why then, upon inquiry, I found you were here alone, and that made me come in—My dear Miss! how charming you look to-day?

Mifs Not. P'fhaw!

Ld. Geo. What's the Matter, my Soul?

Mifs Not. To tell me I look charming, and then call one Mifs.

Ld. Geo. O! I ask a thousand Pardon.

Mifs Not. No, dear Lord *George*, never call me Mifs again, you don't call Mrs. *Conquest* so; and tho' she's bigger, and more out of shape, you know, than I, I'm sure I'm as much a Woman in my Heart, as she; nay, and in my Passions too: For I cou'd kill any Woman that wou'd rob me of a Lover, and die for the dear Man that wou'd not be won from me.

Ld. Geo. O the pretty Tenderness! But, my Dear, take heed how you look upon me, for I am fam'd for Assurance; and if once encourag'd, i'gad my Hope sets no Bounds to its Impudence, but falls downright to resolving, and cocks its Hat to the Fair-One's Face, tho' in the very fury of her Virtue.

Mifs Not. I fancy now you're as gentle as the rest of your Brother Beaux, whose greatest Assurance is only in bragging of more than you have.

Ld. Geo. Nay, if you doubt my Virtues, Child, I'll give you a Taste of 'em, my Dear. [Kisses her.]

Mifs Not. Hold! hold! O lud! The Duce take you for me.

Ld. Geo. Death! what a pouting Lip the Rogue has! I'gad. I think my Friend *Wranglove's* in the right on't sure.

Mifs Not. Besides, do you think this bullying is any Proof of your Courage? [Affectedly grave.]

Ld. Geo. Why then, my Dear, to prevent all Mistakes for the future, I now give you fair warning—If you have a mind I shou'd not like you, don't flatter me any more; for I tell you, I'm a downright believing Puppy, and upon the least hint of a Hope, can no more forbear proceeding——

Mifs Not. Look you, my Lord, all this is but stuff; for, upon my Word, you'll find it no easy matter to flatter me: I know well enough how you're dispos'd of.

Ld. Geo. Why then, by all the Pains, Pangs, and Torments——In short, I'm a Fool; I won't speak a Word more to you.

Mifs Not. Fy! fy! you had better give yourself these
Airs to Mrs. *Conquest*.

Ld. *Geo.* I don't know but I had, Madam, for I suppose
you'll tell my Lord *Wranglove* of it.

Mifs Not. Ah! poor Soul! if Mrs. *Conquest* lik'd you no
better than I do my Lord *Wranglove*, you'd think yourself
a miserable Creature.

Ld. *Geo.* If Mrs. *Conquest* lik'd me but half so well, as I
like you, I'm sure she'd be a miserable Creature.

Mifs Not. Umh! how can you design upon me so?

Ld. *Geo.* How can you think to impose upon me so?

Mifs Not. My Lord, I shall take it very ill, if you tell
me of my Lord *Wranglove*.

Ld. *Geo.* Then perhaps, Madam, I shan't take it well
to be told of Mrs. *Conquest*!

Mifs Not. My Lord *Wranglove*!

Ld. *Geo.* Mrs. *Conquest*.

Mifs Not. I'd have you know, my Lord, of all Mankind,
he's the farthest from my Thoughts.

Ld. *Geo.* And I'd have you know, Madam, of all Woman-
kind, Mrs. *Conquest*'s as far out of mine.

Mifs Not. Lard! the Assurance of some Men!

Ld. *Geo.* Look you, Madam, in short, I can prove what
I say; and I hold ten Pound of Tea to a Pinch of Snuff, you
won't let me prove it: Come, and I'll take the same Bet of
you, that you don't prove what you said to me of my Lord
Wranglove.

Mifs Not. Come, it's done!

Ld. *Geo.* Done!

Mifs Not. Done, for both!

Ld. *Geo.* Done!

Mifs Not. Why then, to prove that I am innocent of the
least Inclination for him, I own he has teiz'd me these two
Months; and because I was resolv'd to give him his Answer
and his Punishment at the same time, I this very Afternoon
made him an Appointment; then went immediately and told
my Lady *Wranglove* he was to meet a Mistress at such an
hour, to my Knowledge, and so sent her in a fury after him
to catch 'em together.

Ld. *Geo.* But how cou'd you escape yourself, all this while!

Mifs Not. O! I did not tell her it was I; for as soon as I
had blown up her Jealousy, I whipt into a Hackney-Coach,
and

and got to my Lord before her, where I just popp'd out my Head to him, and told him, in a pretended Fright, my Lady had dogg'd him, and I durst not stay; then drove away as fast as I cou'd, and e'en left her to make up accounts with him.

Ld. *Geo.* Why then, my Life, I do pronounce, that the stoutest Wife of 'em all, with the Spirit of Revenge in her, could not have better bustled through this Business than you have.

Miss *Not.* And to let you see, Sir, that I never do design him any Favour, I give you leave to tell him, that I sent my Lady after him.——Which, if he does, I'm sure my Lord *Wronglove* must suspect an Intimacy between us. [*Afide.*] Nay, and if you'll but stay a moment, you'll have an Opportunity, for I know he'll be at home presently.

Ld. *Geo.* Then you are but just come from him?

Miss *Not.* The minute you saw me come in—And now, Sir, if you can but give me half as good a Proof, that your Heart is innocent of Mrs. *Conquest*——Why 'tis possible (when you have been about seven Years in the same mind) I may then begin to think whether I shall consider of it or no.

Ld. *Geo.* A notable Encouragement, truly! But to let you see, Madam, I can't bear the Scandal of a Passion I'm not guilty of, as the last Proof of my Innocence, if either she doubts of my Indifference, or you of my Inclination, I am content to own both, before both your faces.

Miss *Not.* And so afterwards deny both, behind both our backs. Indeed you must think again, that won't do——An old Bite.

Ld. *Geo.* Come, I'll do more—I'll pretend to trust you with my Passion for a third Person, and give you leave, in the tenderest Touches Art or Woman's Wit can paint it, to tell it that third Person, while Mrs. *Conquest* is by.

Miss *Not.* Umh! This has a face.

Ld. *Geo.* Nay, with a Mask upon't too; for while I am convincing you, I don't care a button for her; I impose upon a third Person purely to make a Secret of my Passion for you.

Miss *Not.* Better still—But, when I have a mind to pull off the Mask, you shan't refuse to show your Face; for I don't care a Man shou'd be askam'd of his Passion neither.

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* As you please, for that.

Mifs *Not.* I begin to like this strangely — This will teize Mrs. *Conquest* to death — But now the Difficulty is to find out this third Person — It must be one I'm acquainted with — What think you of my Lady *Wranglove*?

Ld. *Geo.* Umh! No, I don't care to affront the Wife of my Friend.

Mifs *Not.* Ah! Do you think any of the sober Souls about Town are ever angry in their Hearts to hear a Man likes 'em.

Ld. *Geo.* That's true; 'tis possible her Resentment might let a Man die in his Bed after it — But 'tis not worth one's while to quarrel with him, about a Woman I don't like.

Mifs *Not.* Nay, I wou'd not run you into any hazard — unless 'twere upon my own account — And now I think on't, I'll reserve that Quarrel for myself. [*Afide.*]

Ld. *Geo.* Come! I have found one — the properest Person in the World is my Lady *Gentle* — You know you are all in a House together; her Husband Sir *William's* in the Country, I have no Acquaintance with him; and if I lose hers by it, I don't care Sixpence.

Mifs *Not.* I like your Choice very well — but I doubt it will require some Art to manage her; for to say the Truth, the Woman is most fantastically simple: The very Word Love out of any Mouth but her Husband's, will make her start, as if a Gun went off.

Ld. *Geo.* Therefore, my Dear, it must be done as if you did not do it: You must go to her in all the disorder in the World, as if I had had the Impudence to endeavour to bribe you into my assistance.

Mifs *Not.* Right! or I'll go first and quarrel with my Uncle till he makes me cry, and then come in with my Eyes swell'd, and sobbing, as if I was almost choak'd with the Affront you had offer'd me, and then call you a thousand Villains for daring to propose such an impudent thing to me.

Ld. *Geo.* Admirable! — I'gad, the Child's a Bar's length in experience above the stoutest of her Sex — Hark! I hear a Coach stop!

Mifs *Not.* Pshah! Duce take him, it's certainly my Lord! how shall we do?

Ld. *Geo.* Why, if you'll give me leave, my Life, I'll call at your House in an Hour, and there we'll settle every Point to a tittle.

Mifs *Not.* With all my Heart, I won't stay for my Lady ! I'll go home now : But here comes my Lord, you shall see first how I'll use him.

Ld. *Geo.* Don't trouble yourself, my Life, it will only give him a Jealousy, and do us no service.

Mifs *Not.* Indeed ! methinks if I am not afraid of his Jealousy, you need not.

Ld. *Geo.* My Soul ! I ask ten thousand Pardons for my Stupidity.

Enter Lord Wronglove, and stops Miss Notable, who seems to talk gravely with him.

Ld. *Geo.* I'gad, I can hardly believe my Senses ; if this Girl's Character were in a Play, People that had not seen it wou'd swear the Notableness of her Head were above Nature.

Ld. *Wrong.* [To Miss Notable.] Did my Lord George tell you I told him that you were to meet me ?

Mifs *Not.* That's no matter, it's sufficient I know you told him : But I thought at least you had seen enough of the World to know, that a Confidant was the safest Disguise for a Rival.

Ld. *Wrong.* I am sorry your Ladyship has such an Opinion of me.

Mifs *Not.* Indeed, Sir, I shall not reproach you, I have satisfied myself in serving you, as you deserve for it—— There's one can tell you how too, and so your Servant—— My Lord, you'll remember. [To Lord George.] [Exit Miss.

Ld. *Wrong.* Ha ! ha ! ha ! Why how now, Friend ! What are you my Rival ?

Ld. *Geo.* Ha ! ha ! ha ! Why, faith I am very near being one of 'em ; for I believe the Child will think she has hard luck, if the whole Town is not so in a Fortnight.

Ld. *Geo.* But prithee how came she to know I ever made you a confidant of my Affair with her ? I am afraid you have been thoughtless.

Ld. *Geo.* No, by all that's honest——But she has told me more than you cou'd tell me.

Ld. *Wrong.* What ?

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* That she herself told my Lady *Wranglowe* of your Appointment with her this Afternoon, and (as I suppose you have since found) sent her in a Hackney-Coach after you.

Ld. *Wrang.* The Devil!

Ld. *Geo.* Nay, 'twas a home push, faith!

Ld. *Wrang.* Home! quotha! i'gad it's time for me to knock off, I shall never come up with her: But what cou'd she propose by telling you of it?

Ld. *Geo.* Why, a fresh Lover, I suppose——She found me a little tardy here in addressing her, and imagining my small Virtue might proceed from a regard to you; to convince me of her Indifference to you, she very fairly told me how she had serv'd you, to open an easier Passage in my Conscience for my Passion to her.

Ld. *Wrang.* Sir, I give you joy.

Ld. *Geo.* And faith, Sir, I expect it, though not as you do, from the green Youth of her Person, but the plump Maturity of her Understanding——in helping me to another.

Ld. *Wrang.* Riddles!

Ld. *Geo.* To be short; I think I have bit the Babe; for in return, to convince her of my Indifference to Mrs. *Conquest*, I have impos'd upon her to discover my real Passion to Lady *Gentle*, before Mrs. *Conquest's* Face: And this, Sir, with your leave, is, upon Honour, all the use I design to make of her.

Ld. *Wrang.* Faith! 'tis a glorious one——All *Matchiavel* was Boys-play to it——Look you, Sir, if you have a fancy to the small remainder of her Composition——Pray be free——

Ld. *Geo.* Dear Sir! not so much as the squeeze of her little Finger: But I thought I might make bold with her Virtue, and not rob your *Gouft* of a Morfel.

Ld. *Wrang.* Not a step farther, faith——I shall e'en turn about my Nag and go home: a little humble Hare-hunting, by way of taking the Air, I can make a shift to come up to; but to scamper, neck or nothing, after a mad galloping Jade of a Hind, that will run you strait an end out of a Country, requires a little more Mettle than I am master of.

Ld. *Geo.* Come, come! you are Sportsman enough to know, that as Pride first humbles a Coquet into the loosest Encouragements

couragements to gain a Man, so the same Bride very often piques her into the granting the last Favour, rather than lose him.

Ld. *Wrong*. I am sorry I have made this rout about it, Sir, I expect to have my Wife shock me too.

Ld. *Geo*. O! pray, how did you come off? Did my Lady see you in the Coach?

Ld. *Wrong*. I am not sure, faith; but whether she did or not, she shan't convince me she did.

Ld. *Geo*. Where did you leave her!

Ld. *Wrong*. Why, as soon as the Child told me from her Coach, that my Wife was in another behind me, I advis'd her to go off; then whipt up my wooden Glasses, and stood cross the Road, to prevent the Nymph's being follow'd; when she was out of sight, I order'd the Fellow to drive to Town as fast as *Black* and *Bay* cou'd lay Legs to the Ground; and having the Fortune of better Horses, I just got Time enough to stop, and give a Fellow a Guinea to cut the Braces of the Coach that came after me; which, while I drove gently on, I saw him do; so e'en came away, and left her Ladyship fairly overfet in the middle of a swinging Shower, at *Hyde-Park-Corner*.

Ld. *Geo*. How will she get home?

Ld. *Wrong*. Umh! She will have Wit enough in her Passion, I presume, to send for another Coach; or, if not, it will be a very pretty cool Walk over the Park for her.

Ld. *Geo*. What an unfortunate Creature is a jealous Wife!

[*Brush whispers Lord Wronglove, and Exit.*]

Ld. *Wrong*. My Wife's come home: Now, if you have a Curiosity, you shall see how I'll manage her.

Ld. *Geo*. Pray, Sir, don't let me be witness of your conjugal Douceurs; but, if you please, I'll step into the next Room a little, for I have two or three Words to write: I must appoint the Count to meet me at my Lady *Gentle's* after the Play.

Ld. *Wrong*. Do so then——Take this Key, you'll find Paper in the Bureau.

Ld. *Geo*. Quick, quick, I hear her——*Bon Voyage.*

[*Exit Lord George.*]

Enter Lady Wronglove, as from the Street, in a Hood and Scarf, and her Petticoat tinn'd up.

La. *Wrong*. So, Sir, you are come home, I see.

Ld.

Ld. *Wrong*. Yes, Madam, and you have been abroad, I see; will you never give over making yourself ridiculous to the very Servants? Was this a Dress to go out in, or a Condition for a Woman of your Quality to walk home in? Death! What must People take you for?—For shame!

La. *Wrong*. My Lord, when a Husband grows monstrous, a Wife may well become ridiculous.

Ld. *Wrong*. Look you, Madam, while your Jealousy keeps within Bounds, I shall take little notice of it: But when its idle Extravagances break in upon my Reputation, I shall resent it as I ought. You may think me an ill Husband, if you please; but I won't have the World think so, till I give 'em Occasion.

La. *Wrong*. Insolent!

Ld. *Wrong*. I thought I had told you in the Morning of a foolish Letter, that was brought by Mistake to me instead of my Servant: Your not taking my Word, methinks was not over-civil, Madam; and your since dogging my Servant, instead of me, to the very Place of Appointment, was extremely obliging. The Fellow has confess'd to me, since he came home, that in his Fear to be seen, he got your Coach overthrown in the middle of the Highway, while you ridiculously pursued him: A mighty reputable Figure you must make, while you were getting out of it, no doubt!

La. *Wrong*. Come, come, my Lord, I have not lost my Senses yet——I follow'd you, and saw you in the Coach, when the confident Creature reach'd out to you from another, to tell you, I suppose, that I was just behind you. You may wrong me, but you can never blind me.

[*In a scornful Smile.*]

Ld. *Wrong*. Look you, Madam, that Manner in speaking shews too much Transport, and—Colour does not become your Face. ——

La. *Wrong*. [*Taking him up short.*] Some People think it does now: All Men are not of your Opinion, my Lord, my Complexion may not please you perhaps; but I have known many a Lover find an Appetite only from a Husband's losing it.

Ld. *Wrong*. I won't suppose, Madam, you'll suffer any Man to like you more than he ought to do.

La. *Wrong*. O Sir! don't you depend more upon my
Discre-

Discretion, than your own——We Wives, as well as our Husbands, love to have some idle Body or other to flatter us into Humour, when the Time hangs upon our Hands.

Ld. *Wrong*. You are pleasant, Madam.

La. *Wrong*. Marriage wou'd be an unfortunate Frolick indeed, if a Woman's Happiness were to die with her Husband's Inclination.

Ld. *Wrong*. Waggish, I protest.

La. *Wrong*. O there's nothing like a modish Husband to refine the unbred Virtue of a Wife into all the pretty Liberties in fashion.

Ld. *Wrong*. Good Company, or let me die.

La. *Wrong*. I knew the Day, when my Lady *Honey-Moon* wou'd have blush'd, almost into tears, at the alarm of a bare civil thing from any Man but her Husband; but from the well-bred Example of his Conscience, she has now most undauntedly got the better of her own, and stands buff at the Head of the Mode, without the least Tincture of Virtue to put her out of countenance.

Ld. *Wrong*. Why now, my Dear——this is something; if you'd but always treat me with this Good-Humour, you and I shou'd never dispute as long as we live.

La. *Wrong*. Monster!

Ld. *Wrong*. For you know I have often told you, that if ever I shou'd be weak enough to wrong you, a gentle Complaint and good Words wou'd work me to any thing; when the Pride of an insolent Reproach wou'd be but adding Fuel to my Folly, and make it flame the higher: But now I see that you are convinc'd that your Suspicions were groundless, and that you are sensible, if they had not that, Defiance is utterly the wrong Way to reform me: You shall find that all this Tenderness and Temper that you now treat me with, shall not be thrown away upon me.

La. *Wrong*. Insolent! Provoking Devil!

Ld. *Wrong*. I am glad we are Friends with all my Heart; I am, upon my Soul, my Dear.

La. *Wrong*. Villain!

Ld. *Wrong*. O my Dear! I had like to have forgot one thing, and since we are now come to a right Understanding, I'll tell you, if ever you and I should happen to disagree,

disagree, I beg of you, for your own sake, never give me any hard Language; because there is no being certain, but in one of my brutal Fits, I may let you cry yourself half blind for it, before I forgive you.

La. Wrong. Forgive me! I have a Soul as much above the Fear of you, as are your Injuries below my scorn—I laugh at both.

Ld. Wrong. Ay but, my Life, I wou'd not have you trust me; for if ever you shou'd accuse me wrongfully, I know my foolish Temper so well, that, in my Conscience, in pure Spite, I believe—I believe—I believe I shou'd keep a Whore.

La. Wrong. My Lord, this Affectation won't redress my Injuries, and however you deceive yourself, in your unquestion'd Power of doing wrong, you'll find there is a Force of Justice yet above your Strength, a Curb of Law to check abandon'd Principles; nor am I yet so poor in Interest or Friends, jealous of my Wrongs, as of their own, but I may find a Time and Place to make your proud Heart humble for this Usage.

Ld. Wrong. Death! and Hell! dare to insult me with such another Thought, these Walls shall mark your Bounds of Liberty: This dismal House becomes your Prison, debarr'd of Light, of Converse, or Relief, you live immur'd for Life: And, let me see that Big-mouth'd Friend, or Interest then, that can unlock a Husband's Power to keep you—When my Wife talks warmly to me, she shall ask my leave first.

La. Wrong. Never—Such leave as you took to give me Cause for't, I take to tell you of it.

Ld. Wrong. We are not upon an equal Foot: I won't have you so familiar in your Accusations. Be warn'd, and stir me not to use my Power: You may sooner make me an ill Husband than a tame one.

La. Wrong. So may you me a Wife, my Lord: And what is't binds me more to bear an Injury, than you? I have seen you laugh at Passive Obedience between a Prince and People, and in the Sense of Nature, I can't see why 'tis not as ridiculous from a Wife to an injurious Husband.

Ld. Wrong. Their Hazard is at least unequal: A People may be freed by struggling; but when a fetter'd Wife presumes, th' insulted Husband's sure to make her Chain the shorter.

La.

La. Wrong. Her Mind, at least, is more at liberty; the Ease of giving Shame for Pain, stands yet in some degree of Pleasure: The Wretch that's basely kill'd, falls better satisfied to see his Murtherer bleed.

Ld. Wrong. Nay, now I crave your mercy, Madam, I find I mistook your Grievance all this while——it seems then, to be refus'd the Pleasure of reproaching, is what you can't bear——and when you are wrong'd, to lock up your Tongue is the greatest Cruelty your Tyrant can impose upon you——If that be the Hardship, pray be easy, when you please, in the Name of Thunder go on, spare no Invectives, but open the Spout of your Eloquence, and see with what a calm connubial Resignation, I will both hear and bow me to the Chastisement.

La. Wrong. Poor helpless Affectation! This Shew of Temper is as much dissembled as your Innocence——I know, in spite of all your hardned Thoughts, to hear your Guilt confronted thus, must gall your Soul: Patients don't use to smile while their fresh Wounds are prob'd, nor Criminals to laugh under the smart of Justice.

Ld. Wrong. My Life, you begin extremely well, and with abundance of Fire, only give me leave to observe one thing to you, that as you draw towards an End, don't forget the principal Thing you were going to say.

La. Wrong. How poor! How low! how wretched is a guilty Mind, that stands without a Blush the Shock of Accusation——

Ld. Wrong. Hold, Madam, don't mistake me neither; for I allow you to accuse me of nothing, but of what we fine Gentlemen think is next to nothing——a little Whoredom.

La. Wrong. Audacious! Horrid Wretch! and dare you own the Fact.

Ld. Wrong. Own it! No, no, if I were guilty I wou'd not do that, but I give you leave to suppose me so, because, by what you say, I fancy it wou'd ease your Heart to reproach me; tho' methinks——it's very hard that Demonstration won't convince you of my Innocence.

La. Wrong. Demonstration!

Ld. Wrong. Demonstration! Ay, Demonstration: For if I were guilty, pray who cou'd better know it than myself?

self? and have not I told you with my own Mouth 'tis no such thing? Pray what Demonstration can be plainer?

La. Wrong. I find you are resolv'd to stand it to the last; but since I know your Guilt, I owe myself the Justice to resent it. When the weak Wife transgresses, the Husband's Blood has leave to boil; his Fury's justified by Honour! the Wrong admits no measure of amends; his Reputation bleeds, and only Blood can stanch it. And I must tell you, Sir, that in the Scales of Conscience, the Husband's Falshood is an equal Injury, and equal too, you'll find the Wife's Resentment: Henceforth be sure you're private in your Shame; for if I trace you to another Proof, expect as little Mercy for the Wretch you doat on, as you yourself wou'd shew to the felonious Lover.

*My Wrongs through her shall shoot you to the Soul,
You shall not find I am an injur'd Fool.* [Exit.

Ld. Wrong. Well said I-gad, if she cou'd but love with half the Fire she can hate, I wou'd not desire to pass my Time in better Company.—Not but between me, and myself, our dear Consorts have something a hard time on't: We are a little apt to take more Liberty than we give —But People in Power don't care to part with it, whether it be lawful or no; to bear her Insolence is positively intolerable—What shall I do with her—I know no way of making an honourable Peace, better than Sword in in Hand—Ev'n let her Pride swell till it bursts, and then 'tis possible she may come to Reason.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Here's Sir *Friendly Moral*, my Lord,

Ld. Wrong. Desire him to walk in—I hold fifty Pound the old Gentleman comes to school me about his young Kinswoman; if he does, I know he'll do it handsomely: For give him his due, with all his severity of Principles, he is as good-humour'd, and as well-bred, as if he had no Principles at all.

Enter a Servant with Sir Friendly.

Sir Fr. My Lord, I am your most humble Servant.

Ld. Wrong. Sir *Friendly!* this is kind indeed! Chairs there—Well! how goes the Gout, Sir?

Sir Fr. In troth very untowardly; for I can hardly walk with it—Will your Lordship give me leave?

Ld. Wrong. To stand upon any thing but Ceremony.

Enter

Enter Lord George from the inner Room.

Ld. *Geo.* Nuncle, I am glad to see you.

Sir *Fr.* Hah! Monsieur *Brilliant*, and in a sober Visit after Sunt-fet!

Ld. *Geo.* O dear Sir, I'm grown a Fellow of the most retir'd Conversation in the World.

Sir *Fr.* Your Reformation is not of a very long Date, I'm afraid; for if I don't mistake, I saw you but Yesterday at the Thatch'd-house, with a Napkin upon your Head, at the Window in very hopeless Company!

Ld. *Geo.* How! how Nuncle! two Men of Title, and a foreign Count, hopeless Company!

Sir *Fr.* Most deplorable! Your Count's a Counter, and only passes for what he is in his own Country; your Men of Title indeed are no Counterfeits, every Body sees into their Worth, Sir *Bubble Squander*, and my Lord *Lawless*: But the Sparks I observ'd you with, were *Done-first* the Jockey, and *Touchum* the Gamester; as infamous a Fellow, as ever broke the Head of a Box-keeper.

Ld. *Geo.* Pshah! People that play keep all Company: But to let you see I had my Account in it, I had a mind to bite Sir *Bubble* in a Horse-match, and so took these two Fellows with me, to let him into the Secret.

Sir *Fr.* A fine Instance of our modish Morals indeed! To make one's Conscience a Bawd, to the dishonour of biting a Wretch of perhaps an hundred Pound! What a Shame it is the World should not call it by its true name Cheating, that Men of Honour might not be guilty of it!

Ld. *Geo.* O, Sir, the name I grant you wou'd strangely alter the Case; but People of Rank, and Power, Nuncle, are wiser and nick-name one another's Infirmities.—— Therefore 'tis your little Cheat, you see, that's sent to *New-gate*; your great one only turn'd out of his Place.

Sir *Fr.* Nay, 'tis a comfortable World indeed, for Knaves, Fools, Fops, Cowards, and Sharpers.

Ld. *Geo.* Right! their Quality and Quantity keeps 'em in countenance.

Sir *Fr.* So that a Man may be any one, or all of 'em, and yet appear no Monster in most of the publick Places about Town.

Ld. *Wrong*. But with submission, Sir *Friendly*, if I meet with a Man of Figure, that talks agreeably over a Glas; what in the Name of Good-nature have I to do with his Morals?

Sir *Fr*. 'Tis in my Opinion, as dishonest in a Man of Quality to converse with a well-bred Rogue, as 'twere unsafe for a Woman of Reputation to make a Companion of an agreeable Strumpet. People's Taste and Principles are very justly measur'd by their Choice of Acquaintance: Besides, a Man of Honour owes the discountenance of a Villain, as a Debt to his own Dignity. How poor a Spirit must it shew in our People of Fortune, to let Fellows, who deserve hanging every other Day of their Lives, die at last of sitting up in the best Company? But my Lord *Wronglove*, I am afraid I have a Pardon to ask; the last Time we three were together, did not the old Fellow a little overshoot himself? I thought, when I parted, I had been freer in my Advice than became me?

Ld. *Wrong*. So far from it, that your very Manner of speaking makes your most severe Reproofs an Obligation.

Sir *Fr*. Nay, I was only concern'd for what I had said to your Lordship: As for this Spark, I no more mind his Caprice, than I believe he does any thing I can say to him: And yet the Knaves has something of good Humour in him, that makes me I can't help sometimes throwing away my Words upon him. But give me your Hand; in troth, when I was at your Years I had my Follies too.

Ld. *Geo*. Ay! Now you come to us, Nuncle, and I hope you'll have Good-nature enough, not to expect your Friends to be wiser than you were.

Sir *Fr*. Perhaps I don't expect it, but in troth, if they shou'd be wiser——for my Soul I can't see any harm 'twou'd do 'em: And tho' I love with all my Heart to see Spirit in a young Fellow, yet a little Prudence won't poison him. And if a Man that sets out into Life, shou'd carry a little general Esteem with him, as part of his Equipage, he'd make never the worse Figure at the End of his Journey.

Ld. *Geo*. We young Fellows that ride Post never mind what Figures we make.

Sir

Sir *Fr.* Come! come! let's not contend for Victory, but Truth——I love you both——and wou'd have all that know you do so too——Don't think because you pass for Men of Wit, and modish Honour, that that's all you owe to your Condition: Fortune has given you Titles to set your Actions in a fairer Light, and Nature Understanding to make 'em not only just, but generous. Troth! It grieves me to think you can abuse such Happiness, and have no more Ambition, or regard to real Honour, than the wretched fine Gentlemen in most of our modern Comedies!——Will you forgive me——Upon my Faith, I don't speak thus of you to other People, nor wou'd I now speak so to you, but to prevent other Peoples speaking thus of you to me.

Ld. *Geo.* Nuncle, depend upon't I'm always pleas'd to hear you.

Ld. *Wrong.* I take it kindly.

Sir *Fr.* Then first to you, Lord *George*——What can you think the honest Part of the World will say of you, when you have seduc'd the innocent Inclinations of one of the best Wives, from perhaps one of the best Husbands in the World.——To be plain, I mean my Lady *Gentle*;——You see, my Lord, with all your Discretion, your Design's no Secret.

Ld. *Geo.* Upon my Life, Nuncle, if I were half the Fellow you think me, I shou'd be asham'd to look People in the Face.

Sir *Fr.* Fie, fie! how usefess is the Force of Understanding, when only Age can give us Virtue?

Ld. *Wrong.* Come, Sir, you see he's incorrigible, you'll have better Success with me, I hope; for, to tell you the Truth, I have few Pleasures, that you can call it Virtue in me to part with.

Sir *Fr.* I am glad to hear it, my Lord,——I shall be as favourable as I can; but, since we are in search of Truth, must freely tell you, The Man that violates himself the sacred Honours of his Wife's chaste Bed (I must be plain, my Lord) ought at least to fear, as she's the frailer Sex, the same from her; the Injury to her strikes deeper than the Head, often to the Heart. And then her Provocation is in Nature greater; and injured Minds think nothing is unjust that's natural. This ought

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make a wife Man tremble: For, in the Point of real Honour, there's very little Difference between being a Cuckold, and deserving to be one. And to come a little closer to your Lordship's Case, to see so fine a Woman as my Lady *Wronglove*, even in her Flower of Beauty, slighted for the unblown Pleasures of a Green-sick Girl; besides the imprudent part, argues at best a thin and sickly Appetite.

Ld. *Wrong*. Sir *Friendly*, I am almost asham'd to answer you.——Your Reproach indeed has touch'd me; I mean for my Attempts upon your young Kinswoman: but because 'tis not fit you shou'd take my Word, after my owning so unfair an Action, here's one can bear me witness, that not half an Hour before you came in, I had resolv'd never to pursue her more.

Sir *F*. My Lord, I came not to reproach you with a Wrong to me, but to yourself; had the Girl had no Relation to me, I still had said the same; not but I now am doubly Bound to thank you.

Ld. *Geo*. And now, Nuncle, I'll give you a Piece of Advice: Dispose of the Child as soon as you can, rather under-match her, than not at all. For, if you'll allow me to know any thing of the Mathematicks, that before she's five Weeks older she will be totally unqualify'd for an Ape-leader, you may as positively depend upon, as that she is of the Feminine Gender.

Sir *Fr*. I am pretty well acquainted with the Ripeness of her Inclinations, and have provided for 'em; unless some such Spark as you (now my Lord has laid 'em down) whips up the Cudgels in the mean time.

Ld. *Geo*. Not I, upon Honour, depend upon't; her Person's quite out of my Gouft, nor have I any more Concern about it than I have to know who will be the next King of *Poland*, or who is the true Original of Strops for Razors.

Ld. *Wrong*. Sir *Friendly*, I own I have been no Stranger in other Places to the Follies you have charg'd me with; yet I am so far inclin'd to part with them, that were it possible I could be, my own way, and properly, reconcil'd to my Wife, I wou'd not wish a Thought of Happiness beyond it.

Sir *Fr*. My Lord, I know her Temper, and her Spirit.

Ld.

Ld. *Wrong*. O! human Patience can't bear it.

Sir *Fr*. I warrant you! a wife Man will bear a greater Weakness from a Woman: And, since I find your Good-nature is not wholly disoblig'd, I could wish, for both your Sakes, I had your Lordship's secret leave to talk with her.

Ld. *Wrong*. Umh! Cou'd not it as well be done without my Leave, Sir *Friendly*? I shou'd not care to have her think I made Advances ———

Sir *Fr*. O! ——— I am a Friend to both, and will betray neither of you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's a Gentleman come out of the City, and stays at your House to speak with you.

Sir *Fr*. I'll wait on him. ——— My Lord, will you excuse me?

Ld. *Wrong*. I cou'd rather wish your Business wou'd, Sir *Friendly*.

Sir *Fr*. Upon my Word, my Lord, 'tis urgent; this Man brings me Money: I am discharging myself of my Guardianship to Mrs. *Conquest*, and my Business is now to pay her in the last Sum of her Fortune.

Ld. *Geo*. What's the Sum total, Nuncle, if a Man shou'd happen to set a Price upon his Liberty?

Sir *Fr*. Come, come, the Liberties you value, my Lord, are not worth keeping: An honest Smile from the Good-humour of that Girl is worth all the sodden Favours of your whole *Seraglio* ——— Will four Thousand Pound do any good, my Lord?

Ld. *Geo*. Look you, Sir *Friendly*, Marriage is very honourable and wise, and — and — it — it — it's — it's an extreme fine thing, no doubt, but I am one of those frank-hearted Fellows that had rather see my Friends happy that way than myself. ——— My Lord, your Servant ——— If you are going home, Nuncle, I'll carry you, for I have Business at your House too.

Ld. *Wrong*. Who's there? Light out! ——— Lord *George*, is your new Chariot at the Door?

Ld. *Geo*. Yes; and positively the prettiest that ever roll'd in the Rear of six Horses.

Ld. *Wrong*. I have a mind to look at it. [Exeunt.]

The End of the Third Act.



A C T IV.

SCENE *Lord Wronglove's House.*

Enter Lady Wronglove and Mrs. Hartshorn.

La. *Wrong.* **W**AS Sir *Friendly* within?
 Mrs. *Hartf.* Yes, Madam, he gives his humble Service, and says, he will certainly be at home at eight a-clock, and expect your Ladyship's Commands.

La. *Wrong.* Did the Fellow give my Service to my Lady *Gentle* too, and to Mrs. *Conquest*?

Mrs. *Hartf.* He did not say any thing of it to me, Madam.

La. *Wrong.* What Blockhead is it you always find out to neglect my Business? Whom did you send?

Mrs. *Hartf.* *James*, Madam.

La. *Wrong.* Call him in, I find I must always give my Orders myself.

Mrs. *Hartf.* He's gone to the Play to keep your Ladyship's Places.

La. *Wrong.* The Play! sure the People are all out of their Senses! Why I shan't go to-day.

Mrs. *Hartf.* He said, Madam, your Ladyship order'd him, right, or wrong, to keep Places every Saturday.

La. *Wrong.* Pfhah!

Mrs. *Hartf.* I hope your Ladyship is not angry at me, Madam.

La. *Wrong.* No! Prithee! I don't know what I say.

Mrs. *Hartf.* Ah, poor Lady! [*Aside.*

La. *Wrong.* What is the Play to-day?

Mrs. *Hartf.* The——the——*Husband*, something——
 the *Careful Husband*, I think, Madam.

La. *Wrong.* The *Careful*; the *Careless Husband*, you mean sure——tho' I never saw it.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Hartf.* Yes, yes, Madam——it's that Play, that my Lady *Wear-breeches* hates so, that I saw once, Madam——where there's a Lady that comes in, and catches her Husband fast asleep with her own Woman, and then takes her Handkerchief off her Neck, and then goes softly to him ——

La. *Wrong.* And strangles him in his Sleep?

Mrs. *Hartf.* No, Madam.

La. *Wrong.* Oh, strangles the Woman.

Mrs. *Hartf.* No, Madam, she only lays it gently over his Head, for fear he should catch Cold, and so steals out of the Room, without so much as offering to wake him.

La. *Wrong.* Horrid! And what becomes of the poor-spirited Creature?

Mrs. *Hartf.* O! Madam, when the Gentleman wakes, and finds that his Lady has been there without taking any Notice of it to him, he grows so sham'd of his Wickedness, and so sensible of her Virtues, that he afterwards proves the civilest Gentleman, and the best Husband in the World to her.

La. *Wrong.* Foh! were I an Husband, a Wife with such a tame enduring Spirit wou'd make me scorn her, or, at best, but sleep at her groveling Virtue——Is my Lord within?

Mrs. *Hartf.* Yes, Madam, he's reading in his Closet.

La. *Wrong.* Any thing, the dullest Solitude more pleases him than my Company——Hoh! [Sighing.]

Mrs. *Hartf.* [*Aside.*] Ah poor Lady! it makes me weep to see her grieve at Heart so.

La. *Wrong.* Go to my Lord, and say I desire to speak with him. [*Exit Mrs. Hartshorn.*] O! for a Draught of cold Indifference to chill this lukewarm Love, that wou'd rebel against my Peace, that I may leave without a Pang this hardned Wretch, and to the rude Riots of his gross Desire give him up for ever——He comes, keep down my swelling Heart, and let tame Patience speak my Wrongs for once; for Wrongs like mine need not the Force, or Fire of Passion to present them.

Enter Lord Wronglove.

Ld. *Wrong.* I am told, Madam, you desire to speak with me!

La. Wrong. Yes, my Lord; and which perhaps you'll not dislike, to talk with you in Temper too, if you're in Temper to receive it.

Ld. Wrong. While you're in Temper, Madam, I shall always think I owe you the respect of keeping mine; and when you are not, I shall keep it in respect to myself.

La. Wrong. My Lord, I never had occasion to question your knowing what you ought to do; But you are not bound, you'll say, to make your Inclination a Slave to your Understanding: And therefore 'tis possible you won't want Arguments to convince me, that a Wife's oblig'd to bear all Faults in a Husband, that are not in her Power to punish.

Ld. Wrong. Proceed.

La. Wrong. Now I must tell you, my Lord, when any one injures me, because 'tis in their Power, I shall certainly hate 'em for't, because that's in my power.

Ld. Wrong. I am sorry you think it worth your while to make use of so unprofitable a Power.

La. Wrong. I am sorry I have Occasion for it.

Ld. Wrong. Um ——— That's half a Question ——— but go on.

La. Wrong. And therefore since I find the more I endeavour to detect you, the more you persist in your Resolution to use me ill; since my honest Resentment, and your Actions have made us a mutual Grievance to one another, I see no way in Nature to make us mutually just, but by cancelling our Obligations. If we agree to part, th' uneasy Bond of Wife or Husband no longer lies in force against us ——— And since I am contented to remit the Breaches you have made of the Conditions on your part, I suppose you won't think it inconsistent with your Reputation, to allow me part of the Fortune I brought you, as a separate Maintenance.

Ld. Wrong. When you and I part, Madam, you shall leave none of your Fortune behind you: But shou'd I now yield to your Proposal, the World might think I own'd the Breaches you accuse me of, and then 'twere only parting to indulge your Pride: But if the sincere Sorrow of your humble Heart can find a way to make it as consistent with my Reputation, as my private Peace, I'll sign to your Relief this moment.

La.

La. Wrong. Your Reputation! No, my Lord, that's your Business to secure, I've taken care to let my Actions justify my own; if you have been remiss, the Fault's not mine to answer—I'm glad at least to see you own where 'tis your Weakness lies.

Ld. Wrong. To bear such Insults from a Wife is not perhaps my least Weakness—Nay, I've another too, which I might own with equal Blushing: A tame forgiving Pity of your unfortunate Temper, that pauses yet to take the Advantage of your Distraction to undo you.

La. Wrong. Horrid! Insolent Assertion, to do me Injury; and call my innocent Endeavours at Redress, Distraction.

Ld. Wrong. Innocent! Away! You take the Rudest, Fiercest, Falsest Means for Reparation, if you had a Wrong.

La. Wrong. If I had! Insupportable! To be out-fac'd that my own Eyes deceive me!

Ld. Wrong. Death and Confusion! Suppose your Wrongs were true——think what they are——speak 'em with a modest Tongue, and blush at all this Redness of Resentment.

La. Wrong. Nay now, my Lord, we are past all Argument.

Ld. Wrong. 'Tis fit we should be so—the Subject ought to be below your Thoughts——don't misuse your Pride, till I am taught to think you've none. Death! I've known the Spirit of a Strumpet in the Misfortunes of her slighted Love shew more than you; who tho' her Heart was bleeding with the inward Pain, yet to her Lover's Face took Pride and Ease to seem concernless at his Falshood.

La. Wrong. My Lord, your having a better Opinion of such Creatures than your Wife, is no new Thing to me; but I must tell you, I have not deserv'd your vile Comparison. Nor shall I ever buy an Husband's Inclination, by being like the horrid Things you doat on.

Ld. Wrong. Come, since you are incorrigible, I'll give your Pride the vain Relief you ask for——Your Temper is at last intolerable, and now 'tis mutual Ease to part with you: Yet to let you see, 'tis not in the Power of all your Follies to provoke me to an Injustice; I will not trust your Wishes with your own Discretion; but if you have a Friend, that's not an Enemy to me, whose

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Honesty and Sense you dare depend on, let him be Umpire of the Conditions, of what's proper both of us should yield to when we part; and here's my Hand, my Word, my Honour, I'll sign 'em on demand.

La. Wrong. Keep but your Word in this, my Lord, and I have henceforth no Injuries to reproach you with.

Ld. Wrong. If in the least Article I shrink from it, conclude me then the mean, the servile Wretch you'd make me.

La. Wrong. I'd make you just, my Lord; if that's my fault, I never shall repent it.

Ld. Wrong. We are now no longer our own Judges: Madam, name the Person you appeal to.

La. Wrong. O! my Lord, you can't be more in haste than I am: Sir *Friendly Moral*; and I think you can have no Objection to his Integrity——I appeal to him.

Ld. Wrong. The Man o'th' World I wou'd have chose myself; and if you please, Madam, I'll wait upon you to him immediately.

La. Wrong. No, my Lord, I think it won't be unreasonable, if I speak with him alone first.

Ld. Wrong. With all my Heart; in half an Hour then I'll follow you.

La. Wrong. My Lord, you need not affect this Indifference, I have Provocations enough without it——I'll go, depend upon't.

Ld. Wrong. I thought you had been gone, Madam. How now!
[*Passing hastily by him.*]

Enter a Servant, who whispers Lord Wronglove.

Serv. Sir *Friendly Moral* desires to speak with your Lordship! he stays in the next Room, and begs my Lady may not know he's here.

La. Wrong. [*Turning*] What can that Whisper mean? But I have done with Jealousy.

Ld. Wrong. When your Lady's gone out, desire him to walk in. [*Exit Servant.*] In half an Hour, as I told you, I'll positively be with you.

La. Wrong. O! my Lord, I shan't stay to interrupt your Privacies.
[*Exit Lady Wronglove.*]

Ld. Wrong. How unfortunate must this Woman's Temper when e'en this Affectation of Indifference is the greatest

Proof I ever receiv'd of her Inclination?——What can this come to?——By Sir *Friendly's* being here, I fancy she has been disclosing her Grievance already; and when she has made the very worst of it, I am mistaken, if his Temper and Understanding won't convince her, that 'tis below the Pride and Prudence of a Wife, to take so violent a Notice of it——But here he comes— [*Enter Sir Friendly Moral.*] Sir *Friendly*, your most humble Servant——Come, we are alone, I guess the Business——my Wife has been talking with you.

Sir *Friend*. No, my Lord; and unless you give me your Word to be secret, I dare not tell you my Business.

Ld. *Wrong*. Upon my Honour.

Sir *Friend*. Then, there, my Lord, I just now receiv'd that Letter from her.

Ld. *Wrong*. [*Reads.*]

AT last, I find there's no way of being easy in my Life; but parting for ever with my Lord: And I wou'd willingly do it in such a Manner, as might least blame me to the World. Your Friendship to both our Families will, I am sure, engage you to advise me in the safest Method: Therefore I beg you'll be at Home some Time this Evening, that I may speak with you: for Life, as it is, is insupportable. I am Sir, &c.

Well, Sir *Friendly*, then I can tell you half your Trouble's over; for we have agreed to part already, and both have chosen you the Umpire of the Conditions.

Sir *Fr*. How, my Lord! cou'd Passion be so far your Master too?

Ld. *Wrong*. Why faith, Sir *Friendly*, Patience could endure it no longer——'Twas her own Proposal, and she found the Way at last to provoke me, to take her at her Word.

Sir *Fr*. Her Word, fy! fy! because she'd lame her Reputation to cripple your's, shall you revenge her Folly on yourself? Come, come, your Understanding ought to have more Compassion for the Misfortune of a weak Woman's Temper.

Ld. *Wrong*. Oh! she's implacable!

Sir *Fr*. That Quality punishes itself, my Lord! and since the Provocation's yours, it might sometimes be pardon'd. Do but imagine how it must gall the Heart of a
Woman

62 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE ; or,*

Woman of Spirit, to see the loose *Coquets* of her Acquaintance smile at her modish Husband's sleeping in a separate Bed from her.

Ld. *Wrong*. Humph! there's something in what you say—I own—Not but you'll laugh at me, should I tell you the true and honest Occasion of it.

Sir *Fr*. Not if it be true, and honest, my Lord.

Ld. *Wrong*. Upon my Faith, it was not the least distaste of her Person, but her being downright an intolerable Bed-fellow.

Sir *Fr*. How do you mean?

Ld. *Wrong*. I cou'd never sleep with her——For tho' she loves late Hours, yet when she has seen me gape for Bed, like a Waiter at the Groom-Porter's in a Morning, she wou'd still reserve to herself the tedious Decorum of being first sollicitated for her Company; so that she usually contriv'd to let me be three quarters asleep, before she wou'd do me the Honour to disturb me. Then besides this, I was seldom less than two Nights in four, but in the very middle of my first comfortable Nap, I was awaken'd with th'alarum of tingle, tingle, tingle, for a quarter of an Hour together, that you'd swear she wanted a Doctor or a Midwife; And by and by down comes Madamoiselle with a single Under-Petticoat in one hand, and rubbing her Eyes with t'other; and then, after about half an Hour's weighty Arguments on both sides, poor Madamoiselle is guilty of not having pull'd the Sheet smooth at her feet; by which unpardonable Neglect, her Ladyship's little Toe had lain at least two Hours upon the Rack of a Wrinkle, that had almost put her into a Fever——This, when I civilly complain'd of, she said she must either be easy in the Bed, or go out of it——I told her, that was exactly my Case; so I very fairly stepp'd into the next Room, where I have ever since slept most profoundly sound, without so much as once dreaming of her.

Sir *Fr*. An unfortunate Circumstance truly! but I see a little Matter, my Lord, will part People that don't care for Company.

Ld. *Wrong*. But, Sir *Friendly*, (not to trouble you with a long Particular of the Provocations I had from her Temper, to run a roguing at first) suppose I have play'd the Fool, is the Fault unpardonable? Is a Wife's Reputation like an
Huf-

Husband's, mean, or infamous, because she overlooks the Folly,

Sir *Fr.* No—but did you, my Lord, ever give her any Signs of a Repentance?

Ld. *Wrong.* As far as I thought the Nature of the Crime requir'd—I've often receiv'd her moderate Reproaches with a Smile, and Raillery—given her leave to guess, in hopes her Understanding wou'd have smil'd again, and pardon'd it.

Sir *Fr.* And what Effect had that?

Ld. *Wrong.* O! none in Nature! For, Sir, her Pride has possess'd her with so horrid an Idea of the Crime, that my making slight on't but the more incenses her: And when once her Passion takes the liberty of her Tongue to me, I neither spare Authority, nor Ill-nature to provoke or silence her—This generally is our Course of Conversation; and for aught I see, if we shou'd not agree upon parting, we are in as fair a way of heartily plaguing one another for Life, as e'er a comfortable Couple in *Europe*.

Sir *Fr.* My Lord, the Thought's too melancholy to jest upon.

Ld. *Wrong.* Why Faith, I have so far a Concern for her, that cou'd any Means of an Accommodation be found, that were not unfit for an Husband to submit to, I shou'd not yet refuse to come into it.

Sir *Fr.* Spoken like a Man, my Lord: How far the Fault's in you, I partly see; and when I have made the same enquiry into my Lady's Grief, I doubt not then I shall be better able to advise.

Ld. *Wrong.* You've now an Opportunity; for she's gone this very Minute to my Lady *Gentle's*, to speak with you.

Sir *Fr.* 'Twere best to lose no time then, my Lord; I'll take my Leave—Nay, no Ceremony.

Ld. *Wrong.* No, I'm going part of your way—upon my Word. [Exit.]

Enter Lady Gentle, reading a Letter, and Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. *Con.* I hope Sir *William's* well, Madam.

La. *Gent.* Yes, very well, my Dear, and desires his *Baize-mains* to your Ladyship,

Mrs. *Con.* Does he say any thing of coming to town?

La. *Gent.* No, nothing yet.

64 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE : or,*

Mrs. Con. No ! Pray, Madam, don't you think his good Worship begins to be a little fonder of Fox-hunting, than you cou'd wish he were ?

La. Gent. I am always pleas'd while he's diverted ; if you saw his Letters to me, you wou'd not think I had any reason to complain.

Mrs. Con. Nay, the World owns your Ladyship has the perfect Secret of making a good Husband.

La. Gent. Believe me, Child, the Matter's not so difficult as People wou'd have it. If you but knew what Trifles, in the Compliance of a Woman's Temper, sooth a Man to Fondness, you'd admire to what childish Obstinacy so many Women owe their Uneasiness.

Enter Miss, crying.

Miss Not. Oh ! oh !

La. Gent. How now ! what's the Matter, my Dear ?

Miss Not. Oh ! oh ! Madam ! Madam !

Mrs. Con. Bless me ! what ails the Child ?

Miss Not. I have been so abus'd ! so affronted !

La. Gent. Abus'd ! by whom, my Dear ?

Miss Not. That Monster of Men, my Lord *George Brilliant*.

Mrs. Con. My Lord *George* !

Miss Not. Oh ! I can't speak for Passion !

La. Gent. I'm amaz'd ! what has he done, Child ?

Miss Not. The most provoking, impudent thing that ever was offer'd to a young Creature, sure ; Oh ! oh !

Mrs. Con. [*Aside.*] This must be some strange thing, indeed : For if I don't mistake, her young Ladyship thinks herself old enough for most sorts of Impudence, that a Man can offer to her.

La. Gent. Has he offer'd any Love, or Rudeness to you ?

Miss Not. O worse ! worse ! a thousand times.

Mrs. Con. Worse ! what can that be, Child ? — unless it be, that he has not made Love to her ? [*Aside.*

Miss Not. O ! Madam ! 'tis not myself alone, but your Ladyship, and Mrs. *Conquest* too, that are affronted.

Mrs. Con. Am I in ? But it's no Novelty to me—I have so far the better of both of you, I am us'd to his Impudence, and know how to bear it.

La.

La. *Gent.* I am amaz'd! Pray let's hear, Child.

Mifs *Not.* O! I cou'd tear his Flesh, for having such a Thought of me.

La. *Gent.* What Thought, my Dear?

Mifs *Not.* O! Madam! cou'd any thing, but the greatest Villain upon Earth, think to make me a Procurefs?

La. *Gent.* Child! you startle me!

Mifs *Not.* Or any Mortal, but from a most profligate Principle of the most provoking Vanity, nourish but the least living hope against your Ladyship's Virtue?

La. *Gent.* How, Child!

Mifs *Not.* Or any Monster, but the most ungrateful, most audacious of Mankind propose too, that I shou'd discover his odious Inclinations to your Ladyship, before the very Face of one who innocently loves him: O! I am past Patience! ————— I think I do it bravely. [*Aside.*]

[*Walks in disorder.*]

La. *Gent.* I am all Confusion!

Mrs. *Con.* [*Aside,*] If this Girl's Passion is not all an Air, and his own Contrivance, then will I be bound to endure the Success of it.

La. *Gent.* His Inclination! and to me! and yet propos'd, that you shou'd discover it before Mrs. *Conquest* too: To glory in such Insolence! This seems a Contradiction.

Mifs *Not.* Or else, said he, 'twould never be believ'd; for having the idle Reputation of liking one, I am oblig'd that both should know it, that she I really Love may see I'm wholly free from any former Passion.

Mrs. *Con.* This Lye must be his own, by the Extremity of its Impudence. [*Aside.*]

La. *Gent.* But when he us'd my Name, Child, why were you not shock'd at first? Why did not you leave him to tell his idle Story to the Wind?

Mifs *Not.* O Madam! that was what betray'd me into hearing him: For when he first began, he nam'd no Names; that he reserv'd till last, till he had told me all, to clinch the Secret with.

La. *Gent.* But pray, Child, how did he begin it? What was his manner of first attempting you?

Mrs. *Con.* Her Ladyship grows a little inquisitive, methinks. [*Aside.*]

66 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

Miss Not. O! with all the subtle Softness that ever humble Love inspir'd : ——— Then of a sudden, rousing from his Fear, he gave himself such an animated Air of Confidence, threw back his Wig, and cry'd aloud :

*But why should she asham'd, or angry be,
To be belov'd by me ?*

Mrs. Con. What do you think of his Modesty now, Madam ?

La. Gent. I am amaz'd, indeed.

Miss Not. Then he turn'd to me, press'd me by the Hand, and, kneeling, begg'd my Friendship, and threw into my Lap such untold Heaps of Gold, forc'd upon my Finger too a sparkling Diamond, I thought must beggar him to purchase——But when I heard him close his impudent Story, with offering me a Letter to give your Ladyship, while *Mrs. Conquest* was by——I started up, and told him, Yes, my Lord, I'll do your Errand, but without your Letter, in another manner than your infamous Principles have propos'd it ; my Lady shall know your Passion, but know it as I do, to avoid, to loath, and scorn you for such a villainous Thought. While I was saying this, I threw his filthy Gold upon the Floor, his Letter into the Fire, his Diamond out of the Window, and left him to gather 'em up, as he pleas'd, without expecting an Answer.

La. Gent. Sure ! 'tis impossible a Man shou'd wear a Face, that cou'd so stedfastly belye his Heart.

Miss Not. So I was resolv'd to tell your Ladyship——Besides, I thought it proper *Mrs. Conquest* should know his Brutality to her too.

Mrs. Con. O! I am mightily oblig'd to you, my Dear ; but I knew him before.

Miss Not. [*Aside.*] Hah ! how affectedly indifferent the vain thing is ?

La. Gent. My Dear, I'm at a loss how far to doubt, or to believe this Folly of him——Pray advise me. [*To Mrs. Conquest.*]

Mrs. Con. If your Ladyship wou'd take my Opinion, I'd be entirely easy, I'd neither doubt or believe any thing of the Matter, till I had it confirm'd from his own Behaviour.

Miss Not. [*Aside.*] I can't bear this——She shan't be so easy——I'll tell her the whole truth of his addressing to me ; but I'll humble her.

La.

La. Gent. Now, you know, he was to be here with other Company at Cards to-night; but if you'll do me the Favour to sit with me, I'll keep my Chamber, say I'm indispos'd, and see no Company at all——What think you?

Mrs. Con. I think it won't be worth that trouble, Madam.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the Company's come.

La. Gent. Is my Lord *George* there?

Serv. Yes, Madam.

La. Gent. What shall we do now?

Mrs. Con. By all means go and receive him among the rest; as you us'd to do, and take no Notice of any thing — I'll wait upon your Ladyship in two Minutes.

La. Gent. If you don't, I shall certainly betray myself; I'll come and fetch you. *[Exit Lady Gentle.*

Mrs. Con. As you please, Madam——I have observ'd a thoughtful Smile upon this Girl's Face, that makes me fancy her Secret is but half out yet——If I guess right, I'll e'en pique her little Pride till she tells me, for I know the Chit does not care for me. *[Aside.*

Miss Not. Oh! *Mrs. Vanity's* a little upon the hum-drum at last, I see; I'll make her sob before I have done with her——*Mrs. Conquest,* you seem a little concern'd about this Matter; now, if I were you, I'd take no manner of Notice of it, he shou'd not have the Pride to think 'twas in his Power to give me a Moment's Uneasiness.

Mrs. Con. My Dear, you advise me very well; but, upon my Word, I am not uneasy.

Miss Not. Pooh! That's such a Jest! as if you did not love my Lord *George.*

Mrs. Con. Did he ever tell you I did?

Miss Not. Tell me!——No:—But—one sees that well enough.

Mrs. Con. Why then, if I do love him, Child, you may depend upon't, it's only from the Assurances I have of his loving me only.

Miss Not. But since you see (as the World will too, in a little time) how false those Assurances are, had not you better seem to leave him, than lie under the scandal of his leaving you?

Mrs. Con. No, Child; I'll still keep up my Pretensions, if it be only to hinder other vain Creatures from coming into hopes

hopes of him: For I know, were I once to own myself disengag'd, then ev'ry impertinent Coquet in Town would be giving Airs to him.

Miss Not. Was ever any thing so stupidly vain? [*Aside.*] Lard! Madam, you have a mighty Opinion of your Perfections sure, to think it impossible a Man can be false to you: Some Women wou'd ha' been a-top of the House by this time, if they had only heard of their Lover's common Civility to another—You are strangely happy sure, when his owning a Passion to your Friend, before your face, can't make you uneasy; Heh! heh!

Mrs. Con. Methinks, Child, my want of Jealousy from what you've said, gives you a little Uneasiness—I shou'd be loth to think his idle way of Raillery had taught you to think of Love so soon!

Miss Not. So soon! I suppose, Madam, if I had the forwardness of your Ladyship's Inclination, I might produce as good Proofs of his Passion for me, as you can of his Constancy to you.

Mrs. Con. So! she's stirr'd—I must have the rest on't. [*Aside.*] His Passion to thee, Love, that were impossible—Have a Passion for any thing so incapable to conceive it—Why Love's a thing you won't be fit to think of these two Years.

Miss Not. Not think of it! I'd have you to know, Madam, there are Men in the World that think me as fit for a Lover, as your Ladyship.

Mrs. Con. So! now its coming. [*Aside.*]

Miss Not. And however unfit you think me, Madam, I'd advise you, next time any Man's idle Raillery flatters you into a Passion for him, don't let me know it; I say, don't let me know it, for fear my Unfitness should deceive your Vanity, by taking him from you—Not think of it!—I shall live to see you burst with Envy, Madam—Do you observe me? Burst! burst!—Not think of it!

Mrs. Con. Nay, now I am convinc'd—This Passion, I dare swear, is real—He has certainly said some civil thing to thee, before he was aware—But for what you said of him just now, to my Lady *Gentle*, my pretty One—

Miss Not. Pretty One!—Pray, Madam!—Tho' I'm sorry I can't say the same of your Ladyship.

Mrs. Con. I say, all your late sobbing, and pretending to throw Gold about the Room, and Diamonds out of the Window,

Window, and all that stuff, my Honey, I am now confirm'd was all, from first to last, the pretty Fiction of thy own little Pride and Jealousy, only to have the Ease of giving me Pain, from his suppos'd forsaking me.

Miss Not. Ha! ha! ha! I am glad to see your Vanity so swell'd, Madam; but since I find 'tis your Disease, I'll be your Friend for once, and work your Cure by bursting it. Know then, you have guess'd a Truth that has undone you: The Part I've acted of his pretended Passion to another, was, as you said indeed, a Fiction all, and only play'd to give my Pride the Diversion of his owning to your Face, how little he regards you. But know the fatal Face to which you owe your Ruin, was not my Lady *Gentle's* (that was my own Invention) but mine; not her, nor you, but me, and me alone he loves—These poor unfit Features have seduc'd him from you—And now let all the World (that sees how barbarously your Vanity, or mine, has mistaken idle Raillery for Love) judge who's most fit to think of it. [Exit.

Mrs. Con. Now the Mystery's unfolded—O! this subtle Devil! how artfully has he fool'd this forward Girl to his Assistance—Well! there's something in the barefac'd excess of his Assurance that makes me smile: I'm loth to say he's impudent, but he has an undaunted Modesty, that's certain, and for that very one Quality 'twill be worth my while not to trust him even with my Lady *Gentle*——
O Sir——

Enter Sir Friendly Moral.

Sir Fr. So Child, how stand Affairs now? any fresh Discovery?

Mrs. Con. Only a trifling Confirmation or two, Sir, of what we suspected before——Therefore what we do must be done quickly——Have you consider'd what I propos'd, Sir?

Sir Fr. In troth 'tis a wild Thought, but you have a wild Spark to deal with, and for aught I know, his own Snares may be likeliest to hold him. Only take this general Caution with you, that the Warmth of your Undertaking don't carry you into any Action, that the Discretion of your Sex can't answer.

Mrs.

Mrs. Con. Fear not, Sir, I know my Man, and know myself.

Sir Fr. Then here's your Letter writ, and seal'd as you directed.

Mrs. Con. And here comes my Lady, 'twill be now a fit Occasion to make use of it.

Sir Fr. I'll leave you then.

Mrs. Con. When I have done with her, Sir, I wou'd consult you farther.

Sir Fr. I'll expect you in my Chamber. [*Exit Sir Friend.*]

Enter Lady Gentle.

La. Gent. O Child, I'm glad I have found you.

Mrs. Con. What's the Matter, Madam?

La. Gent. I think I was never more provok'd in my Life.

Mrs. Con. Any thing from my Lord George?

La. Gent. Yes——something that makes me shudder at the Thought.

Mrs. Con. Bless me!

La. Gent. Something so grossly insolent in the over-respectfulness of his Behaviour, such an affected Awe when he but speaks to me, something that sneers within his Heart so vain, so arrogant a Hope! it more provokes me than all the awkward Follies of a barefac'd Impudence: And since I find he secretly presumes upon my knowing his odious Secret, 'twill be therefore but equal Justice to myself and you, to crush his idle Hopes at once: For not to check, is to encourage 'em: And when once a Woman's known to be follow'd, let her Virtue be never so fam'd, or fortified, the good-natur'd Town always conclude the Lover successful.

Mrs. Con. You did not seem to understand his Behaviour.

La. Gent. I can't tell whether he understood me, or no; but I cou'd not help saying in a very grave manner, that whatever Strait I put myself to, his Thousand Pound shou'd certainly be paid him next Week.

Mrs. Con. And how did he take it?

La. Gent. O! he is not to be put out of Countenance, that I see, for he press'd me with a World of easy Civility, not to give myself the least Concern; for if I pleas'd, he wou'd immediately give me a very fair Chance to pay him, without ever drawing a Line for it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Con. A fair Chance ! What was it ?

La. Gent. Why he offer'd me indeed at Picquet such odds, as I am sure he is not able to give me ; for Count *Tailly*, who stood by, thought it so considerable an Advantage, that he begg'd he might go my halves, or what part of the Money I pleas'd.

Mrs. Con. Well said Count ——— This may come to something ——— She must play with him ——— for positively there's no other Way of seeing a quick End of his Hopes, or my own.

La. Gent. The Extravagance of his Offer I confess surpriz'd me ; so I only told him, I'd consider on't, and came to you for Advice.

Mrs. Con. Then certainly, Madam, take him at his Word ; and since you know his dishonest End, in offering such an Advantage, ev'n make use on't, and let his very Baseness punish itself.

La. Gent. As how ?

Mrs. Con. Look you, the best way to disappoint his Hopes, is first to raise 'em ——— Go to him this Minute ——— call for Cards ——— and put on all the coquet Airs imaginable : Smile at his Respect, and glance him out of his affected Modesty. By this Means you will certainly encourage his Vanity, not only to the Gallantry of letting you win your Money again, but more than probably, of losing his own to you.

La. Gent. I vow you tempt me strangely ——— I boggle at nothing, but those Airs you speak of, I shall do it so awkwardly ———

Mrs. Con. Pooh ! I warrant you, trust to Nature ; it's nothing, one cannot set one's Hair in a Glass without 'em ——— If it were not a sure Card, you can't think I'd advise you to play it, for my own sake.

La. Gent. That, indeed, leaves me nothing to say ——— Well, upon your Encouragement, I will venture, and the very Moment I get home the Sum I am out to him, I'll throw up my Cards, and fairly tell him, I know when 'tis time to give over.

Mrs. Con. Admirable !

La. Gent. Nay, and because I don't think I owe him the Regard of declaring it myself, I'll go down into *Suffex* tomorrow

morrow Morning, and leave you, if you think fit, to tell him the Occasion.

Mrs. Con. No, Madam, to let your Ladyship see I think every thing is entirely safe under your Discretion, as my own, I am resolv'd to go out of Town this Moment.

La. Gent. What do you mean?

Mrs. Con. I have receiv'd a Letter here from my Brother Sir Charles, my Twin-Brother, Madam, whom I have not seen these nine Years; he arrived but last Night from *Italy*, to take Possession of his Estate, he's now at his House in *Essex*, and a little indispos'd after his Voyage, he has sent his Coach, and begs, if possible, I would be with him to-night.

La. Gent. To night! impossible! Go as early in the Morning, Child, as you please.

Mrs. Con. No, dear Madam, pardon me, the Moon shines, and I had rather defer my Sleep, than break it.

La. Gent. Well, my Dear, since you won't be persuaded, I wish you a good Journey——I shall see you before you go.

Mrs. Con. I have just a Moment's Business with Sir *Friendly*, and then I'll wait upon your Ladyship. [*Exit Lady Gentle.*] Well, there she goes——How she will come off I can't tell. The good Woman, I dare swear, is truly innocent in her Intentions, but good looking after, I fancy, can do her no Injury: For Virtue, tho' she's of a noble Spirit, and a great Conqueror, 'tis true; yet, as she's stout, alas! we know she's merciful, and when fly Humility and Nature kneel hopeless to her unquestion'd Power, they look so pitiful, speak in such a gentle Tone, and sigh their Grievs with such Submission, that cruel Virtue loses all its Anger for Compassion——Compassion kindles Hope, Hope arms Assurance, and then——Tho' Virtue may have Courage enough to give a stout Knock with her Heel, for somebody to come in——still, I say, if somebody shou'd come in——'twould be ungrateful in any Woman alive not to allow, that good Attendance sometimes may do her Virtue considerable Service. —— [*Exit.*]

The End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT



ACT V.

The SCENE continues.

Enter Lord George, and Miss Notable.

Miss Not. SO when I found that wou'd not take down her Vanity, I e'en told her the whole Truth of the Matter, that it was not my Lady Gentle, but her humble Servant was her Rival.

Ld. Geo. Well said! What did Mrs. Conquest say upon that?

Miss Not. She did not say much, but the poor Soul's gone out of Town upon't.

Ld. Geo. Out of Town at this time of Night! What d'ye mean?

Miss Not. Just as I say, Sir——Her Brother, it seems, is come from Travel, so the Fulness of her Stomach laid hold on that Occasion, and she pretends she's gone to meet him——Now what I expect from you is this; since I see nothing but Demonstration will heartily humble her Ladyship, you shall confess all I told her of your Addressing to me, under your own Hand, in a Billet to me, which I'll inclose in a stinging Letter from myself to her, and send it immediately.

Ld. Geo. So, so, I am like to be drawn into a fine Business here: The Jest must not go so far neither: The Child has a strange Vivacity in her Good-nature——

[Aside.

Miss Not. You pause upon't——

Ld. Geo. Well, Madam, to let you see I scorn to profess more than I'll stand to, do you draw up the Letter to your Mind, I'll copy it, and—and—and—and—put the change upon you.

[Aside.

Miss Not. Ay, now you say something, I'll about it immediately.

D

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* Do so, I'll stay here till you have done it. [*Exit Miss Not.*] Who says I am not a provident Lover? For now by that time my Harvest of Lady *Gentle* is over, the early Inclination I have sown in this Girl will be just ripe and ready for the Sickle—A true Woman's Man should breed his Mistresses, as an old What-d'ye-call-um does young Girls in a Play-House, one under another, that he may have always something fit for the Desire of several Persons of Quality—But here comes my Lady *Gentle*—Assurance stand fast, and don't let the insolent Awe of a fine Woman's Virtue look thee out of Countenance.

Enter Lady Gentle.

La. *Gent.* Come, come, my Lord, where do you run? the Cards stay for you.

Ld. *Geo.* I did not know your Ladyship had resolv'd to do me the Honour of accepting the Match I propos'd you.

La. *Gent.* O your Servant, grave Sir—you have a mind to be off on't, I suppose—but as meer a Country-Gentlewoman as you think me, you'll find I am enough in the Mode not to refuse a good Offer, whether I deserve it or no.

Ld. *Geo.* Coquet, by all that's lovely. [*Aside.*]—I must confess, Madam, I shou'd be glad to see your Ladyship a little better reconcil'd to the Diversions in fashion.

La. *Gent.* And if I have any Skill in Faces, whatever solemn Airs you give yourself, nobody is more a private Friend to 'em than your Lordship.

Ld. *Geo.* I can't disown a secret Tenderness for every Thing that ought to move the Heart, but Reputation shou'd be always sacred: And he that does not take some care of his own, can never hope to be much trusted with other Peoples: For were a Woman of Condition generously to make that Trust, what Consequence upon Earth cou'd be more terrible to her, than the Folly, or Baseness of her Lover's exposing the Secret.

La. *Gent.* Very modish Morals, upon my Word; so that a prudent Regard to her Reputation is all the Virtue you think a Woman has occasion for—Fie, fie, I'll swear, my Lord, I took you for quite another Man.

Ld.

Ld. Geo. I never was deceiv'd in your Ladyship, for I always took you for a Woman of the first and quickest Understanding.

La. Gent. Are not you a wicked Creature? How can you have the Assurance to think any Woman that knows you, will be commonly civil to you?

Ld. Geo. I do think the most impudent Thing a Man can offer a Woman, is to ask the least Favour of her before he has done something to deserve it; and so, if you please, Madam, well e'en sit down to Picquet, and make an end of our Argument afterwards.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] How blind is Vanity? that this Wretch can't see I fool him all this while?—Well, my Lord, for once I won't baulk your Gallantry. [*Enter Sir Friendly.*] Come, Sir *Friendly*, my Lord and I are going to Picquet; have you a mind to look on a little?

Sir Fr. Troth, Madam, I have often look'd on, and have as often wondred, to see two very good Friends sit fairly down, and in cool Blood, agree to wish one another heartily inconvenienc'd in their Fortune.

Ld. Geo. O Fie! Nuncle, that's driving the Consequence too far.

Sir Fr. Not a Jot———And 'tis amazing, that so many good Families shou'd daily encourage a Diversion, whose utmost Pleasure is founded upon Avarice and Ill-nature: For those are always the secret Principles of deep Play.

Re-enter Miss, and winks to Lord George.

Ld. Geo. I'll wait upon your Ladyship in a Moment. [*Exit.*]

La. Gent. I don't know, Play is a Diversion that always keeps the Spirits awake, methinks, whether one wins or loses.

Sir Fr. I have very little to say against a moderate Use of it———but we grow serious———Pray, Madam, is my Lady *Wronglove* in the next Room?

La. Gent. I left her there, she was enquiring for you— Here she is.

Enter Lady Wronglove.

La. Gent. Well, Madam! What are they doing with-
in?

76 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

La. Wrong. There's like to be no Bank, I find, they are all broke into Ombre and Picquet.

La. Gent. Your Ladyship is not for Play then?

La. Wrong. Not yet, Madam; I have a Word or two with Sir *Friendly*, and I'll endeavour to wait on your Ladyship.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's Sir *John Conquest* just come to Town, he enquires for your Ladyship, or Sir *Friendly Moral*.

La. Gent. Sir *John*! What a Mistake has poor Mrs. *Conquest* made now? She went but an Hour ago to meet him.

Sir Fr. Will your Ladyship give me leave to wait on him?

La. Gent. If you please to give yourself that trouble, Sir *Friendly*. Pray desire him to walk in. [*Exit Sir Friendly.*] Is my Lord *Wronglove* come, Madam?

La. Wrong. He said he would be here; but you must not expect him the more for that.

La. Gent. He does not much stand upon Forms, indeed; but he's extremely good-humour'd when one has him.

La. Wrong. How can People taste Good-humour, where there's no Principle?

La. Gent. And what dull Company wou'd the strictest Principles be without Good-humour?

La. Wrong. And yet the best Temper's but a Cheat without 'em.

La. Gent. He must be a Man indeed that lives without a Fault; but there are some, that 'tis always a Woman's Interest to over-lock in a Husband: Our Frowns may govern Lovers, but Husbands must be smil'd on.

La. Wrong. I shou'd despise the Man that must be flatter'd to be just.

La. Gent. Alas! the Price is very little, and let me tell you, Madam, the Man that's just, is not to be despis'd.

La. Wrong. He that lives in a profess'd Contempt of Obligations, can never be belov'd——'tis better to release 'em: you'll shortly see me easy.

La. Gent. I shall ever wish you so.

Enter

Enter Sir Friendly, with Mrs. Conquest, in Man's Habit.

Sir Fr. This, Sir, is my Lady Gentle. [They salute.

La. Gent. You are welcome into England, Sir.

Enter Lord George, who seeing Mrs. Conquest, whispers Sir Friendly.

Mrs. Con. I hope your Ladyship will excuse my unseasonable Visit, but I rather chose to be troublesome, than slow in the Acknowledgments I owe your Ladyship for your many Favours to my Sister.

La. Gent. Mrs. Conquest and her Friends are always welcome to me——My Lady Wronglove, pray, know Sir John!

Sir Fr. My Lord George, and Sir John, will you give me leave to recommend a Friendship between you?

Ld. Geo. Sir, I shall be proud to embrace it.

Mrs. Con. 'Twill be a Charity in a Man of your Lordship's Figure to give a raw young Fellow a little Countenance at his first Arrival.

Ld. Geo. Your Appearance, Sir, I am confident, will never want a Friendship among the Men of Taste, or the Ladies.

Sir Fr. This young Lady, Sir John, is a near Relation of mine; and if you have not left your Heart abroad, will endanger it here as far as e'er a Southern Beauty of 'em all.

Mrs. Con. If the Lady's Good-nature were equal to her Beauty, 'twould be dispos'd this minute.

Ld. Geo. Faith, he's a pretty Fellow.

Miss Not. A sweet Creature!

[Aside.

La. Wrong. He's extremely like his Sister.

La. Gent. The very Image of her!

Mrs. Con. We were both made at the same time, Ladies: I only wish she had been born to Breeches too: For I fancy that wild Humour of hers is dismally put to't under the Confinement of Petticoats.

[Lady Wrong. goes to Sir Friendly.

78 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: OR,*

La. Gen. I find, *Sir John*, you are Twins in your Good-humour, as well as your Persons.

Mrs. Con. We always took a Liberty with one another, Madam, tho' I believe the Girl may be honest at the bottom.

Ld. Geo. Methinks you lose time with the young Lady, *Sir John*. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Con. To tell you the Truth, my Lord, I find myself a little too sharp set for a formal Gallantry; I have had a tedious Voyage, and wou'd be as glad of a small Recommendation to any humble extempore Favour.

Ld. Geo. Faith I'm a little out of——Gentlewomen, myself at present: But if your Occasions are not very pressing, I'll put you out of a despairing Condition——I'll carry you behind the Scenes, and there are Ladies of all sorts, Coquets, Prudes, and Virgins (they say) serious and comical, vocal——and instrumental.

Mrs. Con. We shall find a time, my Lord.

Miss Not. I must have a Friendship with him, that's Pops. Let me see——ay, that will do it.——What a dear Pleasure 'tis, be in what Company one will, to have all the young Fellows particular? [*Aside.*

Mrs. Con. [*To La. Gen.*] I am afraid, Madam, we interrupt the Diversion of the good Company; I heard Cards call'd for as we came in.

La. Gent. If you please then, *Sir John*, we'll step into the next Room——my Lady *Wronglove*, we'll expect you.

[*Exeunt all but Lady Wrong. and Sir Friendly.*]

La. Wrong. I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

Sir Fr. I am sorry, Madam, to find the Misunderstanding carried to such Extremities,

La. Wrong. After such Usage, 'tis impossible to live with him.

Sir Fr. And have you in your calmer Thoughts e'er weigh'd the miserable Consequence of parting?

La. Wrong. 'Twill shew the World, at least, I am not like the World; but scorn on any Terms t'endure the Man that wrongs me. Since too he still persists in his Defiance of my Resentment, what Remedy on Earth have I but parting?

Sir Fr. Is there no cure for Wounds but bleeding dead?
 ——You'll say he has wrong'd you.——Grant it——that
 Wrong has been severely punish'd in your severe Resent-
 ment.

La. *Wrong*. But still it has not cur'd the Wrong.

Sir Fr. Then certainly 'twas wrong to use it.

La. *Wrong*. I've been reduc'd to use it: Nor cou'd I
 bear the loose, malicious Fleerings of the World without a
 just Resentment upon him.

Sir Fr. Nor would I have you bear it——no;——but
 disappoint their empty fashionable Malice, close up this un-
 profitable Breach, 'tis still within your Power, and fix him
 yet more firmly yours.

La. *Wrong*. Alas, 'tis now too late! We have agreed on
 other Terms: He too, at last, is willing we shou'd part.

Sir Fr. Bury that Thought: Come, come, there's yet a
 gentler Cure, cou'd you suppress your Temper to go
 through it: This rash and fruitless struggling with a bro-
 ken Limb gives you but more outrageous Pain, inflames
 the Wound, and brings your very Life of Peace in dan-
 ger: Think what a glorious Conquest it wou'd be, ev'n
 in the Face of the censorious and insulting World, to
 tame this Wanderer, whose frail Inconstancy has sought
 a vain and false Belief abroad: To lure him home with
 soft Affection, to lull him into Blushes, Peace, and en-
 vied Happiness: One Word, one tender Look secures
 your Triumph: Is there no Virtue, think you, in Re-
 mission? Nothing persuasive in the Reproach of patient
 Love.

La. *Wrong*. I see to what your Friendship wou'd per-
 suade me, but were it possible my flatter'd Hopes cou'd
 lose the Memory of my Wrongs for ever.——Say I
 cou'd this Moment hush my Woman's Pride to all the
 Tenderness of soft Affection, cou'd sigh, cou'd weep, and
 earn for Reconcilement! Where cou'd a Wretch, unheed-
 ed in her Wrongs like me, find shelter? Where is the
 Friendly Bosom wou'd receive me? How can I hope
 for Comfort from that Breast, that now I fear is hardned
 to my undoing?

Sir Fr. Cherish that softning Thought, and all may yet
 be well. O! there's a meritable Goodness in those Fears

80 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

that cannot fail to conquer. Do not suppose, I can be partial to his Errors, and not a Friend to your Complaints. Repentment can but at best revenge, but never redress 'em. Repose 'em with a Friend for once, and be assur'd, as of my Honesty, I'll make you no dishonourable Peace.

La. Wrong. I don't doubt of your sincere Endeavours. But who can answer for another's Morals? Think how much more miserably you make me, shou'd he insult upon my Patience.

Sir Fr. By that Sincerity you trust in, I know him of a softer Nature, friendly, generous, and tender; only to Opposition, obstinately cool; to Gentleness, submissive as a Lover,

La. Wrong. Do what you will with me.

[*Sits down weeping.*]

Sir Fr. He comes! be comforted! Depend upon my Friendship.

Enter Lord Wronglove.

My Lord, I grieve to see you here on this Occasion.

Ld. Wrong. I'm not myself transported at it, *Sir Friendly*—I come—t'obey my Summons.

Sir Fr. How easily we pay Obedience to our Wishes! Was it well done, my Lord, to work the Weakness of a Woman to ask for what you knew was her undoing? A Mind, which your Unkindness had distemper'd, deserv'd a tenderer Care, than reaching it a Corrosive for a Cordial. Your Judgment cou'd not but foresee, the Resolution of a love-sick Wife must stagger in the Shock of Separation.

Ld. Wrong. Ha!

[*Lady Wrong. weeping.*]

Sir Fr. Look there; and while those softning Tears reproach you, think on the long watched, restless Hours, she already has endur'd from your Misdoing. Nor cou'd you blame her, if in the torturing Pain she thought her only Help was cutting off the infected Limb: But you! You to hold the horrid Knife prepar'd, while your hard Heart was conscious of a gentler Cure, was Cruelty beyond a human Nature.

Ld. Wrong. Mistake me not: I need not these Reproaches, to be just. I never sought this Separation, never wish'd
it;

it ; and when it can be prov'd unkind in me to accept it, my Ruin shou'd as soon be welcome. And tho' perhaps my negligence of Temper may have stood the Frowns of Love unmov'd, yet I can find no Guard within, that can support me against its Tears. [Goes to La. Wrong.

Sir *Fr.* Now, my Lord, you are indeed a Man.

Ld. *Wrong.* Welcome or not, I must not see you thus, Madam, without an offer'd Hand to raise you. What is't disturbs you ?

La. *Wrong.* Nothing.

Ld. *Wrong.* If I can never more deserve the soft Reception of a Lover, give me at least the honest Freedom of a Friend's Concern, to wish you well, to search your inmost Grievs and share 'em.

La. *Wrong.* I cannot speak to you.

Sir *Fr.* My Lord, that tender Silence tells you all.

Ld. *Wrong.* Too much indeed for Sense of Shame to bear. — Now, I shou'd blush ever to have deserv'd these just reproachful Tears ; but when I think they spring from the dissolving Rock of secret Love, I triumph in the thought ; and in this wild Irruption of its Joy, my parching Heart cou'd drink the cordial Dew.

La. *Wrong.* What means this soft Effusion in my Breast ! an aching Tenderness ne'er felt before !

Ld. *Wrong.* I cannot bear that melting Eloquence of Eyes. Yet nearer, closer to my Heart, and live for ever there — Thus blending our dissolving Souls in dumb inutterable Softness.

Sir *Fr.* Age has not yet so drain'd me, but when I see a Tenderness in Virtue's Eye, my Heart will soften, and its Springs will flow.

La. *Wrong.* Pity this new Confusion of my Woman's Heart, that wou'd (but knows not how to) make returns for this Endearment ; that fears, yet wishes, that burns and blushes, with my Sex's shame in yielding. — Can you forgive, my Lord, the late uncurb'd Expressions of a disorder'd Mind — But think they were my Passion's fault, and pardon 'em.

Ld. *Wrong.* O never ! never let us think we ever disagreed ! since our sick Love is heal'd, for ever be its Cause forgotten, and remov'd.

82 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

La. Wrong. But let the kind Physician that restor'd us, be for ever in our thanks remember'd. Had not his tender Care observ'd the Crisis of my distemper'd Mind, how rashly had I languish'd out a wretched Being?

Ld. Wrong. This was indeed beyond a Friend—a Father's Care.

Sir Fr. My Lord, what I have done, your mutual Peace has over-paid: I knew you both had Virtues, and was too far concern'd indeed to see 'em lost in passion.

Ld. Wrong. If Heaven wou'd mark our Bounds of Happiness below, or human Wisdom were allow'd to chuse from Virtue's largest Store; in Joys, like ours, the needless Search wou'd end.

Sir Fr. In such soft Wives.

La. Wrong. ———So kind a Husband.

Ld. Wrong. ———Such a Friend.

Enter Mrs. Conquest, and Miss Notable.

Mrs. Con. I'm all Amazement, all Rapture, Madam! Is't possible so fair, and young a Creature, can have so just, so exquisite a Sense of Love.

Miss Not. Why not? If I have any Sense, 'tis natural to have our first views of Happiness from Love.

Mrs. Con. My little Soul, you charm me! You have a mind to pique Lord *George*, you say.

Miss Not. To a Rapidity!—Yet, methinks, not so much upon my own account as yours; for his dishonourable Usage, as I told you, of your Sister. And to convince you of my Friendship—there's his own Hand to accuse him of it:—
Read it—Hold! hold!—here's my Uncle—put it up.

Mrs. Con. Can't I steal into your Room by and by?

Miss Not. With all my heart—Then I'll tell you more.

[*Exit Miss Notable.*]

Enter Sir Friendly.

Sir Fr. So, Child! you are making way, I see! What have you got in your Hand there?

Mrs. Con. Why, young Madam tells me, 'tis something under my Lord *George's* Hand, that will convince me of his abusing my Sister—me.

Sir Fr. Pray read it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Con. [*Reads.*] To Mrs. Conquest.

IF you design to make any stay in the Country, 'twill be obliging to return the Lampon you stole from me, it being the only Copy from the face of this Globe to the Sky, that is to be had for Malice or Money. I am, dear Madam, with all due Extremity, most invincibly yours,
BRILLIANT.

A very tender Epistle, truly!

Sir Fr. 'Tis like all the rest of him.

Mrs. Con. I'm glad to find, however, he has Good-humour enough not to let the little Malice of that Chit fool him, to affront me; which I find she has been heartily driving at.

Sir Fr. In troth, it shews some sense of Honour in him.

Mrs. Con. Depend upon't, Sir, he does not want it upon an honourable occasion.

Sir Fr. And 'twould be hard indeed, not to make some allowances for Youth.

Mrs. Con. But if I am not even with her young Ladyship—

Sir Fr. I'm glad you have so innocent a Revenge in your hands; pursue your Addresses to her: To make her Coquetry a little ridiculous, will do her no harm. Well! how go Affairs within? How is my Lady Gentle like to come off with his Lordship at play?

Mrs. Con. Just as I expected: I left her in the last Game of losing about double the Sum she owes him. That Fellow, the Count, is certainly his Confederate! his going her halves, is only a pretence to look on, and so, by private Signs, to tell my Lord every Card in her hand.

Sir Fr. Not unlikely: What's to be done next?

Mrs. Con. Only, Sir, do you engage the Company still in the next Room, while I take my Post. Hark! they have done play—I heard the Table move: Away.

Sir Fr. Success to you ————— [*Exeunt severally.*]

The SCENE opening, discovers Lord George and Lady Gentle rising from Play.

Ld. Geo. Have we done, Madam?

La. Gent. I have, my Lord, and I think for ever!—please to tell that. Intolerable Fortune! [*Throws down Money.*]

Ld. Geo. The Count gone!

La. Gent. O yes, my Lord! he had not patience, you see, —He run away when the Game was scarce up.

84 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

Ld. *Geo.* This Bill is his then.

La. *Gent.* It was ; but it's your's now, I suppose.

Ld. *Geo.* Here's forty Pound, Madam.

La. *Gent.* There's a hundred and sixty. [*Gives a Bill.*]
What do I owe you now, my Lord?

Ld. *Geo.* Forty !—a hundred and sixty !—um—just
1000*l.* Madam.

La. *Gent.* Very well !—and a thousand Pound more
borrow'd this Morning ! and all fool'd away !—fool'd ! —
fool'd away !

Ld. *Geo.* Oh ! does it bite ?

[*Fretting.*

[*Aside.*

La. *Gent.* O Wretch ! Wretch ! miserable forsaken Wretch !
—Ay ! do ! think ! think ! and sigh upon the consequence
of what thou'st done ! the Ruin ! Ruin ! the sure, Ruin that's
before thee !

Ld. *Geo.* Suppose, Madam, you try your Fortune at some
other Game.

La. *Gent.* Talk not of Play—for I have done with it for-
ever.

Ld. *Geo.* I can't see you, under this Confusion at your Ill-
Fortune, Madam, without offering all within my power to
make you easy.

La. *Gent.* My Lord, I can't be easy under an Obligation,
which I have no prospect of returning.

Ld. *Geo.* Come, Come ! you're not so poor, as your hard
Fears wou'd make you. There are a thousand Trifles in
your power to grant, that you wou'd never miss ; yet a
Heart less sensible of your Concern than mine, wou'd prize
beyond a tenfold Value of your Losses.

La. *Gent.* I'm poor in every thing but Folly, and a just
Will to answer for its Miscarriages. On this, my Lord,
you may depend : I'll strain my utmost to be just to you.

Ld. *Geo.* Alas ! you do not know the Plenty Nature has
endow'd you with. There's not a tender Sigh that heaves
that lovely Bosom, but might, if given in soft Compassion
to a Lover's Pain, release you of the *Indies*, had you lost
'em. Can you suppose, that sordid Avarice alone, has push'd
my Fortune to this height ? Was the poor lucre of a little
Pelf, worth all this wild Extravagance of Hazzard I have
run ?—Give it at least a View more generous, tho' less suc-
cessful !

cessful; and think, that all I've done was, in your greatest Need, to prove myself your firmest Friend.

La. Gent. My Lord, 'twou'd now be Affectation not to understand you. But I'm concern'd, that you shou'd think, that Fortune ever cou'd reduce me to stand the hearing of a dishonourable Thought from any Man; or, if I cou'd be won to Folly, at least I wou'd make a Gift, and not a Bargain of my Heart: Therefore if the worst must be, I'll own the Sum, and Sir *William* shall pay it on demand.

Ld. Geo. [*Afide.*] Shall he? I know what will become of your Ladyship—You may flounce, and run away with my Line, if you please; but you will find at the end of it a lovely bearded Hook, that will strangely persuade you to come back again——A Debt of two thousand Pounds is not so easily slipt out of.

La. Gent. Now, my Lord, if, after all I've said, you have Honour enough to do a handsome thing, and not let him know of it.

Ld. Geo. O! do you feel it, Madam? [*Afide.*]

La. Gent. 'Tis but being a better Housewife in Pins; and if an hundred Pounds a Quarter of that will satisfy you, till the whole's paid, you may depend upon't: A little more Prudence, and a Winter or two in the Country, will soon recover it.

Ld. Geo. Press me not with so unkind a Thought: To drive you from the Town, e'er you have scarce run through half the Diversions of it, wou'd be barbarous indeed.

La. Gent. Wou'd I had never seen it.

Ld. Geo. Since I see, Madam, how much you dread an Obligation to me, say, I cou'd find the means to free you of this Debt, without my obliging you; nay, without a possibility of your losing more: I wou'd even unthank'd relieve you.

La. Gent. That's a Proposal I can't comprehend, my Lord.

Ld. Geo. I'll make it more engaging yet: For give but a promise you'll weigh the Offer in one moment's Thought before you answer to it; and in return, by all my Heart's last bleeding Hopes, I swear, that even your refusal then shall silence my offensive Love, and seal its Lips for ever.

La. Gent. I think, my Lord, on that condition, I may safely hear you.

Ld.

86 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE ; or,*

Ld. Geo. Thus then I offer—I'll taily to you on one single Card ; which if your Fortune wins, the Sums you owe me then shall all be quit, and my offensive Hopes of Love be dumb for ever : If I win, those Sums shall still be paid you back, with this Reserve, That I have then your silent leave to hope.

La. Gent. My Lord —————

Ld. Geo. I beg you do not answer yet——Consider, first, This Offer shuts out my very humblest Hope from Merit, is certain to recover all you've lost, with equal chance, to rid you of (I fear) a hateful Lover ; and but at worst, makes it your avoidless Fortune to endure him.

La. Gent. A bold and artful Bait indeed ! [*Aside.*

Ld. Geo. I've done ; and leave you to the moment's Pause you promis'd.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] A Certainty to quit the Sums I owe ! A Chance with it, to rid me of his assaulting Love ! A blest Deliverance indeed ! But then the Lot is equal too, of being oblig'd to give him Hope, my secret, conscious, leave to love——That Thought imbitters all again ; 'tis horrid loathsome, and my Disease less formidable than such a Cure. Why do I hold it in a moment's thought ? Be bold and tell him so ; for while I pause, he hopes in spite of me——
Hold —————

Ld. Geo. Ay ! think a little better on't. [*Aside.*

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] To do it rashly, may incense him to my Ruin : He has it in his Power. He may demand my Losings of my Husband's Honour ! who, tho' 'twill make his Fortune bleed to do't, I'm sure will pay 'em. Two thousand Pounds, with what I've lately lost, might shock the measures of a larger Income. What Face must I appear with then ? whose shameful Conduct is the cause on't——
The Consequence of that must, like an inward Canker, feed upon our future Quiet ! His former friendly Confidence must wear a face of strangeness to me : His ease of Thought, his chearful Smiles, with all the thousand hoarded Pleasures of his indulgent Love, are lost : Then lost for ever ! Insupportable Dilemma ! What will become of me !

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] Ah ! poor Lady ! it's a hard Tug indeed ; but by the Grace of Necessity, Virtue may get over it.

La.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] If some Women had this offer now, they'd make a trifle of the Hazard! Nay, even of their losing it.

Ld. Geo. [*Aside.*] Well said! take Courage!—— There's nothing in't——it's a good round Sum——half ready Money too——think of that——Suppose I shou'd touch the Cards a little.

La. Gent. [*Aside.*] Hope! he hopes already from his Offer: But then he offers me the means to kill it too! Say he shou'd win, he takes that Hope but from his Fortune, not my Virtue! Beside—am I so sure to lose? Is't in his Fate, that he must ever win? Why shan't I rather think, that Providence has brought me to this Strefs, only to set my Follies dreadful in my view, and reaches now, at last, its Hand to save and warn me on the Precipice?—It must—it is—my flatt'ring Hope will have it so——Impossible so critical a Chance can lose——My Fancy strengthens on the Thought, my Heart grows bold, and bids me venture.

Ld. Geo. Shall I deal, Madam?—— or——

La. Gent. Quick, quickly then, and take me while my Courage can support it. [*He shuffles the Cards.*] Forgive me, Virtue, if I this once depend on Fortune to relieve thee.

Ld. Geo. Then Fortune for the Bold—I've dealt—'Tis fix'd for one of us.

La. Gent. There. [*She sets upon the King.*]

Ld. Geo. The King—'tis mine.

[*Lord George tallies, and Lady Gentle loses.*]

La. Gent. Distraction!——Madness——Madness only can relieve me now.

Ld. Geo. Soh! my Venture is arriv'd at last——Now to unlade it. These Bills, Madam, now are your's again. [*Lays 'em down.*] But why this hard, unkind Concern? Be just at least, and don't in these reluctant Tears, drown all the humble Hopes that Fortune has bequeath'd me: Or if they press too rude and sudden for their Welcome, chide 'em but gently; they're soft as Infant-Wishes, one tender Word will hush them into Whispers.

La. Gent. Thus then with low Submission, on my Knees, I beg for pity of my Fortune! O save me! save me from your cruel Power: Pity the hard Distresses of a trembling Wretch, whom Folly has betray'd to Ruin. O! think not

88 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

I can ever stain my Virtue, and preserve my Senses! For while I think, my shrinking Heart will shudder at the Horror: This trembling Hand will wither in your Touch, or end me in Distraction. If you've a human Soul, O yet be greatly good, and save me from eternal Ruin!

Ld. Geo. These bugbear Terrors, (Pray be raised——

La. Gent. O never!)

Ld. Geo. Which Inexperience forms, wou'd vanish in a moment's just or generous Thought: And since the right of Fortune has decreed me Hope, your Word, your Faith, your Honour stands engag'd to pay it——

Enter a Stranger, bluntly, with a Letter.

Strang. Lady.

La. Gent. Ah!

Ld. Geo. How now! what's the meaning of this?

Strang. I have sworn to deliver this into your own Hands, tho' I shou'd find you at your Prayers.

La. Gent. Who are you, Sir?

Strang. Nobody.

La. Gent. Whence come you?

Strang. From Nobody——Good by. *[Exit.]*

Ld. Geo. Fire and Furies! what a ridiculous Interruption is this?

La. Gent. I'm amaz'd.

Ld. Geo. What can it mean?

La. Gent. Ha! what's here! Bank Bills of two thousand Pounds! The very Sums I have lost!——No Advice! Not a Line with 'em! No matter whence they came! From no Enemy, I'm sure; better owe 'em any where, than here.

Ld. Geo. I fancy, Madam, the next Room were——
were——

La. Gent. No, my Lord——our Accounts now need no Privacy——there's your two thousand Pounds.

Ld. Geo. What mean you, Madam?

La. Gent. To be as you wou'd have me, just, and pay my Debts of Honour: For those that you demand against my Honour, by the known Laws of Play, are void: Where Honour cannot win, Honour can never lose. And now, my Lord, 'tis time to leave my Folly, and its Danger——
Fare you well.

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* Hold, Madam, our short Account is not made even yet : Your Tears indeed might fool me into Pity, but this unfair Defiance never can : Since you wou'd poorly falsify your Word, you've nothing but your Sex to guard you now ; and all the favour that you can hope, is, that I'll give your Virtue even its last Excuse, and force you to be just.

La. *Gent.* Ah !

Enter Mrs. Conquest, with her Sword drawn.

Mrs. *Con.* Hold, Sir ! unhand the Lady.

Ld. *Geo.* Death again ! [*Draws.*

Mrs. *Con.* My Lord, this is no place to use our Swords in ; this Lady's Presence may sheath 'em here, without Dishonour. Your Pardon, Madam, for this rude Intrusion, which your Protection, and my own injur'd Honour have compell'd me to.

Ld. *Geo.* Let me advise you, Sir, to have more regard to this Lady's Honour, than to suppose my being innocently here at Cards, was upon the least ill thought against it.

Mrs. *Con.* My Lord, that's answer'd, in owning I have over-heard every word you have said this half hour.

Ld. *Geo.* The Devil ! he loves her sure ! You are to be found, Sir ———

Mrs. *Con.* O ! my Lord, I shall not part with you ; but I have first a Message to you from my Sister, which you must answer instantly : Not but I know her Pride contemns the Baseness you have us'd her with ; for which she'd think perhaps, your Disappointment here an over-paid Revenge : But there's a jealous Honour in our Family, whose Injuries are above the feeble Spirit of a Girl to punish, that lies on me to vindicate, and calls for warmer Reparation—— Follow me.

La. *Gent.* Good Sir !——my Lord, I beg for Pity's sake, compose this Breach some milder way——If Blood shou'd follow on your going hence, what must the World report of me ? my Fame's undone for ever——Let me intreat you, Sir, be pacify'd, my Lord will think of honourable Means to right your Sister——My Lord, for Mercy's sake ——

Ld.

90 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

Ld. Geo. Your Pardon, Madam, Honour must be free before it can repair: Compulsion stains it into Cowardice
 —— Away, Sir —— I follow you.

[*Exeunt Lord George and Mrs. Conquest.*]

La. Gent. O miserable Wretch! to what a sure Destruction has thy Folly brought thee!

Enter Sir Friendly Moral.

Sir Fr. Dear Madam, what's the matter, I heard high Words within, no harm I hope?

La. Gent. Murder I fear, if not prevented; my Lord George, and Sir John Conquest have quarrell'd, and are gone out this moment in their Heat to end it.

Sir Fr. How!

La. Gent. I beg you, Sir, go after 'em; shou'd there be Mischief, the World will certainly report, from false Appearances, that I'm the Cause.

Sir Fr. Don't think so, Madam, I'll use my best Endeavour to prevent it! In the mean time, take heed your Disorder don't alarm the Company within —— Which way went they?

La. Gent. That Door, Sir. [*Exit Sir Friendly.*] Who's there? [*Enter a Servant.*] Run quick, and see if the Garden-Door into the Park be lock'd —— [*Exit Servant.*] How strict a Guard should Virtue keep upon its Innocence? How dangerous, how faithless are its lawful Pleasures, when habitual! This Vice of Play, that has, I fear, undone me, appear'd at first an harmless, safe Amusement; but stealing into Habit, its greatest Hazards grew so familiar, that even the Face of Ruin lost its Terror to me. O Reflection! how I shudder at thee! the shameful Memory of what I have done this Night, will live with me for ever.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, the Garden-Door was wide open.

La. Gent. Did you hear no Noise, or Bustle in the Park?

Serv. No, Madam. [*Exit Servant.*]

La. Gent. They're certainly gone out that way, and Sir Friendly must miss of 'em —— O Wretch! Wretch! that stoodst

the WIFE'S RESENTMENT. 91

stoodst the foremost in the Rank of prudent, happy Wives, art now become the branded Mark of Infamy and Shame. [Exit.

SCENE *changes to the Park.*

Enter Lord George.

Ld. Geo. So, I think we've lost the Fellows that observ'd us; and if my Gentleman's Stomach holds, now I'm at leisure to entertain him. Death! was ever glorious Hope so inveterately disappointed? To bring her to her last Stake, to have her fast upon my Hook, nay, in my Hand, and after all, to have her whip through my Fingers like an Eel, was the very Impudence of Fortune——What! not come yet? He has not thought better on't, I hope——It's a lovely clear Moon——I wish it does not shine through somebody presently.

Enter four Fellows at a distance.

1. Fel. Stand close, softly, and we have him ——
By your leave, Sir. [They seize him.

Ld. Geo. So! here's like to be no Sport to night then — I'm taken care of, I see——Nay, pray Gentlemen, you need not be so boisterous——I am sensible we are prevented.

2 Fel. Damn your Sense, Sir. [Trips up his Heels.

1 Fel. Blood, Sir, make the least Noise, I'll stick you to the Ground.

Ld. Geo. I beg your pardon, Gentlemen, I find I am mistaken! I thought you had only come to preserve my Person, but I find 'tis my Purse you have a Passion for——You're in the wrong Pocket, upon my faith, Sir.

1 Fel. Pull off his Breeches, make sure work; over his Heels with 'em, that's the shortest way.

Ld. Geo. With submission, Sir, there's a shorter—and if you pull off my Skin you won't find another Sixpence in the inside on't.

2 Fel. What's this?

Ld. Geo. Only a Table-Book; you don't deal in Paper, I presume?

1 Fel.

92 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

1 *Fel.* Rot your Paper, Sir, we'll trust no Man! Money down's our Business.

Enter Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. How now, Gentlemen, what are you doing here?

Ld. Geo. Only borrowing a little Money, Sir; the Gentlemen will be gone presently.

1 *Fel.* Hark you, you bastardly Beau, get about your Business—or—lay hold on him, *Jack*—

Mrs. Con. Me! Raskal—look, you Dogs—release that Gentleman quick—give him his Sword again this minute—or—
[Presents a Pistol.]

Ld. Geo. And my Money, I beseech you, Sir.

1 *Fel.* Blood! stand him, *Jack.* Five to one he don't kill. The Dog has a good Coat on, and may have Money in his Pocket.

2 *Fel.* Drop your Pistol, Sir, or spill my B'ood, I'll stick you.

Mrs. Con. Do you brave me, Villains—Have at you.

[She presents, and misses fire.]

1 *Fel.* O ho! Mr. Bully, have we met with you—Come on, Sir—there, Sir, that will do, I believe.

[Two of them secure Lord George.]

3 *Fel.* What is he down? Strip him.

[They push, she falls.]

2 *Fel.* No, rot him, he's not worth it—let's brush off.
[Exit.]

Ld. Geo. Barbarous Dogs! how is it, Sir!

Mrs. Con. I'm kill'd—I fear the Wound's quite through me.

Ld. Geo. Mercy forbid! Where is't?

Mrs. Con. O! don't touch me—I beg you call for help, or any one to witness that my last Words confess you guiltless of this Accident.

Ld. Geo. This generous Reproach has more than vanquish'd me—I think I see a Chair in the Mall—Chair, Chair,—they come—Believe me, Sir, I have so just a Sense of your Misfortune, and your Honour, that my full Heart now bleeds with shame to think
how

how grossly I have wrong'd you in your Sister's Goodness :
But if you live, the future study of my Life shall be with
utmost Reparation to deserve your Friendship.

Enter Chairman.

Chair. Here : Who calls Chair ?

Ld. Geo. Here, Friend, help up this Gentleman, he's
wounded by some Foot-Pads, that just now set upon us——
Softly——Carry him to Sir *William Gentle's*, in——
in——

Chair. I know it very well, Sir.

[*Exit Chairmen with Mrs. Conquest.*]

Ld. Geo. Make haste, while I run for a Surgeon. Death!
how this Misfortune shocks and alters me.

The SCENE changes to Lady Gentle's.

Enter Mrs. Notable. [Alone.]

Miss Not. So, my Plot takes, I find the Family's in
a terrible Confusion : Sir *John* has certainly call'd him to
an Account for the Letter I gave him—— If the Town
does not allow me the Reputation of this Quarrel——
I have very hard Fortune——Lord ! What a mortifi-
ed Creature will poor *Mrs. Conquest* be, when she hears
in the loansome Country, that her own Brother has fought
with her only Lover, for his Offers of Love to me ? Dear
Soul ! What must it think, when such a raw unfit Thing as
I, gives such a great Creature as she so unexpected a Con-
fusion ? She can't take it ill sure, if one shou'd smile when
one sees her next.

Enter to her Mrs. Hartshorn crying.

Mrs. Hartf. O dear Madam ! Sad News.

Miss Not. What's the Matter ?

Mrs. Hartf. My Lord *George* has kill'd Sir *John Conquest*.

Miss Not. O Heavens ! Upon my Account ! Art sure
he's kill'd ? Didst see him dead ?

Mrs. Hartf. No Madam, he's alive yet : They've just
brought him in a Hackney-Chair ; but they say the
Wound's

Wound's quite through his Body: O! 'tis a ghastly Sight——

Miss Not. Malicious Fortune! Had it been t'other's Fate, I cou'd have born it. To take from me the only Life I ever really lov'd, is insupportable.

Mrs. Hartf. Won't your Ladyship go in and see him, Madam?

Miss Not. Prithee leave me to my Griefs alone.

Mrs. Hartf. Ah! poor Gentleman—— [Exit.]

Miss Not. Pretty Creature! I must see him——but it shall be in an Undress——it will be proper, at least, to give my Concern the Advantage of as much Disorder as I can. [Exit.]

The SCENE drawing, discovers Mrs. Conquest in an arm'd Chair, with Lady Gentle, Lady Wronglove, and Servants about her.

Mrs. Con. No Surgeon yet?

Ld. Wrong. Here's my Lord George, and I believe the Surgeon with him.

Enter Lord George, Sir Friendly, and Surgeon.

Ld. Geo. Come, Sir, pray be quick, there's your Patient. How is it, Sir?

Mrs. Con. Oh!

Sir Fr. 'Twas not in my Fortune, Madam, to prevent this Accident. [To Lady Gentle.]

Sur. By your leave Sir——Your Coat must come off, Sir.

Mrs. Con. Hold——Hark you, Sir.

[Whispers the Surgeon.]

Sur. I am surpriz'd indeed——A Woman, but don't be uneasy, Madam, I shall have all due regard to your Sex.

Omnes. A Woman!

Ld. Geo. Ha!

Mrs. Con. To raise your Wonder, Ladies, equal to your Pity, know then, I am not what I seem, the injur'd Brother of Mrs. Conquest; but she, herself, the feeble Champion of my own Despair.

Ld.

Ld. *Geo.* Distraction?

La. *Gent.* O my fatal Folly! What Ruin art thou now the Cause of?

La. *Wrong.* Poor unhappy Creature!

Ld. *Wrong.* What have you done, my Lord?

Ld. *Geo.* O blind besotted Sense! Not by a thousand pointing Circumstances to fore-know this Secret, and prevent its Consequence. How shall I look on her?

Sur. No Hopes, indeed, Sir.

Sir *Fr.* Take heed———Art sure 'tis mortal?

Sur. Sir, 'tis impossible she can live three hours:———
The best way will be to convey the Lady to Bed, and let her take a large Dose of Opium: All the helps I can give her, is the hopes of going off in her Sleep.

La. *Gent.* [*Weeping.*] O piteous Creature!

Ld. *Wrong.* A Heart so generous indeed, deserv'd a kinder Fate.

Ld. *Geo.* [*Throwing himself at Mrs. Conquest's Feet.*] O pardon injur'd Goodness! Pardon the ungrateful Follies of a thoughtless Wretch, that burns to be forgiven! Cou'd I have e'er supposed your generous Soul had set at half this fatal Price my tenderest Vows, how gladly lavish had I paid 'em to deserve such Virtue.

Mrs. *Con.* My Death, my Lord, is not half so terrible, as the wide Wound this rash Attempt must give my bleeding Reputation.

Ld. *Geo.*———To cure that Virgin Fear, this Moment I conjure you, then, before your latest Breath forsakes you, let the pronouncing Priest, in sacred Union of our hands, unite our Honour too, and in this full Reduction of my vanquish'd Heart silence all envious Questions on your Fame for ever.

Mrs. *Con.* 'Twould be, I own, an Ease in Death, to give me the Excuse of dying honourably yours.

Ld. *Geo.* My Lord, your Chaplain's near, I beg he may be sent for.

Ld. *Wrong.* This Minute———

La. *Wrong.* An honourable, tho' unfortunate Amends.

Mrs. *Con.* We have seen happier Hours, my Lord; but little thought our many cheerful Evenings wou'd have so dark a Night to end 'em.

La.

96 *The* LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,

La. Gent. Mournful indeed !

Ld. Geo. How gladly wou'd I pay down future Life to purchase back one past, one fatal Hour !

Mrs. Con. Is't possible !

Ld. Geo. What !

Mrs. Con. The World shou'd judge, my Lord, so widely of your Heart, that only what was grossly sensual cou'd affect it:———Now, Sir, [*To Sir Friend.*] What think you ? With all this headlong Wildness of a youthful Heat, one Moment's Thought, you see, produces Love, Compassion, Tenderness and Honour: And now, my Lord, to let you see 'twas not my Interest, but innocent Revenge, that made me thus turn Champion to my Sex's Honour ; since by this exposing the Weakness of your Inconstancy, I have reduc'd you fairly to confess the forceful power of Honourable Love ; I thus release you of the Chain: For, know, I am as well in Health as ever.

[*Walks from the Chair.*

Ld. Geo. Ha !

[*Joyfully surpriz'd.*

Mrs. Con. And if the darling Pleasures of abandon'd Liberty have yet a more prevailing Charm, you now again are free ; return and revel in the Transport.

Ld. Geo. Is there a Transport under Heav'n like this ?

La. Gent. O blest Deliverance !

Ld. Wrong. Surprizing Change !

La. Wrong. No Wound nor Danger then at last ?

Mrs. Con. All ! all ! in every Circumstance I've done this Night, my Wound, the Robbery, the Surgeon, (here's one can witness) all was equally dissembled as my Person.

Ld. Geo. Is't possible ?

Ld. Wrong. The most consummate Bite, my Lord, that ever happen'd in all the Circumstances of human Nature.

Ld. Geo. O ! for a Strain of Thought to out-do this spiteful Virtue.

Ld. Wrong. Why Faith, my Lord, 'twas smartly handsome, not to cheat you into Marriage, when 'twas so provokingly in her power.

Mrs. Con. If you think it worth your Revenge, my Lord
———Come ! for once I'll give your Vanity leave to humble
my

my Pride, and laugh in your Turn at the notable stir I have made about you.

Ld. *Geo.* Since you provoke me then, prepare to start, and tremble at my Revenge——I will not only marry thee this Instant, but the next spiteful Moment insolently bed thee too, and make such ravenous Havock of thy Beauties, that thou shalt call in vain for Mercy of my Power. Ho! within there! call the Chaplain.

Mrs. *Con.* Hold, my Lord!

Ld. *Geo.* Nay, no resistance——by the transporting Fury thou hast rais'd, I'll do't.

Mrs. *Con.* This is down-right Violence——my Lord
Wrongo-vc—— [Struggling,

Ld. *Wrong.* Don't be concern'd, Madam, he never does any harm in these Fits.

Mrs. *Con.* Have you no Shame!

Ld. *Geo.* By Earth, Seas, Air, and by the glorious Impudence of substantial Darknes, I am fix'd.

Mrs. *Con.* Will no one help me?——Sir *Friendly.*

Sir *Fr.* Not I, in troth, Madam, I think his Revenge is a very honest one.

Ld. *Geo.* Confess me Victor, or expect no Mercy: Not all the Adamantine Rocks of Virgin Coyness, not all your Trembling, Sighs, Prayers, Threats, Promises, or Tears, shall save you. O Transport of devouring Joy!

[Closely embracing her.

Mrs. *Con.* Oh!——Quarter! Quarter! O spare my Perriwig.

Ld. *Wrong.* Victoria! Victoria! The Town's our own.

Sir *Fr.* Fairly won indeed, my Lord!

Ld. *Geo.* Sword in Hand, by *Jupiter*——And now, Madam, I put myself into Garrison for Life.

Mrs. *Con.* Oh! that won't be long, I'm sure; for you've almost kill'd me.

Ld. *Geo.* I warrant you, moderate Exercise will bring you to your Wind again.

Mrs. *Con.* [*Aside.*] Well! People may say what they will; but upon some Occasions, an agreeable Impudence saves one a World of impertinent Confusion.

Ld. *Geo.* And now, Madam, to let you see you have as much subdu'd my Follies, as my Heart,——First,

98 *The LADY'S LAST STAKE: or,*

let me humbly ask a Pardon for Offences. Here ———
 [To Lady Gentle] These Sums, Madam, I now must own,
 to serve my shameful Ends, were all unfairly won of you ;
 which since I never meant to keep, I thus restore, and
 with 'em give a friendly Warning of your too mix'd a
 Company in Play.

La. *Gent.* My Lord, I thank you ——— and shall hence-
 forth study to deserve the Providence that fav'd me ———
 If I mistake not too, I have some Bills that call for resti-
 tution. Here, [To Mrs. Con.] No one cou'd, I'm sure,
 be more concern'd to send 'em. Friendships conceal'd are
 double Obligations.

Mrs. *Con.* I sent 'em to relieve you, Madam, but since
 your danger has no farther need of 'em ———

[Takes the Bills.]

Sir *Fr.* Now, Child, I claim your Promise, here comes
 another of your small Accounts that is not made up yet.

Mrs. *Con.* Fear not, Sir, I'll pay it to a Scruple.

Enter Miss Notable weeping, in a Night-Dress.

Miss *Not.* O where's this mournful sight! Your Pardon,
 Ladies, if my intruding Tears confess the weakness of a
 harmless Passion, that now 'twould be ungrateful to con-
 ceal: Had I not lov'd too well, this fatal Accident had
 never been.

Mrs. *Con.* Well! don't be concern'd, dear Madam, for
 the worst part of the Accident is, that I am found at last, it
 seems, to be no more fit for a Wife, than as I told you,
 you were for a Husband.

Miss *Not.* Ha!

[In confusion.]

Mrs. *Con.* Not but I had some thoughts of marrying you
 too; but then I fancy'd you'd soon be uneasy under the
 cold Comfort of Petticoats ——— so ——— I don't know ———
 the good Company has ev'n persuad'd me to pull off my
 Breeches, and marry Lord *George*.

Miss *Not.* Marry'd! base Man! is this the proof of your
 Indifference to Mrs. *Conquest*! [Aside to Lord *George*.]

Ld. *Geo.* 'Tis not a Proof yet indeed ——— But I believe
 I shall marry her to-night; and then you know, my Life,
 I am in a fair way to it.

Miss

Mifs Not. Jeer'd by him too! I'll lock myself up in some dark Room, and never see the World again. [Exit.

La. Wrong. [To Ld. Wrong.] Was she? that Creature then, the little wicked cause of my Disquiet?— How ridiculous have you made my Jealousy? Farewel the Folly and the Pain.

Ld. Wrong. Farewel the Cause of it for ever.

La. Gent. [To Sir Fr.] The Count, say you, his Accomplice! How I tremble! But I have done with it for Life; such ruinous Hazards, need no second Warning.

Ld. Geo. I fancy Nuncle, I begin to make a very ridiculous Figure here, and have given myself the Air of more Looseness than I have been able to come up to.

Mrs. Con. I'm afraid that's giving yourself the Air of more Virtue than you'll be able to come up to—— But however, since I can't help it, I had as good trust you.

Ld. Geo. And when I wrong that Trust, may you deceive me.

Sir Fr. And now a lasting Happiness to all.

[Coming forward to the Audience.

*Let those that here, as in a Mirror see
These Follies, and the Dangers they have run,
Be cheaply warn'd, and think these 'Scapes their own.*

F I N I S.





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