

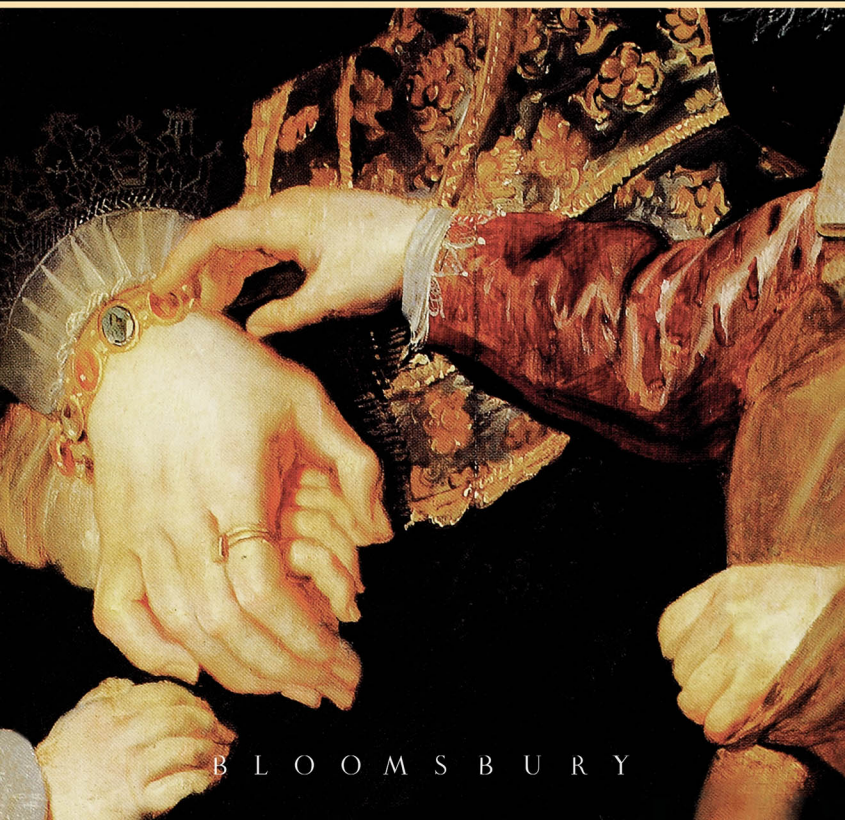
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# BEHN

## FIVE PLAYS

THE LUCKY CHANCE, THE ROVER PART 1,  
THE WIDOW RANTER,  
THE FALSE COUNT, ABDELAZER

INTRODUCED BY MAUREEN DUFFY



B L O O M S B U R Y

# Aphra Behn

## Five Plays

The Lucky Chance, The Rover Part I,  
The Widow Ranter, The False Count, Abdelazer

'Masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice . . . All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn . . . for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds.' Virginia Woolf

Dealing robustly with the main concerns of the age: politics and sex, Aphra Behn provides a vivid picture of her own times and society that stretches from the city alderman through the chimney-sweep to the Spanish courtesan and the Amerindian queen, embracing all ages and classes and a full range of human emotion from lust and greed to loyalty and courage.

Selected and introduced by Maureen Duffy.

### APHRA BEHN

Aphra Behn was born in 1640 near Canterbury, Kent and began her career as a professional writer in 1670 when *The Forced Marriage* was performed by the Duke's Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Her other plays include: *The Amorous Prince* (1671); *The Dutch Lover* (1673); *Abdelazer* (1676); *The Rover* (1677); *The Debauchee* (1677); *The Counterfeit Bridegroom* (1677); *Sir Patient Fancy* (1678); *The Imaginary Invalid* (1678); *The Feigned Courtesans* (1679); *The Young King* (1679); *The Rover Part II* (1681); *The False Count* (1681); *The Roundheads* (1681); *The City Heiress* (1682); *Like Father, Like Son* (1682); *The Lucky Chance* (1686); *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687); *The Widow Ranter* (1690). She also wrote novels and poetry. Aphra Behn died in 1689.

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APHRA BEHN

**FIVE PLAYS**

*selected and introduced by Maureen Duffy*

The Lucky Chance  
The Rover Part I  
The Widow Ranter  
The False Count  
Abdelazer

B L O O M S B U R Y

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## Aphra Behn: a Brief Chronology

- 1640 Born at Harbledown, near Canterbury, Kent. Maiden name Johnson.
- 1663 c. Family in Surinam, but her father, who had been appointed Lieutenant-General, died on the voyage. Stayed on a local plantation.
- 1664 Returned to London in the spring. Presented an Indian costume to the King's Company.
- 1665 c. Marriage to Mr. Behn, probably a Dutch or German merchant, who died soon afterwards, perhaps during the Great Plague.
- 1666 Persuaded by Thomas Killigrew to serve as a spy in the Dutch Wars, but discovered little the government thought of value while in Antwerp, and remained unpaid for her services. Great Fire of London in her absence.
- 1667 Returned to London.
- 1668 Committed to prison for debt, despite petitions to Killigrew and the King. Date of release uncertain.
- 1670 Beginning of her career as a professional writer. December, her first play, the tragi-comic *The Forced Marriage*, performed by the Duke's Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, with Betterton in the lead, achieving a run of six nights. Around this time, beginning of her long relationship with the dissolute lawyer John Hoyle.
- 1671 Her second tragi-comedy, *The Amorous Prince*, at Lincoln's Inn Fields in the spring.
- 1672 Possibly edited the collection of poetry, *The Covent-Garden Drollery*.
- 1673 Feb., failure of her comedy of intrigue *The Dutch Lover* at Dorset Garden.
- 1676 The passionate tragedy *Abdelazer* performed at Dorset Garden in July, followed there in September by a 'scandalous' comedy with brothel scenes, *The Town Fop*.
- 1677 March, *The Rover* produced at Dorset Garden. Two other plays attributed to her also seen at Dorset Garden, *The Debauchee* in February and *The Counterfeit Bridegroom* in September.
- 1678 January, *Sir Patient Fancy*, a comedy adapted from Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid*, at Dorset Garden. The Popish Plot 'revealed' by Titus Oates.

- 1679 Beginning of the exclusion crisis. The comedy *The Feigned Courtesans* seen in the spring, and the tragi-comedy *The Young King* in early autumn, both at Dorset Garden.
- 1680 Death of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, aged 33.
- 1681 April, *The Second Part of The Rover*; November, the farcical comedy *The False Count*; and December, the historical comedy *The Roundheads*: all at Dorset Garden.
- 1682 The anti-Whig political lampoon *The City Heiress* 'well-received' at Dorset Garden in the spring, but *Like Father, Like Son* which failed there, remained unprinted, and is now lost apart from prologue and epilogue. Increasing hostility from the Whigs leads to her arrest for the 'abusive' and 'scandalous' prologue she contributed in August to the anonymous *Romulus and Hersilia*: she was probably let off with a caution. Merging of the two theatre companies.
- 1683 Wrote three of her posthumously-published short novels, and the first part of *Love Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister*.
- 1684 Published her *Poems on Several Occasions*.
- 1685 Publication of her poetic *Miscellany*. Death of Charles II and accession of his brother James II.
- 1686 The prose work *La Montre; or, The Lover's Watch* published. Returned to the theatre in April with the comedy *The Lucky Chance* at Drury Lane.
- 1687 The *commedia*-style farce *The Emperor of the Moon*, one of her greatest successes, first seen at Drury Lane in March. Arrest and inconclusive trial of John Hoyle for sodomy.
- 1688 Published the short novels *The Fair Jilt*, *Agnes de Castro*, and *Oroonoko*, the latter based on her experiences in Surinam. The 'bloodless revolution' leads to the abdication of James II, and the protestant supremacy under William and Mary.
- 1689 16 April, died, and buried in Westminster Abbey. Posthumous production in November of her last play, the comedy *The Widow Ranter* at Drury Lane, a failure. The comedy *The Younger Brother* also first produced posthumously, at Drury Lane in February 1696.

# Introduction

Aphra Behn's first theatrical production was in September 1670, at *The Playhouse* in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the home of the Duke's Company, which had been managed by Sir William Davenant (said to be Shakespeare's bastard son) until his death in 1668 and had then passed to the actor manager Thomas Betterton. The play was *The Forced Marriage*, a romantic tragi-comedy which ran for a very successful six nights and gave Thomas Otway his only stage appearance in person as the old king. The prompter John Langbaine in his memoirs calls it 'a good play . . . that made its exit . . . to give room for a greater, *The Tempest*'. The prologue dealt boldly with the novelty of a woman daring to write for the stage, and the play was so successful that Behn's next piece was produced only six months later. She was launched upon a career as playwright that was to last the rest of her life, interspersed with writing fiction, poetry and translation, and which was to continue in posthumous productions for another ninety years, before an eclipse of nearly two centuries, until the twentieth-century revival of interest in her and her work.

The longest-lived of her plays, as it was the most popular in her lifetime, was *The Rover*, for which she took and completely transformed an old play, *Tommaso* by Thomas Killigrew who ran the rival King's Company at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. There is in the library at Columbia University what seems to be Aphra Behn's own copy of Killigrew's *Comedies and Tragedies*, published in 1664, with her signature as Mad Behn and marginal annotations. She mined this play for two of her own, both called *The Rover*, the second written as a sequel after the great success of the first at the request of the Duke of York, her patron, later to be crowned as James II.

Whereas Behn's male contemporaries derived their style and structure mainly from Ben Jonson, her spiritual begetter is Shakespeare, an allegiance she acknowledged in her preface to *The Dutch Lover*, and that's apparent in the texts themselves. The Rover, Wilmore, certainly owes something to Petrucchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, but it's the women characters, in particular Hellena and the courtesan Angelica Bianca, whose individuality and

strength, derived from Shakespeare's own heroines, especially Beatrice and Rosalind, set the play apart from the work of her male colleagues, until the appearance of Congreve's *Millament in The Way of the World*, eleven years after Behn's death.

Behn had already produced her only tragedy, *Abdelazer*, early in 1677. Tragedy was in fashion, with Dryden and Otway, and Behn's friend Edward Howard as its chief exponents. Once again there's an Ur-text in a play called *Lust's Dominion* which may be by Dekker, but *Abdelazer's* true antecedents are *Othello* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. It was revived after her death with new music by Henry Purcell but he didn't, unfortunately, set her most famous song which opens the play: 'Love in fantastick triumph sat'. The part of *Abdelazer* was played by Thomas Betterton who is reputed to have been magnificent as *Othello*, and Elizabeth Barry, Aphra Behn's great friend who was to become one of the finest actresses of her day, the friend of Nell Gwyn and lover of the Earl of Rochester whose child she bore, appeared as the daughter of the lascivious Queen of Spain.

If Restoration Comedy is seen by some contemporary directors as so much theatrical wallpaper, which can be cut to any size and the bits stuck together to make an evening of rollicking bawdy, the tragedies of the period have suffered what is perhaps the even worse fate of almost total neglect, apart from an occasional production of Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*. The very full-bloodedness of Restoration tragedies, closer to Webster and Marlowe than to either Shakespeare or their French counterpart Racine, makes them sound alien to an audience nourished on tragicomedy and understatement, a situation akin to the difficulty of convincingly staging *opera seria*. Nevertheless it seems important to include *Abdelazer*, Behn's only, but highly successful, contribution to the genre in any representative selection of her plays.

Several of her stage works are described on their title pages as 'A Farce'. *The False Count* belongs to a group of political writings which were commissioned specifically by the two parties, Tory and Whig, Court and Country, who were engaged in a bitter power struggle for most of Behn's working life, a conflict which was only finally resolved in 1688, a few months before her death, with the flight of James II and the accession of William and Mary. Aphra Behn came from an old royalist family, at least on her mother's side, and she remained staunchly loyal to the Stuarts. It's a proof of her success and popularity, if any is still needed, that the court should

have paid her for her services in writing what she described to a friend as: 'Tory farce and doggerell'. *The False Count* however, produced in 1682 when the battle was at its fiercest, goes beyond mere political propaganda though she was perfectly capable of writing this kind of simple theatrical pamphleteering as she showed with *The Roundheads* or *The Good Old Cause* which followed a couple of months after. So far, however, does *The False Count* surpass its genre that it was given a new production in 1697 when the Whigs were securely in the ascendant. Its true theme is money and class but the play also embodies one of her favourite topics: the sale of young women in marriage to old men, something she returns to so often that the reader is forced to consider whether there wasn't a personal experience informing this continued exploration of a social issue. However so little is known about her own brief marriage to the merchant Behn that this must be only speculation.

By the time *The Lucky Chance* was licensed for printing on Shakespeare's birthday in 1686 Aphra Behn had only three years to live. Ill and poor she was nevertheless writing furiously in every medium. The theatres were in decline and it was hard to get new plays staged. Her friend Tom Otway had died in great poverty hiding out from his creditors in the London slum known as Alsatia, and this gives her the core for the play in the plight of Gayman who is finally rescued by his lover, the spirited Lady Fulbank who is trapped in an unhappy marriage. The play ran into instant criticism on the grounds of its immorality and Behn hurried it into print with a preface in her own and the play's defence.

All I ask is the privilege for my masculine part the poet in me (if any such you will allow me), to tread in those successful paths my predecessors have so long thrived in, to take those measures that both the ancient and modern writers have set me, and by which they have pleased the world so well. If I must not, because of my sex, have this freedom, but that you will usurp all to yourselves; I lay down my quill and you shall hear no more of me.

She couldn't of course afford to carry out such a threat but her next work to be staged was an earlier play, written during the time of Charles II and based on the commedia dell'arte characters, called *The Emperor of the Moon*, which offended no one and was a great success. The other play which seems to have been written about this time but not produced until after her death, perhaps because she

thought it too controversial, was *The Widow Ranter*, 'a tragedy-comedy' set in the colony of Virginia. As a young woman she had visited Surinam in 1663 and stayed for a few months waiting for a ship home. In 1688 she mined this experience for the novella *Oroonoko*, which Thomas Southerne was to make into a very successful play, and at much the same time must have used her 'American' material also for *The Widow Ranter*. It's as exotic as Dryden's *The Indian Queen* for which Aphra Behn claimed to have supplied some feathered costumes brought back from Surinam, and it was Dryden who was to supply the prologue and epilogue for the play which contain what sounds like his epitaph for her:

She who so well could love's kind passion paint  
We piously believe, must be a saint.

The separate publication of the prologue and epilogue in folio form in 1689, before the play was even staged but after Dryden had been stripped of his laureateship by the new powers, reinforces this elegiac effect.

Not only did Aphra Behn produce more plays than any British playwright of her generation except Dryden, she also encompassed the whole range of available dramatic forms. Her fluent dialogue is less allusive than that of her contemporaries and therefore more accessible to a modern audience. The wit seems less striven for, and her characters' emotions, even when she is dealing with the theatrical stereotypes of the period, are much more fully explored. It's hard to think of another dramatist of her time, or indeed for the next two hundred years, who could have written, with such tenderness and subtlety, the opening scene of *The Rover* where the girls discuss their future lives and aspirations.

There is, however, nothing insipid about her work; that failing which her contemporaries identified in other women writers as 'tastes strongly of the sex is weak and poor'. Her plays are as rigorous and eventful as any by her male counterparts and she deals robustly with the main concerns of the age: politics and sex. It was her insistence on freedom and equality in both choice of theme and its treatment that gave her enemies and critics their weapons against her, both for her theatrical works and her fiction and poetry. There were times when she was forced to trim a little as in the timing of the production of *The Emperor of the Moon*, or in the play she dedicated to Nell Gwyn, *The Feigned Curtezans*, which adhered strictly to the classical unities of time, place and action and, without

being in the least bland, gave no cause for offence – an important consideration, since the country was in the grip of hysteria over the so-called Popish Plot and at least one of Aphra Behn's friends, the dramatist Neville Payne, was in prison and in danger of his life. In the main, however, she was fearlessly outspoken and was herself imprisoned on one occasion for a prologue which cast aspersions on 'persons of quality', in other words the Duke of Monmouth in his rivalry with the Duke of York for the succession to the throne.

A knowledge of the political sub-text of Behn's work gives it, of course, an added stratum of meaning, yet even without this, her plays provide a vivid picture of her own times and society, that stretches from the city alderman through the chimney-sweep to the Spanish courtesan and the Amerindian queen, embracing all ages and classes and a full range of human emotion from lust and greed to loyalty and courage.

Maureen Duffy  
August, 1990

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THE LUCKY CHANCE; OR,  
AN ALDERMAN'S BARGAIN.

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To the Right Honourable *Laurence*, Lord *Hyde*, Earl of *Rochester*, one of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, Lord High Treasurer of *England*, and Knight of the Noble Order of the Garter.

My Lord,

When I consider how Ancient and Honourable a Date Plays have born, how they have been the peculiar Care of the most Illustrious Persons of *Greece* and *Rome*, who strove as much to outdoe each other in Magnificence, (when by Turns they manag'd the great Business of the Stage, as if they had contended for the Victory of the Universe;) I say, my Lord, when I consider this, I with the greater Assurance most humbly address this Comedy to your Lordship, since by right of Antient Custom, the Patronage of Plays belong'd only to the great Men, and chiefest Magistrates. Cardinal *Richelieu*, that great and wise Statesman, said, That there was no surer Testimony to be given of the flourishing Greatness of a State, than publick Pleasures and Divertisements—for they are, says he—the Schools of Virtue, where Vice is always either punish't, or disdain'd. They are secret Instructions to the People, in things that 'tis impossible to insinuate into them any other Way. 'Tis Example that prevails above Reason or DIVINE PRECEPTS. (Philosophy not understood by the Multitude;) 'tis Example alone that inspires Morality, and best establishes Vertue, I have my self known a Man, whom neither Conscience nor Religion cou'd perswade to Loyalty, who with beholding in our Theatre a Modern Politician set forth in all his Colours, was converted, renounc'd his opinion, and quitted the Party.

The Abbot of *Aubignac* to show that Plays have been ever held most important to the very Political Part of Government, says, The Phylosophy of *Greece*, and the Majesty and Wisdom of the *Romans*, did equally concern their Great Men in making them Venerable, Noble, and Magnificent: Venerable, by their Consecration to their Gods: Noble, by being govern'd by their chiefest Men; and their Magnificency was from the publick Treasury, and the liberal Contributions of their Noble Men.

It being undeniable then, that Plays and publick Diversions were thought by the Greatest and Wisest of States, one of the most essential Parts of good Government, and in which so many great Persons were interested; suffer me to beg your Lordships Patronage for this little Endeavour, and believe it not below the Grandure of your Birth and State, the Illustrious Places you so justly hold in the Kingdom, nor your Illustrious Relation to the greatest Monarch of the World, to afford it the Glory of your Protection; since it is the Product of a Heart and Pen, that always faithfully serv'd that Royal Cause, to which your Lordship is by many Tyes so firmly fixt: It approaches you with that absolute Veneration, that all the World is oblig'd to pay you; and has no other Design than to express my sense of

those excellent Vertues, that make your Lordship so truly admir'd and lov'd. Amongst which we find those two so rare in a Great Man and a Statesman, those of Gracious Speech and easie Access, and I believe none were ever sent from your Presence dissatisfied. You have an Art to please even when you deny; and something in your Look and Voice has an Air so greatly good, it recompences even for Disappointment, and we never leave your Lordship but with Blessings. It is no less our Admiration, to behold with what Serenity and perfect Conduct, that great Part of the Nations Business is carry'd on, by one single Person; who having to do with so vast Numbers of Men of all Qualitys, Interests, and Humours, nevertheless all are well satisfi'd, and none complain of Oppression, but all is done with Gentleness and Silence, as if (like the first Creator) you cou'd finish all by a Word. You have, my Lord, a Judgment so piercing and solid, a Wisdom so quick and clear, and a Fortitude so truly Noble, that those Fatigues of State, that wou'd even sink a Spirit of less Magnitude, is by yours accomplish't without Toil, or any Appearance of that harsh and crabbed Austerity, that is usually put on by the buisy Great. You, my Lord, support the Globe, as if you did not feel its Weight; nor so much as seem to bend beneath it: Your Zeal for the Glorious Monarch you love and serve, makes all things a Pleasure that advance his Interest, which is so absolutely your Care. You are, my Lord, by your generous Candor, your unbyast Justice, your Sweetness, Affability, and Condescending Goodness (those never-failing Marks of Greatness) above that Envy which reigns in Courts, and is aim'd at the most elevated Fortunes and Noblest Favourites of Princes: And when they consider your Lordship, with all the Abilities and Wisdom of a great Counsellor, your unblemisht Vertue, your unshaken Loyalty, your constant Industry for the Publick Good, how all things under your Part of Sway have been refin'd and purg'd from those Grossnesses, Frauds, Briberys, and Grievances, beneath which so many of his Majestys Subjects groan'd, when we see Merit establish't and prefer'd, and Vice discourag'd; it imposes Silence upon Malice it self, and compells 'em to bless his Majesty's Choice of such a Pillar of the State, such a Patron of Vertue.

Long may your Lordship live to remain in this most Honourable Station, that his Majesty may be serv'd with an entire Fidelity, and the Nation be render'd perfectly Happy. Since from such Heads and Hearts, the Monarch reaps his Glory, and the Kingdom receives its Safety and Tranquility. This is the unfeign'd Prayer of

My Lord,  
Your Lordships most Humble  
And most Obedient Servant  
A. Behn.

## PREFACE.

THE little Obligation I have to some of the witty Sparks and Poets of the Town, has put me on a Vindication of this Comedy from those Censures that Malice, and ill Nature have thrown upon it, tho in vain : The Poets I heartily excuse, since there is a sort of Self-Interest in their Malice, which I shou'd rather call a witty Way they have in this Age, of Railing at every thing they find with pain successful, and never to shew good Nature and speak well of any thing ; but when they are sure 'tis damn'd, then they afford it that worse Scandal, their Pity. And nothing makes them so thorough-sticht an Enemy as a full Third Day, that's Crime enough to load it with all manner of Infamy ; and when they can no other way prevail with the Town, they charge it with the old never failing Scandal— That 'tis not fit for the Ladys : As if (if it were as they falsly give it out) the Ladys were oblig'd to hear Indecencys only from their Pens and Plays and some of them have ventur'd to treat 'em as Coursely as 'twas possible, without the least Reproach from them ; and in some of their most Celebrated Plays have entertained 'em with things, that if I should here strip from their Wit and Occasion that conducts 'em in and makes them proper, their fair Cheeks would perhaps wear a natural Colour at the reading them : yet are never taken Notice of, because a Man writ them, and they may hear that from them they blush at from a Woman— But I make a Challenge to any Person of common Sense and Reason—that is not wilfully bent on ill Nature, and will in spight of Sense wrest a double *Entendre* from every thing, lying upon the Catch for a Jest or a Quibble, like a Rook for a Cully ; but any unprejudic'd Person that knows not the Author, to read any of my Comedys and compare 'em with others of this Age, and if they find one Word that can offend the chastest Ear, I will submit to all their peevish Cavills ; but Right or Wrong they must be Criminal because a Woman's ; condemning them without having the Christian Charity, to examine whether it be guilty or not, with reading, comparing, or thinking ; the Ladies taking up any Scandal on Trust from some conceited Sparks, who will in spight of Nature be Wits and *Beaus* ; then scatter it for Authentick all over the Town and Court, poysoning of others Judgments with their false Notions, condemning it to worse than Death, Loss of Fame. And to fortifie their Detraction, charge me with all the Plays that have ever been offensive ; though I wish with all their Faults I had been the Author of some of those they have honour'd me with.

For the farther Justification of this Play ; it being a Comedy of Intrigue Dr. *Davenant* out of Respect to the Commands he had from Court, to take great Care that no Indecency should be in Plays, sent for it and nicely look't it over, putting out anything he but imagin'd the Criticks would play with. After that, Sir *Roger L'Estrange* read it and licens'd it, and found no such Faults as 'tis charg'd with : Then Mr. *Killigrew*, who more severe than any, from the strict Order he had, perus'd it with great

Circumspection; and lastly the Master Players, who you will I hope in some Measure esteem Judges of Decency and their own Interest, having been so many Years Prentice to the Trade of Judging.

I say, after all these Supervisors the Ladys may be convinc'd, they left nothing that could offend, and the Men of their unjust Reflections on so many Judges of Wit and Decencys. When it happens that I challenge any one, to point me out the least Expression of what some have made their Discourse, they cry, *That Mr. Leigh opens bis Night Gown, when he comes into the Bride-chamber*; if he do, which is a Jest of his own making, and which I never saw, I hope he has his Cloaths on underneath? And if so, where is the Indecency? I have seen in that admirable Play of *Oedipus*, the Gown open'd wide, and the Man shown in his Drawers and Waist coat, and never thought it an Offence before. Another cries, *Why we know not what they mean, when the Man takes a Woman off the Stage, and another is thereby cuckolded*; is that any more than you see in the most Celebrated of your Plays? as the *City Politicks*, the *Lady Mayoress*, and the *Old Lawyers Wife*, who goes with a Man she never saw before, and comes out again the joyfull'st Woman alive, for having made her Husband a Cuckold with such Dexterity, and yet I see nothing unnatural nor obscene: 'tis proper for the Characters. So in that lucky Play of the *London Cuckolds*, not to recite Particulars. And in that good Comedy of *Sir Courtly Nice*, the *Taylor to the young Lady*—in the fam'd *Sir Fopling Dorimont* and *Bellinda*, see the very Words—in *Valentinian*, see the Scene between the *Court Bawds*. And *Valentinian* all loose and ruff'd a Moment after the Rape, and all this you see without Scandal, and a thousand others *The Moor of Venice* in many places. *The Maids Tragedy*—see the Scene of undressing the Bride, and between the *King* and *Amintor*, and after between the *King* and *Evadne*—All these I Name as some of the best Plays I know; If I should repeat the Words express in these Scenes I mention, I might justly be charg'd with course ill Manners, and very little Modesty, and yet they so naturally fall into the places they are designed for, and so are proper for the Business, that there is not the least Fault to be found with them; though I say those things in any of mine wou'd damn the whole Peice, and alarm the Town. Had I a Day or two's time, as I have scarce so many Hours to write this in (the Play, being all printed off and the Press waiting,) I would sum up all your Beloved Plays, and all the Things in them that are past with such Silence by; because written by Men: such Masculine Strokes in me, must not be allow'd. I must conclude those Women (if there be any such) greater Critics in that sort of Conversation than my self, who find any of that sort in mine, or any thing that can justly be reproach't. But 'tis in vain by dint of Reason or Comparison to convince the obstinate Criticks, whose Business is to find Fault, if not by a loose and gross Imagination to create them, for they must either find the Jest, or make it; and those of this sort fall to my share, they find Faults of another kind for the Men Writers. And this one thing I will venture to say, though against my Nature, because it has a Vanity in it: That had the Plays I have writ come forth under any Mans Name, and never known to have been mine; I appeal to all unbyast Judges of Sense, if they had not said that Person had made as many good Comedies, as any one Man that has writ in our Age; but a Devil on't the Woman damns the Poet.

Ladies, for its further Justification to you, be pleas'd to know, that the first Copy of this Play was read by several Ladys of very great Quality, and unquestioned Fame, and received their most favourable Opinion, not one charging it with the Crime, that some have been pleas'd to find in the Acting. Other Ladys who saw it more than once, whose Quality and Vertue can sufficiently justify any thing they design to favour, were pleas'd to say, they found an Entertainment in it very far from scandalous; and for the Generality of the Town, I found by my Receipts it was not thought so Criminal. However, that shall not be an Incouragement to me to trouble the Criticks with new Occasion of affronting me, for endeavouring at least to divert; and at this rate, both the few Poets that are left, and the Players who toil in vain will be weary of their Trade.

I cannot omit to tell you, that a Wit of the Town, a Friend of mine at *Wills Coffee House*, the first Night of the Play, cry'd it down as much as in him lay, who before had read it and assured me he never saw a prettier Comedy. So complaisant one pestilent Wit will be to another, and in the full Cry make his Noise too; but since 'tis to the witty Few I speak, I hope the better Judges will take no Offence, to whom I am oblig'd for better Judgments; and those I hope will be so kind to me, knowing my Conversation not at all addicted to the Indecencys alledged, that I would much less practice it in a Play, that must stand the Test of the censoring World. And I must want common Sense, and all the Degrees of good Manners, renouncing my Fame, all Modesty and Interest for a silly Sawcy fruitless Jest, to make Fools laugh, and Women blush, and wise Men asham'd; My self all the while, if I had been guilty of this Crime charg'd to me, remaining the only stupid, insensible. Is this likely, is this reasonable to be believ'd by any body, but the wilfully blind? All I ask, is the Priviledge for my Masculine Part the Poet in me, (if any such you will allow me) to tread in those successful Paths my Predecessors have so long thriv'd in, to take those Measures that both the Ancient and Modern Writers have set me, and by which they have pleas'd the World so well: If I must not, because of my Sex, have this Freedom, but that you will usurp all to your selves; I lay down my Quill, and you shall hear no more of me, no not so much as to make Comparisons, because I will be kinder to my Brothers of the Pen, than they have been to a defenceless Woman; for I am not content to write for a Third day only. I value Fame as much as if I had been born a *Hero*; and if you rob me of that, I can retire from the ungrateful World, and scorn its sickle Favours.

THE LUCKY CHANCE;  
or, An Alderman's Bargain.

PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. Jevon.

*SINCE with old Plays you have so long been cloy'd,  
As with a Mistress many years enjoy'd,  
How briskly dear Variety you pursue;  
Nay, though for worse ye change, ye will have New.  
Widows take heed some of you in fresh Youth  
Have been the unpitied Martyrs of this Youth.  
When for a drunken Sot, that had kind hours,  
And taking their own freedoms, left you yours;  
'Twas your delib'rate choice your days to pass  
With a damn'd, sober, self-admiring Ass,  
Who thinks good usage for the Sex unfit,  
And slights ye out of Sparkishness and Wit.  
But you can fit him—Let a worse Fool come,  
If he neglect, to officiate in his room.  
Vain amorous Coxcombs every where are found,  
Fops for all uses, but the Stage abound.  
Though you shou'd change them oftener than your Fashions,  
There still wou'd be enough for your Occasions:  
But ours are not so easily supplied,  
All that cou'd e'er quit cost, we have already tried.  
Nay, dear sometimes have bought the Frippery stuff. }  
This, Widows, you—I mean the old and tough— }  
Will never think, be they but Fool enough. }  
Such will with any kind of Puppies play; }  
But we must better know for what we pay: }  
We must not purchase such dull Fools as they. }*

*Shou'd we shew each her own partic'lar Dear,  
What they admire at home, they wou'd loath here.  
Thus, though the Mall, the Ring, the Pit is full,  
And every Coffee-House still swarms with Fool;  
Though still by Fools all other Callings live,  
Nay our own Women by fresh Cullies thrive,  
Though your Intrigues which no Lampoon can cure,  
Promise a long Succession to ensure ;  
And all your Matches plenty do presage :  
Dire is the Dearth and Famine on the Stage.  
Our Store's quite wasted, and our Credit's small,  
Not a Fool left to bless our selves withal.  
We're forc't at last to rob, (which is great pity,  
Though 'tis a never-failing Bank) the City.  
We show you one to day intirely new,  
And of all Jests, none relish like the true.  
Let that the value of our Play inhance,  
Then it may prove indeed the Lucky Chance.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

Sir <i>Feeble Fainwou'd</i> , an old Alderman to be married to <i>Leticia</i> ,	}	Mr. <i>Leigh</i> .
Sir <i>Cautious Fulbank</i> , an old Banker married to <i>Julia</i> ,	}	Mr. <i>Nokes</i> .
Mr. <i>Gayman</i> , a Spark of the Town, Lover of <i>Julia</i> ,	}	Mr. <i>Betterton</i> .
Mr. <i>Bellmour</i> , contracted to <i>Leticia</i> , disguis'd, and passes for Sir <i>Feeble's</i> Nephew,	}	Mr. <i>Kynaston</i> .
Mr. <i>Bearjest</i> , Nephew to Sir <i>Cautious</i> , a Fop,	}	Mr. <i>Jevon</i> .
Capt. <i>Noisey</i> , his Companion,	}	Mr. <i>Harris</i> .
Mr. <i>Bredwel</i> , Prentice to Sir <i>Cautious</i> , and Brother to <i>Leticia</i> , in love with <i>Diana</i> ,	}	Mr. <i>Bowman</i> .
Rag, Footman to <i>Gayman</i> .		
Ralph, Footman to Sir <i>Feeble</i> .		
Dick, Footman to Sir <i>Cautious</i> .		
Gingle, a Music Master.		
A Post-man.		
Two Porters.		
A Servant.		

### WOMEN.

Lady <i>Fulbank</i> , in love with <i>Gayman</i> , honest and generous,	}	Mrs. <i>Barry</i> .
<i>Leticia</i> , contracted to <i>Bellmour</i> , married to Sir <i>Feeble</i> , young and virtuous,	}	Mrs. <i>Cook</i> .
<i>Diana</i> , Daughter to Sir <i>Feeble</i> , in love with <i>Bredwel</i> ; virtuous,	}	Mrs. <i>Mountford</i> .
<i>Pert</i> , Lady <i>Fulbank's</i> Woman.		
Gammer <i>Grime</i> , Landlady to <i>Gayman</i> , a Smith's Wife in <i>Alsatia</i> ,	}	Mrs. <i>Powell</i> .
<i>Susan</i> , Servant to Sir <i>Feeble</i> .		
<i>Phillis</i> , <i>Leticia's</i> Woman.		

A Parson, Fidlers, Dancers and Singers.

*The Scene*, LONDON.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The Street, at break of Day.*

*Enter Bellmour disguis'd in a travelling Habit.*

*Bel.* Sure 'tis the day that gleams in yonder East,  
The day that all but Lovers blest by Shade  
Pay chearful Homage to:  
Lovers! and those pursu'd like guilty me  
By rigid Laws, which put no difference  
'Twixt fairly killing in my own Defence,  
And Murders bred by drunken Arguments,  
Whores, or the mean Revenges of a Coward.  
—This is *Leticia's* Father's House— [Looking about.  
And that the dear Balcony  
That has so oft been conscious of our Loves;  
From whence she has sent me down a thousand Sighs,  
A thousand looks of Love, a thousand Vows.  
O thou dear witness of those charming Hours,  
How do I bless thee, how am I pleas'd to view thee  
After a tedious Age of Six Months Banishment.

*Enter Mr. Gingle and several with Musick.*

*Fid.* But hark ye, *Mr. Gingle*, is it proper to play before  
the Wedding?

*Gin.* Ever while you live, for many a time in playing after  
the first night, the Bride's sleepy, the Bridegroom tir'd, and  
both so out of humour, that perhaps they hate any thing that  
puts 'em in mind they are married. [They play and sing.

*Enter Phillis in the Balcony, throws 'em Money.*

RISE, *Cloris, charming Maid, arise!*  
And baffle breaking Day,  
Shew the adoring World thy Eyes  
Are more surprizing gay;

*The Gods of Love are smiling round,  
And lead the Bridegroom on,  
And Hymen has the Altar crown'd.  
While all thy sighing Lovers are undone.*

*To see thee pass they throng the Plain;  
The Groves with Flowers are strown,  
And every young and envying Swain  
Wishes the hour his own.  
Rise then, and let the God of Day,  
When thou dost to the Lover yield,  
Behold more Treasure given away  
Than he in his vast Circle e'er beheld.*

*Bel.* Hah, *Phillis*, *Leticia's* Woman!

*Ging.* Fie, Mrs. *Phillis*, do you take us for Fiddlers that play for Hire? I came to compliment Mrs. *Leticia* on her Wedding-Morning because she is my Scholar.

*Phil.* She sends it only to drink her Health.

*Ging.* Come, Lads, let's to the Tavern then—

[*Ex. Musick.*]

*Bel.* Hah! said he *Leticia*?

Sure, I shall turn to Marble at this News:  
I harden, and cold Damps pass through my senseless Pores.  
—Hah, who's here?

*Enter Gayman wrapt in his Cloke.*

*Gay.* 'Tis yet too early, but my Soul's impatient,  
And I must see *Leticia*. [Goes to the door.]

*Bel.* Death and the Devil—the Bridegroom!  
Stay, Sir, by Heaven, you pass not this way.

[Goes to the door as he is knocking, pushes him away,  
and draws.]

*Gay.* Hah! what art thou that durst forbid me Entrance?  
—Stand off. [They fight a little, and closing view each other.]

*Bel.* *Gayman*!

*Gay.* My dearest *Bellmour*!

*Bel.* Oh thou false Friend, thou treacherous base Deceiver!

*Gay.* Hah, this to me, dear *Harry*?

*Bel.* Whither is Honour, Truth and Friendship fled?

*Gay.* Why, there ne'er was such a Virtue,

'Tis all a Poet's Dream.

*Bel.* I thank you, Sir.

*Gay.* I'm sorry for't, or that ever I did any thing that could deserve it: put up your Sword—an honest man wou'd say how he's offended, before he rashly draws.

*Bel.* Are not you going to be married, Sir?

*Gay.* No, Sir, as long as any Man in *London* is so, that has but a handsom Wife, Sir.

*Bel.* Are you not in love, Sir?

*Gay.* Most damnably,—and wou'd fain lie with the dear jilting Gipsy.

*Bel.* Hah, who would you lie with, Sir?

*Gay.* You catechise me roundly—'tis not fair to name, but I am no Starter, *Harry*; just as you left me, you find me. I am for the faithless *Julia* still, the old Alderman's Wife.—'Twas high time the City should lose their Charter, when their Wives turn honest: But pray, Sir, answer me a Question or two.

*Bel.* Answer me first, what makes you here this Morning?

*Gay.* Faith, to do you service. Your damn'd little Jade of a Mistress has learned of her Neighbours the Art of Swearing and Lying in abundance, and is—

*Bel.* To be married!

[*Sighing.*

*Gay.* Even so, God save the Mark; and she'll be a fair one for many an Arrow besides her Husband's, though he an old *Finsbury* Hero this threescore Years.

*Bel.* Who mean you?

*Gay.* Why, thy Cuckold that shall be, if thou be'st wise.

*Bel.* Away;

Who is this Man? thou dalliest with me.

*Gay.* Why, an old Knight, and Alderman here o'th' City, Sir *Feeble Fainwou'd*, a jolly old Fellow, whose Activity is all got into his Tongue, a very excellent Teazer; but neither Youth nor Beauty can grind his Dudgeon to an Edge.

*Bel.* Fie, what Stuff's here!

*Gay.* Very excellent Stuff, if you have but the Grace to improve it.

*Bel.* You banter me—but in plain *English*, tell me, What made you here thus early, Entring yon House with such Authority?

*Gay.* Why, your Mistress *Leticia*, your contracted Wife, is this Morning to be married to old Sir *Feeble Fainwou'd*, induc'd to't I suppose by the great Jointure he makes her, and the improbability of your ever gaining your Pardon for your high Duel—Do I speak *English* now, Sir?

*Bel.* Too well, would I had never heard thee.

*Gay.* Now I being the Confident in your Amours, the Jack-go-between—the civil Pimp, or so—you left her in charge with me at your Departure.

*Bel.* I did so.

*Gay.* I saw her every day; and every day she paid the Tribute of a shower of Tears, to the dear Lord of all her Vows, young *Bellmour*: Till faith at last, for Reasons manifold, I slackt my daily Visits.

*Bel.* And left her to Temptation—was that well done?

*Gay.* Now must I afflict you and my self with a long tale of Causes why; Or be charg'd with want of Friendship.

*Bel.* You will do well to clear that Point to me.

*Gay.* I see you're peevish, and you shall be humour'd.—You know my *Julia* play'd me e'en such another Prank as your false one is going to play you, and married old Sir *Cautious Fulbank* here i'th' City; at which you know I storm'd, and rav'd, and swore, as thou wo't now, and to

as little purpose. There was but one way left, and that was cuckolding him.

*Bel.* Well, that Design I left thee hot upon.

*Gay.* And hotly have pursu'd it: Swore, wept, vow'd, wrote, upbraided, prayed and railed; then treated lavishly, and presented high—till, between you and I, *Harry*, I have presented the best part of Eight hundred a year into her Husband's hands, in Mortgage.

*Bel.* This is the Course you'd have me steer, I thank you.

*Gay.* No, no, Pox on't, all Women are not Jilts. Some are honest, and will give as well as take; or else there would not be so many broke i'th' City. In fine, Sir, I have been in Tribulation, that is to say, Moneyless, for six tedious Weeks, without either Clothes, or Equipage to appear withal; and so not only my own Love-affair lay neglected—but thine too—and I am forced to pretend to my Lady, that I am i'th' Country with a dying Uncle—from whom, if he were indeed dead, I expect two thousand a Year.

*Bel.* But what's all this to being here this Morning?

*Gay.* Thus have I lain conceal'd like a Winter-Fly, hoping for some blest Sunshine to warm me into life again, and make me hover my flagging Wings; till the News of this Marriage (which fills the Town) made me crawl out this silent Hour, to upbraid the fickle Maid.

*Bel.* Didst thou?—pursue thy kind Design. Get me to see her; and sure no Woman, even possess'd with a new Passion, Grown confident even to Prostitution, But when she sees the Man to whom she's sworn so very—very much, will find Remorse and Shame.

*Gay.* For your sake, though the day be broke upon us, And I'm undone, if seen—I'll venture in—

[*Throws his Cloke over.*]

*Enter Sir Feeble Fainwou'd, Sir Cautious Fulbank, Bear-  
jest and Noisy.* [*Pass over the Stage, and go in.*]

Hah—see the Bridegroom!

And with him my destin'd Cuckold, old Sir *Cautious Fulbank*.

—Hah, what ail'st thou, Man?

*Bel.* The Bridegroom!

Like *Gorgon's* Head he's turned me into Stone.

*Gay.* *Gorgon's* Head—a Cuckold's Head—'twas made to graft upon.

*Bel.* By Heaven, I'll seize her even at the Altar,  
And bear her thence in Triumph.

*Gay.* Ay, and be borne to *Newgate* in Triumph, and be hanged in Triumph—'twill be cold Comfort, celebrating your Nuptials in the Press-Yard, and be wak'd next Morning, like Mr. *Barnardine* in the Play—Will you please to rise and be hanged a little, Sir?

*Bel.* What wouldst thou have me do?

*Gay.* As many an honest Man has done before thee—Cuckold him—cuckold him.

*Bel.* What—and let him marry her! She that's mine by sacred Vows already! By Heaven, it would be flat Adultery in her!

*Gay.* She'll learn the trick, and practise it the better with thee.

*Bel.* Oh Heavens! *Leticia* marry him! and lie with him!—

Here will I stand and see this shameful Woman,  
See if she dares pass by me to this Wickedness.

*Gay.* Hark ye, *Harry*—in earnest have a care of betraying your self; and do not venture sweet Life for a fickle Woman, who perhaps hates you.

*Bel.* You counsel well—but yet to see her married!  
How every thought of that shocks all my Resolution!—  
But hang it, I'll be resolute and saucy,  
Despise a Woman who can use me ill,  
And think my self above her.

*Gay.* Why, now thou art thy self—a Man again.  
But see, they're coming forth, now stand your ground.

*Enter Sir Feeble, Sir Cautious, Bearjest, Noisey, Leticia sad, Diana, Phillis.* [Pass over the Stage.

*Bel.* 'Tis she; support me, *Charles*, or I shall sink to Earth,

—Methought in passing by she cast a scornful glance at me;  
Such charming Pride I've seen upon her Eyes,  
When our Love-Quarrels arm'd 'em with Disdain—  
—I'll after 'em, if I live she shall not 'scape me.

[Offers to go, *Gay*. holds him.

*Gay.* Hold, remember you're proscribed,  
And die if you are taken.

*Bel.* I've done, and I will live, but he shall ne'er enjoy her.

—Who's yonder, *Ralph*, my trusty Confident?

*Enter Ralph.*

Now though I perish I must speak to him.

—Friend, what Wedding's this?

*Ral.* One that was never made in Heaven, Sir;

'Tis Alderman *Fainwou'd*, and Mrs. *Leticia Bredwel*.

*Bel. Bredwel*—I have heard of her,—she was Mistress—

*Ral.* To fine Mr. *Bellmour*, Sir,—ay, there was a Gentlemen

—But rest his Soul—he's hang'd, Sir. [Weeps.

*Bel.* How! hang'd?

*Ral.* Hang'd, Sir, hang'd—at the *Hague* in *Holland*.

*Gay.* I heard some such News, but did not credit it.

*Bel.* For what, said they, was he hang'd?

*Ral.* Why, e'en for High Treason, Sir, he killed one of their Kings.

*Gay.* *Holland's* a Commonwealth, and is not rul'd by Kings.

*Ral.* Not by one, Sir, but by a great many; this was a Cheesemonger—they fell out over a Bottle of Brandy, went to Snicker Snee; Mr. *Bellmour* cut his Throat, and was hang'd for't, that's all, Sir.

*Bel.* And did the young Lady believe this?

*Ral.* Yes, and took on most heavily—the Doctors gave her over—and there was the Devil to do to get her to consent to this Marriage—but her Fortune was small, and the hope of a Ladyship, and a Gold Chain at the Spittal Sermon, did the Business—and so your Servant, Sir. [*Ex.* Ralph.]

*Bel.* So, here's a hopeful Account of my sweet self now.

*Enter Post-man with Letters.*

*Post.* Pray, Sir, which is Sir *Feeble Fainwou'd's*?

*Bel.* What wou'd you with him, Friend?

*Post.* I have a Letter here from the *Hague* for him.

*Bel.* From the *Hague*! Now have I a curiosity to see it—I am his Servant—give it me—[*Gives it him, and Exit.*—Perhaps here may be the second part of my Tragedy, I'm full of Mischief, *Charles*—and have a mind to see this Fellow's Secrets. For from this hour I'll be his evil Genius, haunt him at Bed and Board; he shall not sleep nor eat; disturb him at his Prayers, in his Embraces; and tease him into Madness.

Help me, Invention, Malice, Love, and Wit:

[*Opening the Letter.*

Ye Gods, and little Fiends, instruct my Mischief.

[*Reads.*

Dear Brother,

*ACCORDING to your desire I have sent for my Son from St. Omer's, whom I have sent to wait on you in England; he is a very good Accountant, and fit for Business, and much pleas'd he shall see that Uncle to whom he's so obliged, and which is so gratefully acknowledged by— Dear Brother, your affectionate Brother,*

Francis Fainwou'd.

—Hum—hark ye, *Charles*, do you know who I am now?

*Gay.* Why, I hope a very honest Friend of mine, *Harry Bellmour.*

*Bel.* No, Sir, you are mistaken in your Man.

Gay. It may be so.

Bel. I am, d'ye see, *Charles*, this very individual, numerical young Mr.—*what ye call 'um Fainwou'd*, just come from *St. Omers* into *England*—to my Uncle the Alderman.

I am, *Charles*, this very Man.

Gay. I know you are, and will swear't upon occasion.

Bel. This lucky Thought has almost calm'd my mind. And if I don't fit you, my dear Uncle, May I never lie with my Aunt.

Gay. Ah, Rogue—but prithee what care have you taken about your Pardon? 'twere good you should secure that.

Bel. There's the Devil, *Charles*,—had I but that—but I have had a very good Friend at work, a thousand Guyneys, that seldom fails; but yet in vain, I being the first Transgressor since the Act against Duelling.

But I impatient to see this dear delight of my Soul, and hearing from none of you this six weeks, came from *Brussels* in this disguise—for the *Hague* I have not seen, though hang'd there—but come—let's away, and compleat me a right *St. Omer's* Spark, that I may present my self as soon as they come from Church. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *Sir Cautious Fulbank's House.*

Enter *Lady Fulbank*, *Pert* and *Bredwel*. *Bredwel* gives her a Letter.

*Lady Fulbank* reads.

*DID my Julia know how I languish in this cruel Separation, she would afford me her pity, and write oftner. If only the Expectation of two thousand a year kept me from you, ah! Julia, how easily would I abandon that Trifle for your more valued sight; but that I know a Fortune will render me more agreeable to the charming Julia, I should quit all my Interest here, to throw my self at her Feet, to make her sensible how I am intirely her Adorer.*

Charles Gayman.

—Faith, *Charles*, you lie—you are as welcome to me now,  
Now when I doubt thy Fortune is declining,  
As if the Universe were thine.

*Pert.* That, Madam, is a noble Gratitude. For if his  
Fortune be declining, 'tis sacrificed to his Passion for your  
Ladyship.

—'Tis all laid out on Love.

*L. Ful.* I prize my Honour more than Life,  
Yet I had rather have given him all he wish'd of me,  
Than be guilty of his Undoing.

*Pert.* And I think the Sin were less.

*L. Ful.* I must confess, such Jewels, Rings and Presents  
as he made me, must needs decay his Fortune.

*Bred.* Ay, Madam, his very Coach at last was turned  
into a Jewel for your Ladyship. Then, Madam, what  
Expences his Despair have run him on—  
As Drinking and Gaming, to divert the Thought of your  
marrying my old Master.

*L. Ful.* And put in Wenching too.—

*Bred.* No, assure your self, Madam—

*L. Ful.* Of that I would be better satisfied—and you  
too must assist me, as e'er you hope I should be kind to  
you in gaining you *Diana*. [To *Bredwel*.

*Bred.* Madam, I'll die to serve you.

*Pert.* Nor will I be behind in my Duty.

*L. Ful.* Oh, how fatal are forc'd Marriages!  
How many Ruins one such Match pulls on!  
Had I but kept my Sacred Vows to *Gayman*,  
How happy had I been—how prosperous he!  
Whilst now I languish in a loath'd embrace,  
Pine out my Life with Age—Consumptions, Coughs.  
—But dost thou fear that *Gayman* is declining?

*Bred.* You are my Lady, and the best of Mistresses—  
Therefore I would not grieve you, for I know  
You love this best—but most unhappy Man.

*L. Ful.* You shall not grieve me—prithee on.

*Bred.* My Master sent me yesterday to Mr. *Crap*, his Scrivener, to send to one Mr. *Wasteall*, to tell him his first Mortgage was out, which is two hundred pounds a Year—and who has since ingaged five or six hundred more to my Master; but if this first be not redeem'd, he'll take the Forfeit on't, as he says a wise Man ought.

*L. Ful.* That is to say, a Knave, according to his Notion of a wise Man.

*Bred.* Mr. *Crap*, being busy with a borrowing Lord, sent me to Mr. *Wasteall*, whose Lodging is in a nasty Place called *Alsatia*, at a Black-Smith's.

*L. Ful.* But what's all this to *Gayman*?

*Bred.* Madam, this *Wasteall* was Mr. *Gayman*.

*L. Ful.* *Gayman*! Saw'st thou *Gayman*?

*Bred.* Madam, Mr. *Gayman*, yesterday.

*L. Ful.* When came he to Town?

*Bred.* Madam, he has not been out of it.

*L. Ful.* Not at his Uncle's in *Northamptonshire*?

*Bred.* Your Ladyship was wont to credit me.

*L. Ful.* Forgive me—you went to a Black-Smith's—

*Bred.* Yes, Madam; and at the door encountred the beastly thing he calls a Landlady; who lookt as if she had been of her own Husband's making, compos'd of moulded Smith's Dust. I ask'd for Mr. *Wasteall*, and she began to open—and did so rail at him, that what with her *Billingsgate*, and her Husband's hammers, I was both deaf and dumb—at last the hammers ceas'd, and she grew weary, and call'd down Mr. *Wasteall*; but he not answering—I was sent up a Ladder rather than a pair of Stairs; at last I scal'd the top, and enter'd the enchanted Castle; there did I find him, spite of the noise below, drowning his Cares in Sleep.

*L. Ful.* Whom foundst thou? *Gayman*?

*Bred.* He, Madam, whom I waked—and seeing me, Heavens, what Confusion seiz'd him! which nothing but my own Surprize could equal. Asham'd—he wou'd have turn'd away;

But when he saw, by my dejected Eyes, I knew him,  
 He sigh'd, and blusht, and heard me tell my Business:  
 Then beg'd I wou'd be secret; for he vow'd his whole  
 Repose and Life depended on my silence. Nor had I told  
 it now,

But that your Ladyship may find some speedy means to  
 draw him from this desperate Condition.

*L. Ful.* Heavens, is't possible?

*Bred.* He's driven to the last degree of Poverty—  
 Had you but seen his Lodgings, Madam!

*L. Ful.* What were they?

*Bred.* 'Tis a pretty convenient Tub, Madam. He may  
 lie a long in't, there's just room for an old join'd Stool  
 besides the Bed, which one cannot call a Cabin, about the  
 largeness of a Pantry Bin, or a Usurer's Trunk; there had  
 been Dornex Curtains to't in the days of Yore; but they  
 were now annihilated, and nothing left to save his Eyes  
 from the Light, but my Landlady's Blue Apron, ty'd by  
 the strings before the Window, in which stood a broken  
 six-penny Looking-Glass, that shew'd as many Faces as  
 the Scene in *Henry* the Eighth, which could but just stand  
 upright, and then the Comb-Case fill'd it.

*L. Ful.* What a leud Description hast thou made of his  
 Chamber?

*Bred.* Then for his Equipage, 'tis banisht to one small  
 Monsieur, who (saucy with his Master's Poverty) is rather  
 a Companion than a Footman.

*L. Ful.* But what said he to the Forfeiture of his Land?

*Bred.* He sigh'd and cry'd, Why, farewell dirty Acres;  
 It shall not trouble me, since 'twas all but for Love!

*L. Ful.* How much redeems it?

*Bred.* Madam, five hundred Pounds.

*L. Ful.* Enough—you shall in some disguise convey this  
 Money to him, as from an unknown hand: I wou'd not  
 have him think it comes from me, for all the World:  
 That Nicety and Virtue I've profest, I am resolved to keep.

*Pert.* If I were your Ladyship, I wou'd make use of Sir *Cautious's* Cash : pay him in his own Coin.

*Bred.* Your Ladyship wou'd make no Scruple of it, if you knew how this poor Gentleman has been us'd by my unmerciful Master.

*L. Ful.* I have a Key already to his Counting-House ; it being lost, he had another made, and this I found and kept.

*Bred.* Madam, this is an excellent time for't, my Master being gone to give my Sister *Leticia* at Church.

*L. Ful.* 'Tis so, I'll go and commit the Theft, whilst you prepare to carry it, and then we'll to dinner with your Sister the Bride. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *The House of Sir Feeble.*

*Enter Sir Feeble, Leticia, Sir Cautious, Bearjest, Diana, Noisy.* *Sir Feeble sings and salutes 'em.*

*Sir Feeb.* Welcome, *Joan Sanderson*, welcome, welcome. [Kisses the Bride.

Ods bobs, and so thou art, Sweet-heart. [So to the rest.

*Bear.* Methinks my Lady Bride is very melancholy.

*Sir Cau.* Ay, ay, Women that are discreet, are always thus upon their Wedding-day.

*Sir Feeb.* Always by day-light, *Sir Cautious.*

*But when bright Phœbus does retire,  
To Thetis' Bed to quench his fire,  
And do the thing we need not name,  
We Mortals by his influence do the same.  
Then then the blushing Maid lays by  
Her simpering, and her Modesty;  
And round the Lover clasps and twines  
Like Ivy, or the circling Vines.*

*Sir Feeb.* Here, *Ralph*, the Bottle, Rogue, of Sack, ye Rascal ; hadst thou been a Butler worth hanging, thou wou'dst have met us at the door with it.—Ods bods, Sweet-heart, thy health.

*Bear.* Away with it, to the Bride's *Haunce in Kelder.*

*Sir Feeb.* Gots so, go to, Rogue, go to, that shall be, Knave, that shall be the morrow morning; he—ods bobs, we'll do't, Sweet heart; here's to't. [*Drinks again.*]

*Let.* I die but to imagine it, wou'd I were dead indeed.

*Sir Feeb.* Hah—hum—how's this? Tears upon the Wedding day? Why, why—you Baggage, you, ye little Ting, Fools-face—away, you Rogue, you're naughty, you're naughty. [*Patting and playing, and following her.* Look—look—look now,—buss it—buss it—buss it—and Friends; did'ums, did'ums beat its none silly Baby—away, you little Hussey, away, and pledge me—

[*She drinks a little.*]

*Sir Cau.* A wise discreet Lady, I'll warrant her; my Lady would prodigally have took it off all.

*Sir Feeb.* Dear's its nown dear Fubs; buss again, buss again, away, away—ods bobs, I long for Night—look, look, *Sir Cautious*, what an Eye's there!

*Sir Cau.* Ay, so there is, Brother, and a modest Eye too.

*Sir Feeb.* Adad, I love her more and more, *Ralph*—call old *Susan* hither—come, Mr. *Bearjest*, put the Glass about. Ods bobs, when I was a young Fellow, I wou'd not let the young Wenches look pale and wan—but would rouse 'em, and touse 'em, and blowze 'em, till I put a colour in their Cheeks, like an Apple *John*, affacks—Nay, I can make a shift still, and Pupsey shall not be jealous.

*Enter Susan, Sir Feeble whispers her, she goes out.*

*Let.* Indeed, not I; Sir. I shall be all Obedience.

*Sir Cau.* A most judicious Lady; would my *Julia* had a little of her Modesty; but my Lady's a Wit.

*Enter Susan with a Box.*

*Sir Feeb.* Look here, my little Puskin, here's fine Play-things for its nown little Coxcomb—go—get you gone—get you gone, and off with this St. *Martin's* Trumpery, these Play-house Glass Baubles, this Necklace, and these

Pendants, and all this false Ware; ods bobs, I'll have no Counterfeit Geer about thee, not I. See—these are right as the Blushes on thy Cheeks, and these as true as my Heart, my Girl. Go, put 'em on, and be fine. [*Gives 'em her.*

*Let.* Believe me, Sir, I shall not merit this kindness.

*Sir Feeb.* Go to—More of your Love, and less of your Ceremony—give the old Fool a hearty buss, and pay him that way—he, ye little wanton Tit, I'll steal up—and catch ye and love ye—adod, I will—get ye gone—get ye gone.

*Let.* Heavens, what a nauseous thing is an old Man turn'd Lover! [*Ex. Leticia and Diana.*

*Sir Cau.* How, steal up, Sir *Feeble*—I hope not so; I hold it most indecent before the lawful hour.

*Sir Feeb.* Lawful hour! Why, I hope all hours are lawful with a Man's own Wife.

*Sir Cau.* But wise Men have respect to Times and Seasons.

*Sir Feeb.* Wise young Men, Sir *Cautious*; but wise old Men must nick their Inclinations; for it is not as 'twas wont to be, for it is not as 'twas wont to be—

[*Singing and Dancing.*

*Enter Ralph.*

*Ral.* Sir, here's a young Gentleman without wou'd speak with you.

*Sir Feeb.* Hum—I hope it is not that same *Bellmour* come to forbid the Banes—if it be, he comes too late—therefore bring me first my long Sword, and then the Gentleman. [*Exit Ralph.*

*Bea.* Pray, Sir, use mine, it is a travell'd Blade I can assure you, Sir.

*Sir Feeb.* I thank you, Sir.

*Enter Ralph and Bellmour disguis'd, gives him a Letter, he reads.*

How—my Nephew!

*Francis Fainwou'd!*

[*Embraces him.*

*Bel.* I am glad he has told me my Christian name.

*Sir Feeb.* *Sir Cautious*, know my Nephew—'tis a young *St. Omers* Scholar—but none of the Witnesses.

*Sir Cau.* Marry, Sir, and the wiser he; for they got nothing by't.

*Bea.* Sir, I love and honour you, because you are a Traveller.

*Sir Feeb.* A very proper young Fellow, and as like old *Frank Fainwou'd* as the Devil to the Collier; but, *Francis*, you are come into a very leud Town, *Francis*, for Whoring, and Plotting, and Roaring, and Drinking; but you must go to Church, *Francis*, and avoid ill Company, or you may make damnable Havock in my Cash, *Francis*,—what, you can keep Merchants Books?

*Bel.* That's been my study, Sir.

*Sir Feeb.* And you will not be proud, but will be commanded by me, *Francis*?

*Bel.* I desire not to be favour'd as a Kinsman, Sir, but as your humblest Servant.

*Sir Feeb.* Why, thou'rt an honest Fellow, *Francis*,—and thou'rt heartily welcome—and I'll make thee fortunate. But come, *Sir Cautious*, let you and I take a turn i'th' Garden, and get a right understanding between your Nephew Mr. *Bearjest*, and my Daughter *Dye*.

*Sir Cau.* Prudently thought on, Sir, I'll wait on you.—

[*Ex. Sir Feeble, and Sir Cautious.*]

*Bea.* You are a Traveller, I understand.

*Bel.* I have seen a little part of the World, Sir.

*Bea.* So have I, Sir, I thank my Stars, and have performed most of my Travels on Foot, Sir.

*Bel.* You did not travel far then, I presume, Sir?

*Bea.* No, Sir, it was for my diversion indeed; but I assure you, I travell'd into *Ireland* a-foot, Sir.

*Bel.* Sure, Sir, you go by shipping into *Ireland*?

*Bea.* That's all one, Sir, I was still a-foot, ever walking on the Deck.

*Bel.* Was that your farthest Travel, Sir?

*Bea.* Farthest—why, that's the End of the World—and sure a Man can go no farther.

*Bel.* Sure, there can be nothing worth a Man's Curiosity?

*Bea.* No, Sir, I'll assure you, there are the Wonders of the World, Sir: I'll hint you this one. There is a Harbour which since the Creation was never capable of receiving a Lighter, yet by another Miracle the King of France was to ride there with a vast Fleet of Ships, and to land a hundred thousand Men.

*Bel.* This is a swinging Wonder—but are there store of Mad-men there, Sir?

*Bea.* That's another Rarity to see a Man run out of his Wits.

*Noi.* Marry, Sir, the wiser they I say.

*Bea.* Pray, Sir, what store of Miracles have you at *St. Omers*?

*Bel.* None, Sir, since that of the wonderful *Salamanca* Doctor, who was both here and there at the same Instant of time.

*Bea.* How, Sir? why, that's impossible.

*Bel.* That was the Wonder, Sir, because 'twas impossible.

*Noi.* But 'twas a greater, Sir, that 'twas believed.

*Enter L. Fulb. and Pert, Sir Cau. and Sir Feeb.*

*Sir Feeb.* Enough, enough, Sir *Cautious*, we apprehend one another. Mr. *Bearjest*, your Uncle here and I have struck the Bargain, the Wench is yours with three thousand Pound present, and something more after Death, which your Uncle likes well.

*Bea.* Does he so, Sir? I'm beholding to him; then 'tis not a Pin matter whether I like or not, Sir.

*Sir Feeb.* How, Sir, not like my Daughter *Dye*?

*Bea.* Oh, Lord, Sir,—die or live, 'tis all one for that, Sir—I'll stand to the Bargain my Uncle makes.

*Pert.* Will you so, Sir? you'll have very good luck if you do. [Aside.]

*Bea.* Prithee hold thy Peace, my Lady's Woman.

*L. Ful.* Sir, I beg your pardon for not waiting on you to Church—I knew you wou'd be private.

*Enter Let. fine in Jewels.*

*Sir Feeb.* You honour us too highly now, Madam.

*[Presents his Wife, who salutes her.]*

*L. Ful.* Give you Joy, my dear *Leticia*! I find, Sir, you were resolved for Youth, Wit and Beauty.

*Sir Feeb.* Ay, ay, Madam, to the Comfort of many a hoping Coxcomb: but *Lette*,—Rogue *Lette*—thou wo't not make me free o'th' City a second time, wo't thou entice the Rogues with the Twire and the wanton Leer—the amorous Simper that cries, come, kiss me—then the pretty round Lips are pouted out—he, Rogue, how I long to be at 'em!—well, she shall never go to Church more, that she shall not.

*L. Ful.* How, Sir, not to Church, the chiefest Recreation of a City Lady?

*Sir Feeb.* That's all one, Madam, that tricking and dressing, and prinking and patching, is not your Devotion to Heaven, but to the young Knaves that are lick'd and comb'd and are minding you more than the Parson—ods bobs, there are more Cuckolds destin'd in the Church, than are made out of it.

*Sir Cau.* Hah, ha, ha, he tickles ye, i'faith, Ladies.

*[To his Lady.]*

*Bel.* Not one chance look this way—and yet  
I can forgive her lovely Eyes,  
Because they look not pleas'd with all this Ceremony;  
And yet methinks some sympathy in Love  
Might this way glance their Beams—I cannot hold—  
—Sir, is this fair Lady my Aunt?

*Sir Feeb.* Oh, *Francis*! Come hither, *Francis*.

*Lette*, here's a young Rogue has a mind to kiss thee.

*[Puts them together, she starts back.]*

—Nay, start not, he's my own Flesh and Blood,  
My Nephew—Baby—look, look how the young  
Rogues stare at one another; like will to like, I see that.

*Let.* There's something in his Face so like my *Bellmour*,  
it calls my Blushes up, and leaves my Heart defenceless.

*Enter Ralph.*

*Ralph.* Sir, Dinner's on the Table.

*Sir Feeb.* Come, come—let's in then—Gentlemen and  
Ladies,

And share to day my Pleasures and Delight,

But—

Adds bobs, they must be all mine own at Night. [*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. *Gayman's Lodging.*

*Enter Gayman in a Night-Cap, and an old Campaign Coat  
tied about him, very melancholy.*

*Gay.* Curse on my Birth! Curse on my faithless Fortune!  
Curse on my Stars, and curst be all—but Love!

That dear, that charming Sin, though t'have pull'd  
Innumerable Mischiefs on my head,

I have not, nor I cannot find Repentance for.

Nor let me die despis'd, upbraided, poor:

Let Fortune, Friends and all abandon me—

But let me hold thee, thou soft smiling God,

Close to my heart while Life continues there.

Till the last pantings of my vital Blood,

Nay, the last spark of Life and Fire be Love's!

*Enter Rag.*

—How now, *Rag*, what's a Clock?

*Rag.* My Belly can inform you better than my Tongue.

*Gay.* Why, you gormandizing Vermin you, what have  
you done with the Three pence I gave you a fortnight ago.

*Rag.* Alas, Sir, that's all gone long since.

*Gay.* You gutling Rascal, you are enough to breed a Famine in a Land. I have known some industrious Footmen, that have not only gotten their own Livings, but a pretty Livelihood for their Masters too.

*Rag.* Ay, till they came to the Gallows, Sir.

*Gay.* Very well, Sirrah, they died in an honourable Calling—but hark ye, *Rag*,—I have business, very earnest business abroad this Evening; now were you a Rascal of Docity, you wou'd invent a way to get home my last Suit that was laid in Lavender—with the Appurtenances thereunto belonging, as Perriwig, Cravat, and so forth.

*Rag.* Faith, Master, I must deal in the black Art then, for no human means will do't—and now I talk of the black Art, Master, try your Power once more with my Landlady.

*Gay.* Oh! name her not, the thought on't turns my Stomach—a sight of her is a Vomit; but he's a bold Hero that dares venture on her for a kiss, and all beyond that sure is Hell it self—yet there's my last, last Refuge—and I must to this Wedding—I know not what,—but something whispers me,—this Night I shall be happy—and without *Julia* 'tis impossible!

*Rag.* *Julia*, who's that? my Lady *Fulbank*, Sir?

*Gay.* Peace, Sirrah—and call—a—no—Pox on't, come back—and yet—yes—call my fulsome Landlady.

[*Exit Rag.*

Sir *Cautious* knows me not by Name or Person.

And I will to this Wedding, I'm sure of seeing *Julia* there. And what may come of that—but here's old Nasty coming. I smell her up—hah, my dear Landlady.

*Enter Rag and Landlady.*

Quite out of breath—a Chair there for my Landlady.

*Rag.* Here's ne'er a one, Sir.

*Land.* More of your Money and less of your Civility, good Mr. *Wasteall*.

*Gay.* Dear Landlady—

*Land.* Dear me no Dears, Sir, but let me have my Money—Eight Weeks Rent last Friday; besides Taverns, Ale-houses, Chandlers, Landresses' Scores, and ready Money out of my Purse; you know it, Sir.

*Gay.* Ay, but your Husband don't; speak softly.

*Land.* My Husband! what, do you think to fright me with my Husband?—I'd have you to know I'm an honest Woman, and care not this—for my Husband. Is this all the thanks I have for my kindness, for patching, borrowing and shifting for you; 'twas but last Week I pawn'd my best Petticoat, as I hope to wear it again, it cost me six and twenty shillings besides Making; then this Morning my new *Norwich* Mantua followed, and two postle Spoons, I had the whole dozen when you came first; but they dropt, and dropt, till I had only *Judas* left for my Husband.

*Gay.* Hear me, good Landlady.

*Land.* Then I've past my word at the *George Tavern*, for forty Shillings for you, ten Shillings at my Neighbour *Squabs* for Ale, besides seven Shillings to Mother *Suds* for Washing; and do you fob me off with my Husband?

*Gay.* Here, *Rag*, run and fetch her a Pint of Sack—there's no other way of quenching the Fire in her flabber Chops. [Exit *Rag*.

—But, my dear Landlady, have a little Patience.

*Land.* Patience! I scorn your Words, Sir—is this a place to trust in? tell me of Patience, that us'd to have my money before hand; come, come, pay me quickly—or old *Gregory Grimes* house shall be too hot to hold you.

*Gay.* Is't come to this, can I not be heard?

*Land.* No, Sir, you had good Clothes when you came first, but they dwindled daily, till they dwindled to this old Campaign—with tan'd coloured Lining—once red—but now all Colours of the Rain-bow, a Cloke to sculk in a Nights, and a pair of piss-burn'd shammy Breeches. Nay, your very Badge of Manhood's gone too.

*Gay.* How, Landlady! nay then, i'faith, no wonder if you rail so.

*Land.* Your Silver Sword I mean—transmogrified to this two-handed Basket Hilt—this old Sir *Guy* of *Warwick*—which will sell for nothing but old Iron. In fine, I'll have my money, Sir, or i'faith, *Alsatia* shall not shelter you.

*Enter Rag.*

*Gay.* Well, Landlady—if we must part—let's drink at parting; here, Landlady, here's to the Fool—that shall love you better than I have done. [Sighing, drinks.

*Land.* Rot your Wine—dy'e think to pacify me with Wine, Sir?

[*She refusing to drink, he holds open her Jaws, Rag throws a Glass of Wine into her Mouth.*

—What, will you force me?—no—give me another Glass, I scorn to be so uncivil to be forced, my service to you, Sir—this shan't do, Sir.

[*She drinks, he, embracing her, sings.*

*Ah, Cloris, 'tis in vain you scold,  
Whilst your Eyes kindle such a Fire.  
Your Railing cannot make me cold,  
So fast as they a Warmth inspire.*

*Land.* Well, Sir, you have no reason to complain of my Eyes nor my Tongue neither, if rightly understood.

[*Weeps.*

*Gay.* I know you are the best of Landladies, As such I drink your Health— [Drinks. But to upbraid a Man in Tribulation—fie—'tis not done like a Woman of Honour, a Man that loves you too.

[*She drinks.*

*Land.* I am a little hasty sometimes, but you know my good Nature.

*Gay.* I do, and therefore trust my little wants with you. I shall be rich again—and then, my dearest Landlady—

*Land.* Wou'd this Wine might ne'er go through me, if I wou'd not go, as they say, through Fire and Water—by Night or by Day for you. [*She drinks.*

*Gay.* And as this is Wine I do believe thee. [*He drinks.*]

*Land.* Well—you have no money in your Pocket now, I'll warrant you—here—here's ten Shillings for you old *Greg'ry* knows not of.

[*Opens a great greasy purse.*]

*Gay.* I cannot in Conscience take it, good Faith, I cannot—besides, the next Quarrel you'll hit me in the Teeth with it.

*Land.* Nay, pray no more of that; forget it, forget it. I own I was to blame—here, Sir, you shall take it.

*Gay.* Ay,—but what shou'd I do with Money in these damn'd Breeches?—No, put it up—I can't appear abroad thus—no, I'll stay at home, and lose my business.

*Land.* Why, is there no way to redeem one of your Suits?

*Gay.* None—none—I'll e'en lay me down and die.

*Land.* Die—marry, Heavens forbid—I would not for the World—let me see—hum—what does it lie for?

*Gay.* Alas! dear Landlady, a Sum—a Sum.

*Land.* Well, say no more, I'll lay about me.

*Gay.* By this kiss but you shall not—*Assafetida*, by this Light.

*Land.* Shall not? that's a good one, i'faith: shall you rule, or I?

*Gay.* But shou'd your Husband know it?—

*Land.* Husband—marry come up, Husbands know Wives secrets? No, sure, the World's not so bad yet—where do your things lie? and for what?

*Gay.* Five Pounds equips me—*Rag* can conduct you—but I say you shall not go, I've sworn.

*Land.* Meddle with your matters—let me see, the Caudle Cup that *Molly's* Grandmother left her, will pawn for about that sum—I'll sneak it out—well, Sir, you shall have your things presently—trouble not your head, but expect me.

[*Ex. Landlady and Rag.*]

Gay. Was ever man put to such beastly shifts? 'Sdeath, how she stunk—my senses are must luxuriously regal'd—there's my perpetual Musick too—

[Knocking of Hammers on a Anvil.

The ringing of Bells is an Ass to't.

Enter Rag.

Rag. Sir, there's one in a Coach below wou'd speak to you.

Gay. With me, and in a Coach! who can it be?

Rag. The Devil, I think, for he has a strange Countenance.

Gay. The Devil! shew your self a Rascal of Parts, Sirrah, and wait on him up with Ceremony.

Rag. Who, the Devil, Sir?

Gay. Ay, the Devil, Sir, if you mean to thrive.

[Exit Rag.

Who can this be—but see he comes to inform me—withdraw.

Enter Bredwel drest like a Devil.

Bred. I come to bring you this— [Gives him a Letter.

Gayman reads.

RECEIVE what Love and Fortune present you with, be grateful and be silent, or 'twill vanish like a dream, and leave you more wretched than it found You.

Adieu.

—hah—

[Gives him a bag of Money.

Bred. Nay, view it, Sir, 'tis all substantial Gold.

Gay. Now dare not I ask one civil question for fear it vanish all—

[Aside.

But I may ask, how 'tis I ought to pay for this great Bounty.

Bred. Sir, all the Pay is Secrecy—

Gay. And is this all that is required, Sir?

Bred. No, you're invited to the Shades below.