

The Country Wife, Act IV

ACT 4

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

Lucy

Well—Madam, now have I dress'd you, and set you out with so many ornaments, and spent upon you ounces of essence, and pulvilio; and all this for no other purpose, but as People adorn, and perfume a Corps, for a stinking second-hand-grave, such or as bad I think Master *Sparkish's* bed.

Alithea

Hold your peace.

Lucy

Nay, Madam, I will ask you the reason, why you wou'd banish poor Master *Harcourt* for ever from your sight? how cou'd you be so hard-hearted?

Alithea

'Twas because I was not hard-hearted.

Lucy

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

Alithea

It was so; I wou'd see him no more, because I love him.

Lucy

Hey day, a very pretty reason.

Alithea

You do not understand me.

Lucy

I wish you may your self.

Alithea

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

Lucy

Can there be a greater cheat, or wrong done to a Man, than to give him your person, without your heart, I shou'd make a conscience of it.

Alithea

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

Lucy

The Woman that marries to love better, will be as much mistaken, as the Wencher that marries to live better. No; Madam, marrying to encrease love, is like gaming to become rich; alas you only loose what little stock you had before.

Alithea

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

Lucy

Only by his merit, that has brib'd your heart you see against your word, and rigid honour; but what a Divel is this honour? 'tis sure a disease in the head, like the Megrim, or Falling-sickness that alwayes hurries People away to do themselves mischief; Men loose their lives by it: Women what's dearer to 'em, their love, the life of life.

Alithea

Come, pray talk you no more of honour, nor Master *Harcourt*; I wish the other wou'd come, to secure my fidelity to him, and his right in me.

Lucy

You will marry him then?

Alithea

Certainly, I have given him already my word, and will my hand

too, to make it good when he comes.

Lucy

Well, I wish I may never stick pin more, if he be not an errant Natural, to t'other fine Gentleman.

Alithea

I own he wants the wit of *Harcourt*, which I will dispense withal, for another want he has, which is want of jealousy, which men of wit seldom want.

Lucy

Lord, Madam, what shou'd you do with a fool to your Husband, you intend to be honest don't you? then that husbandly virtue, credulity, is thrown away upon you.

Alithea

He only that could suspect my virtue, shou'd have cause to do it; 'tis Sparkish's confidence in my truth, that obliges me to be so faithful to him.

Lucy

You are not sure his opinion may last.

Alithea

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

Lucy

And her pleasure.

Alithea

What d'ye mean, Impertinent?

Lucy

Liberty is a great pleasure, Madam.

Alithea

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

Lucy

O do's the wind lye there? [*Aside.*] Then of necessity, Madam, you think a man must carry his Wife into the Country, if he be wise; the Country is as terrible I find to our young English Ladies, as a Monastery to those abroad: and on my Virginitie, I think they wou'd rather marry a *London-Goaler*, than a high Sheriff of a County, since neither can stir from his employment: formerly Women of wit married Fools, for a great Estate, a fine seat, or the like; but now 'tis for a pretty seat only in *Lincoln's Inn-fields*, *St. James's-fields*, or the *Pall-mall*.

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

Sparkish

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

Harcourt

Amen.—

Alithea

Who have we here?

Sparkish

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

Alithea

Is not that he?

Sparkish

No, fye no; but to shew that he ne're intended to hinder our Match has sent his Brother here to joyn our hands: when I get

me a Wife, I must get her a Chaplain, according to the Custom; this is his Brother, and my Chaplain.

Alithea

His Brother?

Lucy

And your Chaplain, to preach in your Pulpit then—[*Aside*.

Alithea

His Brother!

Sparkish

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

Alithea

Believe it!

Lucy

His Brother! hah, ha, he, he has a trick left still it seems—[*Aside*.

Sparkish

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

Alithea

For shame you are abus'd still.

Sparkish

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

Alithea

'Tis strange you are so credulous.

Sparkish

Dearest of my life, hear me, I tell you this is Ned Harcourt of Cambridge, by the world, you see he has a sneaking Colledg look; 'tis true he's something like his Brother *Frank*, and

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

Lucy

Hah, ha, he.

Alithea

Your Servant, Sir, I cannot be so deceiv'd, though you are; but come let's hear, how do you know what you affirm so confidently?

Sparkish

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

Alithea

Yes, *Frank* goes, and puts on a black-coat, then tell's you, he is *Ned*, that's all you have for't.

Sparkish

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

Alithea

Frank tells you this too.

Sparkish

Ay, and *Ned* there too; nay, they are both in a Story.

Alithea

So, so, very foolish.

Sparkish

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

Lucy

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

Alithea

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

Harcourt

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

Alithea

He speaks like a Chaplain indeed.

Sparkish

Why, was there not, soul, Divine, Heavenly, in what he said.

Alithea

Once more, most impertinent Black-coat, cease your persecution, and let us have a Conclusion of this ridiculous love.

Harcourt

I had forgot, I must sute my Stile to my Coat, or I wear it in vain.[*Aside*.

Alithea

I have no more patience left, let us make once an end of this troublesome Love, I say.

Harcourt

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

Sparkish

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

Alithea

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

Harcourt

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

Sparkish

No, poor man, not I faith.

Harcourt

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

Lucy

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

Alithea

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

Sparkish

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

Lucy

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

Alithea

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

Sparkish

Come, come Madam. [*Pulling her away.*]

Lucy

I pray Madam, do not refuse this Reverend Divine, the honour

and satisfaction of marrying you; for I dare say, he has set his heart upon't, good Doctor.

Alithea

What can you hope, or design by this?

Harcourt

I cou'd answer her, a reprieve for a day only, often revokes a hasty doom; at worst, if she will not take mercy on me, and let me marry her, I have at least the Lover's second pleasure, hind'ring my Rival's enjoyment, though but for a time.

Sparkish

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

Lucy

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

Exeunt *Sparkish, Alithea, Harcourt, and Lucy.*

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

Mr Pinchwife

Come tell me, I say.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

I wou'd try, if in the repetition of the ungrateful tale, I cou'd find her altering it in the least circumstance, for if her story be false, she is so too. [*Aside.*] Come how was't Baggage?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Lord, what pleasure you take to hear it sure!

Mrs Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

So, and you two were only in the room.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

Did he so? Damn him for it—and for—

Mrs. Pinchwife

But presently came up the Gentlewoman of the house.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

He kiss'd me an hundred times, and told me he fancied he kiss'd my fine Sister, meaning me you know, whom he said he lov'd with all his Soul, and bid me be sure to tell her so, and to desire her to be at her window, by eleven of the clock this morning, and he wou'd walk under it at that time.

Mr. Pinchwife

And he was as good as his word, very punctual, a pox reward him for't. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Pinchwife

Well, and he said if you were not within, he wou'd come up to her, meaning me you know, Bud, still.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

Why, he put—

Mr. Pinchwife

What?

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

An eternal canker seize it, for a dog.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

Not unless he shou'd force me.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

So, 'tis plain she loves him, yet she has not love enough to make her conceal it from me, but the sight of him will increase her aversion for me, and love for him; and that love instruct her how to deceive me, and satisfie him, all Ideot as she is: Love, 'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding; out of natures hands, they came plain, open, silly and fit for slaves, as she and Heaven intended 'em; but damn'd Love – Well – I must strangle that little Monster, whilst I can deal with him.– Go fetch Pen, Ink and Paper out of the next room:

Mrs. Pinchwife

Yes Bud.

Exit *Mrs. Pinchwife*.

Mr. Pinchwife

Why should Women have more invention in love than men? It can only be, because they have more desires, more solliciting passions, more lust, and more of the Devil. [*Aside*.

Mistris Pinchwife returns.

Come, Minks, sit down and write.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

I wish you cou'd not at all.

Mrs. Pinchwife

But what shou'd I write for?

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

O Lord, to the fine Gentleman a Letter!

Mr. Pinchwife

Yes, to the fine Gentleman.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Lord, you do but jeer; sure you jest.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

What, do you think I am a fool?

Mr. Pinchwife

She's afraid I would not dictate any love to him, therefore she's unwilling; but you had best begin.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

Why?

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

Very well, you wou'd have him brought to you; is it come to this? I say take the pen and write, or you'll provoke me.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

So I am glad it is no worse, she is innocent enough yet.

[*Aside.*] Yes you may when your Husband bids you write Letters to people that are in Town.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O may I so! Then I'm satisfied.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come begin— Sir—
Dictates.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

Nay good Bud—Sir—

She writes.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

Nay, why shou'd I say so, you know I told you, he had a sweet breath.

Mr. Pinchwife

Write.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Let me but put out, loath'd.

Mr. Pinchwife

Write I say.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Well then.

Writes.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

I can't abide to write such filthy words.

Mr. Pinchwife

Once more write as I'd have you, and question it not, or I will spoil thy writing with this, I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief.

Holds up the penknife.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O Lord, I will.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

I have writ it.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

She writes.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So—

Mr. Pinchwife

The same reason now I am out of your hands—

She writes.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So—

Mr. Pinchwife

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

She writes.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So—

Mr. Pinchwife

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

She writes on.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So — h —[Sighs.]

Mr. Pinchwife

What do you sigh? — detests you — as much as she loves
her Husband and her Honour —

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

No, tormenting Fiend; her stile I find wou'd be very soft. Aside. Come wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle; and write on the back side, for Mr. *Horner*.

Exit *Pinchwife*.

Mrs. Pinchwife

For Mr. *Horner* – So, I am glad he has told me his name; Dear Mr. *Horner*, but why should I send thee such a Letter, that will vex thee, and make thee angry with me; –well I will not send it –Ay but then my husband will kill me –for I see plainly, he won't let me love Mr. *Horner* –but what care I for my Husband –I won't so I won't send poor Mr. *Horner* such a Letter –but then my Husband –But oh –what if I writ at bottom, my Husband made me write it –Ay but then my Husband wou'd see't –Can one have no shift, ah, a *London* woman wou'd have had a hundred presently; stay –what if I shou'd write a Letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon't too; ay but then my Husband wou'd see't –I don't know what to do –But yet y vads I'll try, so I will –for I will not send this Letter to poor Mr. *Horner*, come what will on't. [*She writes, and repeats what she hath writ.*] Dear, Sweet Mr. *Horner*–So– my Husband wou'd have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly Letter – but I won't – so – and wou'd have me forbid you loving me – but I wont – so – and wou'd have me say to you, I hate you poor Mr. *Horner* – but I won't tell a lye for him – there – for I'm sure if you and I were in the Countrey at cards together, – so – I cou'd not help treading on your Toe under the Table – so – or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face, 'till you saw me –very well – and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together – so – but I must make haste before my Husband come; and now he has taught me to write Letters: You shall have longer ones from me, who am Dear, dear, poor dear Mr. *Horner*, your most Humble Friend, and Servant to command 'till death, *Margery Pinchwife*. Stay I must give him a hint at bottom – so – now wrap it up just like t'other – so – now write for Mr. *Horner*, – But oh now what shall I do with it?

for here comes my Husband.

Enter *Pinchwife*.

Mr. Pinchwife

I have been detained by a *Sparkish* Coxcomb, who pretended a visit to me; but I fear 'twas to my Wife. [*Aside*. What, have you done?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Ay, ay Bud, just now.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

Here – No I must not give him that, so I had been served if I had given him this. [*Aside*.

He opens, and reads the first Letter.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, where's the Wax and Seal?

Mrs. Pinchwife

Lord, what shall I do now? May then I have it – [*Aside*.] Pray let me see't, Lord you think me so errand a fool, I cannot seal a Letter, I will do't, so I will.

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

Mr. Pinchwife

Nay, I believe you will learn that, and other things too, which I wou'd not have you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

So, han't I done it curiously? I think I have, there's my Letter going to Mr. *Horner*; since he'll needs have me send

Letters to Folks. [*Aside.*]

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Exit *Mrs. Pinchwife*. *Pinchwife* locks the door.

At least, 'tis fit she think so, if we do not cheat women, they'll cheat us; and fraud may be justly used with secret enemies, of which a Wife is the most dangerous; and he that has a handsome one to keep, and a Frontier Town, must provide against treachery, rather than open Force – Now I have secur'd all within, I'll deal with the Foe without with false intelligence.

Holds up the Letter. Exit *Pinchwife*.

The Scene changes to *Horner's* Lodging. *Quack* and *Horner*.

Quack

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

Horner

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

Quack

Already!

Horner

Already, I say; last night I was drunk with half a dozen of your civil persons, as you call 'em, and people of Honour, and so was made free of their Society, and dressing rooms for ever hereafter; and am already come to the privileges of sleeping upon their Pallats, warming Smocks, tying Shooes and Garters, and the like Doctor, already, already Doctor.

Quack

You have made use of your time, Sir.

Horner

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

Quack

But do civil persons, and women of Honour drink, and sing bawdy Songs?

Horner

O amongst Friends, amongst Friends; for your Bigots in Honour, are just like those in Religion; they fear the eye of the world, more than the eye of Heaven, and think there is no virtue, but railing at vice; and no sin, but giving scandal: They rail at a poor, little, kept Player, and keep themselves some young, modest Pulpit Comedian to be privy to their sins in their Closets, not to tell 'em of them in their Chappels.

Quack

Nay, the truth on't is, Priests amongst the women now, have quite got the better of us Lay Confessors, Physicians.

Horner

And they are rather their Patients, but— [*Enter my Lady Fidget, looking about her.*] Now we talk of women of Honour, here comes one, step behind the Screen there, and but observe;

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

Lady Fidget

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

Horner

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

Lady Fidget

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

Horner

If you talk a word more of your Honour, you'll make me incapable to wrong it; to talk of Honour in the mysteries of Love, is like talking of Heaven, or the Deity in an operation of Witchcraft, just when you are employing the Devil, it makes the charm impotent.

Lady Fidget

Nay, fie, let us not be smooty; but you talk of mysteries, and bewitching to me, I don't understand you.

Horner

I tell you Madam, the word money in a Mistresses mouth, at such a nick of time, is not a more disheartning sound to a younger Brother, than that of Honour to an eager Lover like my self.

Lady Fidget

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

Horner

Chary – I have been chary of it already, by the report I have caus'd of my self.

Lady Fidget

Ay, but if you shou'd ever let other women know that dear secret, it would come out; nay, you must have a great care of your conduct; for my acquaintance are so censorious, (oh 'tis a wicked censorious world, Mr. *Horner*) I say, are so censorious, and detracting, that perhaps they'll talk to the prejudice of my Honour, though you shou'd not let them know the dear secret.

Horner

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

Lady Fidget

O, no Sir, not that way.

Horner

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

Lady Fidget

A secret is better kept I hope, by a single person, than a multitude; therefore pray do not trust any body else with it, dear, dear Mr. *Horner*. Embracing him.

Enter *Sir Jaspar Fidget*.

Sir Jaspar

How now!

Lady Fidget

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

Sir Jaspar

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

Horner

China-House, that's my Cue, I must take it [*Aside.*] A Pox, can't you keep your impertinent Wives at home? some men are troubled with the Husbands, but I with the Wives; but I'd have you to know, since I cannot be your Journey-man by night, I will not be your drudge by day, to squire your wife about, and be your man of straw, or scare-crow only to Pyes and Jays; that would be nibbling at your forbidden fruit; I shall be shortly the Hackney Gentleman-Usher of the Town.

Sir Jaspar

Heh, heh, he, poor fellow he's in the right on't faith, to squire women about for other folks, is as ungrateful an employment, as to tell money for other folks; *Aside.* heh, he, he, ben't angry *Horner*—

Lady Fidget

No, 'tis I have more reason to be angry, who am left by you, to go abroad indecently alone; or, what is more indecent, to pin my self upon such ill bred people of your acquaintance, as this is.

Sir Jaspar

Nay, pr'ythee what has he done?

Lady Fidget

Nay, he has done nothing.

Sir Jaspar

But what d'ye take ill, if he has done nothing?

Lady Fidget

Hah, hah, hah, Faith, I can't but laugh however; why d'ye think the unmannerly toad wou'd not come down to me to the

Coach, I was fain to come up to fetch him, or go without him, which I was resolved not to do; for he knows China very well, and has himself very good, but will not let me see it, lest I should beg some; but I will find it out, and have what I came for yet.

Exit Lady Fidget, and locks the door, followed by Horner to the door.

Horner

Apart to Lady Fidget] Lock the door Madam—So, she has got into my chamber, and lock'd me out; oh the impertinency of woman-kind! Well Sir *Jaspar*, plain dealing is a Jewel; if ever you suffer your Wife to trouble me again here, she shall carry you home a pair of Horns, by my Lord Major she shall; though I cannot furnish you my self, you are sure, yet I'll find a way.

Sir Jaspar

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

Horner

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

Sir Jaspar

Hah, ha, ha, poor angry *Horner*:

Horner

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

Exit Horner at t'other door.

Sir Jaspar

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

Lady Fidget

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

Sir Jaspar

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

Lady Fidget

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

Quack. [Behind]

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

Enter Mistris Squeamish.

Squeamish

Where's this Woman-hater, this Toad, this ugly, greasie, dirty Sloven?

Sir Jaspar

So the women all will have him ugly, methinks he is a comely person; but his wants make his form contemptible to 'em; and 'tis e'en as my Wife said yesterday, talking of him, that a proper handsome Eunuch, was as ridiculous a thing, as a Gigantick Coward.

Squeamish

Sir Jaspar, your Servant, where is the odious Beast?

Sir Jaspar

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

Squeamish

Is she so, and he's a clownish beast, he'll give her no

quarter, he'll play the wag with her again, let me tell you; come, let's go help her—What, the door's lock't?

Sir Jaspar

Ay, my Wife lock't it—

Squeamish

Did she so, let us break it open then?

Sir Jaspar

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

Squeamish

No – But is there no other way to get into 'em, whither goes this? I will disturb 'em. [*Aside.*]

Exit *Squeamish* at another door. Enter *Old Lady Squeamish*.

Old Lady Squeamish

Where is this Harlotry, this Impudent Baggage, this rambling Tomrigg? O *Sir Jaspar*, I'm glad to see you here, did you not see my vil'd Grandchild come in hither just now?

Sir Jaspar

Yes.

Old Lady Squeamish

Ay, but where is she then? where is she? Lord *Sir Jaspar* I have e'ne rattled my self to pieces in pursuit of her, but can you tell what she makes here, they say below, no woman lodges here.

Sir Jaspar

No.

Old Lady Squeamish

No – What does she here then? say if it be not a womans lodging, what makes she here? but are you sure no woman lodges here?

Sir Jaspar

No, nor no man neither, this is Mr. *Horners* Lodging.

Old Lady Squeamish

Is it so are you sure?

Sir Jaspar

Yes, yes.

Old Lady Squeamish

So then there's no hurt in't I hope, but where is he?

Sir Jaspar

He's in the next room with my Wife.

Old Lady Squeamish

Nay if you trust him with your wife, I may with my Biddy, they say he's a merry harmless man now, e'ne as harmless a man as ever came out of Italy with a good voice and as pretty harmless company for a Lady, as a Snake without his teeth.

Sir Jaspar

Ay. ay poor man.

Enter *Mrs. Squeamish*.

Squeamish

I can't find 'em – Oh are you here, Grandmother, I follow'd you must know my *Lady Fidget* hither, 'tis the prettyest lodging, and I have been staring on the prettyest Pictures.

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

Lady Fidget

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

Horner

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

Squeamish

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

Horner

Upon my honour I have none left now.

Squeamish

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

Horner

This Lady had the last there.

Lady Fidget

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

Squeamish

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

Lady Fidget

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

Horner

Do not take it ill, I cannot make China for you all, but I will have a Rol-waggon for you too, another time.

Squeamish

Thank you dear Toad. [*To Horner aside.*]

Lady Fidget

What do you mean by that promise?

Horner

Alas she has an innocent, literal understanding. [*Apart to Lady Fidget.*]

Old Lady Squeamish

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

Horner

Ay Madam, you see how they use me.

Old Lady Squeamish

Poor Gentleman I pittty you.

Horner

I thank you Madam, I could never find pittty, but from such reverend Ladies as you are, the young ones will never spare a man.

Squeamish

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

Horner

That's all their use of me Madam you see.

Squeamish

Come Sloven, I'll lead you to be sure of you. [*Pulls him by the Crevat.*]

Old Lady Squeamish

Alas poor man how she tuggs him, kiss, kiss her, that's the way to make such nice women quiet.

Horner

No Madam, that Remedy is worse than the Torment, they know I dare suffer any thing rather than do it.

Old Lady Squeamish

Prythee kiss her, and I'll give you her Picture in little, that you admir'd so last night, prythee do.

Horner

Well nothing but that could bribe me, I love a woman only in Effigie, and good Painting as much as I hate them – I'll do't,

for I cou'd adore the Devil well painted.

Kisses *Mrs. Squeamish*

Squeamish

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

Old Lady Squeamish

Ha, ha, ha, I told you so.

Squeamish

Foh a kiss of his –

Sir Jaspar

Has no more hurt in't, than one of my Spaniels.

Squeamish

Nor no more good neither.

Quack

I will now believe any thing he tells me. [*Behind.*]

Enter *Mr. Pinchwife.*

Lady Fidget

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

Sir Jaspar

What not when I am with you.

Lady Fidget

No, no my honour – let's be gone.

Squeamish

Oh Grandmother, let us be gone, make hast, make hast, I know not how he may censure us.

Lady Fidget

Be found in the lodging of any thing like a man, away.

Exeunt *Sir Jaspar, Lady Fidget, Old Lady Squeamish, Mrs. Squeamish.*

Quack

What's here another Cuckold – he looks like one, and none else sure have any business with him. [*Behind.*]

Horner

Well what brings my dear friend hither?

Mr. Pinchwife

Your impertinency.

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

No Sir, I'll ne'er trust you any way.

Horner

But why not, dear *Jack*, why diffide in me, thou knowst so well.

Mr. Pinchwife

Because I do know you so well.

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

Well then dear *Jack*, why so unkind, so grum, so strange to me, come prythee kiss me deare Rogue, gad I was always I say, and

am still as much thy Servant as –

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

So there 'tis – a man can't shew his friendship to a married man, but presently he talks of his wife to you, prythee let thy Wife alone, and let thee and I be all one, as we were wont, what thou art as shy of my kindness, as a *Lumbard-street* Alderman of a Courtiers civility at *Lockets*.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

What is't?

Mr. Pinchwife

Only a Love Letter Sir.

Horner

From whom – how, this is from your Wife – hum – and hum – [*Reads.*]

Mr. Pinchwife

Even from my Wife Sir, am I not wondrous kind and civil to you, now too? But you'l not think her so. [*Aside.*]

Horner

Ha, is this a trick of his or hers– [*Aside.*]

Mr. Pinchwife

The Gentleman's surpriz'd I find, what you expected a kinder Letter?

Horner

No faith not I, how cou'd I.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

Come ne're wonder at it so much.

Horner

Faith I can't help it.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

What do'st thou mean?

Mr. Pinchwife

Does the Letter want a Comment? then know Sir, though I have

been so civil a husband, as to bring you a Letter from my Wife, to let you kiss and court her to my face, I will not be a Cuckold Sir, I will not.

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

I weare a Sword.

Horner

It should be taken from thee, lest thou should'st do thy self a mischief with it, thou art mad, Man.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

Ha –[*Aside*.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

Oh – I understand something now –[*Aside*.] Was that thy Wife? why would'st thou not tell me 'twas she? faith my freedome with her was your fault, not mine.

Mr. Pinchwife

Faith so 'twas –[*Aside*.

Horner

Fye, I'de never do't to a woman before her husbands face, sure.

Mr. Pinchwife

But I had rather you should do't to my wife before my face, than behind my back, and that you shall never doe.

Horner

No – you will hinder me.

Mr. Pinchwife

If I would not hinder you, you see by her Letter, she wou'd.

Horner

Well, I must e'ne acquiess then, and be contented with what she writes.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

I do believe thee, faith.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

Well then fare you well, and play with any mans honour but

mine, kiss any mans wife but mine, and welcome –

Exit Mr. Pinchwife

Horner

Ha, ha, ha, Doctor.

Quack

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

Horner

Ha, ha, now Doctor what think you?

Quack

Pray let's see the Letter – hum – for – deare – love you
–[Reads the Letter

Horner

I wonder how she cou'd contrive it! what say'st thou to't, 'tis an Original.

Quack

So are your Cuckolds too Originals: for they are like no other common Cuckolds, and I will henceforth believe it not impossible for you to Cuckold the Grand Signior amidst his Guards of Eunuchs, that I say –

Horner

And I say for the Letter, 'tis the first love Letter that ever was without Flames, Darts, Fates, Destinies, Lying and Dissembling in 't.

Enter Sparkish pulling in Mr. Pinchwife.

Sparkish

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

Mr. Pinchwife

My Sister denies her marriage, and you see is gone away from you dissatisfy'd.

Sparkish

Pshaw, upon a foolish scruple, that our Parson was not in lawful Orders, and did not say all the Common Prayer, but 'tis her modesty only I believe, but let women be never so modest the first day, they'll be sure to come to themselves by night, and I shall have enough of her then; in the mean time, *Harry Horner*, you must dine with me, I keep my wedding at my Aunts in the Piazza.

Horner

Thy wedding, what stale Maid has liv'd to despaire of a husband, or what young one of a Gallant?

Sparkish

O your Servant Sir – this Gentlemans Sister then – No stale Maid.

Horner

I'm sorry for't.

Mr. Pinchwife

How comes he so concern'd for her – [*Aside*.

Sparkish

You sorry for't, why do you know any ill by her?

Horner

No, I know none but by thee, 'tis for her sake, not yours, and another mans sake that might have hop'd, I thought –

Sparkish

Another Man, another man, what is his Name?

Horner

Nay since 'tis past he shall be nameless. Poor *Harcourt* I am sorry thou hast mist her – [*Aside*

Mr. Pinchwife

He seems to be much troubled at the match –. [*Aside.*

Sparkish

Prythee tell me – nay you shan't go Brother.

Mr. Pinchwife

I must of necessity, but I'll come to you to dinner. [*Exit Pinchwife.*

Sparkish

But Harry, what have I a Rival in my Wife already? but withal my heart, for he may be of use to me hereafter, for though my hunger is now my sawce, and I can fall on heartily without, but the time will come, when a Rival will be as good good sawce for a married man to a wife, as an Orange to Veale.

Horner

O thou damn'd Rogue, thou hast set my teeth on edge with thy Orange.

Sparkish

Then let's to dinner, there I was with you againe, come.

Horner

But who dines with thee?

Sparkish

My Friends and Relations, my Brother *Pinchwife* you see of your acquaintance.

Horner

And his Wife.

Sparkish

No gad, he'll nere let her come amongst us good fellows, your stingy country Coxcomb keeps his wife from his friends, as he does his little Firkin of Ale, for his own drinking, and a Gentleman can't get a smack on't, but his servants, when his back is turn'd broach it at their pleasures, and dust it away,

ha, ha, ha, gad I am witty, I think, considering I was married to day, by the world, but come –

Horner

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

Sparkish

Pshaw what pleasure can'st thou have with women now, *Harry*?

Horner

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

Sparkish

Well I'll go try what I can do, in the mean time come away to my Aunts lodging, 'tis in the way to *Pinchwifes*.

Horner

The poor woman has call'd for aid, and stretch'd forth her hand Doctor, I cannot but help her over the Pale out of the Bryars.

Exeunt *Sparkish, Horner, Quack.*

The Scene changes to Pinchwifes house. Mrs. Pinchwife alone leaning on her elbow. A Table, Pen, Ink, and Paper.

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

him, which shall be a finer Letter than my last, because I have studied it like any thing; O Sick, Sick!

Takes the Pen and writes.

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

Mr. Pinchwife

What writing more Letters?

Mrs. Pinchwife

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

She offers to run out: he stops her, and reads.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

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

First I am to beg your pardon for my boldness in writing to you, which I'de have you to know, I would not have done, had not you said first you lov'd me so extreamly, which if you doe, you will never suffer me to lye in the arms of another man, whom I loath. nauseate, and detest – [Now you can write these filthy words] but what follows – Therefore I hope you will speedily find some way to free me from this unfortunate match, which was never, I assure you, of my choice, but I'm afraid 'tis already too far gone; however if you love me, as I do you, you will try what you can do, but you must help me away before to morrow, or else alas I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our – our – what is to follow our – speak what? our Journey into [*The Letter concludes.* the Country I suppose – Oh Woman, damn'd Woman, and and Love, damn'd Love, their old Tempter, for this is one of his miracles, in a moment, he can make those blind that cou'd see, and those see that were blind, those dumb that could speak, and those prattle who were dumb before, nay what is

more than all, make these dow-bak'd, senseless, indocile animals, Women, too hard for us their Politick Lords and Rulers in a moment; But make an end of your Letter, and then I'll make an end of you thus, and all my plagues together.
[Draws his sword.]

Mrs Pinchwife

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

Enter *Sparkish*.

Sparkish

How now what's here to doe.

Mr Pinchwife

This Fool here now!

Sparkish

What drawn upon your Wife? you shou'd never do that but at night in the dark when you can't hurt her, this is my Sister in Law is it not? ay faith e'ne our Country Margery, one may know her, come [Pulls aside her Handkercheife.] she and you must go dine with me, dinner's ready, come, but where's my Wife, is she not come home yet, where is she?

Mr Pinchwife

Making you a Cuckold, 'tis that they all doe, as soon as they can.

Sparkish

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

Mrs Pinchwife

No – Sir go we'll follow you.

Sparkish

I will not wag without you.

Mr Pinchwife

This Coxcomb is a sensible torment to me amidst the greatest in the world.

Sparkish

Come, come Madam Margery.

Mr Pinchwife

No I'll lead her my way, what would you treat your friends with mine, for want of your own Wife?

Leads her to t'other door, and locks her in and returns.

I am contented my rage shou'd take breath –[*Aside*

Sparkish

I told *Horner* this.

Mr Pinchwife

Come now.

Sparkish

Lord, how shy you are of your Wife, but let me tell you Brother, we men of wit have amongst us a saying, that Cuckolding like the small Pox comes with a fear, and you may keep your Wife as much as you will out of danger of infection, but if her constitution incline her to't, she'll have it sooner or later by the world, say they.

Mr Pinchwife

What a thing is a Cuckold, that every fool can make him ridiculous – [*Aside.*] Well Sir – But let me advise you, now you are come to be concern'd, because you suspect the danger, not to neglect the means to prevent it, especially when the greatest share of the Malady will light upon your own head, for –

How'sere the kind Wife's Belly comes to swell.

The Husband breeds for her, and first is ill.