

The Country Wife, Act V

ACT 5. SCENE 1.

Mr. *Pinchwife's* House. Enter Mr. *Pinchwife* and Mrs. *Pinchwife*;
a Table and Candle.

Mr Pinchwife

Come take the Pen and make an end of the Letter, just as you intended, if you are false in a tittle, I shall soon perceive it, and punish you with this as you deserve, write what was to follow – let's see – [*Lays his hand on his Sword.*

“You must make haste and help me away before to morrow, or else I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our –” What follows our? –

Mrs. Pinchwife

Must all out then Budd? – Look you there then.

Mrs. Pinchwife takes the Pen and writes.

Mr Pinchwife

Let's see – “For I can defer no longer our– Wedding – Your slighted *Alithea*”– What's the meaning of this, my Sisters name to't, speak, unriddle?

Mrs Pinchwife

Yes indeed Budd.

Mr Pinchwife

But why her name to 't speak – speak I say?

Mrs Pinchwife

Ay but you'l tell her then again, if you wou'd not tell her again.

Mr Pinchwife

I will not, I am stunn'd, my head turns round, speak.

Mrs Pinchwife

Won't you tell her indeed, and indeed.

Mr Pinchwife

No, speak I say.

Mrs Pinchwife

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

Mr. Pinchwife

Ha – I thought the stile was somewhat better than her own, but how cou'd she come to you to teach you, since I had lock'd you up alone.

Mrs Pinchwife

O through the key hole Budd.

Mr Pinchwife

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

Mrs Pinchwife

Why she said because – for I was unwilling to do it.

Mr Pinchwife

Because what – because.

Mrs Pinchwife

Because lest Mr. *Horner* should be cruel, and refuse her, or vaine afterwards, and shew the Letter, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Mr Pinchwife

How's this? ha – then I think I shall come to my self again – This changeling cou'd not invent this lye, but if she cou'd, why should she? she might think I should soon discover it – stay – now I think on't too, *Horner* said he was sorry she had married *Sparkish*, and her disowning her marriage to me, makes me think she has evaded it, for *Horner's* sake, yet why should

she take this course, but men in love are fools, women may well be so. – [*Aside.*] But hark you Madam, your Sister went out in the morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Mrs Pinchwife

A lack a day she has been crying all day above it seems in a corner.

Mr Pinchwife

Where is she, let me speak with her.

Mrs Pinchwife

O Lord then he'l discover all – [*Aside.*] Pray hold Budd, what d'y mean to discover me, she'll know I have told you then, pray Budd let me talk with her first –

Mr Pinchwife

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

Mrs Pinchwife

Pray dear Budd don't, till I have spoken with her and told her that I have told you all, for she'll kill me else.

Mr Pinchwife

Go then and bid her come out to me.

Mrs Pinchwife

Yes, yes Budd –

Mr Pinchwife

Let me see –

Mrs. Pinchwife

I'le go, but she is not within to come to him, I have just got time to know of *Lucy* her Maid, who first set me on work, what lye I shall tell next, for I am e'ne at my wits end –

Exit *Mrs. Pinchwife*

Mr Pinchwife

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

Mrs Pinchwife returns

Mrs Pinchwife

O Lord Budd I told you what anger you would make me with my Sister.

Mr Pinchwife

Won't she come hither?

Mrs Pinchwife

No no, alack a day, she's asham'd to look you in the face, and she says if you go in to her, she'll run away down stairs, and shamefully go her self to Mr. *Horner*, who has promis'd her marriage she says, and she will have no other, so she won't –

Mr Pinchwife

Did he so – promise her marriage – then she shall have no other, go tell her so, and if she will come and discourse with me a little concerning the means, I will about it immediately, go –

Exit *Mrs Pinchwife*

His estate is equal to *Sparkish's*, and his extraction as much better than his, as his parts are, but my chief reason is, I'd rather be of kin to him by the name of Brother-in-law, than that of Cuckold –

Well what says she now? –

Enter *Mrs. Pinchwife*

Mrs Pinchwife

Why she says she would only have you lead her to *Horners* lodging – with whom she first will discourse the matter before

she talk with you, which yet she cannot doe; for alack poor creature, she says she can't so much as look you in the face, therefore she'l come to you in a mask, and you must excuse her if she make you no answer to any question of yours, till you have brought her to Mr. *Horner*, and if you will not chide her, nor question her, she'l come out to you immediately.

Mr Pinchwife

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

Mrs Pinchwife

Oh I forgot, besides she says, she cannot look you in the face, though through a mask, therefore wou'd desire you to put out the Candle.

Exit Mrs. *Pinchwife*, puts out the Candle.

Mr Pinchwife

I agree to all, let her make haste – there 'tis out – My case is something better, I'd rather fight with *Horner* for not lying with my Sister, than for lying with my Wife, and of the two I had rather find my Sister too forward than my Wife; I expected no other from her free education, as she calls it, and her passion for the Town – well – Wife and Sister are names which make us expect Love and duty, pleasure and comfort, but we find 'em plagues and torments, and are equally, though differently troublesome to their keeper; for we have as much a doe to get people to lye with our Sisters, as to keep 'em from lying with our Wives.

Enter *Mrs. Pinchwife* Masked, and in Hoods and Scarves, and a night Gown and Petticoat of *Alitheas* in the dark.

What are you come Sister? let us go then – but first let me lock up my Wife, Mrs. *Margery* where are you?

Mrs Pinchwife

Here Budd.

Mr Pinchwife

Come hither, that I may lock you up, get you in, Come Sister where are you now? [Locks the door.

Mrs. *Pinchwife* gives him her hand, but when he lets her go, she steals softly on t'other side of him, and is lead away by him for his sister *Alithea*.

The Scene changes to *Horners* Lodging. Quack, *Horner*.

Quack

What all alone, not so much as one of your Cuckolds here, nor one of their Wives! they use to take their turns with you, as if they were to watch you.

Horner

Yes it often happens, that a Cuckold is but his Wifes spye, and is more upon family duty, when he is with her gallant abroad hindring his pleasure, than when he is at home with her playing the Gallant, but the hardest duty a married woman imposes upon a lover is, keeping her husband company always.

Quack

And his fondness wearies you almost as soon as hers.

Horner

A Pox, keeping a Cuckold company after you have had his Wife, is as tiresome as the company of a Country Squire to a witty fellow of the Town, when he has got all his Mony.

Quack

And as at first a man makes a friend of the Husband to get the Wife, so at last you are faine to fall out with the Wife to be rid of the Husband.

Horner

Ay, most Cuckold-makers are true Courtiers, when once a poor man has crack'd his credit for 'em, they can't abide to come neer him.

Quack

But at first to draw him in are so sweet, so kind, so dear, just as you are to *Pinchwife*, but what becomes of that intrigue with his Wife?

Horner

A Pox he's as surly as an Alderman that has been bit, and since he's so coy, his Wife's kindness is in vain, for she's a silly innocent.

Quack

Did she not send you a Letter by him?

Horner

Yes, but that's a riddle I have not yet solv'd – allow the poor creature to be willing, she is silly too, and he keeps her up so close –

Quack

Yes, so close that he makes her but the more willing, and adds but revenge to her love, which two when met seldome faile of satisfying each other one way or other.

Horner

What here's the man we are talking of I think.

Enter Mr. *Pinchwife* leading in his Wife Masqued, Muffled, and in her Sisters Gown.

Horner

Pshaw.

Quack

Bringing his Wife to you is the next thing to bringing a Love Letter from her.

Horner

What means this?

Mr. Pinchwife

The last time you know Sir I brought you a love Letter, now you see a Mistress, I think you'll say I am a civil man to you.

Horner

Ay the Devil take me will I say thou art the civillest man I ever met with, and I have known some; I fancy, I understand thee now, better than I did the Letter, but hark thee in thy eare –

Mr. Pinchwife

What?

Horner

Nothing but the usual question man, is she sound on thy word?

Mr. Pinchwife

What you take her for a Wench and me for a Pimp?

Horner

Pshaw, wench and Pimp, paw words, I know thou art an honest fellow, and hast a great acquaintance among the Ladies, and perhaps hast made love for me rather than let me make love to thy Wife –

Mr. Pinchwife

Come Sir, in short, I am for no fooling.

Horner

Nor I neither, therefore prythee let's see her face presently, make her show man, art thou sure I don't know her?

Mr. Pinchwife

I am sure you doe know her.

Horner

A Pox why dost thou bring her to me then?

Mr. Pinchwife

Because she's a Relation of mine.

Horner

Is she faith man, then thou art still more civil and obliging, dear Rogue.

Mr. Pinchwife

Who desir'd me to bring her to you.

Horner

Then she is obliging, dear Rogue.

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Horner

I hope she is handsome enough to make her self wellcome; prythee let her unmask.

Mr. Pinchwife

Doe you speak to her, she wou'd never be rul'd by me.

Horner

Madam –

[*Mrs. Pinchwife* whispers to *Horner*]

She says she must speak with me in private, withdraw prythee.

Mr. Pinchwife

She's unwilling it seems I shou'd know all her undecent conduct in this business –[*Aside*.

Well then Ile leave you together, and hope when I am gone you'll agree, if not you and I shan't agree Sir. –

Horner

What means the Fool? – if she and I agree 'tis no matter what you and I do.

[Whispers to *Mrs Pinchwife*, who makes signs with her hand for him to be gone.]

Mr. Pinchwife

In the mean time I'll fetch a Parson, and find out *Sparkish* and disabuse him. [*Aside*] You wou'd have me fetch a Parson,

would you not, well then – Now I think I am rid of her, and shall have no more trouble with her – Our Sisters and Daughters like Usurers money, are safest, when put out; but our Wives, like their writings, never safe, but in our Closets under Lock and Key.

Exit Mr.Pinchwife
Enter Boy.

Boy

Sir Jaspar Fidget Sir is coming up.

Horner

Here's the trouble of a Cuckold, now we are talking of, a pox on him, has he not enough to doe to hinder his Wifes sport, but he must other women's too. – Step in here Madam.

Exit Mrs. *Pinchwife*
Enter *Sir Jaspar*.

Sir Jaspar

My best and dearest Friend.

Horner

The old stile Doctor – [Aside to *Quack*] Well be short, for I am busie, what would your impertinent Wife have now?

Sir Jaspar

Well guess'd y'faith, for I do come from her.

Horner

To invite me to supper, tell her I can't come, go.

Sir Jaspar

Nay, now you are out faith, for my Lady and the whole knot of the virtuous gang, as they call themselves, are resolv'd upon a frolick of coming to you to night in a Masquerade, and are all drest already.

Horner

I shan't be at home.

Sir Jasper

Lord how churlish he is to women – nay prythee don't disappoint 'em, they'll think tis my fault, prythee don't, I'll send in the Banquet and the Fiddles, but make no noise on't, for the poor virtuous Rogues would not have it known for the world, that they go a Masquerading, and they would come to no mans Ball, but yours.

Horner

Well, well – get you gone, and tell 'em if they come, 'twill be at the peril of their honour and yours.

Sir Jasper

Heh, he, he – we'll trust you for that, farewell –

Exit Sir Jasper.

Horner

Doctor anon you too shall be my guest. But now I'm going to a private feast.

The Scene changes to the Piazza of *Covent Garden*.

Sparkish, Pinchwife.



The piazza in Covent Garden.

Sparkish with the Letter in his hand.

Sparkish

But who would have thought a woman could have been false to me, by the world, I could not have thought it.

Mr. Pinchwife

You were for giving and taking liberty, she had taken it only Sir, now you find in that Letter, you are a frank person, and so is she you see there.

Sparkish

Nay if this be her hand – for I never saw it.

Mr. Pinchwife

'Tis no matter whether that be her hand or no, I am sure this hand at her desire lead her to Mr. *Horner*, with whom I left her just now, go fetch a Parson to 'em at their desire too, to deprive you of her for ever, for it seems your was but a mock marriage.

Sparkish

Indeed she wou'd needs have it that 'twas *Harcourt* himself in a Parsons habit, that married us, but I'm sure he told me 'twas his Brother *Ned*.

Mr. Pinchwife

O there 'tis out and you were deceiv'd not she, for you are such a frank person – but I must be gone – you'l find her at Mr. *Horners*, go and believe your eyes.

Exit Mr. *Pinchwife*

Sparkish

Nay I'le to her, and call her as many Crocodiles, Syrens, Harpies, and other heathenish names, as a Poet would do a mistress, who had refus'd to heare his suit, nay more his Verses on her. But stay, is not that she following a Torch a t'other end of the Piazza, and from *Horners* certainly – 'tis so –

Enter *Alithea* following a Torch, with *Lucy* behind

You are well met Madam though you don't think so; what you have made a short visit to Mr. *Horner*, but I suppose you'll return to him presently, by that time the Parson can be with him.

Alithea

Mr. Horner, and the Parson Sir –

Sparkish

Come Madam no more dissembling, no more jilting for I am no more a frank person.

Lucy.

So 'twill work I see – [*Aside.*]

Sparkish

Cou'd you find out no easie Country Fool to abuse? none but me, a Gentleman of wit and pleasure about the Town, but it was your pride to be too hard for a man of parts, unworthy false woman, false as a friend that lends a man mony to lose, false as dice, who undoe those that trust all they have to 'em.

Lucy

He has been a great bubble by his similes as they say – [*Aside.*]

Alithea

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

Sparkish

What d'y mock me too?

Alithea

Or you have been deluded.

Sparkish

By you.

Alithea

Let me understand you.

Sparkish

Have you the confidence, I should call it something else, since you know your guilt, to stand my just reproaches? you did not write an impudent Letter to Mr. Horner, who I find now has club'd with you in deluding me with his aversion for women, that I might not forsooth suspect him for my Rival.

Lucy

D'ye think the gentleman can be jealous now, madam? [*Aside.*]

Alithea.

I write a Letter to Mr. *Horner* !

Sparkish

Nay Madam, do not deny it, your Brother shew'd it me just now, and told me likewise he left you at Horners lodging to fetch a Parson to marry you to him, and I wish you joy Madam, joy, joy, and to him too much joy, and to my self more joy for not marrying you.

Alithea

So I find my Brother would break off the match, and I can consent to't, since I see this Gentleman can be made jealous. [*Aside.*] O *Lucy*, by his rude usage and jealousy, he makes me almost afraid I am married to him, art thou sure 'twas *Harcourt* himself and and no parson that married us?

Sparkish

No Madam I thank you, I suppose that was a contrivance too of Mr. *Horners* and yours, to make *Harcourt* play the Parson, but I would as little as you have him one now, no not for the world, for shall I tell you another truth, I never had any passion for you, 'till now, for now I hate you, 'tis true I might have married your portion, as other men of parts of the Town do sometimes, and so your Servant, and to shew my unconcernedness, I'll come to your wedding, and resign you

with as much joy as I would a stale wench to a new Cully, nay with as much joy as I would after the first night, if I had been married to you, there's for you, and so your Servant, Servant. [Exit]

Alithea.

How was I deciev'd in a man !

Lucy

You'l believe then a fool may be made jealous now? for that easiness in him that suffers him to be led by a Wife, will likewise permit him to be perswaded against her by others.

Alithea.

But marry Mr. *Horner*, my brother does not intend it sure ; if I thought he did, I would take thy advice, and Mr. *Harcourt* for my Husband, and now I wish, that if there be any over-wise woman of the Town, who like me would marry a fool, for fortune, liberty, or title, first that her husband may love Play, and be a Cully to all the Town, but her, and suffer none but fortune to be mistress of his purse, then if for liberty, that he may send her into the Country under the conduct of some housewifely mother-in law; and if for title, may the world give 'em none but that of Cuckold.

Lucy

And for her greater curse Madam, may he not deserve it.

Alithea

Away impertinent – is not this my old Lady *Lanterlus*?

Lucy

Yes Madam. And here I hope we shall find Mr. *Harcourt* – [Aside].

Exeunt *Alithea, Lucy.*

The Scene changes again to *Horner's* Lodging. *Horner*, Lady *Fidget*, Mrs. *Dainty Fidget*, Mrs. *Squeamish*, a Table, Banquet,

and Bottles.

Horner

A Pox they are come too soon – before I have sent back my new Mistress, all I have now to do, is to lock her in, that they may not see her – [*Aside.*]

Lady Fidget

That we may be sure of our wellcome, we have brought our entertainment with us, and are resolv'd to treat thee, dear Toad.

Dainty

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

Mrs. Squeamish

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

Lady Fidget

Let us sit then.

Horner

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

Lady Fidget

No Sir, shut 'em only and your lips for ever, for we must trust you as much as our women.

Horner

You know all vanity's kill'd in me, I have no occasion for talking.

Lady Fidget

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

Dainty and Mrs. Squeamish

Agreed.

Lady Fidget

By this brimmer, for truth is no where else to be found; Not
in thy heart false man. [Aside to *Horner*]

Horner

You have found me a true man I'm sure. [Aside to *Lady Fidget*]

Lady Fidget

Not every way – [Aside to *Horner*] But let us sit and be merry.

Lady Fidget sings.

I

Why should our damn'd Tyrants oblige us to live,
On the pittance of Pleasure which they only give.
We must not rejoyce,
With Wine and with noise.
In vaine we must wake in a dull bed alone.
Whilst to our warm Rival the Bottle, they're gone.
Then lay aside charms, And take up these arms.

II

'Tis Wine only gives 'em their Courage and Wit,
Because we live sober to men we submit.
If for Beauties you'd pass.
Take a lick of the Glass.
Twill mend your complexions, and when they are gone,
The best red we have is the red of the Grape.
Then Sisters lay't on.
And damn a good shape.

Dainty

Dear Brimmer, well in token of our openness and plain dealing,
let us throw our Masques over our heads.

Horner

So 'twill come to the Glasses anon.

Mrs Squeamish

Lovely Brimmer, let me enjoy him first.

Lady Fidget

No, I never part with a Gallant, till I've try'd him. Dear Brimmer that mak'st our Husbands short sighted.

Dainty

And our bashful gallants bold.

Mrs. Squeamish

And for want of a Gallant, the Butler lovely in our eyes, drink Eunuch.

Lady Fidget

Drink thou representative of a Husband, damn a Husband.

Dainty

And as it were a Husband, an old keeper.

Mrs Squeamish

And an old Grandmother.

Horner

And an English Bawd, and a French Chirurgion.

Lady Fidget

Ay we have all reason to curse 'em.

Horner

For my sake Ladies.

Lady Fidget

No, for our own, for the first spoils all young gallants industry.

Dainty

And the others art makes 'em bold only with common women.

Squeamish

And rather run the hazard of the vile distemper amongst them,

than of a denial amongst us.

Dainty

The filthy Toads chuse Mistresses now, as they do Stuffs, for having been fancy'd and worn by others.

Mrs. Squeamish

For being common and cheap.

Lady Fidget

Whilst women of quality, like the richest Stuffs, lye untumbled, and unask'd for.

Horner

Ay neat, and cheap, and new often they think best.

Dainty

No Sir, the Beasts will be known by a Mistress longer than by a suit.

Mrs. Squeamish

And 'tis not for cheapness neither.

Lady Fidget

No, for the vain fopps will take up Druggets, and embroider 'em, but I wonder at the depraved appetites of witty men, they use to be out of the common road, and hate imitation, pray tell me beast, when you were a man, why you rather chose to club with a multitude in a common house, for an entertainment, than to be the only guest at a good Table.

Horner

Why faith ceremony and expectation are unsufferable to those that are sharp bent, people always eat with the best stomach at an ordinary, where every man is snatching for the best bit.

Lady Fidget

Though he get a cut over the fingers – but I have heard people eat most heartily of another man's meat, that is, what they do not pay for.

Horner

When they are sure of their wellcome and freedome, for ceremony in love and eating, is as ridiculous as in fighting, falling on briskly is all should be done in those occasions.

Lady Fidget

Well then let me tell you Sir, there is no where more freedome than in our houses, and we take freedom from a young person as a sign of good breeding, and a person may be as free as he pleases with us, as frolick, as gamesome, as wild as he will.

Horner

Han't I heard you all declaim against wild men.

Lady Fidget

Yes, but for all that, we think wildness in a man, as desireable a quality, as in a Duck, or Rabbet; a tame man, foh.

Horner

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

Lady Fidget

Our Reputation, Lord! Why should you not think, that we women make use of our Reputation, as you men of yours, only to deceive the world with less suspicion; our virtue is like the State-man's Religion, the Quakers Word, the Gamesters Oath, and the Great Man's Honour, but to cheat those that trust us.

Mrs. Squeamish

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

Dainty

For I assure you, women are least mask'd, when they have the Velvet Vizard on.

Mrs Squeamish

Our bashfulness is only the reflection of the Men's.

Dainty

We blush, when they are shame-fac'd.

Horner

I beg your pardon Ladies, I was deceiv'd in you devilishly, but why, that mighty pretence to Honour?

Lady Fidget

We have told you; but sometimes 'twas for the same reason you men pretend business often, to avoid ill company, to enjoy the better, and more privately those you love.

Horner

But why, wou'd you ne'er give a Friend a wink then?

Lady Fidget

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

Horner

And you so seemingly honest.

Lady Fidget

Was that all that deterr'd you?

Horner

And so expensive— you allow freedom you say.

Lady Fidget

Ay, ay.

Horner

That I was afraid of losing my little money, as well as my little time, both which my other pleasures required.

Lady Fidget

Money, foh—you talk like a little fellow now, do such as we

expect money?

Horner

I beg your pardon, Madam, I must confess, I have heard that great Ladies, like great Merchants, set but the higher prizes upon what they have, because they are not in necessity of taking the first offer.

Dainty

Such as we, make sale of our hearts?

Mrs. Squeamish

We brib'd for our Love? Foh.

Horner

With your pardon, Ladies, I know, like great men in Offices, you seem to exact flattery and attendance only from your Followers, but you have receivers about you, and such fees to pay, a man is afraid to pass your Grants; besides we must let you win at Cards, or we lose your hearts; and if you make an assignation, 'tis at a Goldsmiths, Jewellers, or China house, where for your Honour, you deposit to him, he must pawn his, to the punctual Citt, and so paying for what you take up, pays for what he takes up.

Dainty

Wou'd you not have us assur'd of our Gallants Love?

Squeamish

For Love is better known by Liberality, than by Jealousie.

Lady Fidget

For one may be dissembled, the other not—but my Jealousie can be no longer dissembled, and they are telling ripe. [*Aside.*] Come here's to our Gallants in waiting, whom we must name, and I'll begin, this is my false Rogue.

Claps him on the back.

Mrs. Squeamish

How!

Horner

So all will out now—

Mrs. Squeamish

Did you not tell me, 'twas for my sake only, you reported your self no man? [*Aside to Horner.*]

Dainty

Oh Wretch! did you not swear to me, 'twas for my Love, and Honour, you pass'd for that thing you do? [*Aside to Horner.*]

Lady Fidget

Come, speak Ladies, this is my false Villain.

Squeamish

And mine too.

Dainty

And mine.

Horner

Well then, you are all three my false Rogues too, and there's an end on't.

Lady Fidget

Well then, there's no remedy, Sister Sharers, let us not fall out, but have a care of our Honour; though we get no Presents, no Jewels of him, we are savers of our Honour, the Jewel of most value and use, which shines yet to the world unsuspected, though it be counterfeit.

Horner

Nay, and is e'en as good, as if it were true, provided the world think so; for Honour, like Beauty now, only depends on the opinion of others.

Lady Fidget

Well Harry Common, I hope you can be true to three, swear, but

'tis no purpose, to require your Oath; for you are as often forsworn, as you swear to new women.

Horner

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

Enter Sir Jaspar Fidget and Old Lady Squeamish

Sir Jaspar

Oh my Lady *Fidget*, was this your cunning, to come to Mr. *Horner* without me; but you have been no where else I hope.

Lady Fidget

No, Sir Jaspar.

Old Lady Squeamish

And you came straight hither Biddy.

Squeamish

Yes indeed, Lady Grandmother.

Sir Jaspar

'Tis well, 'tis well, I knew when once they were throughly acquainted with poor *Horner*, they'd ne'er be from him; you may let her masquerade it with my Wife, and *Horner*, and I warrant her Reputation safe.

Enter Boy.

Boy

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

Horner

Do you all go in there, whil'st I send 'em away, and Boy, do you desire 'em to stay below 'til I come, which shall be

immediately.

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

Boy

Yes Sir. [*Exit.*]

Exit *Horner* at t'other door, and returns with *Mistris Pinchwife.*

Horner

You wou'd not take my advice to be gone home, before your Husband came back, he'll now discover all, yet pray my Dearest be perswaded to go home, and leave the rest to my management, I'll let you down the back way.

Mrs. Pinchwife

I don't know the way home, so I don't.

Horner

My man shall wait upon you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

No, don't you believe, that I'll go at all; what are you weary of me already?

Horner

No my life, 'tis that I may love you long, 'tis to secure my love, and your Reputation with your Husband, he'll never receive you again else.

Mrs. Pinchwife

What care I, d'ye think to frighten me with that? I don't intend to go to him again; you shall be my Husband now.

Horner

I cannot be your Husband, Dearest, since you are married to him.

Mrs. Pinchwife

O wou'd you make me believe that-don't I see every day at *London* here, women leave their first Husbands, and go, and live with other men as their Wives, pish, pshaw, you'd make me angry, but that I love you so mainly.

Horner

So, they are coming up-In again, in, I hear 'em: [Exit *Mistris Pinchwife*.] Well, a silly Mistriss, is like a weak place, soon got, soon lost, a man has scarce time for plunder; she betrays her Husband, first to her Gallant, and then her Gallant, to her Husband.

Enter *Pinchwife, Alithea, Harcourt, Sparkish, Lucy, and a Parson*.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come Madam, 'tis not the sudden change of your dress, the confidence of your asseverations, and your false witness there, shall perswade me, I did not bring you hither, just now; here's my witness, who cannot deny it, since you must be confronted – Mr. *Horner*, did not I bring this Lady to you just now?

Horner

Now must I wrong one woman for anothers sake, but that's no new thing with me; for in these cases I am still on the criminal's side, against the innocent. [*Aside*.

Alithea

Pray, speak Sir.

Horner

It must be so—I must be impudent, and try my luck, impudence uses to be too hard for truth.[*Aside*.

Mr. Pinchwife

What, you are studying an evasion, or excuse for her, speak Sir.

Horner

No faith, I am something backward only, to speak in womens affairs or disputes.

Mr. Pinchwife

She bids you speak.

Alithea

Ay, pray Sir do, pray satisfie him,

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

O ho-

Alithea

How Sir-

Harcourt

How, *Horner* !

Alithea

What mean you Sir, I always took you for a man of Honour?

Horner

Ay, so much a man of Honour, that I must save my Mistriss, I thank you, come what will on't. [*Aside.*]

Sparkish

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

Lucy

Now cou'd I speak, if I durst, and 'solve the Riddle, who am the Author of it. [*Aside.*]

Alithea

O unfortunate Woman! a combination against my Honour, which most concerns me now, because you share in my disgrace, Sir,

and it is your censure which I must now suffer, that troubles me, not theirs.

Harcourt

Madam, then have no trouble, you shall now see 'tis possible for me to love too, without being jealous, I will not only believe your innocence my self, but make all the world believe it – *Horner* I must now be concern'd for this Ladies Honour. [Apart to *Horner*.

Horner

And I must be concern'd for a Ladies Honour too.

Harcourt

This Lady has her Honour, and I will protect it.

Horner

My Lady has not her Honour, but has given it me to keep, and I will preserve it.

Harcourt

I understand you not.

Horner

I wou'd not have you.

Mrs. Pinchwife

What's the matter with 'em all. [*Mistress Pinchwife peeping in behind*.

Mr. Pinchwife

Come, come, Mr. *Horner*, no more disputing, here's the Parson, I brought him not in vain.

Horner

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

Mr. Pinchwife

How, what d'ye mean?

Sparkish

Ay, what does he mean?

Horner

Why, I have resign'd your Sister to him, he has my consent.

Mr. Pinchwife

But he has not mine Sir, a womans injur'd Honour, no more than a man's, can be repair'd or satisfied by any, but him that first wrong'd it; and you shall marry her presently, or—[Lays his hand on his Sword.

Enter to them *Mistress Pinchwife*.

Mistriss Pinchwife

O Lord, they'll kill poor Mr. *Horner*, besides he shan't marry her, whilst I stand by, and look on, I'll not lose my second Husband so.

Mr. Pinchwife

What do I see?

Alithea

My Sister in my cloaths !

Sparkish

Ha !

Mrs. Pinchwife

Nay, pray now don't quarrel about finding work for the Parson, he shall marry me to Mr. *Horner*; for now I believe, you have enough of me. [To *Mr. Pinchwife*.

Horner

Damn'd, damn'd loving Changeling.

Mrs. Pinchwife

Pray Sister, pardon me for telling so many lyes of you.

Harcourt

I suppose the Riddle is plain now.

Lucy

No, that must be my work, good Sir, hear me.

Kneels to Mr. *Pinchwife*, who stands doggedly, with his hat
over his eyes.

Mr. Pinchwife

I will never hear woman again, but make 'em all silent, thus—
Offers to draw upon his Wife.

Horner

No, that must not be.

Mr. Pinchwife

You then shall go first, 'tis all one to me.

Offers to draw on *Horner*; stopt by *Harcourt*.

Harcourt

Hold-

Sir Jaspar

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

Mr. Pinchwife

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

Sir Jaspar

Pshaw, with him, ha, ha, he.

Mr. Pinchwife

D'ye mock me Sir, a Cuckold is a kind of a wild Beast, have a
care Sir-

Sir Jaspar

No sure, you mock me Sir-he cuckold you ! it can't be, ha, ha,
he, why, I'll tell you Sir. [*Offers to whisper.*]

Mr. Pinchwife

I tell you again, he has whor'd my Wife, and yours too, if he knows her, and all the women he comes near; 'tis not his dissembling, his hypocrisie can wheedle me.

Sir Jaspar

How does he dissemble, is he a Hypocrite? nay then- how-Wife-Sister is he an Hypocrite?

Old Lady Squeamish

An Hypocrite, a dissembler, speak young Harlotry, speak how ?

Sir Jaspar

Nay then-0 my head too-0 thou libidinous Lady!

Old Lady Squeamish

0 thou Harloting, Harlotry, hast thou don't then?

Sir Jaspar

Speak good *Horner*, art thou a dissembler, a Rogue? hast thou-

Horner

Soh-

Lucy

I'll fetch you off, and her too, if she will but hold her tongue. [*Apart to Horner*]

Horner

Canst thou? I'll give thee- [*Apart to Lucy*]

Lucy to Mr. Pinchwife

Pray have but patience to hear me Sir, who am the unfortunate cause of all this confusion, your Wife is innocent, I only culpable; for I put her upon telling you all these lyes, concerning my Mistress, in order to the breaking off the match, between Mr. *Sparkish* and her, to make way for Mr. *Harcourt*.

Sparkish

Did you so eternal Rotten-tooth, then it seems my Mistress was not false to me, I was only deceiv'd by you, brother that shou'd have been, now man of conduct, who is a frank person now, to bring your Wife to her Lover-ha-

Lucy

I assure you Sir, she came not to Mr. *Horner* out of love, for she loves him no more-

Mrs. Pinchwife

Hold, I told lyes for you, but you shall tell none for me, for I do love Mr. *Horner* with all my soul, and no body shall say me nay; pray don't you go to make poor Mr. *Horner* believe to the contrary, 'tis spitefully done of you, I'm sure.

Horner

Peace, Dear Ideot. [Aside to Mrs. *Pinchwife*

Mrs. Pinchwife

Nay, I will not peace.

Mr. Pinchwife

Not 'til I make you.

Enter *Dorilant*, Quack

Dorilant

Horner, your Servant, I am the Doctors Guest, he must excuse our intrusion.

Quack

But what's the matter Gentlemen, for Heavens sake, what's the matter?

Horner

Oh 'tis well you are come—'tis a censorious world we live in, you may have brought me a reprieve, or else I had died for a crime, I never committed, and these innocent Ladies had suffer'd with me, therefore pray satisfie these worthy, honourable, jealous Gentlemen that — [*Whispers*.

Quack

O I understand you, is that all—Sir *Jasper*, by heavens and upon the word of a Physician Sir,—[*Whispers to Sir Jasper.*

Sir Jasper

Nay I do believe you truly—pardon me my virtuous Lady, and dear of honour.

Old Lady Squeamish

What then all's right again.

Sir Jasper

Ay, ay, and now let us satisfie him too. [*They whisper with Mr. Pinchwife*

Mr. Pinchwife

An Eunuch! pray no fooling with me.

Quack

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

Mr. Pinchwife

They—they'll sweare a man that bled to death through his wounds died of an Apoplexy .

Quack

Pray hear me Sir—why all the Town has heard the report of him.

Mr. Pinchwife

But does all the Town believe it.

Quack

Pray inquire a little, and first of all these.

Mr. Pinchwife

I'm sure when I left the Town he was the lewdest fellow in't.

Quack

I tell you Sir he has been in *France* since, pray ask but these Ladies and Gentlemen, your friend Mr. *Dorilant*, Gentlemen and

Ladies, han't you all heard the late sad report of poor Mr. *Horner*.

All the Ladies

Ay, ay, ay.

Dorilant

Why thou jealous Fool do'st thou doubt it, he's an errant French Capon.

Mrs. Pinchwife

'Tis false Sir, you shall not disparage poor Mr. *Horner*, for to my certain knowledge—

Lucy

O hold—

Mrs. Squeamish

Stop her mouth- [*Aside to Lucy*].

Lady Fidget

Upon my honour Sir, 'tis as true. [*To Pinchwife*

Dainty

D'y think we would have been seen in his company—

Squeamish

Trust our unspotted reputations with him!

Lady Fidget

This you get, and we too, by trusting your secret to a fool—
[*Aside to Horner*

Horner

Peace Madam,—well *Doctor* is not this a good design that carries a man on unsuspected, and brings him off safe. —
[*Aside to Quack*

Mr. Pinchwife

Well, if this were true, but my Wife — [*Aside*

Dorilant whispers with *Mrs. Pinchwife*.

Alithea

Come Brother your Wife is yet innocent you see, but have a care of too strong an imagination, least like an overconcern'd timerous Gamester by fancying an unlucky cast it should come, Women and Fortune are truest still to those that trust 'em.

Lucy

And any wild thing grows but the more fierce and hungry for being kept up, and more dangerous to theKeeper.

Alithea

There's doctrine for all Husbands Mr. *Harcourt*.

Harcourt

I edifie Madam so much, that I am impatient till I am one.

Dorilant

And I edifie so much by example I will never be one.

Sparkish

And because I will not disparage my parts I'll ne're be one.

Horner

And I alass can't be one.

Mr. Pinchwife

But I must be one – against my will to a Country-Wife, with a Country-murrain to me.

Mrs. Pinchwife

And I must be a Country Wife still too I find, for I can't like a City one, be rid of my musty Husband and doe what I list. [*Aside*.

Horner

Now Sir I must pronounce your Wife Innocent, though I blush whilst I do it, and I am the only man by her now expos'd to shame, which I will straight drown in Wine, as you shall your

suspicion, and the Ladies troubles we'll divert with a Ballet—Doctor where are your Maskers.

Lucy

Indeed she's Innocent Sir, I am her witness, and her end of coming out was but to see her Sisters Wedding, and what she has said to your face of her love to Mr. *Horner* was but the usual innocent revenge on a Husbands jealousy, was it not Madam speak —

Mrs. Pinchwife

Since you'll have me tell more lies — [Aside to *Lucy* and *Horner*.] Yes indeed Budd.

Mr. Pinchwife

For my own sake fain I wou'd all believe. Cuckolds like Lovers shou'd themselves deceive. But—sighs—
His honour is least safe, (too late I find)
Who trusts it with a foolish Wife or Friend.

A Dance of Cuckolds. [to the tune of "Cuckolds all in a Row"]

Horner

Vain Fopps, but court, and dress, and keep a puther,
To pass for Womens men, with one another.
But he who aimes by women to be priz'd,
First by the men you see must be despis'd.

FINIS.

EPILOGUE, spoken by Mr. *Hart*

Now you, the vigorous, who daily here
O'er vizard mask in public domineer,
And what you'd do to her if in place where;
Nay, have the confidence to cry, "Come out!"
Yet when she say, "Lead on," you are not stout,
But to your well-dressed brother straight turn round
And cry, "Pox on her, *Ned*. She can't be sound;"

Then slink away, a fresh one to engage
With so much seeming heat and loving rage,
You'd frighten list'ning actress on the stage:
Till she, at last, has seen you, huffing, come,
And talk of keeping in the tiring-room,
Yet cannot be provoked to lead her home.
Next you *Falstaffs* of fifty, who beset
Your buckram maidenheads, which your friends get;
And whilst to them, you of achievements boast,
They share the booty, and laugh at your cost.
In fine, you essens't boys, both old and young,
Who would be thought so eager, brisk, and strong,
Yet do the Ladies, not their Husbands, wrong;
Whose purses for your manhood make excuse,
And keep your *Flanders* mares for show, not use;
Encouraged by our woman's man today,
A *Horner's* part may vainly think to play;
And may intrigues so bashfully disown
That they may doubted be by few or none,
May kiss the cards at piquet, ombre, -lu,
And so be thought to kiss the lady too;
But gallants, have a care, faith, what you do.
The world, which to no man his due will give,
You by experience know you can deceive,
And men may still believe you vigorous;
But then, we women,- there's no coz'ning us.

FINIS.