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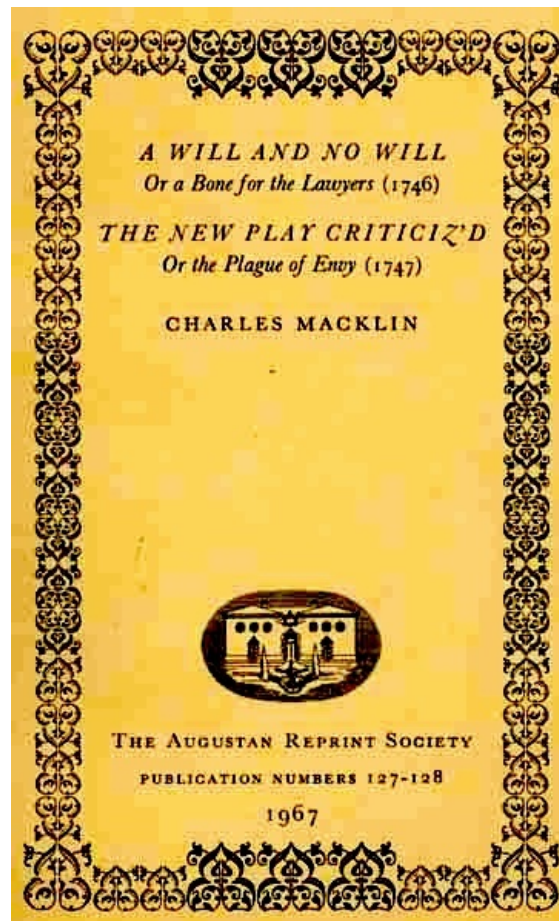
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THE AUGUSTAN REPRINT SOCIETY

CHARLES MACKLIN

***A WILL AND NO WILL,  
OR A Bone for the Lawyers.***

(1746)

**THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D,  
OR *The Plague of Envy.***

(1747)



**Introduction by  
JEAN B. KERN**



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Transcriber's Note: Footnote markers are missing for notes 9, 10, and 11 in the [Notes to the Plays](#).

**INTRODUCTION**

The manuscript copies of these two plays by Charles Macklin, A WILL AND NO WILL, OR A BONE FOR THE LAWYERS (1746) and THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D, OR THE PLAGUE OF ENVY (1747), are in the Larpent Collection of the Huntington Library along with a third afterpiece *The Covent Garden Theatre, or Pasquin Turn'd Drawcansir* (1752) already reproduced in facsimile as Number 116 of the Augustan Reprint Society. [1] Since the introduction to *Covent Garden*

*Theatre* (ARS 116) already gives general biographical information on this actor-playwright, Charles Macklin, as well as an indication of the revived interest in his plays, this introduction will be limited to the two afterpieces here reproduced.

A WILL AND NO WILL, OR A BONE FOR THE LAWYERS (Larpent 58) was first produced in 1746 and revived many times up to March 29, 1756, unlike *The Covent Garden Theatre* which was given only one performance in 1752. The Larpent manuscript 58 copy of A WILL AND NO WILL bears the handwritten application of James Lacy to the Lord Chamberlain for permission to perform the farce for Mrs. Macklin's benefit. It was first performed at the Drury Lane Theatre April 23, 1746, following *Humours of the Army*. [2] Sometimes advertised with a different subtitle as A WILL AND NO WILL, OR A NEW CASE FOR THE LAWYERS, [3] it was revived March 22, 1748, for Macklin's own benefit and apparently was more popular in the revival since it was repeated five more times on March 29, 31 and April 11, 21, 22. [4] The last performance listed in *The London Stage*, Part 4, II, 535, was for Macklin's daughter's benefit on March 29, 1756.

Macklin's two-act farce, A WILL AND NO WILL, is based on Regnard's five-act comedy *le Legetaire Universel* (1707), which is itself a composite of Italian comedy with echoes of Molière, moving from scene to scene with little effort at logical consistency or structure but treating each scene autonomously for its own comic value. [5] Macklin condensed and tightened Regnard's five-act plot into a two-act afterpiece; the role of the apothecary is greatly reduced into the stock London-stage Frenchman, du Maigre, who can barely speak English; the servant Lucy is more the English maid than the French *bonne* of the Regnard play who gave orders to her master; and the satire of Macklin's afterpiece is directed not only at lawyers and physicians, as in the Regnard play, but at Methodist itinerant preachers. Finally Macklin's plot was both complicated and tightened by having the lawyers summoned to draw up the marriage contract, also take down the will of the supposed Skinflint, thus making the marriage a condition of the will.

The rather long Prologue to A WILL AND NO WILL (11 pages of manuscript) makes fun of the convention of the eighteenth century prologues by the familiar dodge of having two actors chatting as though they were in the Pit waiting for the actors in the main play to dress for the afterpiece. The conversation of the Prologue is enlivened by the appearance of an Irish lawyer come to see the play about lawyers. His impossibly long name, Laughlinbulhuderry-Mackshoughlinbulldowny, contains hints of Macklin's own name, and this is also one of Macklin's wonderful Irishmen who never acted except in school where he spoke the Prologue, he says, of one of Terence's tragedies when the play was over. His mispronunciations and inaccuracies put him at the head of the list of stage Irishmen whom Macklin, an Irishman himself, could portray with delight and authority.

Another feature of the long Prologue to this farce is Macklin's reference to the failure of his own tragedy *Henry VII* (1745), for Snarlewit proclaims that he never had so much fun in his life as at Macklin's "merry Tragedy." The ability to laugh at his own failure to construct a tragedy hastily in time to capitalize on the invasion attempt of 1745, together with his reference to his own name in his caricature of the Irish lawyer undoubtedly help explain the success of this farcical afterpiece.

Occasional marks of the Licensor on the manuscript, most notably opposite Shark's lines about statesmen at the end of Act I, are all underscored in the typescript of the play.

The second afterpiece here reproduced, THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D, OR THE PLAGUE OF ENVY (Larpent 64), is an amusing bit of dramatic criticism of Benjamin Hoadly's *The Suspicious Husband* which had opened at the Covent Garden Theatre on February 12, 1747, and was given many times including performances on March 21, 24 and April 28, 30 of the same year. [6] Again the title page of the Macklin afterpiece bears the handwritten request of James Lacy, dated March 17, 1747, for the Lord Chamberlain's permission to perform the play for Macklin's benefit at Drury Lane on March 24. Both performances, then, of Macklin's closely related afterpiece, THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D, were given at Drury Lane on nights when Hoadly's *The Suspicious Husband* was also being performed at the rival theatre, March 24 and April 30, 1747. It was even possible for a spectator to see Hoadly's play at Covent Garden and then catch Macklin's related farcical afterpiece at the Drury Lane Theatre on the same night. Or if that required too difficult a change of *locus*, it was still possible to see *The Suspicious Husband* on March 21 or April 28 and THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND CRITICIZ'D (as Macklin's play is entitled in James T. Kirkman's *Memoirs of the Life of Charles Macklin, Esq.*, II, 443) a few days later on March 24 or April 30; such was the immediacy of the appeal of Macklin's afterpiece.

While Macklin was capitalizing on the popularity of a new play, he also, in THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D, gave ironic portraits of rival playwrights who damned a play out of envy (note the subtitle, THE PLAGUE OF ENVY) for such trivial faults as the use of *suspicious* instead of *jealous* in the title, or for the lacing of Ranger's hat. Macklin's satiric portraits of such envious scribblers who were ready to attack any new author in Journals, Epigrams, and Pamphlets are lively records of mid-eighteenth century subjective criticism. Canker, the envious playwright in the afterpiece, calls Ranger "a Harlequin" and Mr. Strickland, "Columbine's husband." Canker objects to the escapes, scenes in the dark, and the rope ladder, though the young lovers, Heartly and Harriet in Macklin's afterpiece, vow the ladder is a device they themselves will use if Harriet is forced by her aunt to marry Canker. Again an Irishman, Sir Patrick Bashfull, enlivens the farce by his

pretense of being a Frenchman, Fitzbashfull, "of Irish distraction." Bashfull's literal criticism of Hoadly's play serves as a good foil for the carping criticism of the envious playwrights: Plagiary, Grubwit, and Canker; or the nonsense of the foolish critics: Nibble and Trifle. The farce ends with Canker completely routed and Heartly's suggestion that their hour's conversation would make a *petit piece* in itself if Lady Critick would only write it down.

The limited appeal of this kind of related, topical afterpiece probably explains why it was performed only twice, following a performance of *Hamlet* on March 24, 1747, for Macklin's benefit, and following *Julius Caesar* on April 30, 1747, for the benefit of Garrick who had appeared as Ranger in the original cast of Hoadly's play. The separate Prologue to Macklin's afterpiece is addressed to Mr. Macklin in Bow Street, Covent Garden, and attributed to Hely Hutcheson, Provost of Trinity College by William Cooke's *Memoirs of Charles Macklin, Comedian* (1804), p. 152.

These two afterpieces, A WILL AND NO WILL (1746) and THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D (1747) along with *Covent Garden Theatre* (1752), ARS 116, bring up to date the publication of Charles Macklin's unpublished work. It is to be hoped that a definitive critical edition of his writing for the eighteenth-century stage will soon follow.

A word should be added about the editor's changes of these two plays in the typescript. From the facsimile edition of Macklin's *Covent Garden Theatre* (ARS 116) it should already be evident that Macklin's scribes in these three plays in the Larpent Collection were inconsistent both in spelling and punctuation. The *Covent Garden Theatre* appeared in facsimile in response to requests for an eighteenth-century facsimile for use in graduate seminars, because of the clarity of its handwriting. The other two plays are here reproduced in typescript since the condition of the manuscripts made facsimile reproduction unfeasible. In the preparation of the typescript for these remaining two plays, certain problems had of necessity to be decided arbitrarily. Wherever it was possible, the manuscript spelling has been preserved. Punctuation and capitals had to be altered where sentences were run together or new sentences began with small letters. The number of capital letters was reduced since these followed no consistent pattern for emphasis and varied between the scribes of the manuscripts. Nouns were left capitalized to preserve the eighteenth-century flavor. Proper names have been corrected to a recognizable form (Ranelagh for Renelagh, Zoilus for Ziulus, for example); French phrases have been left in the manuscript spelling for those characters who misuse French, such as Sir Patrick Bashfull in THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D. The occasional confusions of characters or speakers have been corrected, with separate notes explaining each change. All marks of the Licensor are in italics; all words or letters interpolated by the editor are in brackets; all stage directions are in parentheses. Applications by the Theatre Manager, James Lacy, for permission to perform the plays, appear in notes.

Coe College

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## NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

[1] As indicated in the Introduction to *The Covent Garden Theatre, or Pasquin Turn'd Drawcansir*, Number 116, Augustan Reprint Society, the author is indebted to the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, both for a Research Fellowship in the summer of 1963 and for permission to reproduce the three Macklin plays in the Larpent Collection (Larpent 58, 64 and 96) which had not previously been printed.

[2] Arthur H. Scouten, *The London Stage* (Carbondale, Ill., 1961), Part 3, II, 1235.

[3] James T. Kirkman, *Memoirs of the Life of Charles Macklin, Esq.* (London, 1799), II, 443, lists this subtitle in an appendix of Macklin's unprinted plays.

[4] George Winchester Stone, *The London Stage* (Carbondale, Ill., 1962), Part 4, 1, 38, 40, 41, 43, 47, 48.

[5] Cf. Alexandre Calame, *Regnard sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris, 1960), pp. 323-333.

[6] See *The London Stage*, Part 3, II, 1287-90, 1297, 1298, 1308, 1309 for the dates when Hoadly's *The Suspicious Husband* and Macklin's THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZ'D were performed close together.

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**A WILL AND NO WILL:**  
**OR**  
**A BONE FOR THE LAWYERS [1]**

**PROLOGUE**

---

DRAMATIS PERSONAE for the Prologue

RATTLE  
SMART  
DULLMAN  
IRISHMAN  
SNARLEWIT

*(The Curtain rises and discovers the Stage disposed in the Form of a Pit and crowded with Actors who make a great Noise by Whistling and Knocking for the Farce to begin)*

*Rattle.* Consume them, why don't they begin?

*Smart.* I suppose some of them that were in the Play are dressing for the Farce.

*Rattle.* Psha! damn the Farce! They have had time enough to dress since the Play has been over.

*Smart.* Dick Rattle, were you at the Boxing Match yesterday?

*Rattle.* No, my Dear, I was at the breakfasting at Ranelagh.—Curse catch me, Jack [2], if that is not a fine Woman in the upper Box there, ha!

*Smart.* So she is, by all that's charming,—but the poor Creature's married; it's all over with her.

*Rattle.* Smart, do you go to Newmarket this meeting,—upon my Soul that's a lovely Woman on the right hand. But what the Devil can this Prologue be about, I can't imagine. It has puzzled the whole Town.

*Smart.* Depend upon it, Dick, it is as I said.

*Rattle.* What's that?

*Smart.* Why one of the Fransique's, the French Harlequin's Jokes; you will find that one of the Players come upon the Stage presently, and make a[n] Apologie that they are disappointed of the Prologue, upon which Macklin, or some other Actor is to start up in the Pit, as one of the Audience, and bawl out that rather than so much good Company should be disappointed, he will speak a Prologue himself.

*Rattle.* No, no, no, Smart. That's not it. I thought of that and have been looking carefully all over the Pit, and there is not an Actor in it. Now I fancy it is to be done like the Wall or the Man in the Moon in Pyramus and Thisbe; Macklin will come in dressed like the Pit and say:

*Ladies and Gentlemen, I am the Pit  
And a Prologue I'll speak if you think fit.*

*Omnnes.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Smart.* By Gad, Rattle, I fancy you have hit it. What do you think, Mr. Dullman?

*Omnnes.* Ay, let us have Mr. Dullman's Opinion of it.

*Dull.* Why really, Gentlemen, I have been thinking of it ever since I first read it in the Papers—and I fancy—though to be sure, it was very difficult to find out—but at last, I think I have hit upon it.

*Smart.* Well, well, my dear Dullman, communicate.

*Dull.* I suppose there is some Person here among us whose name is Pit, and that he will get up presently and speak a Prologue.

*Omnnes.* O, O, O, O, Shocking! Shocking! Well conjectured, Dullman.

*Rattle.* Harkee, Jack, [let's] bam the Irishman. Ask him if he knows anything of it.

*Smart.* Don't you laugh then; he'll smoak us if you do; keep your Countenance, and I'll engage I'll pitch-kettle him. Pray Sir, do you know anything of this Prologue?

*Irish.* Who, me? Not upon my Honour. I know no more of it than he that made it.

*Smart.* A Gentleman was saying just before the Play was over that you were to be the Pit and to speak the Prologue; is there any truth in it, Sir?

*Irish.* No indeed, Sir, *it is as false as the Gospel.* I do assure you, Sir, I never spoke a Pit or Prologue in my Life—but once when I was at School, you must know, Sir,—we acted one of Terence's Tragedies there, so when the Play was over I spoke the Prologue to it.

*Omnes.* Ha! ha! ha! ha!

*Smart.* I remember your Face very well. Pray Sir, don't you belong to the Law?

*Irish.* Yes, at your Service, Sir—and so did my Father and Grandfather before me, and all my Posterity. I myself solicit Cause at the old Bailey and Hick's Hall, so I am come to see this BONE FOR THE LAWYERS, because they say it is a Pun upon us Gentlemen of the long Robe.

*Omnes.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Rattle.* He is a poor ridiculous Fellow, Jack (*aside*); he is as great a Teague as Barrington himself.

*Smart.* Hush! Hush! Pray Sir, may I crave your name?

*Irish.* Yes you may indeed and welcome, Sir. My name is Laughlinbullruderrymackshoughlinbulldowny, at your Service. And if you have any Friend who is indicted for Robbery or Murder at any time or has any other Law Suits upon his Hands at the old Bailey or Hick's Hall, I should be proud to serve you and to be concerned in the Cause likewise.

*Smart.* Whenever I have a Friend in such Circumstances, you may depend upon being retained.

*Irish.* Sir, I'll assure you no megrim. England understands the Practice of those Courts better than myself. I know my Croaker upon all the *In res* and for an Evidence, the Devil a Man in Westminster Hall can tell an Evidence what to say better than I that shits here; or hark you, if you should happen to want a Witness upon Occasion, I believe, Sir, I could serve you.

*Smart.* I am infinitely obliged to you. (*Bowing*)

*Irish.* Sir, I am your most obsequious. (*Bowing*)

*Rattle.* But pray Sir, what kind of Prologue do you think we shall have tonight?

*Irish.* Why I believe it will be a kind of Prologue that will be spoken by the Pit.

*Rattle.* Ay, that we suppose but in what Manner?

*Irish.* Why I am come here on purpose to know that, but I suppose it will be in the manner of—a—a—by my Shoul I don't know how it will be.

*Smart.* Upon my word, Sir, I think you give a very clear Account of it.

*Rattle.* Jack, yonder's Snarlewit, the Poet and intimate Friend of Macklin's; you are acquainted with him. Prithee call him; ten to one but he can give us the History both of the Prologue and the Farce.

*Smart.* Hiss, Mr. Snarlewit, we have Room for you here, if you will come and set by us; do you know Snarlewit, Dick?

*Rattle.* He is a devilish odd Fellow; he is one that never speaks well of any Man behind his back nor ill of him to his Face and is a most terrible Critick.

(SNARLEWIT *steps over the Benches and sits down between RATTLE and SMART*)

*Snarle.* Mr. Smart, your Servant. How do you do, Mr. Rattle? What, you are come to hear the Pit speak the Prologue, I suppose. Ha! Macklin's fine Conceit.

*Smart.* Ay, we are so; do you know anything of it?

*Snarle.* Psha! psha! a parcel of Stuff! a ridiculous Conceit of the Blockhead's in imitation of a French writer who stole it from one of the Greek Comic Poets.

*Smart.* But in what manner is it to be done? Is it in Prose or in Verse, or upon the Stage, or really in the Pit?

*Snarle.* Lord, Sir, the Blockhead brings the Pit upon the Stage; and the supposed Conversation there between the Play and the Farce is to be the Prologue,—a French Conceit calculated merely to raise Curiosity and fill the House, that's all.

*Smart.* Ay, and enough too, if it answers his purpose.

*Irish.* But pray, Sir, with humble Submission, if he brings the Pit up on the Stage, how shall we be

able to see the Farce unless we go up into the Gallery?

*Omnes.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Rattle.* Very well observed, Sir.

*Snarle.* Why this Fellow's an Idiot.

*Smart.* No, no, he is only a Teague. But Mr. Snarlewit, do you think this Prologue will be liked?

*Snarle.* Psha! psha! liked, impossible! So it is for his Wife's Benefit and meant as a Puff to fill her House, why perhaps the Town may be so indulgent as to let it pass—but it is damned Trash! I advised the Fool against it. But he persisted. He said he was sure it would be better liked than the modern dull way of Prologue Writing which for many years has been only to give the Audience an Historical Account of the Comic Stoick or the Tragic Buskin, or a dull detail of the piece they were to see with the Age and Circumstances of the Author, and how long he was writing his Play. Now, says Macklin, my Prologue, Sir, if it has nothing else, it has Novelty on its side; and as Bays says it will elevate and surprize and all that. And if they don't laugh at it as a good Prologue, I am sure, says he, they will laugh at me for its being a bad one—so that either way they will have their Joke.

*Omnes.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Smart.* Ay, ay, there I think he was right; for the Audience will laugh, I make no doubt of it, but it will be at him.

*Omnes.* Right! Right!

*Snarle.* So I told him but he would persist.

*Smart.* But Mr. Snarlewit, how will he answer to the Critics his making the Stage represent the Pit?

*Snarle.* Psha! psha! he is below Criticism; they will never trouble themselves about that. Besides I think he may be defended very justly in that, for if the Stage has a Right to represent Palaces and Countries, nay, and Heaven and Hell, surely it may be allowed to exhibit the Pit.

*Smart.* Do you know anything of the Farce?

*Snarle.* Yes, I have read it.

*Smart.* It is a very odd Title, a Bone for the Lawyers; who is the Author, pray? Is it known?

*Snarle.* Why Macklin gives out that some Gentleman, a Friend of his, has made him a Present of it, but I shrewdly suspect it to be his own.

*Rattle.* Whose! Macklin's?

*Snarle.* Ay!

*Rattle.* Why, can he write?

*Snarle.* Write? Ay, and damnably too, I assure you, ha! ha! He writ a Tragedy this Winter, but so merry a Tragedy was never seen since the first night of Tom Thumb the Great.

*Smart.* I was at it and a merry Tragedy it was and a merry Audience!

*Snarle.* I never laughed so heartily at a Play in my Life; if his Farce has half so much Fun in it as his Tragedy had, I'll engage it succeeds.

*Smart.* Come, come. There was some tolerable Things in his Tragedy.

*Snarle.* Psha! psha! Stuff! Stuff! damned Stuff! Pray Sir, what do you think of Lady Catherine Gordon's Letter to her Father, Lord Huntley, that begun honoured Papa, hoping you are in good Health as I am at this present Writing. There was a Stile for Tragedy!

*Omnes.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Smart.* Well, I wish his Farce may succeed, however.

*Snarle.* O so do I upon my word, Sir.—I have a great Regard for Macklin—but to be sure he is a very egregious Blockhead ever to think of writing; that I believe everybody will allow.

*Omnes.* Ay, ay, there's nobody will dispute that with you, Mr. Snarlewit.

*Snarle.* Notwithstanding he is such a Blockhead, I assure you, Mr. Smart, I have an Esteem for him.

*Smart.* Do you know what Characters or Business he has in his Farce?

*Snarle.* I think his chief Character is an old Fellow, one Sir Isaac Skinflint, who is eaten up with Diseases, and who promises everybody Legacies, but dreads making a Will, for the Instant he does that he thinks he shall die.

*Rattle.* That's a very common Character; my Uncle was just such a superstitious Wretch.

*Snarle.* And the Business of the Farce is to induce this old Fellow to disinherit all his Relations, except a Nephew who wants to be his sole Heir, which according to the Rules of Farce, you may suppose it to be brought about by a Footman who upon these Occasions always has more Wit than his Master.

*Smart.* But when is the Prologue to begin?

*Snarle.* Why as soon as the Curtain is drawn up you will see the Stage disposed in the Form of a Pit, and that you are to imagine the Prologue, and when they let the Curtain down, why then you must suppose it to be ended.

*Smart.* I wonder what the Audience will say when it is over.

*Snarle.* What? Why some will stare and wonder what the Actors have been about, and will still be expecting the Prologue; others will chuckle at their Disappointment, and cry—they knew how it would be; and some will judiciously observe—what better could be expected from a Prologue to be written and spoken by the Pit. But upon the whole, I dare say, ninety nine in a hundred will conclude it to be a parcell of low Stuff—and that its only Merit was the quaintness of the Conceit [which] raised the People's Curiosity and helped to fill the House; and so ends the Prologue—and now let us make a Noise for the Farce.

*(The Curtain is let down)*

---

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

for

A WILL AND NO WILL:

OR A BONE FOR THE LAWYERS

SIR ISAAC SKINFLINT	LADY LOVEWEALTH
BELLAIR	HARRIET
DOCTOR LEATHERHEAD	LUCY
COUNCELLOUR CORMORANT	
MR. LITTLEWIT	
MONSIEUR DU MAIGRE	
MR. DEATH	
SHARK	
SERVANT	

ACT I

*(Enter SHARK and LUCY—meeting)*

*Shark.* Good morrow, Lucy.

*Lucy.* Good morrow, Shark.

*Shark.* Give me a Kiss, Hussy. *(Kisses her)*

*Lucy.* Psha—pritheee don't touzle and mouzle a Body so; can't you salute without rumpling one's Tucker and spoiling one's Things? I hate to be tumbled. *(Adjusting herself)*

*Shark.* Ay, as much as you do Flattery or a looking Glass.

*Lucy.* Well, what's your Business this Morning? Have you any Message?

*Shark.* Yes, the old one: my Master's Duty to his gracious Uncle, Sir Isaac Skinflint, and he hopes he rested well last night—that is, to translate it out of the Language of Compliment into that of Sincerity, he hopes the old Huncks has made his Will, my Master his sole Heir, that he has had a very bad Night, and is within a few Hours of giving up the Ghost and paying a Visit to his old friend Belzebub.



*Lucy.* We were afraid he would have gone off last night; he has had two of his Epileptic Feasts.

*Shark.* Why sure the old Cannibal would not offer to make his Exit without making his Will; that would ruin us all.

*Lucy.* Nay it would be a considerable Loss to me should he die without a Will: for you know he has promised me a handsome Legacy.

*Shark.* And so he has to Thousands, my Dear; why, Child, I don't believe he has spent thirty Shillings upon himself in Food for these thirty years; all gratis, all upon the Spunge. Ay, ay, let Sir Isaac Skinflint alone for mumping a Dinner. There has not been a Churchwarden's or an Overseer's Feast these twenty years but what he has been at. And when he is not at these Irish meals, he is preying upon his Friends and Acquaintances, and promises them all Legacies. "Well," he says, after he has filled his Paunch,—"I shall not forget you. I shall remember all my Friends. I have you down in my Will." Then he claps his hand upon the Servant's Head as he is going out—"I shall think of you too, John. You are my old Friend"—but the Devil a Louse he gives him; an old gouty Rogue! I'll warrant the old Hypocrite has promised more Legacies than the Bank of England is able to pay. Has he made any mention lately of his Nephew and Niece in the Country, Sir Roger Bumper and his Sister?

*Lucy.* He expects them in Town today, or tomorrow at farthest, and I believe he intends to make them joint Heirs with your Master.

*Shark.* He may intend it, but shall not accomplish it, take my word; if he does I'll never plot again. You say he has never seen neither the Nephew nor the Niece since they were Children?

*Lucy.* Never.

*Shark.* Then he shall see them in my proper Person before he sleeps, and if I don't make him disinherit them, say I am a Fool and know nothing of Mankind.

*Lucy.* Here your Master comes.

*Shark.* He's welcome.

(*Enter BELLAIR*)

*Bell.* O Lucy, we are all undone.

*Lucy.* Bless us; what's the matter, Sir?

*Bell.* I am just come from my Lady Lovewearth's, who, to my great Surprise, has assured me that my Addresses to her Daughter for the future will be highly improper, for that my Uncle had not only refused to make such a Settlement on me as she liked, but had resolved to marry Harriet himself.

*Lucy.* Pray Sir, what says the young Lady to all this?

*Bell.* She seems to comply with her Mother's avaricious Temper, but has vowed to me privately that should matters be brought to an Extremity, she will never consent.

*Lucy.* You, Sir, must act the same part; seem to approve of the Marriage by all means, for the more you oppose, the more violent they will be. Trust the affair to Shark and me, and I'll engage we bring you together in spite of Age and Avarice. I'll give the young Lady a hint or two, which I believe will cure the old Fellow of his Lovefit! Shark, go you and prepare your Disguises; do you act the Nephew and the Niece well and I'll warrant everything else shall thrive. (*Exit Shark*)

*Bell.* Dear Girl, the moment my Affairs are brought to bear, you may depend upon the five hundred pounds I promised you.—Is my Uncle up yet?

*Lucy.* He has been up this Hour—here he comes; be sure you comply with him, let him say what he will.

(*Enter SKINFLINT dressed in a Nightgown, a fur Nightcap, his hands muffled in Flannel, his feet in gouty Shoes*)

*Bell.* A good morning to you, Sir.

*Skin.* A good morning to you, Nephew. Auh! auh!

*Bell.* I am sorry to hear, Sir, you have had so bad a Night.

*Skin.* I had indeed, Nephew; I was afraid it was all over. Such another Fit would carry me off. Auh! auh!

*Bell.* But you are pretty well this morning, I hope, Sir.

*Skin.* Something better but very weak—very faint indeed, Nephew! O—o—o, very faint.

*Bell.* You should take something comfortable, Sir—Cordials to repair the breaches you Illness hath made.

*Skin.* Lord, Nephew, it would require such a monstrous deal of Money, and really these Syringe Carriers and Glyster Baggs and Doctors give themselves such Airs, that a Man can't have their Assistance, nor any of their Druggs and Slops under their Weight in Gold; therefore, I think, Nephew, since we are to dye we had better save our Money.

*Bell.* I grant you, Sir, the Fees of Surgeons and Physicians are exorbitant,—yet as Health and Life are our most valuable Blessings, we might lay a little out in Support of them—I mean in Cases of very great Danger.

*Skin.* No, no, the—auh, auh!—the Tenement is not worth the Repairs—auh—auh—I am like an old House that is ready to drop—the first high Wind, down I shall go—the next fit will carry me off.

*Bell.* Heaven forbid, Sir.

*Skin.* Therefore, I am resolved—auh! to settle my Affairs this very day. You know, Nephew, you were talking of Harriet, my Lady Lovewealth's Daughter; but my Lady truly will not consent to the Match, unless I make you my sole Heir, which you know, Child, cannot be, as I have another Nephew and a Niece, Sir Roger Bumper and his Sister, whom I intend to provide for.

*Bell.* Very true, Sir.

*Skin.* And so—Harry—as my Lady and I could not hit it off in regard to you—she hath persuaded me to marry the Girl myself; what is your Judgment of it, Nephew? ha!

*Bell.* If you like it, Sir, there can be no Objection to it.

(*Enter a SERVANT*)

*Serv.* Sir, there is Mr. Littlewit, the Proctor, come to know your Commands.

*Skin.* Desire him to walk in.

(*Exit Servant*)

(*Enter Mr. LITTLEWIT*)

So Mr. Littlewit, I have sent for you upon a Business which will perhaps surprize you; it is to draw up my marriage Articles.

*Little.* What between you and Death, I suppose. Ha! Your Will, I reckon you mean.

*Skin.* Dear Mr. Littlewit, your Jest is very ill timed; I mean, Sir, my marriage Articles with Harriet Lovewealth, and at the same time I intend to make my Will too; here are the Directions in this Paper for both; and let them be drawn up as soon as possible and looked over by my old Friend, Doctor Leatherhead; and pray bring him with you this Afternoon.

*Little.* Sir, your Directions shall be observed with Punctuality and Expedition.

(*Exit*)

*Skin.* So you approve of my Marriage, you say, Nephew?

*Bell.* I think it the best thing you can do, Sir.

*Skin.* Why, Nephew, notwithstanding—I am so shattered with Age—and Infirmities—I assure you I have more Vigour than People imagine; what think you, Lucy?

*Lucy.* Your Eyes, Sir, look very sparkling and lively—but I think a—um—your other parts are not quite so brisk.

*Skin.* Why ay, 'tis true, my other parts are a little—a little morbific or so, as the Doctors say; but Harriet is very young, and she will be a charming Bedfellow. Besides, Nephew, I have a great Satisfaction in Disappointing my Crew of Relations, who have been like as many Undertakers for these twenty years past, enquiring not after my Health but my Death; but I'll be revenged on them. I will have the Pleasure of sending for 'em all, one by one, and assuring them I will not leave a single Shilling among them.

(*Enter a SERVANT*)

*Serv.* Sir, My Lady Lovewealth and her Daughter are come to wait on you.

*Skin.* Odso. I did not expect them so soon—Stay, stay, Boy; don't shew them up yet; my Mistress must not find me in this Pickle. Go you down, Lucy, and shew them into the Parlour, but return directly and help to dress me. (*Exeunt Lucy and Servant*) Come, Nephew, help me off with this Gown and Cap; let me make myself as agreeable as I can for my Mistress. Gently, gently, Child, have a care, have a care of my Hand (*pulling off the Gown*)! Oh! Oh! Oh! you have touched my gouty Finger. (*Enter Lucy*) Come hither, Lucy, do you dress me; you are most used to it. Are my Flannels warm?

*Lucy.* Here, here, all roasted—they have been at the Fire these three Hours. (*Lucy and Bellair*

*dress him up like a ridiculous old man; they put a heap of Flannels on him, then his Clothes, and a ridiculous Tye Wig)*

*Skin.* Well, how do I look now? Pretty well, ha?

*Bell.* Very well, Sir, and very genteel.

*Skin.* Now shew the Ladies up, Lucy. I protest this dressing hath fatigued me, auh! auh! auh!  
(*coughing*)

*Lucy.* (To *Bellair* as she goes out) I have hinted something to Harriet which I believe will break off the Match infallibly. (Exit)

*Skin.* Nephew, notwithstanding, auh!—This Marriage, I shall make a handsome Provision for you.

*Bell.* Sir, your Health and Happiness are my chiefest Blessings.

(Enter *Lady LOVEWEALTH*, *HARRIET* and *LUCY*)

*Lad.* Sir Isaac Skinflint, I am glad to see you up and dressed this morning. We had a report in our Neighbourhood that you died last Night.

*Skin.* Ay, Madam, Envious Wretches who expect Legacies—and who wish me in my Grave—spread it abroad—'tis true I was a little out of order last Night, but I'm mighty well today. Auh! Auh! Extremely well. Auh! Auh! Lucy, give me a little of that Hartshorn.

*Bell.* Upon my word, Sir, I never saw you look better. Pray young Lady, what do you think?

*Har.* Indeed, Sir, I think the Gentleman looks extremely gay and healthy.

*Skin.* I should be very ill indeed, Madam, if such powerful Eyes as yours could not give me new Life. (*Bowing very low*)

*Har.* O Sir, your Servant. (*Curtsying very low*)

*Lad.* Very gallant indeed, Sir.

*Skin.* Yes, Madam, you will be a Medea's Kettle to me from [whence] I shall receive new Vigour. Your Charms will be a vivifying Nostrum to the morbidic parts, which Infirmary and Age have laid hold of. You will be an Inlap to my Heart—and my Marriage will be an infallible Specific which I shall take as my last Remedy.—Give me a little of that Cordial.

*Har.* Sir, whatever commands my Lady thinks proper to lay on me, I shall think it my Duty to give them an implicit Obedience. (*She curtsies all the while. Skin. bows*)

*Lad.* You see, Sir Isaac, my Daughter is entirely directed by my Will; so if you are ready to fulfill the Agreement, that is to settle a thousand pounds a year on her during your own Life, and your whole Fortune in Reversion upon your Decease, she is ready to marry you.

*Skin.* Madam, I am as ready as she, and have given orders to my Lawyer to draw up the Articles for that purpose with the utmost Expedition, and I expect them to be brought every moment ready to sign.

*Lad.* Then, Harriet, I will leave you here, Child, while I call upon my Lawyer in Lincoln's Inn, who is to peruse the Writings.—Mrs. Lucy, pray will you let one of your Men order my Coach up to the Door. (Exit *Lucy*)

Sir Isaac Skinflint, your Servant. Mr. Bellair, yours. (Exit)

*Skin.* [To Harriet] Come Madam, let not these naughty Flannels disgust you; I can pull 'em off upon—um—ahu—certain Occasions. I shall look better in a few days.

*Har.* Better! That's impossible, Sir, you can't look better.

*Skin.* O Lord, Madam! (*Bowing*)

*Har.* (*Takes him by the hand*) There, there's a Figure; do but view him. Sir, I never saw a finer Figure for a Shroud and Coffin in my Life.

*Skin.* Madam! (*starting*)

*Har.* I say, Sir, you are a most enchanting Figure for a Shroud and Coffin.

*Skin.* Shroud and Coffin! (*He walks off! She after him*)

*Har.* Well I can't help admiring your Intrepidity, Sir Isaac; o' my Conscience, you have more Courage than half the young Fellows in Town. Why what a Don Quixot are you to venture that shattered, shabby, crazy Carcass of yours into a Marriage Bed with a hale Constitution of Nineteen!

*Skin.* Why really, Madam—

*Har.* Why really, Sir, you'll repent it.

*Skin.* I believe it, I believe it, Madam.

*Har.* What you, who are a gouty, cholicky, feverish, paralytick, hydropic, asthmatic, and a thousand Diseases besides, venture to light Hymen's Torch! Why, Sir, it is perfect Madness; it is making but one Step from your Wedding to your Grave. Pray Sir, how long do you expect to live?

*Skin.* Not long I am sure if I marry you.

*Har.* You are in the right on't, Sir; it will not be consistent with my Pleasure or my Interest that you should live above a Fortnight; um—ay, in about a Fortnight I can do it. Let me see; ay, it is but pulling away a Pillow in one of your coughing Fits—or speaking properly to your Apothecary—a very little Ratsbane or Laudanum will do the Business!

*Skin.* O monstrous!

*Bell.* Madam, this is a behaviour unbecoming the Daughter of Lady Lovewealth, and what I am confident her Ladyship will highly resent.

*Har.* You are mistaken, Sir; my Lady has consented to his Death in a Fortnight after our Marriage.

*Skin.* O lud! O lud!

*Har.* She begged hard for a Month, but I could not agree to it; so now the only Dispute between us is whether he shall be poisoned or strangled.

*Skin.* O horrid! O terrible! So then it was agreed between you that I should be sent out of the World one way or t'other.

*Har.* Yes Sir. What other Treatment could you expect, you who are a mere walking Hospital! an Infirmary! O shocking! Ha! ha! There's a Figure to go to bed with. *(Pointing at him and bursting into a Laugh)*

*Skin.* I shall choke with Rage. Auh! Auh!

*Bell.* Madam, I cannot stand by and see this Treatment.—If you use him thus before Marriage, what ought he to expect after it?

*Har.* What? Why I have told him, Death! Death! Death!

*Skin.* Ay, you have indeed, Madam, and I thank you for it, but it shall never be in your Power, either to strangle or poison me. Auh! Auh! I would as soon marry a she Dragon; Nephew, I beg you will turn her out—see her out of the House, pray.

*Bell.* Madam, let me beg you will shorten your Visit.

*Har.* O Sir, with all my Heart; I see you are a Confederate with your Uncle in this Affair, but I shall insist upon his Promise of Marriage; I can prove it, and assure yourself, Sir, if there be Law in Westminster Hall or Doctors Commons, you shall hear from me, and so your Servant, Sir.

*Skin.* Dear Nephew, see her out of the House; she has almost worried me to Death. *(Sits down)* *(Goes off in a Passion)*  
*(Exit Bellair)*

*(Enter LUCY)*

*Skin.* O Lucy, give me a little Inlap or Hartshorn or something to raise my Spirits. Had ever Man so happy an Escape?

*Lucy.* Ay, Sir, you'd say it was a happy Escape indeed, if you knew all; why Sir, it is whispered everywhere that she had an Intrigue last Summer at Scarborough with a Captain of Horse.

*Skin.* I don't in the least doubt it; she who could give Ratsbane or Laudanum to her Husband, I believe would not hesitate at a little Fornication.

*(SHARK without, dressed like a Fox Hunter, drunk, knocking very loud and hollowing)*

*Shar.* Haux, haux, haux, my Honies, Heyhe! House, where the Devil are you all?

*Skin.* Bless us, who is it knocks so? *([knocking] within)*

*Lucy.* The Lord knows, Sir, some Madman I believe—It is Shark, I suppose. *(Aside)*

*(Enter SHARK)*

*Shar.* Hey House! Family! Where are you all?

*Lucy.* What do you want, Sir?

*Shar.* What's that to you, Hussy? Where's Skinflint?

*Lucy.* Skinflint!

*Shar.* Ay, Skinflint.

*Lucy.* There is my Master, Sir Isaac Skinflint, in that great Chair.

*Shar.* (*Going up to him looking in his Face and laughing*) A damned odd Sort of a Figure: a cursed queer old Fellow to look at. Is your name Skinflint?

*Skin.* It is, Sir.

*Shar.* Then give me you Hand, old Boy. (*Shakes him by the Flannels*)

*Skin.* Hold, hold, Sir, you'll kill me if you han't a Care.

*Shar.* So much the better; the sooner you die the better for me.

*Skin.* For you? Pray, Sir, who are you?

*Shar.* Your Nephew who has rid a hundred Miles on purpose to take Possession of your Estate.

*Skin.* Are you my Nephew?

*Shar.* Yes, Sir.

*Skin.* I am sorry for it.

*Shar.* My Name is Bumper; my Father, Sir Barnaby Bumper, took to Wife a Lady who as I have been told was your Sister; which said Sister, Sir, brought me into the World in less than four Months after her Marriage.

*Skin.* In four Months?

*Shar.* Yes, Sir, My Father was a little displeas'd with it at first; but upon his being inform'd that such forward Births were frequent in your Family, he was soon reconcil'd to it.

*Skin.* They belied our Family, Sir—for our Family—

*Shar.* Hush! hush! Don't expose them. They were always a damned whoring Family; I must confess I have frequently blush'd at the quickness of my Mother's conception, for it has often been thrown in my Teeth; but since it has made me your Heir, that will set me above the Disgrace.

*Skin.* My Heir!

*Shar.* Ay, your Heir, Sir. I am come to Town on purpose to take Possession. We had an Account in the Country that you were dead.

*Skin.* And I suppose you are not a little mortifi'd to find the Report is false, ha?

*Shar.* Why, I am sorry to find you alive, I must confess. I was in hopes to have found you stretch'd out and ready for the black Gentleman to say Grace over you.

*Skin.* Sir, your Servant.

*Shar.* May the strawberry Mare knock up the next hard Chace if I have not ridden as hard to be at your Earthing as ever I did to be in at the Death of a Fox.

*Skin.* It was most affectionately done of you, Nephew, and I shall remember you for it.—A Villain! I'll not leave him a Groat. (*Aside*)

*Shar.* However since you are alive, Uncle, I am glad to see you look so ill.

*Skin.* I am very much oblig'd to you, Nephew. (*Aside to Lucy*) Was there ever such a Reprobate, Lucy?

*Shar.* They tell me you have a damned deal of money that you have got by Extortion and Usury and Cheating of Widows and Orphans to whom you have been Guardian and Executor, ha—but I suppose you intend every Grig of it for me, ha! Old Boy, I'll let it fly. I'll release the yellow Sinners from their Prisons; they shall never be confin'd by me.

*Skin.* I believe you, Nephew.

*Shar.* But harkee you, Uncle, my Sister is come to Town too, and she thinks to come in for Snacks—but not a Grig—d'ye hear—not a Grig—I must have every Souse—Cousin Bellair too, that Prig, I hear, is looking out Sharp—but if you leave a Denier to any of them without my Consent you shall be buried alive in one of your own iron Chests, and sent as a present to your old Friend Belzebub.

*Skin.* To be sure, Nephew, you are so very dutiful and affectionate that I shall be entirely directed by you. *Lucy, (Aside to Lucy)* I am afraid this Villain is come to murder me; step in and call Bellair this Instant. *(Exit Lucy)* Pray Nephew, how long have you been in Town?

*Shar.* I came to Town late last Night—and hearing you were alive, I was resolved I would not sleep 'till I had seen you. So I went amongst the Coffee Houses at Covent Garden where I made a charming Riot; I fought a Duel, beat the Watch, kicked the Bawds, broke their Punch Bowls, clapt an old Market Woman upon her Head in the middle of a Kennel, bullied a Justice, and made all the Whores as drunk—

*Skin.* As yourself, I suppose. Upon my word, Nephew, you have made good use of your time since you have been in Town.

*Shar.* Ay, han't I, old Skinflint? Zounds I love a Riot; don't you love a Riot, Uncle?

*Skin.* O most passionately.

*Shar.* Give me your Hand. *(Slaps him upon the Shoulder)* Old Boy, I love you for that.

*Skin.* O, O, O, O, he has killed me; I am murdered.

*Shar.* Rot your old crazy Carcass, what do you cry out for, ha?

*Skin.* O, O, O, I can't bear to be touched.

*Shar.* O, O, Oh! Damn you, why don't you die then? Harkee Uncle, how long do you intend to live? Ha! I'll allow you but three days, and if you don't die in that time, dead or alive, I'll have you buried. For I am resolved not to stir out of Town 'till I see that Bag of Bones of yours, that old rotten Carcass pailed up between four substantial Elms and laid twenty foot deep in the Earth, and then light lie the Turf, and flourish long Bow. Toll, loll, de doll, ha! ha! Uncle, I'll take care of your safe Passage to Pluto, never fear.

*Skin.* Had ever Man such a Reprobate Relation? O the Villain!

*(Enter Mr. DEATH)*

*Shar.* O Mr. Death, your Servant.

*Death.* I am come, Sir, according to your Commands; pray which is the Gentleman I am to take Measure of?

*Shar.* That old Prig in the Chair there.

*Death.* Sir, your humble Servant.

*Skin.* Sir, your Servant. What are your Commands with me?

*Death.* Sir, my Name is Death.

*Skin.* Death!

*Death.* Yes Sir, at your Service, Dismal Death of—pretty well known in this City.

*Skin.* And pray Mr. Dismal Death, what do you want with me?

*Death.* I am come to take measure of you for a Coffin.

*Skin.* What! How!

*Shar.* Yes you old Prig, I ordered him to take Measure of you and Measure he shall take this Instant; do you hear, Mr. Death, measure him, measure the old Prig; I'll hold him fast.

*(SHARK lays hold of him while Mr. DEATH measures him)*

*Skin.* Are you going to murder me? You Villain! Here Lucy, Nephew, Murder!

*(Enter LUCY and BELLAIR)*

*Bell.* How now, what's the matter? Are you going to rob my Uncle?

*Death.* No, no, Sir, we are only taking Measure of him for a Coffin.

*Skin.* O Nephew, they have almost killed me! Here is your cousin Bumper come to take Possession of my Fortune whether I will or no; and [he] has brought a frightful Fellow to take Measure of me for a Coffin and Shroud, and swears he will bury me within these three days, dead or alive.

*Bell.* Are not you ashamed, Cousin Bumper, to use our Uncle so inhumanly?

*Shar.* Damn you Prig, have you a mind to resent it? If you have, lug out, and I'll soon dispatch you. *(Draws)*

*Skin.* Was there ever such a bloody minded Villain? Dear Nephew, come in with me; I'll do his Business for him in a more effectual way than fighting. I'll swear the Peace against him and make my Will, without leaving him a Shilling. (*Exit with Bellair*)

*Shar.* So far the Plow speeds. I think we have done Mr. Bumper's Business for him. That Obstacle is pretty well removed—We have nothing to do now but to provide for his Sister the Widow, and then to contrive some means to frighten the old Fellow into a Will in favour of my Master.

*Lucy.* Ay, Shark, that is the chiefest Difficulty, the Masterpiece, and unless you accomplish that you do nothing.

*Shar.* I know it, my Dear; here, here (*pointing to his head*), here, here—the Embryo is here, and will come forth perfect in less than ten Minutes. Why Lucy, I have a Genius to Deceit, and wanted nothing but an Opportunity to shew it.

*Lucy.* I think you have a very fair one now.

*Shar.* I have so, and never fear, Girl, I'll engage I make a proper use of it. Lord, how many great Men have been lost for want of being thrown into a proper light? On my Conscience, had I been bred in a Court, I believe I should have made as great a Figure as ever Cromwell did, for

*The Stateman's Skill like mine is all Deceit  
What's Policy in him—in me's a Cheat.  
Titles and Wealth reward his noble Art,  
Cudgels and Bruises mine—sometimes a Cart.  
Twas, is and will he, to the End of Time,  
That Poverty not Fraud creates the Crime.*

(*Exeunt*)

## A C T I I

(*Enter BELLAIR and LUCY*)

*Bell.* What Coach was that stopt at the Door?

*Lucy.* My Lady Lovewealth's, Sir. I told her Miss Harriet was gone home, and that my Master was gone out in a Chair to some of his Lawyers, for I could not let her see Sir Isaac.

*Bell.* You were right, Lucy. Where is Shark?

*Lucy.* In my Room, Sir, dressing for the Widow.

(*SKINFLINT within*)

*Skin.* Lucy, why Lucy, ugh, ugh, where are you, Wench?

*Bell.* I'll leave you with my Uncle, Lucy, while I step up and hasten Shark. (*Exit [Bellair]*)

(*Enter SKINFLINT*)

*Skin.* Here, Lucy, tye up me Affairs; they are loose and falling about my Heels.

*Lucy.* They are always loose, I think.

*Skin.* Lucy, did not I send for Monsieur du Maigre, the Apothecary?

*Lucy.* Yes Sir, and he will be here presently. (*Knocking*) Hark, this is he I suppose.

*Skin.* Go see; if it is, send him up. (*Exit Lucy*) What an insupportable Vexation Riches are; all my Relations are watching and hovering about me like so many Crows about a dead Carrion; even Bellair, who behaves the best of them all, has a Hawk's Eye, I see, after my Will and advises me in a sly indirect manner to the making of it. A Parent is used by an Heir just as a Virgin is by a Rake; before we have parted with our Treasure, we are adored, we are Gods and Goddesses, but as soon as that is over, we become as troublesome to them as an evil Conscience. I'll keep my money to save my poor Soul, for to be sure I have got a great deal of it in an unfair manner; therefore in order to make my Peace hereafter, I'll leave it to build an Almshouse.

(*Enter LUCY*)

*Lucy.* Sir, there's a Lady in deep Mourning below, who says she is your Niece.

*Skin.* If she is such a Canary Bird as her Brother that was here today, she may go to the Devil; however shew her up. (*Exit Lucy*)

She may be the reverse of him; we ought not to condemn a whole Family for one bad Person.

(Enter LUCY, showing in SHARK who is dressed in Weeds)

Lucy. Madam, this is your Uncle.

Shar. Sir, I have not the Honour to be known to you, but the Report of your Death has brought me to Town, to testify the Duty and Affection of an unworthy Niece for the best of Uncles.

Skin. A good well bred kind of a Woman. (*Aside to Lucy*) Ay, this is something like a Relation.

Lucy. I shall hear you sing another tune presently. (*Aside*)

Skin. Pray Niece, give me leave to salute you. You are welcome to London. (*Kisses him*) My Eyes are but bad—yet I think I can discover a strong Resemblance of my Sister in you. (*Peering in his Face*)

Shar. Yes Sir, I was reckoned very like my Mama before I was married, but frequent Child bearing you know, Sir, will alter a Woman strangely for the worse.

Skin. It will so, Niece; you are a Widow I perceive.

Shar. Yes Sir, an unfortunate Widow (*Weeps*). I never had a dry Eye since my Husband died.

Skin. Pray Niece, what did your Husband die of?

Shar. He broke his Neck a Fox Hunting.

Skin. Good lack, good lack! That was dreadful.

Shar. Ay Sir, and tho' I was but one and twenty when he died, he left me both a Widow and a Mother; so early a Grief you may be sure must have robbed me of my Bloom and has broke me mightily.

Skin. As you were a Widow, Niece, at one and twenty, I don't suppose your Husband left you many Children.

Shar. Fifteen, Sir.

Skin. Fifteen, Niece! (*Starting*)

Shar. Ay, fifteen, Sir; I was married at fourteen.

Skin. That was very young, Niece.

Shar. It was so, Sir; but young Girls can't keep now adays, so I ran away with him from the Boarding School. I had two Children by him every ten months for six Years, and I had three by him the seventh.

Skin. Upon my word you are a very good Breeder.

Shar. Yes Sir, I was always accounted so; besides, Sir, I have had two by him since his Death.

Skin. How, Madam, since his Death.

Shar. Yes Sir, and I am afraid I shall have some more, for a Word in your Ear, Sir—I find I am coming again, Sir. [3]

Skin. O Fye, Niece, O fye, fye—why Lucy, this Woman is as bad as her Brother.

Lucy. Indeed Sir, I am afraid so. (*Aside*)

Skin. But I'll try her a little further. Pray Niece, who has been your Companion *and* *Bedfellow* for these two years past? For I presume you have not lain alone.

Shar. O Lord, Sir, not for the World! You must know, Uncle, I am greatly addicted to be afraid of Spirits, Ghosts, Witches, and Fairies, and so to prevent terrifying Dreams and Apparitions, *I took a Religious Gentleman, a very good Man to bed with me—an Itinerant Methodist, one Doctor Preach Field.*

Skin. Doctor Preach Field. I have heard of him.

Shar. O he's a very good man, Uncle, I assure you, *and very full of the Spirit.*

Skin. Lucy, have not I got a hopeful parcel of Relations? (*Aside*)

Lucy. Indeed Sir, I think this Lady is not extremely modest. (*Aside*)

Skin. Why she ought to be whipped at the Cart's Tail (*Aside*); pray Niece, have not you a Brother in Town?

Shar. Yes Sir; he and I beat the Watch last night at Tom Kings.



*Skin.* O Monstrous! beat the Watch, Madam!

*Shar.* Yes Sir, and broke all the Lamps in the Parish.

*Skin.* Very pretty Employment for a Lady truly, and so, Madam, you came to Town merely to shew your Duty and Affection to me.

*Shar.* Yes Sir, and in hopes to be your Heir; we had a Report in the Country that you was Defunct; and I was in hopes to have found it true.

*Skin.* I am obliged to you, Madam.

*Shar.* There is another thing we have very current in the Country. I do not know how true it is.

*Skin.* What is it, I pray?

*Shar.* I have been told, Uncle, and from very good Hands, that you are little better than a Thief.

*Skin.* Madam!

*Shar.* And that you got all your Fortune by biting and sharping, extortion and cheating.

*Skin.* Harkee Madam, get out of my House this Minute, or I will order somebody to throw you out of the Window.

*Shar.* I have heard too that for several years past, you have been an old Fornicator, and that you have led a most wicked Life with this Girl.

*Lucy.* With me, Madam?

*Shar.* Yes, you naughty Creature, and *that your Fornication would have had carnal symptoms, but that he took most unnatural methods to prevent your Pregnancy.*

*Skin.* Get out of my Doors this Minute.

*Shar.* Sir, you are an uncivil Gentleman to bid me get out, but I find you are as great a Rogue as the most malicious Report can make you.

*Skin.* Get out of my House, I say!

*Shar.* Well, I'll go, Sir, but depend upon it you shall not live many Days after this. I'll be the Death of you, if there are no more Uncles in the World.

*Lucy.* Slip up the back stairs to my Room and I'll come and undress you. (*Aside to him as she thrusts him off*) Get you out, you wicked Woman, get you out. (*Exit Shark*)

*Skin.* Was ever Man so hope up with such a parcel of Relations! Make them my Heirs! I would as soon leave my Money to a Privateer's Crew; and I verily believe they would be as thankful and make as good a use of it.—I have been so worried and teased by them all, that I am not able to support any longer—I must go in and lye down. Support me, Lucy, or I shall fall; I am quite faint. Oh, oh! (*Exeunt*)

(*Enter BELLAIR*)

*Bell.* So! Thus far all goes well. Shark has been as successful in his Widow as his Fox. We have routed the Family of the Bumpers. There is nothing now to apprehend from that Quarter. But the main Difficulty is yet behind, which is to induce him to make his Will, for without that my Lady Lovewearth's Avarice never will consent to make my dearest Harriet mine.

(*Enter LUCY*)

*Lucy.* O Sir, we are all undone!

*Bell.* Why what's the matter?

*Lucy.* Your Uncle, Sir, is dead.

*Bell.* Dead!

*Lucy.* Ay, dead, Sir! Shark with his Tricks and Rogueries has so teased him that having with much ado got into his Chamber, down he fell upon the Bed, and there he lies without either Motion, Voice, Sense, Pulse or Understanding.

*Bell.* The very means I took to succeed have infallibly ruined me.

(*Enter SHARK*)

*Shar.* Is he gone? Is the coast clear?

*Bell.* So Villain, your Schemes and Plots have a fine Conclusion, Rascal.

*Shar.* A fine Conclusion, Rascal! I don't know what conclusion they have, but I am sure it can't be worse than this Reward; pray Sir, what has happened?

*Bell.* Why you have killed my Uncle, Villain, and ruined me forever.

*Shar.* What! Is the old Fellow dead?

*Bell.* Yes, Rascal, and without a Will.

*Shar.* This is now an Instance of the Judgment and Gratitude of Mankind; if I had succeeded, I should have been a second Machiavel, and my dear Shark, I shall be ever obliged to you—but now I am a Rascal and a Son of a Whore, a Blockhead and deserve my Bones broke.

*Bell.* Well Sir, no upbraiding now, but tell what is to be done.

*Shar.* What's to be done? What should be done, Sir. Break open his Coffers, his Cabinet, his Strong Box, seize upon his Mortgage Deeds, and Writings, but above all take a particular Care of the Bank Bills, and the ready Cash. I have a great Veneration for them; they will tell no tales to your Fellow Heirs, and as the old Man has bit you, why do you plunder them. Do you take Possession and I'll engage I procure a Lawyer who shall prove it to be something more than eleven points of the Law.

*Bell.* But then my Harriet, Shark! Without her the Wealth of Mexico is useless and insipid.

*Shar.* Upon my Soul, Sir, begging your Pardon, you make as ridiculous a Figure in this Business as a disappointed Lover in a Play; why Sir, our Farce is now in the very Height of the Plot, and it is impossible you can have your Mistress 'till it be ended.

*Bell.* Nor then either I am afraid.

*Shar.* Lord, Sir, you are too hasty. You are like the ignorant part of an Audience the first night of a new Play; you will have things brought about before their time. Go and take Possession of the Assets, I tell you, and leave the rest to the Devil and the Law. Get them on our side, and I'll engage you prosper in any Roguery.

*Bell.* Well, I'll go—but I see no glimmering of hope from it. (*Exit Bellair*)

*Shar.* Lucy, do you shut up all the Windows and lock up the door.

*Lucy.* That's impossible, for Mr. Littlewit and Doctor Leatherhead are below with the Marriage Articles.

*Shar.* O the Devil! Then we are all ruined again. Hold—ha—ay—I have a thought. Lucy, do the Lawyers know of the old Man's Death?

*Lucy.* Not a word. They are but this minute come in.

*Shar.* Then keep it an entire Secret—I'll clinch the whole Affair this Instant.—Get me the old Man's Gown—and Cap—his Slippers, his Pillow, his Flannels and all his Trumpery.

*Lucy.* Here they all are upon the Table where he shifted.

*Shar.* Give 'em me, quick, quick—ask no questions—so—now my Cap—my gouty Slippers, my Flannels for my hands, here, here, pin them on, pin them on, quick—quick, so! And now my great Chair—and now I am damnable ill—O sick, sick,—Auh—Auh—Auh! Go and tell my Master how I am transmogrified, do you hear, and bid him not be surprized let what will happen, but first send up the Lawyers. (*Exit Lucy*) Lawyers have often made false Wills for their own Interests, and I see no reason now why they mayn't make one for mine. I am sure I have as good a Title to be a Rogue as any of them all, for my Father was an Irish Solicitor, my Mother a Yorkshire Gipsy, I was begotten in Wales, born in Scotland, and brought up at that famous University of St. Giles pound, and now he who has a better Right to be a Rogue than me, let him put in his Claim. Tho' I believe nobody will dispute it with me, it is all my own today; when I come to Westminster Hall I'll resign.

(*Enter BELLAIR, LUCY, Doctor LEATHERHEAD, and Mr. LITTLEWIT, [with] Pens, Ink, Papers, Candles, etc., etc.*)

*Shar.* So Gentlemen, when I sent for you in the Morning, I was foolish enough to think of Marriage, but Heaven pardon me, I must now think of Death, of my poor precious Soul. I must desire you to get my Will ready as soon as possible, for I fear my poor fleeting Life is not worth half an Hour's purchase.

*Doct.* The sooner it is done, the better; it may procure you Ease and Consolation of mind.

*Shar.* Dear Doctor Leatherhead, hold your Tongue; the less you talk, the more it will be to the purpose, I am sure. Nephew, draw near. Lucy, take those Candles out of my Eyes, and shut that Door.

*Lucy.* Sir, my Lady Lovewalth has sent her Daughter to wait on you, and my Lady will be here

herself immediately.

*Shar.* Very well, let my wife that was to be come up—and let her know how Affairs are, Lucy.  
(*Aside to Lucy*) (*Exit Lucy*)

*Little.* (*At the Table writing*) Um, um, Sir Isaac Skinflint of the Parish of um—sound sense—um weak in Body—uncertainty of human Life—um—last Will and Testament—Now Sir, we are ready; I have finished the Preamble.

*Doct.* But Sir Isaac, should not this Will be made in Private? We always choose to have as few Witnesses by as possible.

*Shar.* I believe you, Doctor Leatherhead, that they may produce the more Law Suits. Ay, ay, Doctor, I know the tricks of the Law; the more Grist, the more Toll for the Miller—but you shall not fill your Bags out of my Sack, you Harpies, you Cormorants, you Devourers! O you Bloodsuckers! Auh, auh!

*Doct.* I find Sir Isaac still the same Man.

*Little.* No matter, Doctor; as it is the last Business we shall do for him, he shall pay swingingly.

*Shar.* I will make my Will simple and plain, and before many Witnesses.

(*Enter HARRIET*)

So Harriet, you are come to see the last of the old Man—well I forgive you your Raillery today—come kiss me, Hussy, or I'll disinherit you. (*Kisses her*) You had better kiss me as a dying Uncle, Hussy, than a living Husband, for I shall give you to my Nephew—and now Gentlemen of the Black Robe, who protect our properties for us, the first thing you are to do is to fill up the blank in the Marriage Articles with my Nephew's name instead of mine, for he I fancy, he will be much properer to manage the young Lady's Concerns than me. It is over with me; what think you, Harriet? Don't you think he'll do it better than me, ha? Ah the young Jade, how she smiles. She knows what I mean, but Gentlemen, before I make my Will, I have one thing to observe, which is that I am a very whimsical old Rogue! You all know that, I believe.

*Doct.* Why you are a little whimsical, Sir Isaac, sometimes, I know.

*Shar.* And therefore I desire a Bond may immediately be prepared for me to give my Nephew, which will put it out of my power to revoke the Will I shall now make in these Presents; for I am so odd a Fellow, that it is a hundred to one, I shall want to go from it tomorrow.

*Doct.* I am afraid, Sir Isaac, such a Bond will not be good in Law.

*Little.* O yes, Doctor, very good. Doctor, you will hurt the Practice with your Scruples; what is it to us whether it be a good Bond or not; it is a new Case, and will be a Bone of Contention to us. The Gown will get by it, let who will lose. (*Aside to the Doctor*)

*Doct.* I believe, Sir Isaac, upon second Thoughts it will be a good Bond.

*Shar.* Then draw it up, and now Gentlemen, as to my Will—Inprimis, let all my Debts be discharged.

*Doct.* That I believe, Sir Isaac, will be soon done; for I don't suppose you owe any.

*Shar.* Yes I owe for the nursing of a Bastard Child at Wandsor.

*Doct.* Is it possible you ever had a Bastard?

*Shar.* Several, Doctor, but they were all dropt upon different Parishes, except that One. Then there are some few dribbling Debts at Alehouses and Taverns where I used to meet my Wenches—in all about twenty Pounds.

*Doct.* I find, Mr. Littlewit, the old Gentleman has been a Cock of the Game in his time, Good Blood.

*Little.* Really, Doctor Leatherhead, I think so.

*Shar.* Item, I do constitute my Nephew Bellair whole and sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament.

*Bell.* O my dear Uncle, shall I lose you. (*Cries*)

*Shar.* Good natured Boy, how he weeps, disinheriting and cutting off all other Persons whatsoever—saving those hereafter mentioned.

*Lucy.* O my dear generous Master. (*Cries*)

*Shar.* Poor Girl, she weeps too; I suppose for the same Reason, to put me in Mind of her; never fear, Lucy. I'll not forget you; you have been a good Girl and managed my Concerns with great

Skill and Decency.

*Doct.* Proceed, Sir.

*Shar.* Unto Harriet Lovewealth my Niece that shall be, I do give—(*Lucy, you know where they are*) a set of Diamond Bracelets which were mortgaged to me and forfeited by the Welch Lady that used to game so much.

*Lucy.* I have them in this Casket, Sir.

*Shar.* Give them to me—there—I give them Harriet, but first kiss me, Hussy—I will have a Kiss for them. (*Kisses her and gives her the bracelets*)

*Bell.* Impudent Rascal!

*Shar.* Item, to Lucy who for many years has served me faithfully—and who used to flatter me in all my little Foibles.

*Lucy.* Sure never was so generous and grateful a Master. (*Cries*)

*Shar.* To her I bequeath, when she marries, one thousand pounds, provided it be with that honest Lad Shark, not a Farthing else.

*Bell.* How Sir, a thousand Pounds; it is too much.

*Shar.* Not at all, Nephew.

*Bell.* Here's a Dog. (*Aside*) Consider, Sir, she's a low bred poor Person.

*Shar.* Poor is she? Why then, Mr. Littlewit, if the Girl is poor, put her down another Hundred, but with a Proviso still that she marries Shark.

*Bell.* I presume, Sir, you have done now.

*Shar.* Done! The Gods of Gratitude and Generosity forbid; no I must remember poor Shark. I must not forget him—Item, to that honest Fellow Shark, auh, auh!

*Bell.* O the Rascal; he'll give half the Estate to himself and Lucy.

*Shar.* To Shark, I say, for his faithful Services.

*Bell.* Why, Sir, he's the most idle, drunken—

*Shar.* Hold your Tongue, Nephew, you are deceived in the young Man—you don't know him so well as I. I have known him many Years; he is a sober honest Fellow, and has a great Regard for you, and for that Reason, I leave him two hundred pounds per Annum.

*Bell.* Two hundred pounds, Sir—

*Shar.* Pray be silent, Nephew; I know his Virtues and good Qualities; therefore, Mr. Littlewit, I think you may as well make it two hundred and fifty.

*Bell.* Sir! Per Annum! Sir!

*Shar.* Ay, per Annum, for ten Annuns if I please, Sir. Why sure I can do what I will with my own.

*Bell.* I beg your Pardon, Sir, it is a great deal too much, I think.

*Shar.* I think not, and I believe at this Juncture my Thoughts are more to the purpose than yours.

*Bell.* But consider, Sir, what can he do with so much money; such a low poor Fellow that has no Friends.

*Shar.* No Friends?

*Bell.* No Sir, a low Friendless Fellow.

*Shar.* Nay if he is poor—set him down another hundred, Mr. Littlewit. He shall not want a Friend while I am alive; for he is an honest Lad, and loves a Bottle and a Wench as well as myself.

*Bell.* Was there ever such a tricking exorbitant Rascal? (*Aside*) Sir, I beg you'll alter that Article that relates to Shark.

*Shar.* Sir, I beg you'll hold your Tongue. Say another word and I'll give him a thousand pounds per Annum.

*Bell.* Sir, I humbly beg Pardon. (*Bowing very low*)

*Shar.* Well, beg Pardon and be satisfied. I think you have reason—here I shall have you Master of six or seven thousand pounds per Annum, as you call it, and almost a Plumb and a half in ready Cole, and you are not satisfied; say one Word more and I'll tear my Will, or leave every Shilling to

the Inhabitants of Bedlam or to the Man that finds out the Longitude.

*Bell.* I have done, Sir.

*Shar.* Pray then have done, Sir, and don't fret me.

*Bell.* An impudent Rogue, but I must not contend with him now. (*Aside*)

*Shar.* Lord, it is as much trouble to give away an Estate as to get it.

*Doct.* Mr. Bellair, you should not interrupt the Testator; at such a time his Mind should not be disturbed.

*Shar.* You are in the right, Doctor Leatherhead. Let me see, have I no Friend that I care to oblige with two or three thousand—I am in such a generous Temper that I don't care to leave off yet. I have a great Mind to give Shark a handful over, but—

*Bell.* Sir!

*Shar.* No, I believe I have done.

*Doct.* Will you please to sign then?

*Shar.* That I would with all my Heart, but that the Gout and Palsy prevent me.

*Doct.* Then we must observe, Mr. Littlewit, that the said Testator does declare his inability to write.

*Shar.* Is the Bond to my Nephew ready?

*Little.* Yes Sir.

*Shar.* But is it strong, and so well drawn that the old Nick himself should he turn Pettyfogger could not reverse it?

*Doct.* It is, Sir.

*Shar.* Very well.

*Doct.* There if you please to make your mark by touching the Pen. (*Shark touches the Pen*) So, and put the Watch over his Hand, and let him take off the Seal—so, very well, Sir, you publish and declare this to be your last Will and Testament, and desire Doctor Leatherhead and Mr. Littlewit to be Witnesses thereunto?

*Shar.* I do.

(*All the ceremony of signing and sealing and delivering is performed*)

*Doct.* Very well, Sir Isaac, I will take care they shall be properly registered.

*Shar.* I beg, good Folks, that you will slip into the next Room for a few Moments while I compose myself after this intolerable Fatigue; Nephew, pray shew them in, and do the Honours of my House in the genteelest Manner.

*Bell.* I shall, Sir.—Doctor Leatherhead, Mr. Littlewit—will you walk in, Gentlemen?

*Doct.* Sir, your Servant, Sir.

*Little.* Your's; we wish you better.

*Shar.* Your Servant, your Servant, Gentlemen. Auh, auh—quick, quick. (*Coughs*) (*Exeunt all but Lucy and Shark*) Lucy, off with my Roguery, and let me appear in my native honesty. I have had Gibbets and Halters in my Mind a hundred Times, passing and repassing, since I began this Business. I am horridly afraid that the Devil and Sir Isaac, for I suppose they are met by this time, will contrive some means to counterplot us. Tho' I think I shall be a Match for them, if we can keep the Law on our side, let me but secure that and I defy the Devil and all his Works. There, there they are, the precious Robes of Deceit. (*Throws down the old Man's Gown and Cap*) I think there has been transacted as ingenious a Scene of Iniquity in that Gown, within the short space of half an Hour, as in any Gown that has been traped in Westminster Hall since the ingenious Mr. Wreathcock was transported—Now my dear Lucy, after all this Fatigue and Bustle (*Throws down the old Man's dress*) I think it would not be amiss for you and I to relieve *and solace ourselves in the lawful State of Procreation.*

*Lucy.* Time enough, Fool. Consider Matrimony is a long Journey.

*Shar.* True, Lucy; therefore the sooner we set out the better; for Love, my Dear, like Time must be taken by the Forelock.

*Lucy.* Come, come, this is no time for prating and fooling. Do you join the Company to avoid Suspicion, and tomorrow Morning put me in Mind of it. If I am in Humour, I may perhaps walk

towards Doctors Commons and venture at a great Leap in the Dark with you, for so I think marriage may be justly called.

*Shar.* Why ay, this is speaking like one that has a mind to Deal. *Here's my hand; it shall stand on my side.*

*Lucy.* And here's my hand. If I can help it, it shall not fail on mine.

*Shar.* Touch—Buss—I like the Sample and *am resolved to purchase the whole Commodity.*  
(*Monsieur DU MAIGRE within*) (Exit *Shark*)

*Maigre.* Mistress Lucy! Mistress Lucy! why you no come when your Maitre Janie be so very much bad—where be you?

*Lucy.* Who have we here? Our Apothecary, Monsieur du Maigre! Pray Heaven the old Man is not come to Life again.

(Enter *Monsieur DU MAIGRE*)

*Maigre.* O Mistress Lucy for shame! Pardie, why you no come to your Maitre! He be dead this one half quartre de Hour, and you no come; by Gar, he wanta his Gown and his Cap.

*Lucy.* What, is he alive?

*Maigre.* Yes; he was dead, but I bring him to Life; I bleed a him, and so he comes from the dead Man to de Life. But come, allons, vite, vite, he want a de Gown. (*Takes up the Gown and Cap*)

*Lucy.* So we have been making a Will to a fine Purpose.

*Maigre.* Allons, vite, vite, Mistress Lucy, he be very bad indeed—and he want a you ver much, allons. (Exit)

(Enter *BELLAIR and SHARK*)

*Shar.* Well, Sir, now who is the Fool? the Blockhead? Did not I tell you we should succeed?

*Bell.* Yes but, Scoundrel, how did you dare to make such a Will?

*Shar.* In what respect, Sir?

*Bell.* In what, Rascal! To Lucy and yourself, how dare you leave so much money between you?

*Shar.* For the best reason in the World, Sir, because I knew nobody dared to contradict me. And had I thought you would have been angry at it—I assure you, Sir—I should have left as much more. Why Sir, if you will consider the Affair impartially, you will find I had a right to be Co-heir with you.

*Bell.* How so, Sir?

*Shar.* By the Laws of Roguery, Sir—in which it is a fundamental Maxim that in Cheats of this Kind, all people are upon a par, and have a right to an equal Snack.

*Bell.* Impudent Rascal!

*Shar.* But if you think, Sir, that I have behaved in this Affair selfishly or unbecoming a Rogue of Honour, I will send in for Doctor Leatherhead and Mr. Littlewit, for they are still in the next Room, and cancel the Will directly.

*Bell.* No, Rascal, you know my Love to Harriet will not let me consent to that.

*Shar.* This is just the way of the great World—the poor Rogues are Men of parts and do all the Business—and the rich ones not only arrogate the Merit to themselves, but are for running away with all the Plunder.

(Enter *LUCY*)

*Lucy.* O Sir!

*Bell.* What's the matter?

*Lucy.* Oh! Oh! Oh! I can't speak—but your Uncle's alive—that's all. (*Sets down a great Chair*)

*Shar.* And that's enough to hang one, I'm sure.

*Bell.* Alive!

*Lucy.* Ay, alive, Sir.

*Shar.* This comes of your begrudging me my Snack of the Spoil, Sir.

*Bell.* Why I thought you saw him senseless and dead.

*Lucy.* I thought so too; but it seems while we were about the Will, Monsieur du Maigre, the Apothecary, came in and bled him in an Instant, which has unfortunately recovered him. He is within with him now, and one Councillour Cormorant who is come upon some Law Business to him—O here they all come.

*Bell.* What a malicious turn of Fortune this is.

*Shar.* Why Sir, if you will not be ungrateful, now I believe I can secure a Retreat and such a one as the greatest General in Europe in our Situation would not be ashamed of.

*Bell.* Dear Shark, I will do anything thou wilt.

*Shar.* Ay, now it is dear Shark, but know, Sir, you have to deal with an Englishman, and a Man of Honour who scorns to put an Enemy to Death when he begs for Quarter—tho' you have been an ungenerous Ally as ever vowed Fidelity to the Crown of England—but no matter, I'll serve you still and completely.

*Bell.* But how, dear Shark?

*Shar.* I won't tell you—and I defy you to guess now—or anybody else that's more—I must step into the next Room for a Moment and whisper the Lawyers, and in the meantime, do you persist in your Uncle's having made a Will; that's all.—Don't you be like an ignorant Thief before a noisy Magistrate, confess and hang yourself. And you, Madam, do you embronze your Countenance, and keep up your Character to the last. (*Exit*)

(*Enter SKINFLINT supported by Councillour CORMORANT and Monsieur DU MAIGRE, LUCY settling his great Chair*)

*Skin.* Auh! auh! gently, gently. Let me down gently, pray. Oh, oh, oh. (*Sits down*) O Nephew, how could you let me lie for dead so long and never come near me?

*Bell.* Really, Sir, I never heard a word that you were in any Danger of Dying.

*Skin.* And Lucy, how could you be so cruel to neglect me so long?

*Lucy.* Me! Lord, Sir, I never knew anything of it 'till Monsieur du Maigre informed me.

*Maigre.* No, Pardie, she not have any knowledge 'till dat me make her de Intelligence.

*Lucy.* I thought you were in a sound Sleep, Sir, and was extremely glad of it.

*Bell.* And so was I, I do assure you, Sir.

*Skin.* I am obliged to you Nephew, but I had like to have slept my last.

*Maigre.* It is very true indeed upon my word. But dat Monsieur la avocat—here—Monsieur la what is your name, si'l vous plait—I always forget.

*Coun.* Cormorant, Sir.

*Maigre.* Mais oui Monsieur la Cormorant—but dat he and I come in together, just after one another; I believe I come in one, two Minute before you, Monsieur la Cormorant—I say but dat me come in the Nick upon a my word, Sir Isaac, you be defunct.—And then I lose my Annuity upon your Life, and by Gar, dat be very bad for Monsieur du Maigre.

*Skin.* I am obliged to you, Monsieur—are the Lawyers come, Lucy? Mr. Littlewit and Doctor Leatherhead?

*Lucy.* Yes Sir, they have been here a considerable time.

*Skin.* Desire them to walk in.

*Lucy.* So now the Murder's coming out. (*Exit Lucy*)

*Skin.* Nephew, I am at last resolved to make my Will; I shall make a proper provision for you in it. But as our Soul is the immortal part of us, [4] I must take Care of that the first thing I do. Therefore I am resolved to appropriate so much of my Fortune as will be sufficient for that purpose to the building of an Almshouse.

(*Enter Doctor LEATHERHEAD, Mr. LITTLEWIT, Lady LOVEWEALTH, [HARRIET,] SHARK and LUCY*)

*Skin.* So Gentlemen! I have altered my Mind, Mr. Littlewit, since I saw you last.

*Little.* Concerning what, Sir?

*Skin.* My Will, Sir.

*Little.* It is now too late, Sir; you have put it out of your Power.

*Skin.* Out of my Power?

*Doct.* Ay, and out of the Power of Westminster Hall! Sir Isaac, you know I gave you my Opinion upon it before you made it.

*Skin.* What, is the man mad?

*Doct.* No, Sir, I am not mad; and I would advise you not to be foolish and whimsical as you owned about half an hour since you were subject to.

*Skin.* Why the men are drunk or mad, I think.

*Maigre.* Pardie, somebody be drunk or mad among you, for by gar, me no understand your Vards.

*Skin.* Why Gentlemen, I sent for you to make my Will.

*Doct.* You did so, Sir, and you have made it. And it is registered. And there is the Copy. Ask your Nephew, and these Ladies, and your maid Lucy, and the Footman here.

*Shar.* No pray, Sir, don't bring me into it; I was not here.

*Doct.* You are right, Friend, I believe you were not here, but ask all the rest.

*Skin.* Nephew, do you know anything of all this?

*Bell.* Upon my word, Sir, what the Doctor says is true.

*Skin.* How! True, Lucy?

*Lucy.* Indeed, Sir, you did make a Will before you had your fit, but you have forgot it, I suppose.

*Skin.* Why this is all a Contrivance, a Conspiracy, a—pray when did I make this Will?

*Doct.* Why, Sir, it is not ten minutes since you signed it, and all these are Witnesses. (*Pointing on their own side of the room*)

*Shar.* No pray, Sir, leave me out. I will be sworn in any Court in Westminster, Sir Isaac, that I know nothing of the matter.

*Maigre.* By Gar, this Doctor Leatherhead be one ver great Fripon.—Harkee, Sir, you say he make de Signature to the Will in these ten a Minute.

*Doct.* Yes Sir.

*Maigre.* By Gar, dat cannot be, fo[r] Monsieur Cormorant and myself be vid him above thirteen, and he make no Will in that time, Jarnie bleu.

*Coun.* It is very true, Gentlemen, that we can attest.

*Skin.* Pray Doctor, let me see this Will; read it if you please.

*Doct.* Sir Isaac Skinflint being seated in his great Chair—um underwritten—Sound Senses tho' infirm in Body.

*Skin.* No matter for the Preamble.

*Doct.* Um, um, um, committed to writing his underwritten Will, in Manner and Form following; Imprimis, I will that all my Debts be paid.

*Skin.* Debts! I do not owe one Shilling in the World.

*Doct.* You forget, Sir Isaac, you owe for the Nursing of a Bastard Child at Wandsor, and several little dribbling Debts where you used to meet your Wenches.

*Skin.* How a Bastard; why I never had a Bastard in my Life—but once—and that was forty years ago with a great red Hair Wench, a Maid that my Father had—but it was when I was a Lad and I did not know what I was about.

*Doct.* Item, I do constitute my Nephew Bellair whole and sole Executor, disinheriting and cutting off all other Persons.

*Skin.* This is a scene of Villainy.

*Doct.* Saving those hereafter mentioned—unto Harriet Lovewealth my Niece that shall be, I do bequeath the set of Diamond Bracelets—Mortgaged by the—

*Skin.* This is all a Robbery.

*Coun.* Let 'em go on, Sir Isaac, you have your Remedy.



*Skin.* This is all a Robbery.

*Doct.* To my Maid Lucy, one thousand pounds.

*Skin.* O monstrous; I never intended to give her a Farthing.

*Doct.* Item, to that honest Fellow Slipstring Shark.

*Shar.* That is me, Sir Isaac, and I humbly thank your Honour.

*Doct.* I bequeath him three hundred pounds per Annum during his natural Life, to be paid out of that part of my Estate he shall think proper.

*Shar.* O blessings on your generous Heart. It was always fond of rewarding Merit.

*Skin.* Read no more—I'll have every one of you indicted for Forgery—and Conspiracy and—first take Notice, Councillour Cormorant and Monsieur du Maigre, that I deny that Will to be any Act of mine—and that I cancel it to all Intents and Purposes.

*Doct.* That you can't do, Sir—for by way of Marriage Articles between Bellair and Harriet Lovewealth you have signed a Deed conformable to this Will.

*Skin.* Why this is such a piece of Villainy as the Records of Westminster Hall cannot match.

*Coun.* Do not be uneasy Sir Isaac, you have one, and one certain way of oversetting all their Villainy; and that is by confessing that you made this Will, and proving that you were out of your Senses when you did it, which may easily be done by proper Witnesses. (*Aside*)

*Skin.* I'll confess that or anything—to get my money again, and to hang them all—Doctor Leatherhead, I begin now to remember something of the making of this Will,—but I can prove I was lightheaded and out of my Senses when I did it.

*Doct.* Sir Isaac, it is no Affair of mine.—It is your Nephew's Concern; if he is willing to let such Chicane pass upon him, he may; but if he has a Mind to insist upon the Will, I'll undertake to prove you were in your Senses as perfectly as ever you were in your Life.

*Skin.* And will you insist, Nephew?

*Bell.* It is not in my Power to be off it, Sir, for in consequence that you were sincere when you made this Will, my Lady Lovewealth here has given me her Daughter, and her own Chaplain has just now put the finishing hand to the Business in the next Room, before all these Witnesses.

*Skin.* So you won't resign?

*Bell.* I can't, Sir.

*Skin.* Come along, Mr. Cormorant, I'll hamper them all—I'll prove myself out of my Senses before I sleep. (*Exit Skinflint and Cormorant*)

*Maigre.* By gar, dis be all ver great, much Surprize upon me, van, pardie, pardie make the Man make a de Vill veder he will or no, and de Man say he will prove dat he be Lunatic and lightheaded—by gar, me never hear de like in France, pardie, etc. etc. (*Exit*)

*Shar.* Well I believe this Affair is over for tonight; and upon my Word, I am heartily glad of it, for I have been in very sweating Circumstances ever since it began, but especially since Sir Isaac came to Life. I was afraid that single incident would have damned our whole Intrigue; but thanks to the Gentlemen of the Gown, I now begin to have some hopes we shall succeed. I have done my Master's Business completely, and as Executors go, I do not think that I have been too partial to myself—I believe there are several honest Gentlemen who walk the 'Change and go to Church constantly [who] would have thought they acted very generously if they had given Bellair even an equal Dividend—but I beg Pardon—you are to judge, not I, and unless you approve the Deed, I shall denounce my Share of the Legacy.

*For should our Will in Westminster be tried  
The Right, I fear, would fall on t'other side.  
Here you are absolute; confirm my Cause.  
If you approve—a Figg for Courts and Laws!*

**FINIS**

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**THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZED:**

**OR**

## P R O L O G U E [6]

Of all good Printing it is hardest sure  
 To form a perfect Piece in Miniature.  
 The Genius and the Pencil when confined  
 Cramp both the Painter's Hand and Poet's Mind.  
 Let then the Author claim a kinder Fate  
 Whose Compass little,—yet his Subject great.  
 Thus for our Petit Piece we crave your Favour,  
 And if she bear one Sketch of Nature, save her—  
*Let not your Wrath against the Author rise,  
 If he to Flight presumes to criticize.  
 Our humble Wren attempts to mount and sing,  
 Beneath the Shelter of his Eagle's Wing.*

Envy's a general Vice from which we see  
 No Country, Sex, no Time or Station free;  
 Not e'en the Stage; for entre nous I fear  
 Our Emulation is meer Envy here.  
 Whatever the Pursuits our Thoughts engage,  
 Envy's the ruling Passion of the Stage.  
 Yet here our Friends the Poets much surpass us;  
 Envy's a Weed that almost choaks Parnassus.  
 And what amazes most is often found  
 Mixt in the Harvest of the richest Ground.  
 While Poets railed and ruined in each Page,  
 We took it all for pure poetick Rage.  
 While ev'ry little Slip was made the Handle,  
 And Satire's specious Name concealed the Scandal,  
 We thought that Virtue did this Warmth impart,  
 Nor saw low Envy lurking in the Heart.  
 Our Indignation into Grief was turned,  
 E'en those, who felt the Smart, admired and mourned.  
 The scribbling unsuccessful envious Fool  
 Is the fit Subject for our Ridicule.  
 Those Sons of Dulness here in Crowds resort,  
 Tho' Dunces on the Record of this Court.  
 As they were wounded, so they wish to wound,  
 And strive to deal their own Damnation round.  
 To blast young Merit all their Powers they bring,  
 And set their little Souls upon the thing.  
 Yet still the wretched Fool comes off a Loser,  
 Dulness, like Conscience, is its own Accuser.  
 And Tyrant Envy can at once impart  
 Sneers to the Face and Vultures to the Heart.

Then from this Subject which tonight we chuse,  
 At least confess it is an honest Muse.  
 A Foe to ev'ry Party, ev'ry Faction;  
 For lo, she draws her Pen against Detraction.

P.S. You may send it to the Barbers.

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 DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CANKER	LADY CRITICK
HEARTLY	HARRIET
SIR PATRICK BASHFULL	MRS. CHATTER
NIBBLE	
TRIFLE	
PLAGIARY	
GRUBWIT	

BUMPKIN  
FOOTMAN

*Scene in Lady CRITICK's House*

The Time an hour after the New Play on the first Night

THE NEW PLAY CRITICIZED:

OR

THE PLAGUE OF ENVY

*(Enter CANKER and FOOTMAN)*

*Cank.* Is not my Man come in yet?

*Foot.* No, Sir.

*Cank.* Pray will you oblige me by letting one of your Servants step to Covent Garden Playhouse to look for him.

*Foot.* I'll go myself, Sir; for I shan't be wanted 'till my Lady comes from the Play. *(Exit)*

*Cank.* Let me see *(pulling out his Watch)* 'tis now half an hour after Seven. By this time the Fate of the Suspicious Husband is determined; applauded to the Skies; or damned beyond Redemption; its Author crowned with Laurel, or covered with Shame. Sure they can't approve it! And yet the Stings I felt at the reading [of] it give me presaging Pangs of its Success. *(Sighs deeply)* It has its Beauties I must confess. Why should I thus grieve at a young Author's approaching Fame? His Throes and Pangs lest it should fail have been far short of mine lest it should succeed; nor would the Author's Joy for its kind Reception equal my secret Rapture at its irretrievable Disgrace. What is this that like a slow but infallible Poison corrodes my Vitals and destroys my Peace of Mind? Emulation? *(Shakes his head and sighs)* I am afraid the World will call it Envy. All Mankind has some, but Authors most; and we can better brook a Rival in our Love than in our Fame. What can detain this Rascal? I am upon the Rack to know how it goes on—let me see, in what Manner would I have it treated? In the first Act I would have them applaud it violently,—in the second and third be coldly attentive,—in the fourth begin to groan, horse laugh and whistle,—and in the fifth just before the Catastrophe, one and all cry aloud, off, off, off! The Epilogue! The Epilogue! O that would be delightful! Exquisite!

*(Enter FOOTMAN)*

So Sir! You Blockhead, how came you to stay so long? But first tell me how the Play was received; whereabouts did they begin to hiss?

*Foot.* Hiss! he, he, he, Lard, Zir, why they did not hiss at all.

*Cank.* You lye, you Rascal! *(Gives him a box)*

*Foot.* Zir!

*Cank.* I say they did hiss.

*Foot.* Hiss quotha!—I am zure you have made my Ear hiss—and zing too, I think; why pray Zir, what did'st give me such a Wherrit var?

*Cank.* How shamefully I expose my weakness to my Servant. I would know the truth, but I cannot bear to hear it. *(Aside)* Come, Sir, tell me *(Sits down in a great Chair)* how was it received? But first what made you stay so long? Did I not order you to hearken at the Pit Door and bring me Word at the end of every Act how it went on?

*Foot.* Yes Zir; you did zo, Zir; but the Vauk zhut the Door, and then I could zee nothing at all o' the Matter.—Zo I begged them to open the door as I might zee through it; but they were zo ztout that they would do no zuch thing, they zaid. Zo then I went up to the Lobby—and there I met with an auld Vellow Zervant out of Zomersetshire. Zo he and I went up to the Footman's Gallery that I might give my Vardie of the matter to your Honour when I came Home.

*Cank.* And why did you not come away at the End of the first Act?

*Foot.* Why faith to tell your Honour the truth it made me laugh zo I could not vind in my Heart to leave it.

*Cank.* Rascal, how dare you tell me it made you laugh? *(Strikes him)*

*Foot.* No indeed, Zir, it was a mistake of mine; I mean it made me cry zo I could not leave it.

*Cank.* Leave your blundering, you blockhead, and tell me how it was received; did they hiss it?

*Foot.* Yes Zir, yes Zir, there was as much hissing as when your Tragedy was acted.

*Cank.* Rascal, how dare you mention that, hissed. (*Strikes him*)

*Foot.* Why what the Devil would you have a Man say. You be'ent pleased when I tell you it was clapt, nor you be'ent pleased when I tell you it was hissed. (*Cries*) But whether you are pleased or no, I tell you it was clapt very much and was ten times comicaler than your Tragedy, and made the People laugh more.

(*Runs off for fear of being beat*)

*Cank.* How this ignorant Rascal has teized me by his Account! I can't tell whether it was damned or saved; he said it was clapt—but he said afterwards it was hissed—it may be so for *it is impossible mere Incidents*, which are the chief Merit of this Piece, should make it succeed! Were I sure of that, would I had gone myself! O what a secret Rapture should I have had in the hypocritical Exertion of my seeming good Nature in the Author's behalf. When I was sure it would not serve him, I would have stabbed and wounded his Fame by my pity for his ill Success, 'till I had made both him and his Play as contemptible as Vanity and Dullness, but the Fear of being martyred by its Applause was insupportable. I could never have survived it.

(*Enter Mr. HEARTLY*)

*Heart.* Mr. Canker, your most humble Servant.

*Cank.* Mr. Heartly, yours.

*Heart.* Are the Ladies come home from the Play?

*Cank.* Not yet, Sir; weren't you there, Mr. Heartly?

*Heart.* No, Sir, I had some Business of Consequence which prevented me. *I hear there were prodigious Crowds there and that the House was full by four o'clock.*

*Cank.* I am surprized at that, for I think that this Author has never writ for the Stage before.

*Heart.* That may be the Reason why he excites such Curiosity now; for the People look upon every new Author as a Candidate for publick Fame or Disgrace; and as the Right of Election is vested in them, each Man's Friendship, Vanity, or Envy prompts him to exert his Authority the first Night, lest he should never have an Opportunity afterwards.

*Cank.* Well I wish this Gentleman well of his Election. *I knew him at School and College*, and have some small Acquaintance with him now; a—a—as a Man I like him extremely, but—as—an—a—a—a—a—an Author, a, um,—I wish he had not writ, that's all.

*Heart.* Why so Sir, I think there is not a Gentleman in Britain but might be proud of being the Author of a well wrote Play.

*Cank.* Ha, ha, Lord, Mr.—sure you can't call his a Play. *It is rather a Pantomime, a thing stuffed with Escapes, Pursuits, Ladders of Ropes and Scenes in the Dark, all a parcel of Pantomimical Finesses such as you see every Night at Rich's Entertainments. Ranger is really the Harlequin and Mr. Strickland Colombine's Husband; though the Author is an Acquaintance and a Man whom I respect, notwithstanding I have so contemptible an Opinion of the Play, I heartily wish he may succeed.*

*Heart.* This is a very strange way of showing your Respect, Mr. Canker.

*Cank.* Sir, I assure you my Censure of the Piece arises from my Esteem of the Author. I would have him exploded now, that he may not expose himself by writing again. Besides I have some Concern for the Publick; it should not be overrun with every Fool *who mistakes Inclination for Genius.*

*Heart.* Nor plagued with every invidious Wretch who mistakes Envy for Judgment and Assurance for Parts. If the Suspicious Husband has Merit, the Publick will reward it; if not they will condemn it.

*Cank.* The Publick! ha, ha, ha, Mr. Heartly, ask any Man of real Taste and Learning what he thinks of publick Judgment.

*Heart.* 'Tis true they have been often in the wrong, but then it is always on the good Natured Side. They have sometimes applauded where perhaps they should have censured, *but there never was an Instance where they condemned unjustly.*

*Cank.* Yes Sir, they condemned several of my pieces unjustly and shamefully, and *if they applaud such a piece as the Suspicious Husband*, I say they have lost all Taste of good Writing and true Comedy.

*Heart.* O here is my Lady's Woman, Mrs. Chatter: she has been at the Play and can give us the whole Account of it.

(*Enter Mrs. CHATTER and FOOTMAN*)

*Mrs. Chat.* Pray Mr. Thomas, be so good as to get me a Glass of Water.

*Foot.* Yes ma'm. (*Going*)

*Chat.* And pray give this Capuchin and Fan to the Chambermaid.

*Foot.* Yes ma'm.

(*Exit*)

*Chat.* Gentlemen, I beg ten thousand Pardons, but I must sit down a bit, I am so immensely fatigued.

*Heart.* Pray Mrs. Chatter, what it is Matter?

*Chat.* Matter! The Devil fetch the new Play for me, and the Play-House, and the Players, and all of them together, for I was never so chagrined since I was born.

*Cank.* What you did not like the Play, I suppose, Mrs. Chatter, nor the Acting.

*Chat.* O quite the contrary, Sir, I never saw a prettier Play in all my Life, and I think Mr. Ranger the Templer is a charming Fellow! O lud! I protest I should not care to trust myself with him in his Chambers—well he made me laugh a thousand times tonight, with his going up the Ladder of Ropes, and then into the Lady's Chamber, and his dropping his Hat, and his going to ravish Jacyntha, and a thousand comical things—but he brings all off at last. (*Enter Footman with a Glass of Water*) O Mr. Thomas, I thank you. (*Drinks, gives him the Glass, Footman is going off*) O Mr. Thomas.

*Foot.* Madam.

*Chat.* I vow I am over Shoes and Boots with walking home from the Playhouse; there was neither Chair nor Coach to be had for Love or Money; pray will you tell the Chambermaid to leave out some clean things for me in my Lady's dressing Room.

*Foot.* I shall, Madam. (*Going*)

*Chat.* O one thing more—pray Mr. Thomas, let the Monkey and the Parrot be removed out of my Lady's dressing Room, for I know she won't care to converse with them tonight.—The new Comedy I suppose will engross our Chat for one week at least.

*Foot.* A pox on these Monkeys and Parrots and these second hand Quality; they require more Attendance than our Ladies. (*Exit*)

*Heart.* Pray Mrs. Chatter, if you were pleased with the Play and the Acting, from whence arises your Distress?

*Chat.* From the oddest Accident in the World, Mr. Heartly. You must know, Mr. Canker, that I am a vast Admirer of the Belles Lettres as my Lady calls 'em, and never miss the first Night of a new thing—I am as fond of a new thing as my Lady is and I assure you she often takes my Judgment upon any new Play or Opera, and the Actors and Actresses. For you must know, Mr. Canker, I am thought a very tolerable Judge.

*Cank.* Well, but how did the Play succeed?

*Chat.* O immensely.

*Cank.* Was it hissed?

*Chat.* Not once.

*Heart.* Was it applauded?

*Chat.* To an immensity.

*Cank.* Psha! impossible! She knows nothing of the Matter.

*Chat.* No to be sure, Mr. Canker, I know nothing of the Matter because I did not like your Play; but I would have you to know, Sir, that my Lady and I know a good Play when we see or read it as well as you for all your Aristotle and your Cook upon Littleton, and all your great Criticks. (*Exit*)

*Cank.* Psha! an ignorant Creature, Mr. Heartly, your Servant; I'll go and see for the Ladies.

*Heart.* So you have nettled him, Mrs. Chatter.

*Chat.* O hang him, he can't abide me upon your Account and Miss Harriet's; a conceited envious Wretch; he will allow nobody to have Judgment but himself.

*Heart.* But pray what was your Distress, Mrs. Chatter?

*Chat.* Why as soon as I had dropped my Lady, away went I to the Play, and so, Sir, I mobbed it into the Pit—for you must know I admire the Humour of the Savages in the Pit upon these Occasions of all things; so, so, Sir, as I was saying my Lady Ramble's Woman who is the most ignorant Animal in the Creation of the Belles Lettres [and] knows no more of them than a Welch Attorney, well she and I and my Lord Pride's Gentleman went together and we had immense fun, ha, ha, ha; we made the Musick play twenty comical Tunes, and a hundred things besides. I saw all our Ladies in the side Box and we pantomimed all Night long at one another, and were immensely merry, and liked the Play vastly well. There was an infinite [ly] pretty Dance at the End of it—and the sweetest Epilogue—We encored the Dance—but they begged they might speak the Epilogue first, so then we clapt immensely, ha, ha.

*Heart.* But I thought, Mrs. Chatter, you were going to give me an Account of your Distress.

*Chat.* I was so, but I protest I quite forgot it—hark! is not that our Coach stopped! Yes 'tis they—then—I beg pardon, Mr. Heartly, but I can't possibly stay to tell you the Story now, for I must run to my Lady. (Exit)

(Enter HARRIET)

*Har.* O Mr. Candid, your Servant; you're a gallant Gentleman not to come to us. O you Clown! You have lost such a Night, such Diversion—

*Heart.* I am glad you were so well entertained, Madam, but you know it was impossible for me to have the Pleasure of waiting upon you, as I was obliged to attend my Uncle. Besides, Madam, I had your leave to be absent. I am glad to hear the Play had such Success; pray how does my Lady like it?

*Har.* O immoderately!

*Heart.* How happened that? She went prejudiced against it, I am sure.

*Har.* O Canker did insinuate a most villainous character of it to us all, that's the truth on't; but *Sir Charles Stanza who is a great Friend of the Author's* came into our Box and sat there all Night with us; and what with his Encomiums and the Merit of the Piece, we are all become most Violent Converts; and now my Lady like a true Proselyte is for persecuting everybody with the Brand of Idiotism who is out of the Pale of her Ladyship's Judgment.

*Heart.* A true mark of Biggotry and Ignorance.

*Har.* You know she is as fond of a New Wit, as a City Esquire who is setting up to be one himself; so she begged Sir Charles would introduce her to the Author, and he was so very obliging as to promise to bring him here to sup this very Night.

*Heart.* That was a high Compliment indeed to a Lady of her Fondness for Authors.

*Har.* O it has won her Heart; she's distracted with it.

*Heart.* But dear Harriet, now to our Affairs. You see there is no getting the better of this Fellow Canker; he has got the entire Possession of your Aunt, and she is resolved by Marriage Contract to give you to him this very Night. What's to be done?

*Har.* What's to be done? Why twenty things; I'll have the Vapours, Hystericks, Cholick and Madness rather than consent, and at last if my Aunt does persist, as I am afraid she will, why, like Jacyntha in the new Play, it is but providing a Ladder of Ropes and a pair of Breeches, and then the Business is done.

*Heart.* Dear Girl, you have eased my anxious Heart; thus let me pay my soft Acknowledgment.

*Har.* Thus let me pay my soft Acknowledgment. Ha, ha, ha! (*Mimicking him*) Upon my Word and Honour you make as ridiculous a Figure as a whining Lover in a Farce. Prithee let us have done with this theatrical Cant.

*Heart.* No, Harriet, I can never have done Loving you.

*Har.* Why I don't desire you to have done loving me; I only bid you have done telling me so—if you would please me, love me more and tell me less.

*Heart.* Dear kind Creature! (*Kissing her Hand*) Pray what's become of my Lady?

*Har.* Apropos, do you know that the Irish Beau that we laughed at so immoderately the other Night at the Opera, came into our Box and set there all the Play?

*Heart.* Who, Sir Patrick Bashfull?

*Har.* The same. The Rogue has plagued me to Death with his Civilities, his Compliments and his Blunders; he is the most fulsome Fellow sure that ever pretended to Politeness.

*Heart.* Yes but the best Jest is that the Rogue is ashamed of his Country and says he was born in France.

*Har.* Well after sighing and making *doux yeux* at me all play time, he would hand me to the Coach; but the Fellow squeezed me so as we went along, that I was obliged to cry out and pull my hand away; when we were in the Coach, I thought we had got rid of him, but the Instant the Footman knocked at our Door, to our great Surprise who should we find at the Coach side ready to hand us out but our Irish Gallant. We could not avoid asking him in; he made a Million of Apologies for his Assurance, but his chief one was that he observed two suspicious Fellows dogging the Coach, so he followed us home to prevent our being insulted.

*Heart.* Ha, ha, ha, I think it was a good Irish Excuse; and pray where is he now?

*Har.* I left him below with my Lady overwhelming her with Civilities—See here they both come.

(*Enter Lady CRITICK and Sir PATRICK BASHFULL*)

*Lady.* Sir Patrick, we are immensely obliged to you for the Trouble you have taken, and be assured, Sir, we shall languish to perpetuity 'till time shall produce a favourable opportunity of my making a suitable Return.

*Sir Pat.* O dear Madam, every Man of Gallantry must esteem the bare Serving of your Ladyship an unmentionable Honour, which ought to be held in the highest Estimation; and I protest to you, if this Accident happens to be productive of a Friendly Intimation betwixt a Personage of your Ladyship's Wit and Politeness and your humble Slave, I shall from thence date the Era of my past and future happiness tho' I was to live an Age of Misery afterwards.

*Heart.* O the blundering fulsome Rogue! (*Aside to Harriet*)

*Lady.* Really I am at a Loss how to return this great Civility.

*Sir Pat.* O Lord, Madam, not in the least—You are only pleased to compliment. (*They compliment in dumbshew apart*)

*Har.* See, see, Sir Patrick and my Lady what pains they take to shew their Politeness.

*Lady.* And I shall be proud of the Honour of a Visit whenever it suits the Inclination and Conveniency of Sir Patrick Bashfull.

*Sir Pat.* Madam, je suis votre tres humble.

*Lady.* O dear Sir Patrick, you are infinitely polite. (*Turning about to Heartly and Harriet*) O Mr. Heartly, I am sorry you did not come to us; I pity you, you have lost such a Night.

*Heart.* I am glad to hear your Ladyship was so agreeably entertained.

*Lady.* Immensely! *It is the highest Entertainment the Age has produced.*

*Sir Pat.* By my Integrity, Madam, I have the Honour to be of your Ladyship's Opinion. It is the prettiest Entertainment I have seen upon the English Theatre, except Orpheus and Eurydice, where the Serpent is—(*Going up to Heartly*) Sir, I have not the Pleasure of being known to you—but I should be proud to have the Honour of an Intimacy with a Gentleman of your polite Parts and Understanding.

*Heart.* Sir, I am greatly obliged to you.

*Sir Pat.* You must know, Sir, I am but just come into the Kingdom of London, and as I am an entire Stranger here, I should be glad to be acquainted with everybody in the Beau Monde, but with none so soon as a Gentleman of Mr.—pray Sir, what's your Name?

*Heart.* Sir, my Name is Heartly.

*Sir Pat.* Sir, I am your most obedient humble Servant, and your sincere Friend and Acquaintance likewise—tho' I have the Honour only to be a Stranger to you as yet.

*Heart.* Sir, your humble Servant.

*Lady.* What a well bred Manner he has.

*Sir Pat.* I hope, Sir, you will excuse my Modesty on this Occasion.

*Heart.* O dear Sir, your Modesty I dare answer for it will never stand in need of any Excuse.

*Sir Pat.* O your very—Sir, I hope you will likewise pardon my Neglect of not introducing myself sooner to your Acquaintance, but I assure you, Sir, the Reason was because I never saw you before.

*Heart.* Sir, your Reason is unanswerable; your Name I think is Bashfull, Sir?

*Sir Pat.* Sir Patrick Bashfull at your Service.

*Heart.* Of the Bashfulls of Ireland I presume, Sir?

*Sir Pat.* No Sir, I am originally descended from the Fitz-Bashfulls of France—tho' indeed our Family was of Irish Distraction first of all.

*Heart.* Your Title is of Ireland I suppose, Sir?

*Sir Pat.* And most Courts of Europe, Sir; I have an intimate Interest with them all, and should be proud to do you any Service with any of them from the Court of Versailles down to the distressed State of Genoa.

*Heart.* Sir, you are infinitely obliging.

*Lady.* Well but, Mr. Heartly, you will go with us tomorrow Night?

*Heart.* By all means, Madam.

*Lady.* I have taken a Box for twenty Night; don't you think it will run so long, Sir Patrick?

*Sir Pat.* Indeed I believe it will, my Lady, and twenty days too—for it is a charming thing. Pray Madam, is it not one of Shakespear's?

*Lady.* O Lud no, Sir—it is entirely new, never was acted before.

*Sir Pat.* I protest, Madam, it is so very fine I took it for one of Shakespear's—for you must know, Madam, that I am a great Admirer of Shakespear and Milton's Comedies—they are very diverting. O they have fine long Soliloquies in them—to be or not to be, that's the Dispute—Don't you think, Madam, that's a charming fine Play—that Hamlet Prince of Dunkirk, and Othello Moor of Venus they say is a very deep Comedy, but I never saw it acted.

*Lady.* To be sure Shakespear was a very tolerable Author for the time, Sir Patrick, he writ in, but—a—he was excessively incorrect. Don't you think he was, Mr. Heartly?

*Heart.* Extremely so, my Lady.

*Lady.* Well this Comedy is quite Aristotelian, with an infinity of Plot—quite tip top—You will like it immensely; it is quite a high thing.

*Heart.* To be sure nobody has a more elegant Taste of Works of Genius than your Ladyship, particularly of the Drama.

*Lady.* Why really, Mr. Heartly, I think I have some tolerable Ideas of the finer Arts. Mr. Canker, who is allowed to have more critical Learning than any man since Zoilus, says I have an Exquisite Taste of Dramatick Rules—I have given him several hints in his Plays—and have sometimes writ an Entire Scene for him.

*Heart.* To be sure, Madam, your Knowledge is indisputable—but I am afraid Mr. Canker will call your Judgment in question about this New Play, for he rails at it excessively.

*Lady.* He did abuse it to an infinite Degree before it came out; but he will soon be convinced when he hears my Judgment of it, and to tell you a Secret, Mr. Heartly, I am a little picqued at him for speaking so ill of it—for I have a great Regard for the Author. Sir Charles Stanza is to bring him to sup tonight, and we are to be immensely intimate, and there is nothing I like so much as an Acquaintance with a new Author.

(Enter FOOTMAN)

*Foot.* Mr. Advocate the Lawyer is come to wait on your Ladyship.

*Lady.* O he has brought the Marriage Articles; Harriet, I hope all your Objections to Mr. Canker are removed, for this Night he is to declare his Passion either for you or your Sister, and if you should be his Choice, I desire as you have any regard for me that you will receive him with Respect and Esteem. He has an immense deal of Wit, and a most refined Understanding; as you are at my disposal, I expect an implicit Acceptance of the Person I shall recommend.

*Sir Pat.* Upon my Honour, my Lady, tho' I know nothing at all of the Matter, I think you talk very reasonably. Shall I have the Honour of your Ladyship's Hand? (Exit Sir Patrick and Lady Critick)

*Har.* Well Sir, Matters are brought to a Crisis.

*Heart.* They are so, and I see no Remedy but the old one.

*Har.* Pray Sir, what is that?

*Heart.* What you resolved on just now—Jacyntha's—

*Har.* What, running away? No, no, Sir, I don't think that quite so necessary to our Plot as it was to



theirs; it will be time enough to put that Scheme in Execution when every thing else fails.

*Heart.* But dear Harriet, what's to be done? You see that Canker pretends a Passion for you, and your Aunt is fully determined on the Match—I will openly avow my Love——

*Har.* Not for your Life. That would infallibly ruin us. Let my Lady and Canker still imagine you are fond of my Sister. You and she have dissembled it so well hitherto, that they are convinced of it; let them continue in their Error, for if Canker gets the least Suspicion of your Tendre for me, so inveterate is his Envy, that he would though he loved another, infallibly make me his Choice.

*Heart.* I am convinced.

*Har.* The Wretch loves me, his Behaviour at least makes me think so; if he does, I will probe his Heart and raise such a Conflict in it between Love and Envy as shall soon decide which is his most predominant Passion. See here [he] comes; be gone. [*Exit Heartly*] He must not see us together.

(*Enter CANKER*)

*Har.* O Mr. Canker, your Servant; we are infinitely obliged to you for your Company at the New Play.

*Cank.* Madam, I beg a Million of Pardons for disappointing you. I had an intolerable Head Ache which rendered me incapable of the Happiness of waiting on you.

*Har.* Nay that won't pass for an Excuse; being there would have cured your Head Ache; the clapping and laughing would have diverted and drove it away.

*Cank.* Yes into my Heart. (*Aside*) Madam, I have often tried and found that kind of Noise increased my Disorder.

*Har.* I fancy, Mr. Canker, because you are sure of my Aunt's Consent that you begin to exert the Husband already and are ashamed to be seen with me in Publick.

*Cank.* Madam, you wrong me; the Husband shall be lost in the Lover. My Heart knows no Sensation but from your heavenly Image.

*Har.* O dear Mr. Canker, you had better keep this Poetic Nonsense 'till you write a Tragedy—It may pass then—But in such a Scene as ours your Brother Criticks will certainly laugh at it; besides, you have said all these fine things to me a thousand times; it is now time to drop them, and instead of Fustian speak plain Common Sense. My Aunt has promised and vowed in my Name, and this Night by Contract resolved to make up a Conjugal Match between you and I, but before we play for so large a Stake as Matrimony, is it not proper to have a good Opinion and a thorough Knowledge of the Skill and Integrity of our Partners that we are to play with?

*Cank.* Sure Madam, you cannot doubt the sincerity of my Heart?

*Har.* Um—why you Men are a kind of Sharpers in Love; you lose trifles to us in Courtship in order to make us the greater Bubbles in Marriage; therefore, like fair Gamesters, let us play upon the Square by letting each other know what they have to trust to.

*Cank.* Madam, my Heart is open to your Dictates; write your own Laws in it.

*Har.* If you will let me write them in my Marriage Articles, Sir, I shall think my Obligation to you much greater.

*Cank.* With all my Heart, Madam. Name your own Conditions; I will subscribe to them.

*Har.* Generous indeed, Mr. Canker; know then that I shall insist upon an entire Change not only in your Conduct but even in your way of thinking which will make you more agreeable to yourself and less hateful to everybody else.

*Cank.* Madam!

*Har.* It is a general Observation behind your back, however complaisant People may be to your Face, that Envy is your predominant Passion and directs in all you say or do. "As ill natured and as Envious as Canker" is a common Simile among your Friends; and may in time grow into a Proverb, Sir, unless you change your Conduct.

*Cank.* Madam, when the Ignorant presume to judge of the finer Arts——

*Har.* Sir, your Satire is ill Nature—and your Judgment Envy. Therefore if you have any hopes of me, you must reverse your Temper and come into the following Treaty: In the first place instead of making it the Business of your Life to wound the Reputation of your Scribblers on all Occasions and explode their Plays, you must endeavour to support them; what if you think their Productions bad, good or bad, you must approve.—Item, I insist that you look upon me as your Minerva, and that for the future you never presume to Scribble, Applaud, or Condemn without first consulting me.

*Cank.* Madam, I have a better Opinion of your Understanding than to think you mean all this seriously.

*Har.* Upon my Honour, then you are mistaken; I shall not marry any Man who dares refuse to comply with these Articles—So, Sir, if you think well of them, I desire you will give me an Instance of your Obedience and Sincerity by going with me to the new Comedy tomorrow Night, and publickly expressing the highest Applause at it.

*Cank.* Madam, you may with as much Justice ask me to reverse my Affections, to love what I loath, and detest what I admire. No Madam, Posterity shall never say such a wretched Performance as the Suspicious Husband had the *sanction of Francis Canker*.

*Har.* Then, Sir, your humble Servant—I am glad I know your Mind. Our Treaty ends here. (*Going, he holds her*)

*Cank.* Dear Harriet, stay! Why will you urge me to a Behaviour so contrary to my Nature? Consider, Madam, how ridiculous it will make me appear to the World. Why People will think me mad.

*Har.* You are mistaken, Sir; they will only think that your good Nature has at last got the better of your Envy.

*Cank.* Well but Madam——

*Har.* Well but Sir, I insist that you clap and laugh, nay and that you cry too.

*Cank.* Cry, Madam?

*Har.* Ay, cry, Sir—as soon as you see Mr. Strictland acknowledge his Error and sue to be reconciled to his Wife; if you have one humane particle in your Composition, I insist upon your Sympathizing with his conscious Heart by dropping a manly Tear along with him.

*Cank.* Madam, I can't come into all you command but what I can I will. When other People laugh, I'll cry, and when they cry, I'll laugh. Will that content you?

*Har.* O mighty well, Sir! Mighty well! I see you turn my Proposals into ridicule. (*Exit Harriet*)

*Cank.* What shall I do? Was ever Man laid under such a Restraint by a *trifling* Woman! The Bawble and Gewgaw of the Creation! Made for Man's Conveniency, his Slave not his Tyrant! To part with my right of Censuring, my Judgment, my Understanding! S'Death, I would as soon part with my——

(*Enter a SERVANT*)

*Serv.* Zir, here's Master Grubwit come to zeek you.

*Cank.* Desire him to walk in.

(*Enter GRUBWIT*)

*Cank.* Dear Grubwit, how came you to stay so long? You need not tell me of the Success! I have been sufficiently mortified with it already! Where is Plagiary?

*Grub.* Talking with my Lady Critick and the rest of the Company.

*Cank.* Did you call in at the Coffee House?

*Grub.* Yes, or we should have been with you sooner.

*Cank.* Well, and what's the Opinion there?

*Grub.* Um—why faith, I am sorry to say it—but it is—generally liked; there is Trifle and a few more of his Size of Understanding in Rapture about it; he avers Antiquity never produced so correct nor so entertaining a Piece, and in his extravagant Manner, returns Jupiter thanks for his having lived in a time when such a Comedy was written.

*Cank.* Blockheads! Fools! Idiots! what signifies Taste or Learning if such Wretches are suffered to have Sway in the Commonwealth of Letters!

(*Enter PLAGIARY*)

*Plag.* A blundering Blockhead! He pretend to give his Judgment upon Writing!

*Cank.* What's the matter, Plagiary?

*Plag.* Why there's that staring Irish Baronet blundering out such fulsome Praise upon the New Play as is enough to make a sensible Man sick—I did but offer an Objection or two and my Lady Critick and the whole Knot opened upon me like a Pack of Hounds—I was forced to quit the Room.

*Cank.* I am amazed at my Lady Critick's liking it but I will soon convince her of her Error. But dear Plagiary, was there no Opportunity, nor no Attempt to hinder its Success?

*Plag.* *Not after it begun; before indeed, there was as promising a Spirit in the Pit as ever made an Author's Heart ache. They whistled, hollowed and catcalled and interrupted the Prologue for above ten Minutes.*

*Cank.* Ay! That looked charming!

*Plag.* O delightful!—I would not have given Sixpence to have secured its Destruction—everybody around me concluded it a gone Play.

*Grub.* And so the[y] did about me I assure you.

*Plag.* If they had been possessed with the Spirit of Zoilus, they could not have behaved better before the Prologue was spoke; but the Instant the Curtain was drawn up, their Clamour changed to a fixed Attention, and their Prejudice to burst of Applause which made the Ring.

*Cank.* What, no hissing at all?

*Plag.* No, Sir!

*Cank.* Nor Catcalling?

*Plag.* None.

*Cank.* Nor groaning?

*Plag.* Not one, Sir.

*Cank.* Well if such Plays go down——

*Plag.* I pulled out my Handkerchief and blowed—and coughed—and hawked—and spit, a hundred times I believe, (*Makes a noise by blowing in his Handkerchief*) but was constantly interrupted with "Silence—pray, Sir, be silent—let us hear."

*Grub.* I heard you from the other side of the Pit and did the same but was interrupted too by the Fools about me.

*Cank.* To see the partiality of Audiences—Idiots—damn 'em, they never would attend to a Play of mine.

*Grub.* Nor mine.

*Plag.* No nor mine.

*Cank.* They always begun with me in the first Act by calling for the Epilogue. Dear Plagiary, do you think this thing will run?

*Plag.* I am afraid so.

*Cank.* *Why then your Tragedy cannot come out this year——*

*Plag.* No Sir, nor your Comedy.

*Grub.* Nor my Mask.

*Cank.* Isn't it monstrous that the Publick must be deprived of such an excellent performance as your Mask is, which is preferable to anything Milton ever wrote for such a wretched *flimsy piece of Stuff?*

*Grub.* Upon my word, Sir, I think the Publick is much worse used in respect of your Comedy, which has the Art and Character of Johnson, the Ease and Elegance of Etheridge, the Wit of Congreve, and the happy ridiculum of Moliere; and is indisputably the best that has been written in our Language.

*Plag.* *Was there ever such Injustice shewn in a Theatre as the setting aside my Tragedy which has the Approbation of all the Judges in England?*

*Cank.* It is severe Treatment no Doubt on't for your Piece stands in the first Class of Tragedy; it is written according to the strictest French Rules, and for the true Sublime as far beyond Shakespear as Banks is beneath him. But what signifies the Excellence of a Piece? Neither your Tragedy, my Comedy, nor your Mask can come on. The Stage is quite monopolized for this Year if this Thing, I can't call it a Play, is suffered to run.

*Plag.* Ay, and what is worse, if some means is not found out to check it, ten to one but we shall be plagued with another next year.

*Grub.* Well, what's to be done?

*Cank.* Why Gentlemen, it is a Common Cause, and requires an active Opposition. We must try fairly to hunt it down by Journals, Epigrams and Pamphlets;—you must attack the Characters,—you the Sentiments and Dialogue, while I expose the Moral and the Fable.

*Plag.* With all my Heart.

*Grub.* Agreed. And now let us join the Company and try if we can't bring them over to our Party; for tho' the most of them are Idiots, yet they will serve to fill up the Cry, which you know is the present Test of Right and Wrong. (*Exit*)

*Plag.* Pray did you ever read his Mask?

*Cank.* I attempted to read it several times but could never get through it.

*Plag.* It is the vilest Thing sure that ever dullness produced. And yet the Fools are as fond of it as if Apollo and the Nine had approved it. Amazing that Men can be so blind to their own Foibles. (*Exit*)

*Cank.* I am sure if you were not as great a Stranger to your own Dullness as you are to Apollo and the Nine, as you quaintly call them, you would never think of writing a Tragedy. But most Writers are such vain, envious Coxcombs, and busy themselves so continually in the pleasing Search of other People's Faults, that they never have time to look into their own. For this Blockhead now, who has no more Imagination than a Dutch Burgomaster, because he can common place Corneille and Racine, sets up for the Euripides of the Age, and has the Vanity to prefer his sleepy, lumpish Tragedy to my Comedy which has that *Viscomica*, that fine Ridiculum of Human Nature which Caesar so lauded in the Greek and so regretted the Want of in the Roman Poet. (*Exit*)

(*Enter HARRIET and HEARTLY*)

*Har.* O I have teased the Wretch 'till his Envy shook him like the Ague fit.

*Heart.* And I have praised the Play and flattered my Lady's Judgment to such a Degree of Pride and Obstinancy as will never bear Contradiction again. No successful Poet after his Ninth Night was ever so brimfull of Vanity as I have made her Ladyship. She run[s] over with folly.

*Har.* Let me tell you, Sir, Trifle makes a pretty ridiculous Figure upon this Occasion.

*Heart.* And indeed upon any Occasion; he never departs from his Character. I left him, and that other Coxcomb Nibble, in the most ridiculous dispute about the Rules of Criticism, and what was high, and what was low Comedy, and what was Farce, that ever was heard. Sir Patrick, he got into the Squabble with them, and did so contradict himself and them, and did so flounder and blunder that they had all gone to Loggerheads if my Lady hadn't stepped in and pre-emptorily decided the point.

*Har.* O delightful! I should have liked that of all things. See here the Knight comes; let us play him off a little.

*Heart.* With all my Heart.

(*Enter Sir PATRICK*)

*Heart.* Sir Patrick, your humble Servant, have you settled the Argument between Nibble and Trifle at last?

*Sir Pat.* Yes, yes, I settled it as dead as a Door Nail betwixt them.

*Heart.* Which way, Sir?

*Sir Pat.* Why I told them they were both wrong and knew nothing at all of the Matter, but they did not believe me so they went to it again, and there I left them.—(*Seeing Harriet, addresses her*) Madam, I am your most obedient Slave and humble Servant! 'Till death do us part.

*Har.* O Sir Patrick, you are superlatively obliging. (*Curtzying very low*) I am afraid, Sir Patrick, that is more than my short Acquaintance with you can merit.

*Sir Pat.* O Madam, you merit more than human Nature can bestow upon you. You are all perfection, beautiful as Venus, and as wise as Medusa.

*Both.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Heart.* Medusa! Ha, ha, ha, Minerva I believe you mean.

*Sir Pat.* Faith I believe so too; but one may easily mistake; you know they are so very much alike, especially as they are both Heathen Gods too.

*Both.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Heart.* Very true, Sir.

*Sir Pat.* Upon my Honour, Madam, I have travelled over several of the Terrestrial Globes both by Land and Sea and I never saw so fair a Creature as your Ladyship, but one, and she was an Indian Queen and black as a Raven.

*Har.* Pray Sir, in all your Travels were you never in Ireland?

*Sir Pat.* I was in Paris, Madam; I lived there all my Life. Parlez vous Francois?

*Har.* Sir, I don't understand your speaking French very well.

*Sir Pat.* Oui, Mademoiselle, je le parle Francois, but I cannot speak a word of Irish tho' I was often taken for an Irish Gentleman when I was abroad—because you must know I used to converse very much with them.

*Har.* And pray, Sir, in all your Travels through the Terrestrial Globes by Land and Sea, are you sure you never were in Ireland?

*Sir Pat.* No, Madam, I can't say positively—Stay—let me remember if I can—Ireland—Ireland—tho' to tell you the Truth, Madam, *I have a very bad Memorandum.*

*Both.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Sir Pat.* Faith, Madam, I can't find by my Brain that ever I was so happy as to visit that Kingdom.

*Har.* I wonder at that, Sir, for all Gentlemen of Taste visit Ireland in their Travels. It's famous for not having venomous Creatures in it, I think.

*Sir Pat.* Not one, Madam, from the beginning of the World to the Creation. For I remember there was a Toad brought over there once, and as soon as ever he died. Madam, upon my Honour, they could not bring it to Life again.

*Har.* No! That was very surprizing, ha, ha.

*Sir Pat.* Upon my Word and Honour, Madam, 'tis as true as the Alcorn, for I stood there with these two Eyes and saw it.

*Har.* Then I find you have been in Ireland, Sir?

*Sir Pat.* In Ireland, Madam. (*Aside*—What the Devil have I said. Now I am afraid I have committed a Blunder here.) Yes, Madam, now I remember I was there once about two or three Months ago—I went over with a Lady for my Diversion—She went there to travel so I went to shew her the Country because we were both Strangers in it. But really, Madam, it was so long ago that I quite forgot it, and as I told you before, Madam, I have a very treacherous Heart at remembering Things when once I forgot them.

*Har.* You are to be excused, Sir, for to be sure a Gentleman that has travelled so much as you have done must have a very treacherous Heart at remembering things. For it is common Observation that Travellers always have bad Memories.

*Sir Pat.* O the worst in the World, Madam, for they go into so many Inns and Taverns upon the Road, and into so many Towns and Villages and Steeples and Churches, that it is impossible to Memorandum all the Kingdoms a Man travels through.

*Heart.* Ha, ha, ha. Pray Sir, in your Travels in Ireland, if your heart will let you recollect it, what sort of usage did you meet with?

*Sir Pat.* O the best behaved usage that ever I met with in all the born days of my Life, Sir—I'll tell you what, Madam, now if you were a strange Gentleman and travelling there and happened to come within a Mile of a Gentleman's House when you were benighted so that you could not find your way to it, upon my Honour you might lie there all Night and not cost you a halfpenny, tho' you had never a farthing of Money in your Pocket.

*Both.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Heart.* That is very hospitable, I must confess, to let one lie within a Mile of their House.

*Sir Pat.* Lord, Madam, there are not so hospitable and good natured People in the World.

*Heart.* I think, Sir, the Irish are reckoned very great Scholars.

*Sir Pat.* O dear, Madam, yes indeed, very great Scholars. They play Back Gammon the best of any Men in the World, *better than all the Bishops in England.*

*Har.* Then you have several good Poets in Ireland.

*Sir Pat.* Yes to be sure, Sir, there is hardly a Gentleman there but knows every one of the Ninety Nine Muses, and can speak all the Mechanical Sciences by Heart, and most of the liberal Languages except Irish and Welch.

*Har.* And how happens it that they don't speak their own Language?

*Sir Pat.* Because, Madam, they are ashamed of it; it has such a rumbling Sound with it. Now when I was upon my Travels I liked the Language so well that I learned it. Madam, if it won't be over and above encumbersome to your sweet Ladyship, I will sing you an Irish Song I learnt there—it was made upon a beautiful young Creature that I was in Love wi[th] there, one Mrs. Gilgifferaghing.

*Har.* Not at all encumbersome; I dare swear it will be very entertaining.

*Sir Pat.* Hem, hem, hem. (*Sings an Irish Song*)

*Har.* I protest, Sir, you have a great deal of very diverting Humour; and upon my Word you sing extremely well. For my part, I think Irish singing is as diverting as Italian.

*Sir Pat.* O Madam, that is more my Deserts than your Goodness to say so.

*Both.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Har.* I am surprized the Directors of the Opera do not send over to Ireland for a Set of Irish Singers.

*Sir Pat.* O no, Madam, it would never do; the Irishmen would never make good Singers.

*Har.* Why so, Sir?

*Sir Pat.* Lord, Madam, as soon as ever they would come to England, the English Ladies would be so very fond of them that it would spoil their Voices—besides, Madam, they are not so well qualified for it as the Italians.

*Har.* We are generally speaking very fond of the Irish Gentlemen to be sure, but there is no avoiding it,—they have so much Wit and Assurance and are such agreeable handsome Fellows.

*Sir Pat.* O Lord, Madam, we Gentlemen of Ireland look upon ourselves to be the handsomest men in England.

*Heart.* Then you are an Irish Man, Sir?

*Sir Pat.* An Irish Man,—poh, what the Devil shall I say now? (*Aside*) No my Life, I am no Irishman at all, not I upon my Honour—but my Mother was one—and so I call that my Country sometimes out of a Joke—that's all—I an Irishman—no, no—no, I'faith you may know by my Tongue that I am no Irishman.

*Har.* O then it is your Mother that was an Irishman?

*Sir Pat.* Yes, Madam, she was born and bred in Ireland all the Days of her Life, but she was educated in England.

*Heart.* Ha, ha, ha, this is more than one in Reason could have expected. This Fellow is more diverting and more blundering than his Countryman in the Committee. [*Aside*]

*Har.* See, here come Mr. Nibble and Mr. Trifle in warm debate; prithee let us leave them to themselves and go see how my Lady and Canker have agreed in their Judgments about this New Play.

*Sir Pat.* With all my Heart, Madam; for really I am tired with these two Gentlemen before they come near us, they are so very silly—(*Pushing between Harriet and Heartly*) I beg Pardon, Mr. Heartly, but I must do the Lady the Honour to give her the Acceptation of my Hand. I hope you will excuse my bashfulness, Madam, that I did not do it sooner.

*Har.* Sir Patrick, you are the most courteous well bred Knight that ever broke Spear in a Lady's Defence.

*Sir Pat.* Faith I am of your Opinion in that, Madam, for I think I am a clever loose Fellow. (*Exeunt*)

(*Enter NIBBLE and TRIFLE*)

*Trif.* Dear Nibble, don't let you and I quarrel which we certainly must if you persist in crying down so admired a Piece. For Dullness seize me if I don't defend it to the last Extremity of critical Obstinacy.

*Nib.* Dear Tim: don't call it critical, but fashionable Obstinacy, for you know very well that Judgment and you are old Antagonists.

*Trif.* Ha, ha, ha, give me your Hand for that, Nibble; faith that was not said amiss—But as I have some regard for you, don't persist in shewing your weakness lest you oblige me to draw my parts upon you, and if I do, expect no Quarter; by all that's witty, I'll pink the Midriff of your Ignorance as a friendly cure to your sickly Understanding.

*Nib.* Tim Trifle, I defy your Parts; they are as blunt and as dull as a Welch Pedant's. I do and shall persist in, asserting to the last Extremity of my critical Judgment that the Piece has glaring Faults—monstrous.

*Trif.* What Faults? What Faults? Prithee name one!

*Nib.* Why in the first place I insist upon it, and I will prove it up to mathematical Demonstration, that the Title of it is quite expotic.

*Trif.* Expotic?

*Nib.* Ay, immensely expotic! so expotic that the Play ought to have been hissed for it. The Suspicious Husband! Is not that an egregious Error? I am sure every Person who has the least Taste of the Drama must allow it to be an unpardonable Fault—quite a Misnomer—absolutely expotic.

*Trif.* Now by Aristotle's Beard, I think there could not have been so happy a Title found out of the Alphabet.

*Nib.* Nay prithee now, Tim [7] Trifle, what do you understand by the word Suspicion?

*Trif.* Dear Nick, every Mortal knows what Suspicion means; Suspicion comes from Suspicio, that is when any Person suspects another.

*Nib.* Well I won't dispute your Definition but upon my Honour I think it should have been the Jealous Husband.

*Trif.* He, he, lud, Nibble, that would have been the most absurd Title in the Creation. Well Nick, have you anything else in the Play to find fault with?

*Nib.* Yes, I think Ranger's Dress is another egregious Fault in it.

*Trif.* His Dress a Fault in the Play?

*Nib.* Ay, and intolerable one.

*Trif.* Nay don't say that, Nick—because if you do I must laugh at you. Why all the World admires his Dress. *That is thought one of the best things in the Play.*

*Nib.* Well now I will mention a Criticism which I defy the warmest of Words to defend.

*Trif.* Well, prithee what's that, Nibble?

*Nib.* Why you know Ranger's hat is laced; that I think you must allow; that is obvious to everybody.

*Trif.* Well, well, granted, my dear Nibble, it is laced.

*Nib.* Why then I aver by all the Rules of Criticism to make the improbability out of imposing upon Mr. Strickland, that Jacyntha's Hat ought to be laced too, and by all that is absurd it is a plain one.

*Trif.* Well come, there is something in that; that is a Fault I must confess, that is a Fault by gad.

*Nib.* O an unpardonable one; I assure you Jack Wagwit and a parcel of us was going to hiss the whole Scene upon that Account.

*Trif.* No, no, that would have been cruel; you know Homer himself sometimes nodded. Don't take any Notice of it to anybody, and it shall be altered tomorrow Night. I'll speak to the Author about it—O here's my Lady and Mr. Canker—now for a thorough Criticism upon it.

*(Enter Lady CRITICK, CANKER, HEARTLY, HARRIET and Sir PATRICK)*

*Lady.* Well, I protest Mr. Canker, I am surprized at your Judgment. You will certainly be laughed at by all the Polite part of the World.

*Cank.* Madam, I hold the Vulgar in as much Contempt as I do the Rabble in the Shilling Gallery; both Herds are ignorant, and praise and condemn, or censure or applau[d], not from a Judgment in the Art, which should be the Director, but from the ignorant Dictates of Nature: mere Affection, like Moliere's old Woman.

*Heart.* Well, for my Part, I shall always prefer the irregular Genius who from mere Affection compels me to laugh or cry, to the regular Blockhead who makes me sleep according to Rule.

*Cank.* Have a Care, Mr. Heartly, none but the Ignorant ever despised Rules.

*Heart.* Nor none but the ill natured or the envious ever judged by the Extremity of Rules. And the laws of Criticism like the Penal Laws should be explained in a favourable Sense lest the Critick like the Judge should be suspected of Cruelty or Malice against the Criminal.

*Sir Pat.* Upon my Honour, Sir, I think you talk mighty reasonably. I think there should be no Law [at] all, and then everybody might do what they please.

*Trif.* Right, right, Sir Patrick! Liberty and Property, I say—demme I am not for Criticks—your Homers and your Virgils—and your Coke upon Littleton, and a parcel of Fellows—who talk of Nothing but Gods and Goddesses—and a Story of a Cock and a Bull—as hard to be understood as a Welch Pedigree.

*Sir Pat.* Upon my Honour, so they are very hard! And that Milton's a strange Fellow too—*he has got a devilish sight of Devils along with him that nobody knows any thing of but himself*—the Devil a one of 'em all I know but one—and that was old Belzebub—you know we have often heard of him, for he was Lucifer's Wife.

*Trif.* For my Part I assure you I never could understand Milton.

*Sir Pat.* Nor I, upon my Honour, Mr. Trifle—tho' I admire him greatly, him and Shakespear are my Favourites, but I could never understand them.

*Trif.* O Shakespear—old Shakespear—O Shakespear is a clever Fellow, ay, ay,—I admire Shakespear to the Skies—I understand him very well, Sir Patrick.

*Lady.* Mr. Canker, finding fault in general is unfair.

*Cank.* Madam, if you will hear me, I will come to particulars and if I don't convince you, and all the Company that it is void of Plot, Character, Wit, Humour, Manners, and Moral, I will ever after submit to be thought as ignorant as I now think those Criticks are who so much admire it.

*Nib.* As to his want of Manners, that I think is as obvious as Mathematical Demonstration—was there ever anything so rude as to bring the Character of our Friend Jack Maggot on the Stage, who is a young Fellow of Family and Fortune, and as well known about Town as I am, and is as good natured and as inoffensive a Creature as ever travelled. I vow as soon as ever I saw him come upon the Stage, I was shocked.—It was vastly unpolite to introduce a young Fellow of his Figure in Life upon a publick Theatre—I suppose he will bring some of our Characters on the Stage in his next Play—if he does I protest I'll make a party to hiss it.

*Lady.* You may be mistaken, Mr. Nibble, i[t] may be a general and not a particular Character that is meant by Mr. Maggot.

*Cank.* Madam, Mr. Nibble's Observation is just, and it is impossible he can be mistaken. For my part, I know Jack Maggot as well as I do myself, or as I do who is meant by Mr. Strictland.

*Heart.* Mr. Canker, this is most invidious Criticism and what the best Writers from Fools and Knaves are most liable to. But instead of injuring, it serves an Author with the Judicious; for it only proves the Copies to be so highly finished that Ignorance and Malice compliment them as known Originals.

*Lady.* I protest, Mr. Heartly, I think you quite right in your Answer, and if Mr. Canker has nothing more Material to offer against the Play, he will be very Singular in his Censure.

*Cank.* Pray what does your Ladyship think of his Ladder of Ropes?

*Lady.* Why lookee, Mr. Canker, he may have transgressed probability by it, I grant you—but I will forgive an Author such Transgressions at any time when it is productive of so much Mirth.

*Heart.* Judiciously observed, my Lady.

*Trif.* Well, by gad, I like the Ladder of Ropes of all things.

*Sir Pat.* Upon my Honour so do I.

*Nib.* Well, I vow I think they are vastly absurd. Pray what do you think, Miss Harriet?

*Har.* I think it is a very simple and a very probable Machine, and productive of many happy Incidents, every one of which naturall[y] arise[s] out of each other, and have this peculiar Beauty, which other Incidents upon the Stage have not, that each of them begins with a Surprize that raises your Anxiety and ends with a turn the least unexpected, which could you have foreseen, would have been what you would have wished.

*Lady.* Very nicely distinguished, Harriet; I protest that is the greatest Encomium I have heard of the Play yet.

*Heart.* And the justest, Madam.

*Cank.* O intolerable! Monstrous! Shocking! Such Ignorance! (*Aside*) Pray Madam, not to mention the improbability, where was the Necessity for a Ladder of Ropes?

*Sir Pat.* What Necessity? Arra why do you ask such a foolish Question? I'll tell you what Necessity—Why it was put there for the young Man, the Templer, to go up Stairs into the House.



*Omnès.* Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Heart.* Very well explained, Sir Patrick; it is a proper Answer.

*Cank.* But pray, Ladies—I speak to you in particular, who best know the Nature of the Question I am going to ask—how can you justify the impoliteness of making Clarinda, a Lady of Fashion and Fortune, in full dress trudge the streets at twelve o'Clock at Night in Contradiction to all Reason, Probability, and Politeness?

*Sir Pat.* Poo, poo! That's foolish now. Why what has a Stage Play to do with Reason and Probability? If a Tragedy makes you laugh and a Comedy makes you cry, as Mr. Heartly said just now, what would you have more?

*Omnès.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Sir Pat.* And as to the young Lady's going home a Foot, that is easily answered. You are to suppose it was a rainy Night and that she walked home to save Chair hire, because there was never a Coach to be had.

*Omnès.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Sir Pat.* I am sure it is very natural to walk. I have done so a hundred times.

*Omnès.* Ha, ha, ha.

*Trif.* My dear Sir Patrick, give me your Hand! Thou art the top Critick of the Age, let me perish.

*Nib.* Ignorant Wretches!

*Cank.* Was ever Man so tortured with such Fools! (*Aside*)—I hope, Mr. Heartly, you will not offer to vindicate the Dialogue. There is not one Attempt to Wit all through the Play, but that about the Gravestone; the Characters all speak like People in common Conversation.

*Heart.* I thought that was a Beauty, Mr. Canker.

*Cank.* Yes just as barrenness is in Land. Don't you see, Sir, what Whicherly and Congreve have done in their Comedies?

*Heart.* Yes Sir, and I know what their Masters, Terence, Plautus, Moliere, and our own Johnson have done, who thought themselves most excellent in their Dialogue when they could make their Characters speak, not what was most witty, but what was most proper to Time, Place, Character, and Circumstance.

*Lady.* Upon my Word, Mr. Heartly, you are a very accurate Critick, and I am entirely of your Judgment.

*Cank.* Well, but allowing it all [it] deserves, why must it be praised so very much?

*Heart.* Because, Sir, Praise is the food, and too often the only Reward of Merit; and none deny it but the ill natured and the envious.

*Cank.* And none give it but the Ignorant or the Fulsome.

*Heart.* Sir, that is not very Complaisant—pray Sir, who do you mean by the Ignorant?

*Trif.* Ay, Sir, who is't you mean?

*Sir Pat.* Ay, Sir, who do you mean? I hope you don't mean me.

*Cank.* You, and all of you who like this Piece—You are Men, Fops in Understanding, catch your Judgments from each other as you do your Dress, not because they are right, but that they are the Fashion, *and you make as ridiculous a Figure in Criticism as an Ape in human Cloathing.*

*Lady.* Give me leave to tell you, Mr. Canker, that you want Politeness.

*Cank.* Madam, I am sorry your Ladyship obliges me to tell you that you want Judgment.

*Lady.* Not to see into you, Sir—Your Envy shall never be rude or troublesome to any of my Family again, I assure you, Sir.

*Cank.* Nor shall your Ignorance or your Niece's ever be troublesome to me again; I would as soon Match into a Family of Hottentots.

*Lady.* O mighty well, Sir!—Harriet, I desire you will never think of Mr. Canker more.

*Har.* I shall obey your Commands, Madam.

*Lady.* Want Judgment! A Family of Hottentots!

*Sir Pat.* Upon my Honour that was unpolite—and you might as well say I want Judgment.

*Trif.* Ay, by Gad, or I.

*Cank.* You are those kind of Judges who are brought into the Channel of Criticism by the Springtide of Fashion, part of the Rubbish which helps to swell it above the Mark of Truth, and with its Ebb, return as precipitately as you came in, and are never heard of more.

*Trif.* Dullness seize me! If I understand what you mean by your Springtide, your Fashion, and your Rubbish—I insist upon the Play, [it] is a good Play—quite tip top, the best Play in life, split me!

*Sir Pat.* Faith, so it is, Mr. Trifle, a very good Play, for the Author told me so himself—and you know it must be good when I had it from his own Mouth.

*Lady.* Did you ever see the Author, Sir Patrick?

*Sir Pat.* No, Madam, but I had it at second hand, from a third Parson, and that's the same thing, you know.

*Omnnes.* Ha! ha! ha!

(*Enter a FOOTMAN*)

*Foot.* Mr. Advocate the Lawyer is come; he bid me inform your Ladyship that the Writings are ready.

*Lady.* Very well. (*Exit Footman*) We shall [have] no Occasion for them tonight nor never in regard to Mr. Canker.

*Heart.* I protest, Madam, this Hour's Conversation and its Circumstances, tolerably handled, would make, a la mode a Francaise, an agreeable Petit Piece.

*Lady.* Not a bad thought, I vow, Mr. Heartly.

*Heart.* Shall I recommend it to your Ladyship? I know your Talents for the Drama, and I'll answer for its Success.

*Trif.* And so will I by Jupiter; my Lady, we'll make a party on purpose to support it.

*Sir Pat.* And so will I by all the Gods in Virgil's Iliad! O I'll come alone with a hundred Catcalls of my Acquaintance to support it.

*Heart.* Shall we prevail on your Ladyship?

*Lady.* Upon my Honour, I don't dislike the Whim, if you will promise your Assistance, Mr. Heartly.

*Heart.* Your Ladyship does me Honour; you may command me and Mr. Canker shall be the Hero.

*Lady.* Really I am afraid his Character is so very high that the Audience will never allow it to be natural.

*Heart.* That part of the Audience who would know the Copy by themselves might condemn it through Policy as being exaggerated, but the Candid and Judicious who could not be hurt by it and who know the Nature of Envy would approve it. Besides Farce will admit of Characters being a little outre.

*Lady.* I protest you are a mighty good Critick, Mr. Heartly, but I am afraid we shall want Plot in our Petit Piece, Mr. Heartly.

*Heart.* Not at all, my Lady! There is no great Demand for Plot in a Farce, but to please the Criticks we'll have a little. The main Business must be the exposing an envious Author, and the Plot must be to provoke his Envy to neglect his Mistress and to quarrel with your Ladyship, the Poetical Justice of which must be your breaking off the intended Match, and giving me his Mistress, who am to be his Rival; and as the Piece is to be a temporary thing, I dare say the Audience will make reasonable Allowances.

*Lady.* I vow I like the Contrivance mightily, and I think there's something very Singular and very Novel.

*Trif.* And pray, Heartly, what part shall I have in it?

*Heart.* You shall be the Jack Maggot of the Farce, which shall be so trifling that you may be either kept in or left out.

*Sir Pat.* And what part shall I have in your Play, Mr. Heartly?

*Heart.* Really, Sir Patrick, I know no Business you can have in it, unless it be to make the Audience laugh.

*Sir Pat.* Faith then I have a good Hand at that—for I am so very witty that I always make

Company laugh wherever I come.

*Nib.* Mr. Heartly, give me leave to tell you your Farce will never succeed, for your Characters will be too high for that Species of the Drama, and not half ridiculous enough.

*Heart.* To remedy that, Sir, we will bring in your Character at the End of the Farce as a Satyr upon all Criticks who find fault with Trifles.

*Trif.* Ha, ha, admirable! That will be delightful! Quite tip top or may I perish, ha.

*Lady.* Pray what shall we call our little Piece, Mr. Heartly?

*Heart.* Why really, Madam, I can't think of any Title better at present than the New Play Criticized, or the Plague of Envy.

(*Enter FOOTMAN*)

*Foot.* Sir Charles Stanza and another Gentleman are come to wait on your Ladyship.

*Lady.* Come Gentlemen, let us go and tell Sir Charles and the Author of our Design; so if you please, Mr. Canker, you may go along with us and be by at the Planning of our little Piece—No, I know his Envy won't suffer him to hear us compliment the Author. That would be out of Character, so we will leave him to consider of an Epilogue for our Farce.

Rough Draft of an EPILOGUE

(*Enter a POET shabbily dressed*)

Hissed, catcalled, and exploded to a man  
By those who cannot write, and those who can,  
How shall a recreant bard in nature's spight  
Save one poor piece, and live a second night?  
What—shall he try the arts of low grimace,  
Rant like old Bayes, and with a begging face  
Implore the patient monarchs of the Pit  
To let dull farce pass off for sterling Wit?  
No faith—his brother critics most he fears,  
And wisely waves the privilege of Peers—  
Nor disapproves he less the threadbare plea  
Of wit in rags, and learned Poverty—  
If, like a son of those bright nymphs, the Nine  
He e'er pr[o]fer a prayer at Phoebus' shrine,  
Ask him to dart one genial beam on Earth  
To hatch the Nothing of his Brain to birth,  
That prayer or never comes, or comes too late;  
The Nine still hold him illegitimate.—  
In this Distress where next his application?  
Where, but to thee thou darling Goddess, Fashion!  
Fashion, the reigning Genius of today  
Whose verdict speaks the fate of each new play,  
Whose *mandate* gives the power to save or kill,  
Lends Amoret her eyes and Ward his pill;  
If Fashion, mighty arbiter of merit,  
Allows it, right or wrong, some wit and spirit,  
Then shall this farce like other farces too  
Run eighteen nights or more and still be new;  
Each different night, a different audience meet,  
And Hawkers cry it up in evr'y Street.

NB. This will damn the piece! [8]

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## NOTES TO THE PLAYS

[1] Larpent ms 58 is dated April, 1746, in another hand and bears the following note to the Licensor: "April 15th, 1746. Sir, I have given Mrs. Macklin leave to act this farce for her Benefit provided it meets with the Approbation of my Lord

Chamberlain. Your humble Servant. J. Lacy."

[2] Smart is addressed as Dick in this speech in the ms. Three speeches later Rattle is addressed as Jack. Elsewhere in the ms. it is Jack Smart and Dick Rattle.

[3] The following line, "You may feel it if you please." is crossed out in the ms.

[4] The following phrase, "and most liable to be hurt" is crossed out in the ms.

[5] Larpent ms 64 is dated "March 17th, 1746/7" and bears the following note to the Licensor: "Sir—I have given Mr. Macklin leave to perform this Piece at His Benefit at my Theatre, provided it meets with the Approbation of my Lord Chamberlain, from your most obedient Humble Servant, J. Lacy."

[6] A "Prologue to the Plague of Envy" addressed in another hand to "Mr. Macklin in Bow Street, Covent Garden," is included with Larpent ms. 64. The Prologue is preceded by the following note: "The following is taken from the Title of the Farce; the Writer for the Subject on the Stage; and hopes his Ignorance of the Manner in which you treat it, will excuse any Want of Approbation that may be in it."

[7] Spelled *Tom* in the ms. Elsewhere Trifle is addressed as *Tim* Trifle.

[8] The Epilogue, in a different hand than that of the play's scribe, appears similar to the handwriting of the Prologue. Cf. n.6

[9] Larpent ms 96 is dated 1752 and bears the following note to the Licensor: "Sir, This piece called Covent Garden Theatre or Pasquin turned Drawcansir Mr. Macklin designs to have performed at his Benefit Night with the permission of his Grace the Duke of Grafton. I am Sir your humble Servant, Jno. C. Rich. To William Chetwyne Esq."

[10] This character, spelled "Romp" in the ms, is probably meant to be the Prompter who does not appear in the Dramatis Personae but speaks twice offstage in this act.

[11] Although Hic and Haec Scriblerus appear in the Dramatis Personae, this is his only speech and his entrance on stage is never indicated.

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