
 WILLIAM CONGREVE

1670–1729

Love for Love

Dramatis Personae

SIR SAMPSON LEGEND, *father to VALENTINE and BEN*
 VALENTINE, *fallen under his father's displeasure by his expensive way of living, in love with ANGELICA*
 SCANDAL, *his friend, a free speaker*
 TATTLE, *a half-witted beau, vain of his amours, yet valuing himself for secrecy*
 BEN, *SIR SAMPSON's younger son, half home-bred and half sea-bred, designed to marry MISS PRUE*
 FORESIGHT, *an illiterate old fellow, peevish and positive, superstitious, and pretending to understand astrology, palmistry, physiognomy,¹ omens, dreams, etc., uncle to ANGELICA*
 JEREMY, *servant to VALENTINE*
 TRAPLAND, *a scrivener²*
 BUCKRAM, *a lawyer*
 ANGELICA, *niece to FORESIGHT, of a considerable fortune in her own hands*
 MRS. FORESIGHT, *second wife to FORESIGHT*
 MRS. FRAIL, *sister to MRS. FORESIGHT, a woman of the town*
 MISS PRUE, *daughter to FORESIGHT by a former wife, a silly, awkward country girl*
 NURSE, *to MISS PRUE*
 JENNY, *maid to ANGELICA*
 A STEWARD, OFFICERS, SAILORS, *and several SERVANTS*
 SCENE—*London*

*Prologue Spoken at the opening of the New House*BY MR. BETTERTON³

The husbandman⁴ in vain renews his toil,
 To cultivate each year a hungry soil;
 And fondly hopes for rich and generous fruit,
 When what should feed the tree devours the root.
 5 Th'unladen boughs he sees, bode certain dearth,
 Unless transplanted to more kindly earth.
 So the poor husbands of the stage, who found
 Their labors lost upon the ungrateful ground,
 This last and only remedy have proved;
 10 And hope new fruit from ancient stocks⁵ removed.

1. Telling fortunes from the lines of the face.
 2. Broker or money-lender.
 3. Thomas Betterton (ca. 1635–1710), the great actor who originated the role of Valentine, had quarreled with the Theater Royal and founded a new playhouse in Lincoln's Inn Fields, taking most

of the company with him. *Love for Love* was their opening production.

4. Farmer.

5. Trunks or stems, with a play on theatrical "stock companies."

Well may they hope, when you so kindly aid,
 And plant a soil which you so rich have made.
 As Nature gave the world to man's first age,
 So from your bounty we receive this stage;
 15 The freedom man was born to, you've restored,
 And to our world such plenty you afford,
 It seems like Eden, fruitful of its own accord.
 But since in Paradise frail flesh gave way,
 And when but two were made, both went astray;
 20 Forbear your wonder and the fault forgive,
 If in our larger family we grieve
 One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.⁶
 We who remain would gratefully repay
 What our endeavors can, and bring this day,
 25 The first-fruit offering of a virgin play.
 We hope there's something that may please each taste,
 And though of homely fare we make the feast,
 Yet you will find variety at least.
 There's humor, which for cheerful friends we got,
 30 And for the thinking party there's plot.
 We've something too, to gratify ill nature
 (If there be any here), and that is satire.
 Though satire scarce dares grin, 'tis grown so mild;
 Or only shows its teeth, as if it smiled.
 35 As asses thistles, poets mumble wit,
 And dare not bite, for fear of being bit.
 They hold their pens, as swords are held by fools,
 And are afraid to use their own edge-tools.
 Since *The Plain Dealer's* scenes of manly rage,⁷
 40 Not one has dared to lash this crying⁸ age.
 This time the poet owns the bold essay,
 Yet hopes there's no ill manners in his play:
 And he declares by me, he has designed
 Affront to none, but frankly speaks his mind.
 45 And should the ensuing scenes not chance to hit,
 He offers but this one excuse, 'twas writ
 Before your late encouragement of wit.⁹

Act One

SCENE ONE

VALENTINE *in his chamber reading*. JEREMY *waiting*.¹ *Several books upon the table.*

VALENTINE. Jeremy

JEREMY. Sir.

VALENTINE. Here, take away; I'll walk a turn, and digest what I have read.

6. A reference to two members of the company who had gone back to the rival Theater Royal.

7. Manly, the title character of William Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer*, was famous for his belligerent honesty.

8. Plays could be "cried down," or hissed off the stage, by offended audiences.

9. I.e., the granting of the license for the new theater.

1. Attending.

JEREMY. [*aside, and taking away the books*] You'll grow devilish fat upon this paper diet.

VALENTINE. And d'ye hear, go you to breakfast.—There's a page doubled down in Epictetus that is a feast for an emperor.

JEREMY. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write receipts?²

VALENTINE. Read, read, sirrah, and refine your appetite. Learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind, and mortify your flesh; read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes; shut up your mouth and chew the cud of understanding. So Epictetus advises.

JEREMY. O Lord! I have heard much of him when I waited upon a gentleman at Cambridge. Pray, what was that Epictetus?

VALENTINE. A very rich man—not worth a groat.

JEREMY. Humph, and so he has made a very fine feast where there is nothing to be eaten.

VALENTINE. Yes.

JEREMY. Sir, you're a gentleman, and probably understand this fine feeding. But if you please, I had rather be at board wages.³ Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? Or Diogenes, because he understands confinement, and lived in a tub, go to prison for you? 'Slife,⁴ sir, what do you mean, to mew your self up here with three or four musty books in commendation of starving and poverty?

VALENTINE. Why, sirrah, I have no money, you know it; and therefore resolve to rail at all that have. And in that I but follow the examples of the wisest and wittiest men in all ages; these poets and philosophers whom you naturally hate, for just such another reason; because they abound in sense, and you are a fool.

JEREMY. Ay, sir, I am a fool, I know it. And yet, heav'n help me, I'm poor enough to be a wit. But I was always a fool, when I told you what your expenses would bring you to: your coaches and your liveries, your treats and your balls: your being in love with a lady that did not care a farthing for you in your prosperity, and keeping company with wits, that cared for nothing but your prosperity, and now when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another.

VALENTINE. Well, and now I am poor, I have an opportunity to be revenged on 'em all. I'll pursue Angelica with more love than ever, and appear more notoriously her admirer in this restraint than when I openly rivaled the rich fops that made court to her. So shall my poverty be a mortification to her pride, and perhaps make her compassionate⁵ that love which has principally reduced me to this lowness of fortune. And for the wits, I'm sure I'm in a condition to be even with them.

JEREMY. Nay, your condition is pretty even with theirs, that's the truth on't.

VALENTINE. I'll take some of their trade out of their hands.

JEREMY. Now Heav'n of mercy continue the tax upon paper! You don't mean to write!

VALENTINE. Yes, I do; I'll write a play.

JEREMY. Hem! Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines—only to certify those whom it may concern that the bearer hereof, Jeremy

2. Recipes. Epictetus (ca. 55–135 A.D.), the Stoic philosopher, taught that reliance on worldly things was folly.

3. Wages paid servants for food.

4. An oath (short for "God's life")

5. Pity

Fetch by name, has for the space of seven years truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend Esq., and that he is not now turned away for any misdemeanor, but does voluntarily dismiss his master from any future authority over him—

VALENTINE. No, sirrah, you shall live with me still.

JEREMY. Sir, it's impossible—I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works; but to live even three days, the life of a play,⁶ I no more expect it than to be canonized for a muse after my decease.

VALENTINE. You are witty, you rogue. I shall want your help. I'll have to learn to make couplets to tag the ends of acts.⁷ D'ye hear, get the maids to crambo in an evening, and learn the knack of rhyming. You may arrive at the height of a song sent by an unknown hand, or a chocolate house lampoon.

JEREMY. But sir, is this the way to recover your father's favor? Why, Sir Sampson will be irreconcilable. If your younger brother should come from sea, he'd never look upon you again. You're undone, sir, you're ruined; you won't have a friend left in the world if you turn poet. Ah, pox confound that Will's coffeehouse,⁸ it has ruined more young men than the Royal Oak Lottery. Nothing thrives that belongs to't. The man of the house would have been an alderman by this time with half the trade, if he had set up in the city. For my part, I never sit at the door that I don't get double the stomach⁹ that I do at a horse race. The air upon Banstead Downs¹ is nothing to it for a whetter. Yet I never see it but the spirit of famine appears to me; sometimes like a decayed porter, worn out with pimping and carrying *billet-doux* and songs, not like other porters for hire, but for the jest's sake; now like a thin chairman,² melted down to half his proportion with carrying a poet upon tick³ to visit some great fortune, and his fare to be paid him like the wages of sin, either at the day of marriage, or the day of death.

VALENTINE. Very well, sir. Can you proceed?

JEREMY. Sometimes like a bilked bookseller, with a meager terrified countenance, that looks as if he had written for himself, or were resolved to turn author and bring the rest of his brethren into the same condition; and lastly, in the form of a worn-out punk,⁴ with verses in her hand, which her vanity had preferred to settlements, without a whole tatter to her tail, but as ragged as one of the muses, or as if she were carrying her linen to the paper mill, to be converted into folio books of warning to all young maids not to prefer poetry to good sense, or lying in the arms of a needy wit before the embraces of a wealthy fool.

[Enter SCANDAL.]

SCANDAL. What, Jeremy holding forth?

VALENTINE. The rogue has, with all the wit he could muster up, been declaiming against wit.

SCANDAL. Ay? Why then I'm afraid Jeremy has wit, for wherever it is, it's always contriving its own ruin.

6. Plays often closed after the third night, when the profits went to the author.

7. A rhymed couplet signified the end of an act. "To crambo": to play at capping verses.

8. Congreve, like Dryden and other literary lions, spent much of his time at Will's. Literary life, Jeremy suggests, is a form of gambling (the Royal Oak, the

only legal English lottery, was suppressed in 1699).

9. Appetite or courage.

1. A racecourse (now Epsom Downs).

2. Someone who carries or wheels others in a chair.

3. On credit.

4. Prostitute.

JEREMY. Why, so I have been telling my master, sir. Mr. Scandal, for Heaven's sake, sir, try if you can dissuade him from turning poet.

SCANDAL. Poet! He shall turn soldier first, and rather depend upon the outside of his head than the lining. Why, what the devil! Has not your poverty made you enemies enough? Must you needs show your wit to get more?

JEREMY. Ay, more indeed. For who cares for anybody that has more wit than himself?

SCANDAL. Jeremy speaks like an oracle. Don't you see how worthless great men and dull rich rogues avoid a witty man of small fortune? Why, he looks like a writ of inquiry⁵ into their titles and estates, and seems commissioned by Heav'n to seize the better half.

VALENTINE. Therefore I would rail in my writings, and be revenged.

SCANDAL. Rail? At whom? The whole world? Impotent and vain! Who would die a martyr to sense in a country where the religion is folly? You may stand at bay for a while, but when the full cry is against you, you won't have fair play for your life. If you can't be fairly run down by the hounds, you will be treacherously shot by the huntsmen.—No, turn pimp, flatterer, quack, lawyer, parson, be chaplain to an atheist, or stallion to an old woman, anything but poet. A modern poet is worse, more servile, timorous, and fawning than any I have named: without⁶ you could retrieve the ancient honors of the name, recall the stage of Athens, and be allowed the force of open honest satire.

VALENTINE. You are as inveterate against our poets as if your character had been lately exposed upon the stage. Nay, I am not violently bent upon the trade.—[*One knocks.*] Jeremy, see who's there.

[*Exit JEREMY.*]

But tell me what you would have me do. What do the world say of me, and of my forced confinement?

SCANDAL. The world behaves itself as it used to do on such occasions; some pity you and condemn your father; others excuse him, and blame you. Only the ladies are merciful and wish you well, since love and pleasurable expense have been your greatest faults.

[*Enter JEREMY.*]

VALENTINE. How now?

JEREMY. Nothing new, sir. I have dispatched some half a dozen duns⁷ with as much dexterity as a hungry judge does causes at dinner time.

VALENTINE. What answer have you given 'em?

SCANDAL. Patience, I suppose, the old receipt.

JEREMY. No, faith, sir. I have put 'em off so long with patience and forbearance and other fair words that I was forced now to tell 'em in plain downright English—

VALENTINE. What?

JEREMY. That they should be paid.

VALENTINE. When?

JEREMY. Tomorrow.

VALENTINE. And how the devil do you mean to keep your word?

JEREMY. Keep it? Not at all; it has been so very much stretched that I reckon it will break of course by tomorrow, and nobody be surprised at the matter.—

5. Legal investigation.

6. Unless.

7. Bill-collectors.

[*Knocking*] Again! Sir, if you don't like my negotiation, will you be pleased to answer these yourself?

VALENTINE. See who they are.

[*Exit* JEREMY.]

By this, Scandal, you may see what it is to be great; Secretaries of State, presidents of the council, and generals of an army lead just such a life as I do; have just such crowds of visitants in a morning, all soliciting of past promises, which are but a civiler sort of duns, that lay claim to voluntary debts.

SCANDAL. And you, like a true great man, having engaged their attendance and promised more than ever you intend to perform, are more perplexed to find evasions than you would be to invent the honest means of keeping your word and gratifying your creditors.

VALENTINE. Scandal, learn to spare your friends, and do not provoke your enemies; this liberty of your tongue will one day bring a confinement on your body, my friend.

[*Re-enter* JEREMY.]

JEREMY. O sir, there's Trapland the scrivener, with two suspicious fellows like lawful pads,⁸ that would knock a man down with pocket-tipstaves, and there's your father's steward, and the nurse with one of your children from Twitnam.⁹

VALENTINE. Pox on her, could she find no other time to fling my sins in my face? Here, give her this [*gives money*], and bid her trouble me no more. A thoughtless two-handed¹ whore, she knows my condition well enough, and might have overlaid² the child a fortnight ago if she had had any forecast in her.

SCANDAL. What, is it bouncing Margery and my godson?

JEREMY. Yes, sir.

SCANDAL. My blessing to the boy, with this token [*gives money*] of my love. And d'ye hear, bid Margery put more flocks in her bed, shift³ twice a week, and not work so hard, that she may not smell so vigorously. I shall take the air shortly.

VALENTINE. Scandal, don't spoil my boy's milk. [*To* JEREMY] Bid Trapland come in.

[*Exit* JEREMY.]

If I can give that Cerberus a sop,⁴ I shall be at rest for one day.

[*Enter* TRAPLAND *and* JEREMY.]

O Mr. Trapland! My old friend! Welcome! Jeremy, a chair, quickly. A bottle of sack and a toast—fly!—a chair first.

TRAPLAND. A good morning to you Mr. Valentine, and to you Mr. Scandal.

SCANDAL. The morning's a very good morning, if you don't spoil it.

VALENTINE. Come, sit down, you know his way.

TRAPLAND. [*sits*] There is a debt, Mr. Valentine, of £1,500, of pretty long standing—

VALENTINE. I cannot talk about business with a thirsty palate. [*To* JEREMY] Sirrah, the sack.

8. Footpads. "Pocket-tipstaves": truncheons carried by bailiffs.

9. Twickenham, a suburb of London.

1. Strapping.

2. Concealed or smothered: "forecast": foresight.

3. Change clothes.

4. Cerberus, the watchdog of Hades, could be put to sleep by a bit of drugged food.

- TRAPLAND. And I desire to know what course you have taken for the payment.
- VALENTINE. Faith and troth, I am heartily glad to see you. My service to you. Fill, fill, to honest Mr. Trapland, fuller.
- TRAPLAND. Hold, sweetheart. This is not to our business. My service to you, Mr. Scandal—*[drinks]*—I have forborne as long—
- VALENTINE. T’other glass, and then we’ll talk. Fill, Jeremy.
- TRAPLAND. No more, in truth. I have forborne, I say—
- VALENTINE. Sirrah, fill when I bid you. And how does your handsome daughter? Come, a good husband to her. *[Drinks.]*
- TRAPLAND. Thank you; I have been out of this money—
- VALENTINE. Drink first. Scandal, why do you not drink? *[They drink.]*
- TRAPLAND. And in short, I can be put off no longer.
- VALENTINE. I was much obliged to you for your supply. It did me signal service in my necessity. But you delight in doing good—Scandal, drink to me, my friend Trapland’s health. An honest man lives not, nor one more ready to serve his friend in distress, though I say it to his face. Come, fill each man his glass.
- SCANDAL. What! I know Trapland has been a whoremaster, and loves a wench still. You never knew a whoremaster that was not an honest fellow.
- TRAPLAND. Fie, Mr. Scandal, you never knew—
- SCANDAL. What don’t know? I know the buxom black widow in the Poultry⁵—£800 a year jointure, and £20,000 in money. Aha! Old Trap!
- VALENTINE. Say you so, i’faith. Come, we’ll remember the widow. I know whereabouts you are. Come, to the widow—
- TRAPLAND. No more indeed.
- VALENTINE. What, the widow’s health! Give it him—off with it. *[They drink.]* A lovely girl, i’faith; black sparkling eyes, soft pouting ruby lips! Better sealing there than a bond for a million, hah?
- TRAPLAND. No, no, there’s no such thing. We’d better mind our business. You’re a wag.
- VALENTINE. No faith, we’ll mind the widow’s business, fill again. Pretty round heaving breasts, a Barbary shape,⁶ and a jut with her bum, would stir an anchorite. And the prettiest foot! Oh, if a man could but fasten his eyes to her feet as they steal in and out and play at Bo-peep under her petticoats, ah Mr. Trapland?
- TRAPLAND. Verily, give me a glass—you’re a wag—and here’s to the widow. *[Drinks.]*
- SCANDAL. *[to VALENTINE]* He begins to chuckle. Ply him close, or he’ll relapse into a dun.
- [Enter OFFICER.]*
- OFFICER. By your leave, gentlemen. Mr. Trapland, if we must do our office, tell us. We have half a dozen gentlemen to arrest in Pall Mall and Covent Garden, and if we don’t make haste the chairmen will be abroad and block up the chocolate houses, and then our labor’s lost.
- TRAPLAND. UdsO, that’s true. Mr. Valentine, I love mirth, but business must be done. Are you ready to—
- JEREMY. Sir, your father’s steward says he comes to make proposals concerning your debts.

5. A London street. “Jointure”: property inherited by a wife on her husband’s death.

6. I.e., graceful as an Arab mare; “anchorite”: hermit.

VALENTINE. Bid him come in. Mr. Trapland, send away your officer. You shall have an answer presently.⁷

MR. TRAPLAND. Mr. Snap, stay within call.

[Exit OFFICER.]

[Enter STEWARD and whispers to VALENTINE.]

SCANDAL. Here's a dog now, a traitor in his wine. [To TRAPLAND] Sirrah, refund the sack: Jeremy, fetch him some warm water, or I'll rip up his stomach, and go the shortest way to his conscience.

TRAPLAND. Mr. Scandal, you are uncivil. I did not value your sack, but you cannot except it again, when I have drunk it.

SCANDAL. And how do you expect to have your money again, when a gentleman has spent it?

VALENTINE. [to STEWARD] You need say no more, I understand the conditions. They are very hard, but my necessity is very pressing. I agree to 'em. Take Mr. Trapland with you, and let him draw the writing.—Mr. Trapland, you know this man. He shall satisfy you.

TRAPLAND. Sincerely, I am loath to be thus pressing, but my necessity—

VALENTINE. No apology, good Mr. Scrivener, you shall be paid.

TRAPLAND. I hope you forgive me. My business requires—

[Exeunt STEWARD, TRAPLAND and JEREMY.]

SCANDAL. He begs pardon like a hangman at an execution.

VALENTINE. But I have got a reprieve.

SCANDAL. I am surprised. What, does your father relent?

VALENTINE. No; he has sent me the hardest conditions in the world. You have heard of a booby brother of mine that was sent to sea three years ago? This brother, my father hears, is landed; whereupon he very affectionately sends me word, if I will make a deed of conveyance of my right to his estate after his death to my younger brother, he will immediately furnish me with four thousand pound to pay my debts and make my fortune. This was once proposed before, and I refused it; but the present impatience of my creditors for their money, and my own impatience of confinement and absence from Angelica, force me to consent.

SCANDAL. A very desperate demonstration of your love to Angelica; and I think she has never given you any assurance of hers.

VALENTINE. You know her temper; she never gave me any great reason either for hope or despair.

SCANDAL. Women of her airy temper, as they seldom think before they act, so they rarely give us any light to guess at what they mean. But you have little reason to believe that a woman of this age, who has had an indifference for you in your prosperity, will fall in love with your ill fortune; besides, Angelica has a great fortune of her own, and great fortunes either expect another great fortune, or a fool.

[Enter JEREMY.]

JEREMY. More misfortunes, sir.

VALENTINE. What, another dun?

JEREMY. No sir, but Mr. Tattle is come to wait upon you.

VALENTINE. Well, I can't help it. You must bring him up; he knows I don't go abroad.

[Exit JEREMY.]

7. At once.

SCANDAL. Pox on him, I'll be gone.

VALENTINE. No, prithee stay. Tattle and you should never be asunder; you are light and shadow; and show one another. He is perfectly thy reverse both in humor and understanding, and as you set up for defamation, he is a mender of reputations.

SCANDAL. A mender of reputations! Ay, just as he is a keeper of secrets, another virtue that he sets up for in the same manner. For the rogue will speak aloud in the posture of a whisper, and deny a woman's name while he gives you the marks of her person. He will forswear receiving a letter from her, and at the same time show you her hand upon the superscription. And yet perhaps he has counterfeited the hand too, and sworn to a truth. But he hopes not to be believed and refuses the reputation of a lady's favor, as a Doctor⁸ says "No" to a bishopric, only that it may be granted him. In short, he is a public professor of secrecy, and makes proclamation that he holds private intelligence.—He's here.

[Enter TATTLE.]

TATTLE. Valentine, good morrow, Scandal, I am yours—that is, when you speak well of me.

SCANDAL. That is, when I am yours; for while I am my own, or anybody's else, that will never happen.

TATTLE. How inhumane!

VALENTINE. Why, Tattle, you need not be much concerned at anything that he says, for to converse with Scandal is to play at Losing Loadum;⁹ you must lose a good name to him before you can win it for yourself.

TATTLE. But how barbarous that is, and how unfortunate for him, that the world shall think the better of any person for his calumnniation! I thank heaven it has always been a part of my character to handle the reputation of others very tenderly.

SCANDAL. Ay, such rotten reputations as you have to deal with are to be handled tenderly indeed.

TATTLE. Nay, but why rotten? Why should you say rotten, when you know not the persons of whom you speak? How cruel that is!

SCANDAL. Not know 'em? Why, thou never hadst to do with anybody that did not stink to all the town.

TATTLE. Ha, ha, ha; nay, now you make a jest of it indeed. For there is nothing more known than that nobody knows anything of that nature of me. As I hope to be saved, Valentine, I never exposed a woman since I knew what woman was.

VALENTINE. And yet you have conversed with several.

TATTLE. To be free with you, I have. I don't care if I own that. Nay more, I'm going to say a bold word now, I never could meddle with a woman that had to do with anybody else.

SCANDAL. How!

VALENTINE. Nay faith, I'm apt to believe him. Except her husband, Tattle.

TATTLE. Oh that—

SCANDAL. What think you of that noble commoner, Mrs. Drab?¹

TATTLE. Pooh, I know Madam Drab has made her brags in three or four places, that I said this and that, and writ to her, and did I know not what.

8. A learned divine or clergyman.

9. A card game won by losing tricks.

1. Name for a whore or strumpet.

But, upon my reputation, she did me wrong. Well, well, that was malice. But I know the bottom of it. She was bribed to that by one that we all know—a man too. Only to bring me into disgrace with a certain woman of quality—
SCANDAL. Whom we all know.

TATTLE. No matter for that. Yes, yes, everybody knows. No doubt on't, everybody knows my secrets. But I soon satisfied the lady of my innocence. For I told her: Madam, says I, there are some persons who make it their business to tell stories, and say this and that of one and t'other, and everything in the world, and, says I, if your Grace—

SCANDAL. Grace!

TATTLE. O Lord, what have I said? My unlucky tongue!

VALENTINE. Ha, ha, ha!

SCANDAL. Why, Tattle, thou hast more impudence than one can in reason expect. I shall have an esteem for thee. Well, and—ha, ha, ha—well, go on, and what did you say to her Grace?

VALENTINE. I confess this is something extraordinary.

TATTLE. Not a word as I hope to be saved; an errant *lapsus linguae*.²—Come, let's talk of something else.

VALENTINE. Well, but how did you acquit yourself?

TATTLE. Pooh, pooh, nothing at all, I only rallied with you. A woman of ordinary rank was a little jealous of me, and I told her something or other—faith, I know not what.—Come, let's talk of something else. [*Hums a song.*]

SCANDAL. Hang him, let him alone, he has a mind we should inquire.

TATTLE. Valentine, I supped last night with your mistress,³ and her uncle, Old Foresight: I think your father lies at Foresight's.

VALENTINE. Yes.

TATTLE. Upon my soul, Angelica's a fine woman, and so is Mrs. Foresight, and her sister Mrs. Frail.

SCANDAL. Yes, Mrs. Frail is a very fine woman, we all know her.

TATTLE. Oh, that is not fair.

SCANDAL. What?

TATTLE. To tell.

SCANDAL. To tell what? Well, what do you know of Mrs. Frail?

TATTLE. Who, I? Upon honor I don't know whether she be man or woman, but by the smoothness of her chin and roundness of her lips.

SCANDAL. No?

TATTLE. No.

SCANDAL. She says otherwise.

TATTLE. Impossible!

SCANDAL. Yes faith. Ask Valentine else.

TATTLE. Why then, as I hope to be saved, I believe a woman only obliges a man to secrecy that she may have the pleasure of telling herself.

SCANDAL. No doubt on't. Well, but has she done you wrong, or no? You have had her, ha?

TATTLE. Though I have more honor than to tell first, I have more manners than to contradict what a lady has declared.

SCANDAL. Well, you own it?

TATTLE. I am strangely surprised! Yes, yes, I can't deny't, if she taxes me with it.

2. Slip of the tongue.

3. I.e., a woman who is courted.

SCANDAL. She'll be here by and by, she sees Valentine every morning.

TATTLE. How?

VALENTINE. She does me the favor—I mean of a visit sometimes. I did not think she had granted more to anybody.

SCANDAL. Nor I, faith. But Tattle does not use to belie a lady; it is contrary to his character. How one may be deceived in a woman, Valentine!

TATTLE. Nay, what do you mean, gentlemen?

SCANDAL. I'm resolved I'll ask her.

TATTLE. O barbarous! Why, did you not tell me—

SCANDAL. No, you told us.

TATTLE. And bid me ask Valentine?

VALENTINE. What did I say? I hope you won't bring me to confess an answer when you never asked me the question.

TATTLE. But, gentlemen, this is the most inhumane proceeding.

VALENTINE. Nay, if you have known Scandal thus long, and cannot avoid such a palpable decoy as this was, the ladies have a fine time whose reputations are in your keeping.

[Enter JEREMY.]

JEREMY. Sir, Mrs. Frail has sent to know if you are stirring.

VALENTINE. Show her up when she comes.

[Exit JEREMY.]

TATTLE. I'll be gone.

VALENTINE. You'll meet her.

TATTLE. Have you not a back way?

VALENTINE. If there were, you have more discretion than to give Scandal such an advantage. Why, your running away will prove all that he can tell her.

TATTLE. Scandal, you will not be so ungenerous.—Oh, I shall lose my reputation of secrecy forever—I shall never be received but upon public days, and my visits will never be admitted beyond a drawing room. I shall never see a bedchamber again, never be locked in a closet, nor run behind a screen or under a table; never be distinguished among the waiting-women by the name of Trusty Mr. Tattle more. You will not be so cruel?

VALENTINE. Scandal, have pity on him, he'll yield to any conditions.

TATTLE. Any, any terms.

SCANDAL. Come then, sacrifice half a dozen women of good reputation to me presently. Come, where are you familiar? And see that they are women of quality too, the first quality.

TATTLE. 'Tis very hard. Won't a baronet's lady pass?

SCANDAL. No, nothing under a Right Honorable.

TATTLE. O inhumane! You don't expect their names?

SCANDAL. No, their titles shall serve.

TATTLE. Alas, that's the same thing. Pray spare me their titles—I'll describe their persons.

SCANDAL. Well, begin then. But take notice, if you are so ill a painter that I cannot know the person by your picture of her, you must be condemned, like other bad painters, to write the name at the bottom.

TATTLE. Well, first then—

[Enter MRS. FRAIL.]

O unfortunate! she's come already; will you have patience till another time—I'll double the number.

SCANDAL. Well, on that condition. Take heed you don't fail me.

MRS. FRAIL. Heyday! I shall get a fine reputation by coming to see fellows in a morning. Scandal, you devil, are you here too? Oh Mr. Tattle, everything is safe with you, we know.

SCANDAL. Tattle?

TATTLE. Mum—O madam, you do me too much honor.

VALENTINE. Well, Lady Galloper, how does Angelica?

MRS. FRAIL. Angelica? Manners!⁴

VALENTINE. What, you will allow an absent lover—

MRS. FRAIL. No, I'll allow a lover present with his mistress to be particular. But otherwise I think his passion ought to give place to his manners.

VALENTINE. But what if he have more passion than manners?

MRS. FRAIL. Then let him marry and reform.

VALENTINE. Marriage indeed may qualify the fury of his passion, but it very rarely mends a man's manners.

MRS. FRAIL. You are the most mistaken in the world. There is no creature perfectly civil but a husband. For in a little time he grows only rude to his wife, and that is the highest good breeding, for it begets his civility to other people. Well, I'll tell you news; but I suppose you hear your brother Benjamin is landed. And my brother Foresight's daughter is come out of the country—I assure you, there's a match talked of by the old people. Well, if he be but as great a sea beast as she is a land monster, we shall have a most amphibious breed. The progeny will be all otters; he has been bred at sea, and she has never been out of the country.

VALENTINE. Pox take 'em, their conjunction bodes no good, I'm sure.

MRS. FRAIL. Now you talk of conjunction, my brother Foresight has cast both their nativities, and prognosticates an admiral and an eminent justice of the peace to be the issue male of their two bodies; 'tis the most superstitious old fool! He would have persuaded me that this was an unlucky day, and would not let me come abroad. But I invented a dream, and sent him to Artimodorus⁵ for interpretation, and so stole out to see you. Well, and what will you give me now? Come, I must have something.

VALENTINE. Step into the next room and I'll give you something.

SCANDAL. Ay, we'll all give you something.

MRS. FRAIL. Well, what will you all give me?

VALENTINE. Mine's a secret.

MRS. FRAIL. I thought you would give me something that would be a trouble to you to keep.

VALENTINE. And Scandal shall give you a good name.

MRS. FRAIL. That's more than he has for himself. And what will you give me, Mr. Tattle?

TATTLE. I? My soul, madam.

MRS. FRAIL. Pooh, no, I thank you. I have enough to do to take care of my own. Well, but I'll come and see you one of these mornings. I hear you have a great many pictures.

TATTLE. I have a pretty good collection at your service, some originals.

SCANDAL. Hang him, he has nothing but the Seasons and the Twelve Caesars, paltry copies, and the Five Senses,⁶ as ill represented as they are in himself. And he himself is the only original you will see there.

4. I.e., Valentine's use of Angelica's first name is impolite or "particular."

5. Ancient authority on the meaning of dreams.

6. Popular prints from old masters.

MRS. FRAIL. Ay, but I hear he has a closet of beauties.

SCANDAL. Yes, all that have done him favors, if you will believe him.

MRS. FRAIL. Ay, let me see those, Mr. Tattle.

TATTLE. Oh, madam, those are sacred to love and contemplation. No man but the painter and myself was ever blessed with the sight.

MRS. FRAIL. Well, but a woman—

TATTLE. Nor woman, till she consented to have her picture there too, for then she is obliged to keep the secret.

SCANDAL. No, no. Come to me if you would see pictures.

MRS. FRAIL. You?

SCANDAL. Yes faith, I can show you your own picture and most of your acquaintance to the life, and as like as at Kneller's.⁷

MRS. FRAIL. O lying creature! Valentine, does not he lie? I can't believe a word he says.

VALENTINE. No indeed, he speaks truth now. For as Tattle has pictures of all that have granted him favors, he has the pictures of all that have refused him—if satires, descriptions, characters, and lampoons are pictures.

SCANDAL. Yes, mine are most in black and white. And yet there are some set out in their true colors, both men and women. I can show you Pride, Folly, Affectation, Wantonness, Inconstancy, Covetousness, Dissimulation, Malice, and Ignorance, all in one piece. Then I can show you Lying, Foppery, Vanity, Cowardice, Bragging, Lechery, Impotence and Ugliness in another piece; and yet one of these is a celebrated beauty, and t'other a professed beau. I have paintings too, some pleasant enough.

MRS. FRAIL. Come, let's hear 'em.

SCANDAL. Why, I have a beau in a bagnio,⁸ cupping for a complexion, and sweating for a shape.

MRS. FRAIL. So.

SCANDAL. Then I have a lady burning of brandy in a cellar with a hackney coachman.

MRS. FRAIL. O devil! Well, but that story is not true.

SCANDAL. I have some hieroglyphics⁹ too. I have a lawyer with a hundred hands, two heads and but one face; a divine with two faces and one head; and I have a soldier with his brains in his belly and his heart where his head should be.

MRS. FRAIL. And no head?

SCANDAL. No head.

MRS. FRAIL. Pooh, this is all invention. Have you ne'er a poet?

SCANDAL. Yes, I have a poet weighing words, and selling praise for praise, and a critic picking his pocket. I have another large piece too, representing a school where there are huge proportioned critics, with long wigs, laced coats, Steinkirk cravats,¹ and terrible faces, with catcalls in their hands, and hornbooks about their necks. I have many more of this kind, very well painted, as you shall see.

MRS. FRAIL. Well, I'll come, if it be only to disprove you.

[Enter JEREMY.]

JEREMY. Sir, here's the steward again from your father.

7. Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646?–1723) was the leading portrait painter of the day.

8. Bathhouse; "cupping": drawing off blood.

9. I.e., pictures with hidden meanings.

1. Fashionably loose neckties. "Catcalls": whistles used to hoot plays; "hornbooks": primers.

VALENTINE. I'll come to him. Will you give me leave? I'll wait on you again presently.

MRS. FRAIL. No, I'll be gone. Come, who squires me to the Exchange?² I must call my sister Foresight there.

SCANDAL. I will. I have a mind to your sister.

MRS. FRAIL. Civil!

TATTLE. I will, because I have a tender for your ladyship.

MRS. FRAIL. That's somewhat the better reason, to my opinion.

SCANDAL. Well, if Tattle entertains you, I have the better opportunity to engage your sister.

VALENTINE. Tell Angelica I am about making hard conditions to come abroad and be at liberty to see her.

SCANDAL. I'll give an account of you and your proceedings. If indiscretion be a sign of love, you are the most a lover of anybody that I know. You fancy that parting with your estate will help you to your mistress. In my mind he is a thoughtless adventurer, Who hopes to purchase wealth, by selling land, Or win a mistress with a losing hand.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT

Act Two

SCENE ONE

A room in FORESIGHT'S house.

[*FORESIGHT and SERVANT.*]

FORESIGHT. Heyday! What, are all the women of my family abroad? Is not my wife come home, nor my sister, nor my daughter?

SERVANT. No, sir.

FORESIGHT. Mercy on us, what can be the meaning of it? Sure the moon is in all her fortitudes.³ Is my niece Angelica at home?

SERVANT. Yes, sir.

FORESIGHT. I believe you lie, sir.

SERVANT. Sir?

FORESIGHT. I say you lie, sir. It is impossible that anything should be as I would have it; for I was born, sir, when the crab was ascending, and all my affairs go backward.

SERVANT. I can't tell indeed, sir.

FORESIGHT. No, I know you can't, sir. But I can tell, sir, and foretell, sir.

[*Enter NURSE.*]

Nurse, where's your young mistress?

NURSE. Wee'st heart,⁴ I know not, they're none of 'em come home yet. Poor child, I warrant she's fond o' seeing the town. Marry, pray Heav'n they ha' given her any dinner. Good lackaday! Ha, ha, ha! O strange! I'll vow and swear now. Ha, ha, ha! Marry, and did you ever see the like?

FORESIGHT. Why, how now, what's the matter?

NURSE. Pray Heav'n send your worship good luck, marry, and amen with all my heart, for you have put on one stocking with the wrong side outward.

2. A shopping arcade or trading center in the Strand.

4. Woe's my heart (dialect).

3. I.e., astrologically, her greatest strength.

FORESIGHT. Ha, now? Faith and troth I'm glad of it, and so I have; that may be good luck in troth, in troth it may, very good luck. Nay, I have had some omens: I got out of bed backwards too this morning, without premeditation; pretty good that too. But then I stumbled coming down stairs, and met a weasel; bad omens those. Some bad, some good, our lives are checkered. Mirth and sorrow, want and plenty, night and day, make up our time.—But in troth I am pleased at my stocking, very well pleased at my stocking.—Oh, here's my niece!—

[Enter ANGELICA.]

Sirrah, go tell Sir Sampson Legend I'll wait on him, if he's at leisure—'tis now three a clock, a very good hour for business; Mercury⁵ governs this hour.

[Exit SERVANT.]

ANGELICA. Is not it a good hour for pleasure too? Uncle, pray lend me your coach, mine's out of order.

FORESIGHT. What, would you be gadding too? Sure all females are mad today. It is of evil portent, and bodes mischief to the master of a family. I remember an old prophecy written by Messahalal the Arabian,⁶ and thus translated by a Reverend Buckinghamshire bard.

When housewives all the house forsake,
And leave good man to brew and bake,
Withouten guile, then be it said,
That house doth stand upon its head;
And when the head is set in grond,
Ne marl⁷ if it be fruitful fond.

Fruitful, the head fruitful, that bodes horns; the fruit of the head is horns.⁸
Dear niece, stay at home, for by the head of the house is meant the husband.
The prophecy needs no explanation.

ANGELICA. Well, but I can neither make you a cuckold, uncle, by going abroad, nor secure you from being one by staying at home.

FORESIGHT. Yes, yes. While there's one woman left, the prophecy is not in full force.

ANGELICA. But my inclinations are in force. I have a mind to go abroad, and if you won't lend me your coach, I'll take a hackney, or a chair, and leave you to erect a scheme,⁹ and find who's in conjunction with your wife. Why don't you keep her at home, if you're jealous when she's abroad? You know my aunt is a little retrograde (as you call it) in her nature. Uncle, I'm afraid you are not lord of the ascendant, ha, ha, ha.

FORESIGHT. Well, jill-flirt, you are very pert, and always ridiculing that celestial science.

ANGELICA. Nay, uncle, don't be angry. If you are, I'll reap up all your false prophecies, ridiculous dreams, and idle divinations. I'll swear you are a nuisance to the neighborhood. What a bustle did you keep against the last invisible eclipse, laying in provision as 'twere for a siege! What a world of fire and candle, matches and tinderboxes did you purchase! One would have thought we were ever after to live underground, or at least making a voyage to Greenland, to inhabit there all the dark season.

5. The planet that presides over traders.

6. Astrologer (ca. 9th century). The "Buckinghamshire bard," John Mason, had died the previous year, but his disciples refused to believe it.

7. No marvel. "Grond": ground; "fond": found.

8. The mark of a cuckolded husband.

9. To set up an astrological chart. Many of Angelica's words ("inclinations," "conjunction," "retrograde," "ascendant") involve puns on astrology.

FORESIGHT. Why, you malapert¹ slut—

ANGELICA. Will you lend me your coach, or I'll go on. Nay, I'll declare how you prophesied popery was coming, only because the butler had mislaid some of the apostle spoons,² and thought they were lost. Away went religion and spoon-meat together.—Indeed, uncle, I'll indite you for a wizard.

FORESIGHT. How, hussy? Was there ever such a provoking minx?

NURSE. O merciful Father, how she talks!

ANGELICA. Yes, I can make oath of your unlawful midnight practices; you and the old nurse there.

NURSE. Marry, Heaven defend—I at midnight practices! O Lord, what's here to do? I in unlawful doings with my master's worship! Why, did you ever hear the like now? Sir, did ever I do any thing of your midnight concerns but warm your bed and tuck you up, and set the candle and your tobacco box and your urinal by you, and now and then rub the soles of your feet?—O Lord, I!

ANGELICA. Yes, I saw you together, through the keyhole of the closet one night, like Saul and the Witch of Endor,³ turning the sieve and shears, and pricking your thumbs to write poor innocent servants' names in blood about a little nutmeg grater which she had forgot in the caudle cup.⁴ Nay, I know something worse, if I would speak of it.

FORESIGHT. I defy you, hussy; but I'll remember this, I'll be revenged on you, cockatrice;⁵ I'll hamper you. You have your fortune in your own hands, but I'll find a way to make your lover, your prodigal spendthrift gallant, Valentine, pay for all, I will.

ANGELICA. Will you? I care not, but all shall out then. Look to it, nurse. I can bring witness that you have a great unnatural teat under your left arm, and he another, and that you suckle a young devil in the shape of a tabby cat by turns, I can.

NURSE. A teat, a teat, I an unnatural teat! O the false slanderous thing; feel, feel here, if I have anything but like another Christian [*crying*] or any teats, but two that ha'n't given suck this thirty years.

FORESIGHT. I will have patience, since it is the will of the stars I should be thus tormented. This is the effect of the malicious conjunctions and oppositions in the third house⁶ of my nativity. There the curse of kindred was foretold. But I will have my doors locked up. I'll punish you. Not a man shall enter my house.

ANGELICA. Do, uncle, lock 'em up quickly before my aunt come home. You'll have a letter for alimony tomorrow morning. But let me be gone first, and then let no mankind come near the house, but converse with spirits and the celestial signs, the bull, and the ram, and the goat. Bless me! there are a great many horned beasts among the twelve signs, uncle. But cuckolds go to Heav'n.

FORESIGHT. But there's but one virgin among the twelve signs, spitfire, but one virgin.

1. Impudent.

2. Old-fashioned spoons whose handles end in figures of the apostles; "spoon-meat": broth. Angelica is playing on the idea that some English people still feared a Catholic rebellion.

3. Saul tried to see into the future by having a witch call up the spirit of the prophet Samuel (I

Samuel xxviii). "Sieve and shears" were used for divination.

4. A warm spiced drink.

5. Legendary serpent, supposed to grow unnaturally from a cock's egg.

6. The third section of the zodiac signifies brethren.

ANGELICA. Nor there had not been that one, if she had had to do with anything but astrologers, uncle. That makes my aunt go abroad.

FORESIGHT. How, how? Is that the reason? Come, you know something. Tell me, and I'll forgive you. Do, good niece. Come, you shall have my coach and horses, faith and troth you shall. Does my wife complain? Come, I know women tell one another. She is young and sanguine, has a wanton hazel eye, and was born under Gemini,⁷ which may incline her to society. She has a mole upon her lip, with a moist palm, and an open liberality on the Mount of Venus.

ANGELICA. Ha, ha, ha!

FORESIGHT. Do you laugh? Well, gentlewoman, I'll—But come, be a good girl, don't perplex your poor uncle, tell me. Won't you speak? Odd, I'll—

[Enter SERVANT,]

SERVANT. Sir Sampson is coming down to wait upon you.

ANGELICA. Goodbye, uncle. Call me a chair. I'll find out my aunt, and tell her she must not come home.

[Exit ANGELICA and SERVANT.]

FORESIGHT. I'm so perplexed and vexed, I am not fit to receive him. I shall scarce recover myself before the hour be past. Go, nurse, tell Sir Sampson I'm ready to wait on him.

NURSE. Yes, sir.

FORESIGHT. Well—Why, if I was born to be a cuckold, there's no more to be said.

[Enter SIR SAMPSON LEGEND with a paper.]

SIR SAMPSON. Nor no more to be done, old boy, that's plain. Here 'tis, I have it in my hand, old Ptolomee.⁸ I'll make the ungracious prodigal know who begat him, I will, old Nostrodamus. What, I warrant my son thought nothing belonged to a father but forgiveness and affection. No authority, no correction, no arbitrary power, nothing to be done, but for him to offend and me to pardon. I warrant you, if he danced till dooms-day, he thought I was to pay the piper. Well, but here it is under black and white, *signatum*, *sigillatum*, and *deliberatum*;⁹ that as soon as my son Benjamin is arrived, he is to make over to him his right of inheritance. Where's my daughter that is to be? Ha! Old Merlin!¹ body o'me, I'm so glad I'm revenged on this undutiful rogue.

FORESIGHT. Odso, let me see. Let me see the paper. Ay, faith and troth, here 'tis, if it will but hold. I wish things were done, and the conveyance made. When was this signed, what hour? Odso, you should have consulted me for the time. Well, but we'll make haste.

SIR SAMPSON. Haste, ay, ay, haste enough. My son Ben will be in town tonight. I have ordered my lawyer to draw up writings of settlement and jointure. All shall be done tonight. No matter for the time. Prithee, brother Foresight, leave superstition. Pox o' th' time! There's no time but the time present; there's no more to be said of what's past, and all that is to come will happen. If the sun shine by day, and the stars by night, why, we shall know one another's faces without the help of a candle, and that's all the stars are good for.

7. A "hot and moist" sign. All these characteristics warn of sensuality.

8. The *Almagest* of Ptolemy of Alexandria (2nd century) was the standard account of Greek

astronomy. "Nostrodamus": a famous 16th-century prophet.

9. Signed, sealed, and delivered.

1. King Arthur's legendary wizard.

FORESIGHT. How, how, Sir Sampson, that all? Give me leave to contradict you, and tell you you are ignorant.

SIR SAMPSON. I tell you I am wise, and *sapiens dominabitur astris*;² there's Latin for you to prove it, and an argument to confound your Ephemeris.³ Ignorant! I tell you, I have traveled, old Fircu, and know the globe. I have seen the antipodes,⁴ where the sun rises at midnight and sets at noonday.

FORESIGHT. But I tell you, I have traveled, and traveled in the celestial spheres, know the signs and the planets, and their houses, can judge of motions direct and retrograde, of sextiles, quadrates, trines, and oppositions, fiery trigons and aquatical trigons,⁵ know whether life shall be long or short, happy or unhappy, whether diseases are curable or incurable, if journeys shall be prosperous, undertakings successful, or goods stol'n recovered. I know—

SIR SAMPSON. I know the length of the Emperor of China's foot, have kissed the Great Mogul's slipper, and rid a hunting upon an elephant with the Cham of Tartary. Body of me, I have made a cuckold of a king, and the present Majesty of Bantam⁶ is the issue of these loins.

FORESIGHT. I know when travelers lie or speak truth, when they don't know it themselves.

SIR SAMPSON. I have known an astrologer made a cuckold in the twinkling of a star, and seen a conjurer that could not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

FORESIGHT. [*aside*] What, does he twit me with my wife too? I must be better informed of this.—Do you mean my wife, Sir Sampson? Though you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet by the body of the sun—

SIR SAMPSON. By the horns of the moon, you would say, Brother Capricorn.⁷

FORESIGHT. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandevil;⁸ Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude. Take back your paper of inheritance; send your son to sea again. I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy ere she shall incorporate with a contemner of sciences, and a defamer of virtue.

SIR SAMPSON. [*aside*] Body of me, I have gone too far. I must not provoke honest Albumazar.⁹ [*Aloud*] An Egyptian mummy is an illustrious creature, my trusty hieroglyphic, and may have significations of futurity about him. Odsbud, I would my son were an Egyptian mummy for thy sake. What, thou art not angry for a jest, my good Haly? I reverence the sun, moon, and stars with all my heart. What, I'll make thee a present of a mummy. Now I think on't, body of me, I have a shoulder of an Egyptian king, that I purloined from one of the pyramids, powdered with hieroglyphics. Thou shalt have it sent home to thy house, and make an entertainment for all the philomaths,¹ and students in physic and astrology in and about London.

FORESIGHT. But what do you know of my wife, Sir Sampson?

SIR SAMPSON. Thy wife is a constellation of virtues. She's the moon, and thou art the man in the moon. Nay, she is more illustrious than the moon, for she has her chastity without her inconstancy. 'S'bud,² I was but in jest.

2. The wise will rule over the stars.

3. Astrological almanac.

4. The opposite side of the earth.

5. All these terms refer to various positions of celestial bodies in the zodiac.

6. A port in Java.

7. Sign of the goat—with horns.

8. Sir John Mandeville and Ferdinand Pinto both wrote famous tales of travel.

9. Arabian astrologer, as is Haly.

1. Lovers of learning, especially astrologers.

2. An oath (short for "God's blood").

[Enter JEREMY.]

How now, who sent for you? Ha! What would you have?

FORESIGHT. Nay, if you were but in jest. Who's that fellow? I don't like his physiognomy. [JEREMY *whispers to* SIR SAMPSON.]

SIR SAMPSON. My son, sir; what son, sir? My son Benjamin, ho?

JEREMY. No, sir, Mr. Valentine, my master. 'Tis the first time he has been abroad since his confinement, and he comes to pay his duty to you.

SIR SAMPSON. Well, sir.

[Enter VALENTINE.]

JEREMY. He is here, sir.

VALENTINE. Your blessing, sir.

SIR SAMPSON. You've had it already, sir, I think I sent it you today in a bill of four thousand pound. A great deal of money, brother Foresight.

FORESIGHT. Ay indeed, Sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man. I wonder what he can do with it!

SIR SAMPSON. Body o' me, so do I. Hark ye, Valentine, if there is too much, refund the superfluity, do'st hear, boy?

VALENTINE. Superfluity, sir, it will scarce pay my debts. I hope you will have more indulgence than to oblige me to those hard conditions which my necessity signed to.

SIR SAMPSON. Sir, how, I beseech you, what were you pleased to intimate concerning indulgence?

VALENTINE. Why, sir, that you would not go to the extremity of the conditions, but release me at least from some part—

SIR SAMPSON. Oh, sir, I understand you. That's all, ha?

VALENTINE. Yes, sir, all that I presume to ask. But what you, out of fatherly fondness, will be pleased to add, shall be doubly welcome.

SIR SAMPSON. No doubt of it, sweet sir, but your filial piety and my fatherly fondness would fit like two tallies. Here's a rogue, brother Foresight, makes a bargain under hand and seal in the morning, and would be released from it in the afternoon! Here's a rogue, dog, here's conscience and honesty! This is your wit now, this is the morality of your wits! You are a wit, and have been a beau, and may be a—Why sirrah, is it not here under hand and seal? Can you deny it?

VALENTINE. Sir, I don't deny it.

SIR SAMPSON. Sirrah, you'll be hanged. I shall live to see you go up Holborn Hill.³ Has he not a rogue's face? Speak, brother, you understand physiognomy; a hanging look to me; of all my boys the most unlike me. He has a damned Tyburn face, without the benefit of the clergy.

FORESIGHT. Hum. Truly I don't care to discourage a young man. He has a violent death in his face; but I hope no danger of hanging.

VALENTINE. Sir, is this usage for your son? For that old, weather-headed fool, I know how to laugh at him; but you, sir—

SIR SAMPSON. You, sir; and you, sir! Why, who are you, sir?

VALENTINE. Your son, sir.

SIR SAMPSON. That's more than I know, sir, and I believe not.

VALENTINE. Faith, I hope not.

3. The way to the gallows at Tyburn.

SIR SAMPSON. What, would you have your mother a whore? Did you ever hear the like! Did you ever hear the like! Body o' me—

VALENTINE. I would have an excuse for your barbarity and unnatural usage.

SIR SAMPSON. Excuse! Impudence! Why sirrah, mayn't I do what I please? Are not you my slave? Did not I beget you? And might not I have chosen whether I would have begot you or no? 'Ouns, who are you? Whence came you? What brought you into the world? How came you here, sir? Here, to stand here, upon those two legs, and look erect with that audacious face, hah! Answer me that! Did you come a volunteer into the world? Or did I beat up⁴ for you with the lawful authority of a parent, and press you to the service?

VALENTINE. I know no more why I came than you do why you called me. But here I am, and if you don't mean to provide for me, I desire you would leave me as you found me.

SIR SAMPSON. With all my heart. Come, uncase, strip, and go naked out of the world as you came into't.

VALENTINE. My clothes are soon put off; but you must also deprive me of reason, thought, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of attendants that you begot along with me.

SIR SAMPSON. Body o' me, what a many-headed monster have I propagated!

VALENTINE. I am of myself, a plain easy simple creature, and to be kept at small expense, but the retinue that you gave me are craving and invincible. They are so many devils that you have raised, and will have employment.

SIR SAMPSON. 'Ouns, what had I to do to get children? Can't a private man be born without all these followers? Why, nothing under an emperor should be born with appetites. Why, at this rate a fellow that has but a groat in his pocket may have a stomach capable of a ten-shilling ordinary.⁵

JEREMY. Nay, that's as clear as the sun; I'll make oath of it before any justice in Middlesex.

SIR SAMPSON. Here's a cormorant too. 'S'heart, this fellow was not born with you? I did not beget him, did I?

JEREMY. By the provision that's made for me, you might have begot me too. Nay, and to tell your worship another truth, I believe you did, for I find I was born with those same whoreson appetites, too, that my master speaks of.

SIR SAMPSON. Why, look you there now, I'll maintain it that by the rule of right reason this fellow ought to have been born without a palate. 'S'heart, what should he do with a distinguishing taste? I warrant now he'd rather eat a pheasant than a piece of poor John.⁶ And smell, now, why, I warrant he can smell, and loves perfumes above a stink. Why, there's it. And music, don't you love music, scoundrel?

JEREMY. Yes, I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jigs and country dances and the like. I don't much matter⁷ your solas or sonatas, they give me the spleen.

SIR SAMPSON. The spleen! Ha, ha, ha! A pox confound you—solas and sonatas? 'Ouns, whose son are you? How were you engendered, muckworm?

JEREMY. I am by my father, the son of a chairman; my mother sold oysters in winter and cucumbers in summer; and I came upstairs into the world, for I was born in a cellar.

4. Call to service by a drum (with a pun).

5. Meal.

6. Dry salt fish.

7. Care for; "solas": solos; "spleen": fashionable feelings of depression.

FORESIGHT. By your looks, you should go upstairs out of the world⁸ too, friend.
 SIR SAMPSON. And if this rogue were anatomized now, and dissected, he has his vessels of digestion and concoction and so forth, large enough for the inside of a cardinal, this son of a cucumber. These things are unaccountable and unreasonable. Body o' me, why was not I a bear, that my cubs might have lived upon sucking their paws? Nature has been provident only to bears and spiders; the one has its nutriment in his own hands, and t'other spins his habitation out of his entrails.

VALENTINE. Fortune was provident enough to supply all the necessities of my nature, if I had my right of inheritance.

SIR SAMPSON. Again! 'Ouns, han't you four thousand pound? If I had it again, I would not give thee a groat. What, wouldst thou have me turn pelican, and feed thee out of my own vitals?⁹ 'S'heart, live by your wits. You were always fond of the wits; now let's see if you have wit enough to keep yourself. Your brother will be in town tonight or tomorrow morning, and then look you perform covenants—and so your friend and servant. Come, brother Foresight.

[*Exeunt* SIR SAMPSON and FORESIGHT.]

JEREMY. I told you what your visit would come to.

VALENTINE. 'Tis as much as I expected. I did not come to see him, I came to Angelica. But since she was gone abroad, it was easily turned another way, and at least looked well on my side. What's here? Mrs. Foresight and Mrs. Frail? They are earnest—I'll avoid 'em. Come this way, and go and enquire when Angelica will return.

[*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* MRS. FORESIGHT and MRS. FRAIL.]

MRS. FRAIL. What have you to do to watch me? 'S'life. I'll do what I please.

MRS. FORESIGHT. You will?

MRS. FRAIL. Yes, marry will I. A great piece of business to go to Covent Garden Square in a hackney coach¹ and take a turn with one's friend.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Nay, two or three turns, I'll take my oath.

MRS. FRAIL. Well, what if I took twenty? I'll warrant if you had been there, it had been only innocent recreation. Lord, where's the comfort of this life, if we can't have the happiness of conversing where we like?

MRS. FORESIGHT. But can't you converse at home? I own it, I think there's no happiness like conversing with an agreeable man. I don't quarrel at that, nor I don't think but your conversation was very innocent; but the place is public, and to be seen with a man in a hackney coach is scandalous. What if anybody else should have seen you alight as I did? How can anybody be happy while they're in perpetual fear of being seen and censured? Besides, it would not only reflect upon you, sister, but me.

MRS. FRAIL. Pooh, here's a clutter. Why should it reflect upon you? I don't doubt but you have thought yourself happy in a hackney coach before now. If I had gone to Knightsbridge, or to Chelsea, or to Spring Garden, or Barn Elms² with a man alone, something might have been said.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Why, was I ever in any of these places? What do you mean, sister?

MRS. FRAIL. Was I? What do you mean?

8. I.e., to the gallows.

9. Pelicans, according to legend, tore their own breasts to feed their young.

1. A two-horse carriage, kept for hire.

2. Disreputable suburban resorts.

MRS. FORESIGHT. You have been at a worse place.

MRS. FRAIL. I at a worse place, and with a man!

MRS. FORESIGHT. I suppose you would not go alone to the World's End.³

MRS. FRAIL. The World's End! What, do you mean to banter me?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Poor innocent! You don't know that there's a place called the World's End? I'll swear you can keep your countenance purely, you'd make an admirable player.

MRS. FRAIL. I'll swear you have a great deal of impudence, and in my mind too much for the stage.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Very well, that will appear who has most. You never were at the World's End?

MRS. FRAIL. No.

MRS. FORESIGHT. You deny it positively to my face?

MRS. FRAIL. Your face, what's your face?

MRS. FORESIGHT. No matter for that, it's as good a face as yours.

MRS. FRAIL. Not by a dozen years' wearing. But I do deny it positively to your face then.

MRS. FORESIGHT. I'll allow you now to find fault with my face; for I'll swear your impudence has put me out of countenance. But look you here now, where did you lose this gold bodkin?⁴ O sister, sister!

MRS. FRAIL. My bodkin!

MRS. FORESIGHT. Nay, 'tis yours, look at it.

MRS. FRAIL. Well, if you go to that, where did you find this bodkin? O sister, sister! Sister every way!

MRS. FORESIGHT. [*aside*] O devil on't, that I could not discover⁵ her without betraying myself!

MRS. FRAIL. I have heard gentlemen say, sister, that one should take great care when one makes a thrust in fencing, not to lie open oneself.

MRS. FORESIGHT. It's very true, sister. Well, since all's out, and as you say, since we are both wounded, let us do what is often done in duels, take care of one another, and grow better friends than before.

MRS. FRAIL. With all my heart. Ours are but slight flesh wounds, and if we keep 'em from air, not at all dangerous. Well, give me your hand in token of sisterly secrecy and affection.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Here 'tis, with all my heart.

MRS. FRAIL. Well, as an earnest of friendship and confidence, I'll acquaint you with a design that I have. To tell truth, and speak openly one to another, I'm afraid the world have observed us more than we have observed one another. You have a rich husband, and are provided for; I am at a loss, and have no great stock either of fortune or reputation, and therefore must look sharply about me. Sir Sampson has a son that is expected tonight, and by the account I have heard of his education can be no conjurer. The estate you know is to be made over to him. Now if I could wheedle him, sister, ha? You understand me?

MRS. FORESIGHT. I do, and will help you to the utmost of my power. And I can tell you one thing that falls out luckily enough; my awkward daughter-in-law,⁶ who you know is designed for his wife, is grown fond of Mr. Tattle. Now if we can improve that, and make her have an aversion for the booby, it may

3. An inn in Chelsea.

4. Long hairpin.

5. Expose.

6. I.e., stepdaughter.

go a great way towards his liking of you. Here they come together; and let us contrive some way or other to leave 'em together.

[Enter TATTLE and MISS PRUE.]

MISS PRUE. Mother, mother, mother, look you here.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Fie, fie, Miss, how you bawl! Besides, I have told you, you must not call me mother.

MISS PRUE. What must I call you then? Are not you my father's wife?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Madam, you must say madam. By my soul, I shall fancy myself old indeed, to have this great girl call me mother. Well, but Miss, what are you so overjoyed at?

MISS PRUE. Look you here, madam, then, what Mr. Tattle has given me. Look you here, cousin, here's a snuffbox; nay, there's snuff in't. Here, will you have any? Oh, good! How sweet it is! Mr. Tattle is all over sweet: his peruke⁷ is sweet, and his gloves are sweet, and his handkerchief is sweet, pure sweet, sweeter than roses. Smell him, mother, madam, I mean. He gave me this ring for a kiss.

TATTLE. O fie, Miss, you must not kiss and tell.

MISS PRUE. Yes; I may tell my mother. And he says he'll give me something to make me smell so. Oh pray lend me your handkerchief. Smell, cousin; he says, he'll give me something that will make my smocks smell this way. Is not it pure? It's better than lavender, mun.⁸ I'm resolved I won't let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks. Ha, cousin?

MRS. FRAIL. Fie, Miss, amongst your linen, you must say. You must never say smock.

MISS PRUE. Why, it is not bawdy, is it cousin?

TATTLE. Oh, madam, you are too severe upon Miss. You must not find fault with her pretty simplicity, it becomes her strangely. Pretty Miss, don't let 'em persuade you out of your innocency.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Oh, demm⁹ you, toad. I wish you don't persuade her out of her innocency.

TATTLE. Who, I madam? O Lord, how can your ladyship have such a thought? Sure you don't know me.

MRS. FRAIL. Ah devil, sly devil. He's as close, sister, as a confessor. He thinks we don't observe him.

MRS. FORESIGHT. A cunning cur. How soon he could find out a fresh harmless creature; and left us, sister, presently.

TATTLE. Upon reputation—

MRS. FORESIGHT. They're all so, sister, these men. They love to have the spoiling of a young thing, they are as fond of it as of being first in the fashion or of seeing a new play the first day. I warrant it would break Mr. Tattle's heart to think that anybody else should be beforehand with him.

TATTLE. O Lord, I swear I would not for the world.

MRS. FRAIL. O hang you, who'll believe you? You'd be hanged before you'd confess. We know you. She's very pretty. Lord, what pure red and white! She looks so wholesome. Ne'er stir, I don't know, but I fancy, if I were a man—

MISS PRUE. How you love to jeer one, cousin.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Hark'ee, sister, by my soul the girl is spoiled already. D'ye

7. Wig.

8. Term of address.

9. I.e., damn (dialect).

think she'll ever endure a great lubberly tarpaulin?¹ Gad, I warrant you she won't let him come near her, after Mr. Tattle.

MRS. FRAIL. O' my soul, I'm afraid not. Eh! filthy creature, that smells all of pitch and tar! [*To TATTLE*] Devil take you, you confounded toad! Why did you see her before she was married?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Nay, why did we let him? My husband will hang us. He'll think we brought 'em acquainted.

MRS. FRAIL. Come, faith, let us be gone. If my brother Foresight should find us with them, he'd think so sure enough.

MRS. FORESIGHT. So he would. But then, leaving 'em together is as bad. And he's such a sly devil, he'll never miss an opportunity.

MRS. FRAIL. I don't care; I won't be seen in't.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Well, if you should, Mr. Tattle, you'll have a world to answer for, remember I wash my hands of it, I'm thoroughly innocent.

[*Exeunt MRS. FORESIGHT and MRS. FRAIL.*]

MISS PRUE. What makes 'em go away, Mr. Tattle? What do they mean, do you know?

TATTLE. Yes, my dear, I think I can guess. But hang me if I know the reason of it.

MISS PRUE. Come, must not we go too?

TATTLE. No, no, they don't mean that.

MISS PRUE. No! What then? What shall you and I do together?

TATTLE. I must make love to you, pretty Miss. Will you let me make love to you?

MISS PRUE. Yes, if you please.

TATTLE. [*aside*] Frank, egad, at least. What a pox does Mrs. Foresight mean by this civility? Is it to make a fool of me? Or does she leave us together out of good morality, and do as she would be done by? Gad, I'll understand it so.

MISS PRUE. Well, and how will you make love to me? Come, I long to have you begin. Must I make love too? You must tell me how.

TATTLE. You must let me speak, Miss, you must not speak first. I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

MISS PRUE. What, is it like the catechism? Come then, ask me.

TATTLE. De'e you think you can love me?

MISS PRUE. Yes.

TATTLE. Pooh, pox, you must not say yes already. I shan't care a farthing for you then in a twinkling.

MISS PRUE. What must I say then?

TATTLE. Why you must say no, or you believe not, or you can't tell.

MISS PRUE. Why, must I tell a lie then?

TATTLE. Yes, if you would be well-bred. All well-bred persons lie. Besides, you are a woman, you must never speak what you think. Your words must contradict your thoughts, but your actions may contradict your words. So, when I ask you if you can love me, you must say no, but you must love me too. If I tell you you are handsome, you must deny it, and say I flatter you. But you must think yourself more charming than I speak you, and like me, for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself. If I ask you to kiss me, you must be angry, but you must not refuse me. If I ask you for more,

1. Nickname for a sailor.

you must be more angry, but more complying. And as soon as ever I make you say you'll cry out, you must be sure to hold your tongue.

MISS PRUE. O Lord, I swear this is pure. I like it better than our old-fashioned country way of speaking one's mind. And must not you lie too?

TATTLE. Hum—yes. But you must believe I speak truth.

MISS PRUE. O Gemini! Well, I always had a great mind to tell lies, but they frightened me, and said it was a sin.

TATTLE. Well, my pretty creature, will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

MISS PRUE. No, indeed, I'm angry at you. [*Runs and kisses him.*]

TATTLE. Hold, hold, that's pretty well, but you should not have given it me, but have suffered me to take it.

MISS PRUE. Well, we'll do it again.

TATTLE. With all my heart. Now then, my little angel. [*Kisses her.*]

MISS PRUE. Pish.

TATTLE. That's right. Again, my charmer. [*Kisses again.*]

MISS PRUE. O fie, nay, now I can't abide you.

TATTLE. Admirable! That was as well as if you had been born and bred in Covent Garden all the days of your life. And won't you show me, pretty Miss, where your bed-chamber is?

MISS PRUE. No, indeed won't I. But I'll run there, and hide myself from you behind the curtains.

TATTLE. I'll follow you.

MISS PRUE. Ah, but I'll hold the door with both hands and be angry—and you shall push me down before you come in.

TATTLE. No, I'll come in first, and push you down afterwards.

MISS PRUE. Will you? Then I'll be more angry, and more complying.

TATTLE. Then I'll make you cry out.

MISS PRUE. Oh, but you shan't, for I'll hold my tongue.

TATTLE. O my dear apt scholar.

MISS PRUE. Well, now I'll run and make more haste than you.

[*Exit MISS PRUE.*]

TATTLE. You shall not fly so fast as I'll pursue.

[*Exit after her.*]

THE END OF THE SECOND ACT

Act Three

SCENE ONE

A room in FORESIGHT'S house.

[*Enter NURSE.*]

NURSE. Miss, Miss, miss Prue. Mercy on me, marry and amen. Why, what's become of the child? Why Miss, Miss Foresight. Sure she has not locked herself up in her chamber, and gone to sleep, or to prayers. Miss, Miss! I hear her. Come to your father, child. Open the door. Open the door, Miss. I hear you cry husht. O Lord, who's there? [*Peeps.*] What's here to do? O the Father! a man with her! Why, Miss I say, God's my life, here's fine doings towards. O Lord, we're all undone. O you young harlotry! [*Knocks.*] Ods my life, won't you open the door? I'll come in the back way.

[*Exit.*]

[*TATTLE and MISS PRUE at the door.*]

MISS PRUE. O Lord, she's coming—and she'll tell my father. What shall I do now?

TATTLE. Pox take her! If she had stayed two minutes longer, I should have wished for her coming.

MISS PRUE. O dear, what shall I say? Tell me, Mr. Tattle, tell me a lie.

TATTLE. There's no occasion for a lie; I could never tell a lie to no purpose. But since we have done nothing, we must say nothing, I think. I hear her. I'll leave you together, and come off as you can. [*Thrusts her in and shuts the door.*]
[*Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, and ANGELICA.*]

ANGELICA. You can't accuse me of inconstancy; I never told you that I loved you.

VALENTINE. But I can accuse you of uncertainty, for not telling me whether you did or no.

ANGELICA. You mistake indifference for uncertainty; I never had concern enough to ask myself the question.

SCANDAL. Nor good nature enough to answer him that did ask you, I'll say that for you, madam.

ANGELICA. What, are you setting up for good nature?

SCANDAL. Only for the affectation of it, as the women do for ill nature.

ANGELICA. Persuade your friend that it is all affectation.

VALENTINE. I shall receive no benefit from the opinion, for I know no effectual difference between continued affectation and reality.

TATTLE. [*coming up, aside to SCANDAL*] Scandal, are you in private discourse, anything of secrecy?

SCANDAL. Yes, but I dare trust you. We were talking of Angelica's love for valentine. You won't speak of it?

TATTLE. No, no, not a syllable. I know that's a secret, for it's whispered everywhere.

SCANDAL. Ha, ha ha!

ANGELICA. What is, Mr. Tattle? I heard you say something was whispered everywhere.

SCANDAL. Your love of Valentine.

ANGELICA. How!

TATTLE. No, madam, his love for your ladyship. Gad take me, I beg your pardon, for I never heard a word of your ladyship's passion till this instant.

ANGELICA. My passion! And who told you of my passion, pray, sir?

SCANDAL. [*to TATTLE*] Why, is the devil in you? Did not I tell it you for a secret?

TATTLE. Gadso, but I thought she might have been trusted with her own affairs.

SCANDAL. Is that your discretion? Trust a woman with herself?

TATTLE. You say true. I beg your pardon, I'll bring all off. [*To ANGELICA*] It was impossible, madam, for me to imagine that a person of your ladyship's wit and gallantry could have so long received the passionate addresses of the accomplished Valentine, and yet remain insensible; therefore you will pardon me, if from a just weight of his merit, with your ladyship's good judgment, I formed the balance of a reciprocal affection.

VALENTINE. O the devil, what damned costive² poet has given thee this lesson of fustian to get by rote?

2. Constipated; "fustian": lofty, inflated language.

ANGELICA. I dare swear you wrong him, it is his own. And Mr. Tattle only judges of the success of others from the effects of his own merit. For certainly Mr. Tattle was never denied anything in his life.

TATTLE. O Lord! Yes indeed madam, several times.

ANGELICA. I swear I don't think 'tis possible.

TATTLE. Yes, I vow and swear I have. Lord, madam, I'm the most unfortunate man in the world, and the most cruelly used by the ladies.

ANGELICA. Nay, now you're ungrateful.

TATTLE. No, I hope not. 'Tis as much ingratitude to own some favors as to conceal others.

VALENTINE. There, now it's out.

ANGELICA. I don't understand you now. I thought you had never asked anything but what a lady might modestly grant and you confess.

SCANDAL. So faith, your business is done here. Now you may go brag somewhere else.

TATTLE. Brag! O heavens! Why, did I name anybody?

ANGELICA. No; I suppose that is not in your power; but you would if you could, no doubt on't.

TATTLE. Not in my power, madam! What does your ladyship mean, that I have no woman's reputation in my power?

SCANDAL. [*aside*] 'Ouns, why, you won't own it, will you?

TATTLE. Faith, madam, you're in the right. No more I have, as I hope to be saved. I never had it in my power to say anything to a lady's prejudice in my life. For as I was telling you, madam, I have been the most unsuccessful creature living in things of that nature, and never had the good fortune to be trusted once with a lady's secret, not once.

ANGELICA. No?

VALENTINE. Not once, I dare answer for him.

SCANDAL. And I'll answer for him, for I'm sure if he had he would have told me. I find, madam, you don't know Mr. Tattle.

TATTLE. No indeed, madam, you don't know me at all, I find. For sure my intimate friends would have known.

ANGELICA. Then it seems you would have told, if you had been trusted.

TATTLE. O pox, Scandal, that was too far put.—Never have told particulars, madam. Perhaps I might have talked as of a third person, or have introduced an amour of my own, in conversation, by way of novel,³ but never have explained particulars.

ANGELICA. But whence comes the reputation of Mr. Tattle's secrecy, if he was never trusted?

SCANDAL. Why thence it arises. The thing is proverbially spoken, but may be applied to him. As if we should say in general terms, he only is secret who never was trusted; a satirical proverb upon our sex. There's another upon yours: as she is chaste, who was never asked the question. That's all.

VALENTINE. A couple of very civil proverbs, truly. 'Tis hard to tell whether the lady or Mr. Tattle be the more obliged to you. For you found her virtue upon the backwardness of the men, and his secrecy upon the mistrust of the women.

3. I.e., novelty.

TATTLE. Gad, it's very true, madam, I think we are obliged to acquit ourselves. And for my part—But your ladyship is to speak first.

ANGELICA. Am I? Well, I freely confess I have resisted a great deal of temptation.

TATTLE. And egad, I have given some temptation that has not been resisted.

VALENTINE. Good.

ANGELICA. I cite Valentine there to declare to the court how fruitless he has found his endeavors, and to confess all his solicitations and my denials.

VALENTINE. I am ready to plead not guilty for you, and guilty for myself.

SCANDAL. So, why this is fair. Here's demonstration with a witness.

TATTLE. Well, my witnesses are not present, but I confess I have had favors from persons. But as the favors are numberless, so the persons are nameless.

SCANDAL. Pooh, pox, this proves nothing.

TATTLE. No? I can show letters, lockets, pictures and rings; and if there be occasion for witnesses, I can summon the maids at the chocolate houses, all the porters of Pall Mall and Covent Garden, the doorkeepers at the Playhouse, the drawers⁴ at Locket's, Pontack's, the Rummer, Spring Garden; my own landlady and *valet de chambre*, all who shall make oath that I receive more letters than the secretary's office, and that I have more visor-masks⁵ to enquire for me than ever went to see the hermaphrodite or the naked prince.⁶ And it is notorious that in a country church once, an inquiry being made who I was, it was answered I was the famous Tattle, who had ruined so many women.

VALENTINE. It was there, I suppose, you got the nickname of the Great Turk.

TATTLE. True: I was called Turk Tattle all over the parish. The next Sunday all the old women kept their daughters at home, and the parson had not half his congregation. He would have brought me into the Spiritual Court,⁷ but I was revenged upon him, for he had a handsome daughter whom I initiated into the science. But I repented it afterwards, for it was talked of in town. And a lady of quality that shall be nameless, in a raging fit of jealousy, came down in her coach and six horses and exposed herself upon my account. Gad, I was sorry for it with all my heart—you know whom I mean. You know where we raffled—

SCANDAL. Mum, Tattle.

VALENTINE. 'Sdeath, are not you ashamed?

ANGELICA. O barbarous! I never heard so insolent a piece of vanity. Fie, Mr. Tattle, I'll swear I could not have believed it. Is this your secrecy?

TATTLE. Gadso, the heat of my story carried me beyond my discretion, as the heat of the lady's passion hurried her beyond her reputation. But I hope you don't know whom I mean; for there were a great many ladies raffled. Pox on't, now could I bite off my tongue.

SCANDAL. No, don't; for then you'll tell us no more. Come, I'll recommend a song to you upon the hint of my two proverbs, and I see one in the next room that will sing it. [*Goes to the door.*]

4. Tapsters or bartenders at London restaurants.

5. I.e., women of the town, who disguised themselves with masks.

6. London sideshows of the time included her-

maphrodites and a tattooed man, "Prince Giolo, son of King of Moangis."

7. A court with authority over ecclesiastical disputes.

TATTLE. For Heav'n's sake, if you do guess, say nothing. Gad, I'm very unfortunate.

[*Re-enter SCANDAL, with one to sing.*]

SCANDAL. Pray sing the first song in the last new play.

SONG

I

A nymph and a swain to Apollo once prayed,
The swain had been jilted, the nymph been betrayed.
Their intent was to try if his oracle knew
E'er a nymph that was chaste, or a swain that was true.

2

Apollo was mute, and had like t' have been posed,⁸
But sagely at length he this secret disclosed:
He alone won't betray in whom none will confide,
And the nymph may be chaste that has never been tried.

[*Exit SINGER.*]

[*Enter SIR SAMPSON, MRS. FRAIL, MISS PRUE and SERVANT.*]

SIR SAMPSON. Is Ben come? Odso, my son Ben come? Odd, I'm glad on't. Where is he? I long to see him. Now, Mrs. Frail, you shall see my son Ben. Body o' me, he's the hopes of my family. I ha'n't seen him these three years. I warrant he's grown. Call him in, bid him make haste. I'm ready to cry for joy.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

MRS. FRAIL. Now, Miss, you shall see your husband.

MISS PRUE. [*aside to MRS. FRAIL*] Pish, he shall be none of my husband.

MRS. FRAIL. Hush. Well he shan't, leave that to me. I'll beckon Mr. Tattle to us.

ANGELICA. Won't you stay and see your brother?

VALENTINE. We are the twin stars, and cannot shine in one sphere; when he rises I must set.⁹ Besides, if I should stay, I don't know but my father in good nature may press me to the immediate signing the deed of conveyance of my estate, and I'll defer it as long as I can. Well, you'll come to a resolution.

ANGELICA. I can't. Resolution must come to me, or I shall never have one.

SCANDAL. Come, Valentine, I'll go with you; I've something in my head to communicate to you.

[*Exit VALENTINE and SCANDAL.*]

SIR SAMPSON. What, is my son Valentine gone? What, is he sneaked off, and would not see his brother? There's an unnatural whelp! There's an ill-natured dog! What, were you here too, madam, and could not keep him? Could neither love, nor duty, nor natural affection oblige him? Odsbud, madam, have no more to say to him; he is not worth your consideration. The rogue has not a drachm¹ of generous love about him. All interest, all interest. He's an undone scoundrel, and courts your estate. Body o' me, he does not care a doit for your person.

8. Puzzled.

9. Castor and Pollux, twin brothers and twin stars, were allowed by Zeus to live forever, but only on

alternate days.

1. Tiny amount (after a Greek coin). "Doit": smallest Dutch coin.

ANGELICA. I'm pretty even with him, Sir Sampson; for if ever I could have liked anything in him, it should have been his estate too. But since that's gone, the bait's off, and the naked hook appears.

SIR SAMPSON. Odsbud, well spoken! And you are a wiser woman than I thought you were. For most young women nowadays are to be tempted with a naked hook.

ANGELICA. If I marry, Sir Sampson, I'm for a good estate with any man, and for any man with a good estate. Therefore if I were obliged to make a choice, I declare I'd rather have you than your son.

SIR SAMPSON. Faith and troth, you're a wise woman, and I'm glad to hear you say so. I was afraid you were in love with the reprobate. Odd, I was sorry for you with all my heart. Hang him, mungrel! Cast him off, you shall see the rogue show himself, and make love to some desponding cadua² of fourscore for sustenance. Odd, I love to see a young spendthrift forced to cling to an old woman for support, like ivy round a dead oak, faith I do. I love to see 'em hug and cotton together, like down upon a thistle.

[Enter BEN LEGEND and SERVANT.]

BEN. Where's father?

SERVANT. There, sir, his back's toward you.

SIR SAMPSON. My son Ben! Bless thee, my dear boy. Body o' me, thou art heartily welcome.

BEN. Thank you, father, and I'm glad to see you.

SIR SAMPSON. Odsbud, and I'm glad to see thee. Kiss me, boy, kiss me again and again, dear Ben [Kisses him.]

BEN. So, so, enough, father. Mess,³ I'd rather kiss these gentlewomen.

SIR SAMPSON. And so thou shalt. Mrs. Angelica, my son Ben.

BEN. Forsooth, an you please. [Salutes her.] Nay, mistress, I'm not for dropping anchor here. About ship, i'faith. [Kisses MRS. FRAIL.] Nay, and you too, my little cock-boat.⁴ So! [Kisses MISS PRUE.]

TATTLE. Sir, you're welcome ashore.

BEN. Thank you, thank you, friend.

SIR SAMPSON. Thou hast been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw thee.

BEN. Ey, ey, been! Been far enough, an⁵ that be all. Well father, and how do all at home? How does brother Dick, and brother Val?

SIR SAMPSON. Dick? Body o' me, Dick has been dead these two years! I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.⁶

BEN. Mess, and that's true; marry, I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say. Well, and how? I have a many questions to ask you. Well, you be'nt married again, father, be you?

SIR SAMPSON. No, I intend you shall marry, Ben. I would not marry for thy sake.

BEN. Nay, what does that signify? An you marry again, why then, I'll go to sea again, so there's one for t'other, an that be all. Pray don't let me be your hindrance. E'en marry a God's name an the wind sit that way. As for my part, mayhap I have no mind to marry.

MRS. FRAIL. That would be pity, such a handsome young gentleman.

2. Something decrepit.

3. An oath ("by the mass").

4. A small ship's boat.

5. If (old-fashioned usage).

6. Livorno, a port on the northwest coast of Italy.

BEN. Handsome! He, he, he! Nay forsooth, an you be for joking, I'll joke with you, for I love my jest, an the ship were sinking, as we sayn at sea. But I'll tell you why I don't much stand towards matrimony. I love to roam about from port to port, and from land to land. I could never abide to be port-bound as we call it. Now a man that is married has as it were, d'ye see, his feet in the bilboes,⁷ and mayhap mayn't get 'em out again when he would.

SIR SAMPSON. Ben's a wag.

BEN. A man that is married, d'ye see, is no more like another man than a galley slave is like one of us free sailors. He is chained to an oar all his life, and mayhap forced to tug a leaky vessel into the bargain.

SIR SAMPSON. A very wag, Ben's a very wag. Only a little rough, he wants a little polishing.

MRS. FRAIL. Not at all. I like his humor mightily, it's plain and honest. I should like such a humor in a husband extremely.

BEN. Sayn you so forsooth? Marry and I should like such a handsome gentlewoman for a bed-fellow hugely. How say you, mistress, would you like going to sea? Mess, you're a tight vessel, and well rigged, an you were but as well manned.

MRS. FRAIL. I should not doubt that, if you were master of me.

BEN. But I'll tell you one thing, an you come to sea in a high wind, or that, lady, you mayn't carry so much sail o'your head. Top and topgallant,⁸ by the Mess.

MRS. FRAIL. No, why so?

BEN. Why an you do, you may run the risk to be overset, and then you'll carry your keels above water, he, he, he!

ANGELICA. I swear, Mr. Benjamin is the veriest wag in nature, an absolute seawit.

SIR SAMPSON. Nay, Ben has parts, but as I told you before, they want a little polishing. You must not take anything ill, madam.

BEN. No, I hope the gentlewoman is not angry. I mean all in good part, for if I give a jest, I'll take a jest, and so forsooth you may be as free with me.

ANGELICA. I thank you, sir, I am not at all offended. But methinks, Sir Sampson, you should leave him alone with his mistress. Mr. Tattle, we must not hinder lovers.

TATTLE. [*aside to* MISS PRUE] Well, Miss, I have your promise.

SIR SAMPSON. Body o' me, madam, you say true. Look you, Ben, this is your mistress. Come, Miss, you must not be shamefaced, we'll leave you together.

MISS PRUE. I can't abide to be left alone. Mayn't my cousin stay with me?

SIR SAMPSON. No, no. Come, let's away.

BEN. Look you, father, mayhap the young woman mayn't take a liking to me.

SIR SAMPSON. I warrant thee, boy. Come, come, we'll be gone. I'll venture that.

[*Exeunt all but* BEN *and* MISS PRUE.]

BEN. Come mistress, will you please to sit down? For an you stand a stern a that'n,⁹ we shall never grapple together. Come, I'll haul a chair. There, an you please to sit, I'll sit by you.

MISS PRUE. You need not sit so near one. If you have anything to say, I can hear you farther off, I an't deaf.

7. Shackles.

8. Sails above the mainmast (referring to her hair-

style).

9. I.e., with your back turned.

BEN. Why, that's true as you say, nor I an't dumb; I can be heard as far as another. I'll heave off to please you. [*Sits farther off.*] An we were a league asunder, I'd undertake to hold discourse with you, an 'twere not a main high wind indeed, and full in my teeth. Look you forsooth, I am as it were bound for the land of matrimony. 'Tis a voyage d'ye see that was none of my seeking. I was commanded by father, and if you like of it, mayhap I may steer into your harbor. How say you, mistress? The short of the thing is this, that if you like me, and I like you, we may chance to swing in a hammock together.

MISS PRUE. I don't know what to say to you, nor I don't care to speak with you at all.

BEN. No? I'm sorry for that. But pray, why are you so scornful?

MISS PRUE. As long as one must not speak one's mind, one had better not speak at all, I think, and truly I won't tell a lie for the matter.

BEN. Nay, you say true in that, it's but a folly to lie. For to speak one thing and to think just the contrary way is, as it were, to look one way and to row another. Now for my part d'ye see, I'm for carrying things above board. I'm not for keeping anything under hatches. So that if you ben't as willing as I, say so a God's name, there's no harm done. Mayhap you may be shamefaced. Some maidens, though'f they love a man well enough, yet they don't care to tell'n so to's face. If that's the case, why, silence gives consent.

MISS PRUE. But I'm sure it is not so, for I'll speak sooner than you should believe that. And I'll speak truth, though one should always tell a lie to a man. And I don't care, let my father do what he will. I'm too big to be whipped, so I'll tell you plainly, I don't like you, nor love you at all, nor never will, that's more. So, there's your answer for you, and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing.

BEN. Look you, young woman. You may learn to give good words, however. I spoke you fair, d'ye see, and civil. As for your love or your liking, I don't value it of a rope's end. And mayhap I like you as little as you do me. What I said was in obedience to father. Gad, I fear a whipping no more than you do. But I tell you one thing, if you should give such language at sea, you'd have a cat-o'-nine-tails¹ laid 'cross your shoulders. Flesh, who are you? You heard t'other handsome young woman speak civilly to me, of her own accord. Whatever you think of yourself, Gad I don't think you are any more to compare to her than a can of small beer to a bowl of punch.

MISS PRUE. Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here that loves me, and I love him; and if he sees you speak to me any more, he'll thrash your jacket for you, he will, you great sea-calf.

BEN. What, do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? Will he thrash my jacket? Let'n, let'n. But an he comes near me, mayhap I may giv'n a salt eel² for's supper for all that. What does father mean to leave me alone as soon as I come home with such a dirty dowdy? Sea calf! I an't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd you. Marry thee! Ouns! I'll marry a Lapland witch³ as soon, and live upon selling of contrary winds, and wracked vessels.

1. Whip with nine lashes.

2. Rope used for flogging.

3. Fabled to send winds and tempests.

MISS PRUE. I won't be called names, nor I won't be abused thus, so I won't. If I were a man—[cries]—you durst not talk at this rate. No you durst not, you stinking tar-barrel.

[Enter MRS. FORESIGHT and MRS. FRAIL.]

MRS. FORESIGHT. They have quarreled just as we could wish.

BEN. Tar-barrel? Let your sweetheart there call me so, if he'll take your part, your Tom Essence,⁴ and I'll say something to him. Gad I'll lace his musk-doublet for him! I'll make him stink! He shall smell more like a weasel than a civet cat afore I ha'done with 'en.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Bless me, what's the matter, Miss? What, does she cry? Mr. Benjamin, what have you done to her?

BEN. Let her cry: the more she cries, the less she'll—she has been gathering foul weather in her mouth, and now it rains out at her eyes.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Come, Miss, come along with me, and tell me, poor child.

MRS. FRAIL. Lord, what shall we do, there's my brother Foresight, and Sir Sampson coming. Sister, do you take Miss down into the parlor, and I'll carry Mr. Benjamin into my chamber, for they must not know that they are fall'n out. Come, sir, will you venture yourself with me? [Looks kindly on him.]

BEN. Venture? Mess, and that I will, 'twere to sea in a storm.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter SIR SAMPSON and FORESIGHT.]

SIR SAMPSON. I left 'em together here. What, are they gone? Ben's a brisk boy. He has got her into a corner. Father's own son, faith, he'll touzle her, and mouzle⁵ her. The rogue's sharp set, coming from sea; if he should not stay for saying grace, old Foresight, but fall to without the help of a parson, ha? Odd, if he should I could not be angry with him. 'Twould be but like me, a chip of the old block. Ha! Thou'rt melancholy, old Prognostication, as melancholy as if thou hadst spilt the salt, or pared thy nails of a Sunday. Come, cheer up, look about thee. Look up, old stargazer. Now is he poring upon the ground for a crooked pin, or an old horse-nail, with the head towards him.

FORESIGHT. Sir Sampson, we'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

SIR SAMPSON. With all my heart.

FORESIGHT. At ten a clock, punctually at ten.

SIR SAMPSON. To a minute, to a second. Thou shall set thy watch, and the bridegroom shall observe its motions. They shall be married to a minute, go to bed to a minute, and when the alarm strikes, they shall keep time like the figures of St. Dunstan's clock, and *consummatum est*⁶ shall ring all over the parish.

[Enter SCANDAL.]

SCANDAL. Sir Sampson, sad news.

FORESIGHT. Bless us!

SIR SAMPSON. Why, what's the matter?

SCANDAL. Can't you guess at what ought to afflict you and him, and all of us, more than anything else?

4. Perfume-loving coxcomb in a play (1676) by Thomas Rawlins.

5. "To fondle with the mouth close. A low word" (Johnson's *Dictionary*). "Sharp set": with sails

trimmed to the wind; in a hurry.

6. "It is finished," Christ's last words on the cross (John 19:30), here adapted to the consummation of the marriage.

SIR SAMPSON. Body o' me, I don't know any universal grievance but a new tax, and the loss of the Canary Fleet,⁷ without popery should be landed in the West, or the French fleet were at anchor at Blackwall.

SCANDAL. No. Undoubtedly Mr. Foresight knew all this, and might have prevented it.

FORESIGHT. 'Tis no earthquake!

SCANDAL. No, not yet, nor whirlwind. But we don't know what it may come to. But it has had a consequence already that touches us all.

SIR SAMPSON. Why, body o' me, out with't.

SCANDAL. Something has appeared to your son Valentine. He's gone to bed upon't, and very ill. He speaks little, yet says he has a world to say. Asks for his father and the wise Foresight; talks of Raymond Lully,⁸ and the ghost of Lilly. He has secrets to impart, I suppose, to you two. I can get nothing out of him but sighs. He desires he may see you in the morning, but would not be disturbed tonight, because he has some business to do in a dream.

SIR SAMPSON. Hoity toity, what have I to do with his dreams or his divination? Body o' me, this is a trick to defer signing the conveyance. I warrant the devil will tell him in a dream that he must not part with his estate. But I'll bring him a parson to tell him that the devil's a liar. Or if that won't do, I'll bring a lawyer that shall out-lie the devil. And so I'll try whether my blackguard or his shall get the better of the day. [*Exit.*]

SCANDAL. Alas, Mr. Foresight, I'm afraid all is not right. You are a wise man, and a conscientious man, a searcher into obscurity and futurity, and if you commit an error, it is with a great deal of consideration, and discretion, and caution.

FORESIGHT. Ah, good Mr. Scandal—

SCANDAL. Nay, nay, 'tis manifest; I do not flatter you. But Sir Sampson is hasty, very hasty. I'm afraid he is not scrupulous enough, Mr. Foresight. He has been wicked, and heaven grant he may mean well in his affair with you. But my mind gives me, these things cannot be wholly insignificant. You are wise, and should not be overreached, methinks you should not—

FORESIGHT. Alas, Mr. Scandal—*Humanum est errare.*

SCANDAL. You say true, man will err, mere man will err; but you are something more. There have been wise men, but they were such as you, men who consulted the stars, and were observers of omens. Solomon was wise, but how? By his judgment in astrology. So says Pineda⁹ in his third book and eighth chapter.

FORESIGHT. You are learned, Mr. Scandal.

SCANDAL. A trifler, but a lover of art. And the wise men of the East owed their instruction to a star, which is rightly observed by Gregory the Great¹ in favor of astrology. And Albertus Magnus makes it the most valuable science, because, says he, it teaches us to consider the causation of causes in the causes of things.

FORESIGHT. I protest I honor you, Mr. Scandal. I did not think you had been read in these matters. Few young men are inclined—

7. The French treasure fleet, pursued by British ships in the war. "Without": unless; "Blackwall": on the Thames near London.

8. 13th-century Spanish philosopher, whose followers, the Lullists, turned to alchemy. William Lilly, a famous astrologer, had died in 1681.

9. Spanish author of a commentary on King Solomon (1609).

1. Pope from 590 to 604. Albertus Magnus, the teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, helped to make alchemy and astrology respectable.

SCANDAL. I thank my stars that have inclined me. But I fear this marriage and making over this estate, this transferring of a rightful inheritance, will bring judgments upon us. I prophesy it, and I would not have the fate of Cassandra,² not to be believed. Valentine is disturbed; what can be the cause of that? And Sir Sampson is hurried on by an unusual violence. I fear he does not act wholly from himself; methinks he does not look as he used to do.

FORESIGHT. He was always of an impetuous nature. But as to this marriage, I have consulted the stars; and all appearances are prosperous.

SCANDAL. Come, come, Mr. Foresight, let not the prospect of worldly lucre carry you beyond your judgment, nor against your conscience. You are not satisfied that you act justly.

FORESIGHT. How?

SCANDAL. You are not satisfied, I say. I am loath to discourage you. But it is palpable that you are not satisfied.

FORESIGHT. How does it appear, Mr. Scandal? I think I am very well satisfied.

SCANDAL. Either you suffer yourself to deceive yourself, or you do not know yourself.

FORESIGHT. Pray explain yourself.

SCANDAL. Do you sleep well o' nights?

FORESIGHT. Very well.

SCANDAL. Are you certain? You do not look so.

FORESIGHT. I am in health, I think.

SCANDAL. So was Valentine this morning, and looked just so.

FORESIGHT. How? Am I altered any way? I don't perceive it.

SCANDAL. That may be, but your beard is longer than it was two hours ago.

FORESIGHT. Indeed? Bless me!

[Enter MRS. FORESIGHT.]

MRS. FORESIGHT. Husband, will you go to bed? It's ten a clock. Mr. Scandal, your servant.

SCANDAL. [*aside*] Pox on her, she has interrupted my design. But I must work her into the project. [*Aloud*] You keep early hours, madam.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Mr. Foresight is punctual, we sit up after him.

FORESIGHT. My dear, pray lend me your glass, your little looking glass.

SCANDAL. Pray lend it him, madam. I'll tell you the reason. [*She gives him the glass: SCANDAL and she whispers.*] My passion for you is grown so violent that I am no longer master of my self. I was interrupted this morning, when you had charity enough to give me your attention, and I had hopes of finding another opportunity of explaining myself to you, but was disappointed all this day, and the uneasiness that has attended me ever since brings me now hither at this unseasonable hour.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Was there ever such impudence? To make love to me before my husband's face. I'll swear I'll tell him.

SCANDAL. Do, I'll die a martyr rather than disclaim my passion. But come a little farther this way, and I'll tell you what project I had to get him out of the way, that I might have an opportunity of waiting upon you. [*Whispers.*]

FORESIGHT. [*looking in the glass*] I do not see any revolution here. Methinks I look with a serene and benign aspect³—pale, a little pale—but the roses of these cheeks have been gathered many years. Ha! I do not like that sudden

2. Legendary Trojan prophetess whose prophecies, though always true, were never believed.

3. Countenance, with a play on the relative position of a planet as it appears on earth.

flushing. Gone already! Hem, hem, hem! Faintish. My heart is pretty good, yet it beats; and my pulses? Ha! I have none. Mercy on me! Hum. Yes, here they are. Gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop. Hey, whither will they hurry me? Now they're gone again, and now I'm faint again, and pale again, and hem! and my—hem?—breath, hem!—grows short. Hem, hem! He, he, hem!

SCANDAL. [*aside to* MRS. FORESIGHT] It takes. Pursue it in the name of love and pleasure.

MRS. FORESIGHT. How do you do, Mr. Foresight?

FORESIGHT. Hum, not so well as I thought I was. Lend me your hand.

SCANDAL. Look you there now. Your lady says your sleep has been unquiet of late.

FORESIGHT. Very likely.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Oh, mighty restless, but I was afraid to tell him so. He has been subject to talking and starting.

SCANDAL. And did not use to be so?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Never, never, till within these three nights. I cannot say that he has once broken my rest since we have been married.

FORESIGHT. I will go to bed.

SCANDAL. Do so, Mr. Foresight, and say your prayers. He looks better than he did.

MRS. FORESIGHT. [*calls*] Nurse, nurse!

FORESIGHT. Do you think so, Mr. Scandal?

SCANDAL. Yes, yes, I hope this will be gone by morning, taking it in time.

FORESIGHT. I hope so.

[*Enter* NURSE.]

MRS. FORESIGHT. Nurse, your master is not well; put him to bed.

SCANDAL. I hope you will be able to see Valentine in the morning. You had best take a little diacodion⁴ and cowslip water, and lie upon your back. Maybe you may dream.

FORESIGHT. I thank you, Mr. Scandal, I will. Nurse, let me have a watch-light, and lay the *Crumbs of Comfort*⁵ by me.

NURSE. Yes, sir.

FORESIGHT. And—Hem, hem! I am very faint.

SCANDAL. No, no, you look much better.

FORESIGHT. Do I? And d'ye hear, bring me, let me see, within a quarter of twelve—hem—he, hem!—just upon the turning of the tide, bring me the urinal. And I hope neither the lord of my ascendants nor the moon will be combust,⁶ and then I may do well.

SCANDAL. I hope so. Leave that to me; I will erect a scheme; and I hope I shall find both Sol and Venus in the sixth house.⁷

FORESIGHT. I thank you, Mr. Scandal. Indeed, that would be a great comfort to me. Hem, hem! Good night. [*Exit.*]

SCANDAL. Good night, good Mr. Foresight. And I hope Mars and Venus will be in conjunction while your wife and I are together.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Well, and what use do you hope to make of this project? You don't think that you are ever like to succeed in your design upon me?

4. An opiate.

5. A popular manual of devotion.

6. I.e., extinguished by the light of the sun.

7. Virgo, a sign of good health in astrology.

SCANDAL. Yes, faith, I do. I have a better opinion both of you and myself than to despair.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Did you ever hear such a toad? Hark'ee devil, do you think any woman honest?

SCANDAL. Yes, several, very honest. They'll cheat a little at cards sometimes, but that's nothing.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Pshaw! but virtuous, I mean?

SCANDAL. Yes, faith, I believe some women are virtuous too; but 'tis as I believe some men are valiant, through fear. For why should a man court danger, or a woman shun pleasure?

MRS. FORESIGHT. O monstrous! What are conscience and honor?

SCANDAL. Why, honor is a public enemy, and conscience a domestic thief; and he that would secure his pleasure must pay a tribute to one and go halves with the other. As for honor, that you have secured, for you have purchased a perpetual opportunity for pleasure.

MRS. FORESIGHT. An opportunity for pleasure?

SCANDAL. Ay, your husband. A husband is an opportunity for pleasure, so you have taken care of honor; and 'tis the least I can do to take care of conscience.

MRS. FORESIGHT. And so you think we are free for one another?

SCANDAL. Yes faith, I think so. I love to speak my mind.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Why then, I'll speak my mind. Now as to this affair between you and me: Here you make love to me. Why, I'll confess it does not displease me. Your person is well enough and your understanding is not amiss.

SCANDAL. I have no great opinion of myself, yet I think I'm neither deformed nor a fool.

MRS. FORESIGHT. But you have a villainous character. You are a libertine in speech as well as practice.

SCANDAL. Come, I know what you would say. You think it more dangerous to be seen in conversation with me than to allow some other men the last favor. You mistake; the liberty I take in talking is purely affected for the service of your sex. He that first cries out "stop thief" is often he that has stolen the treasure. I am a juggler, that act by confederacy; and if you please, we'll put a trick upon the world.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Ay, but you are such an universal juggler that I'm afraid you have a great many confederates.

SCANDAL. Faith, I'm sound.

MRS. FORESIGHT. O fie, I'll swear you're impudent.

SCANDAL. I'll swear you're handsome.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Pish, you'd tell me so, though you did not think so.

SCANDAL. And you'd think so, though I should not tell you so. And now I think we know one another pretty well.

MRS. FORESIGHT. O Lord, who's here?

[Enter MRS. FRAIL and BEN.]

BEN. Mess, I love to speak my mind. Father has nothing to do with me. Nay, I can't say that neither, he has something to do with me. But what does that signify? If so be that I ben't minded to be steered by him, 'tis as though'f he should drive against wind and tide.

MRS. FRAIL. Ay, but my dear, we must keep it secret till the estate be settled. For, you know, marrying without an estate is like sailing in a ship without ballast.

BEN. He, he, he! Why, that's true. Just so for all the world it is indeed, as like as two cable ropes.

MRS. FRAIL. And though I have a good portion, you know one would not venture all in one bottom.⁸

BEN. Why, that's true again, for mayhap one bottom may spring a leak. You have hit it indeed; Mess, you've nicked⁹ the channel.

MRS. FRAIL. Well, but if you should forsake me after all, you'd break my heart.

BEN. Break your heart? I'd rather the *Mary-gold* should break her cable in a storm, as well as I love her. Flesh, you don't think I'm false-hearted, like a landman. A sailor will be honest, though 'f mayhap he has never a penny of money in his pocket. Mayhap I may not have so fair a face as a citizen or a courtier, but for all that I've as good blood in my veins, and a heart as sound as a biscuit.

MRS. FRAIL. And will you love me always?

BEN. Nay, an I love once, I'll stick like pitch, I'll tell you that. Come, I'll sing you a song of a sailor.

MRS. FRAIL. Hold, there's my sister. I'll call her to hear it.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Well, I won't go to bed to my husband tonight, because I'll retire to my own chamber and think of what you have said.

SCANDAL. Well, you'll give me leave to wait upon you to your chamber door and leave you my last instructions?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Hold, here's my sister coming toward us.

MRS. FRAIL. If it won't interrupt you, I'll entertain you with a song.

BEN. The song was made upon one of our ship's crew's wife; our boatswain made the song. Mayhap you may know her, sir. Before she was married, she was called buxom Joan of Deptford.

SCANDAL. I have heard of her.

BEN. [*sings*]

1

A soldier and a sailor,
 A tinker, and a tailor,
 Had once a doubtful strife, sir,
 To make a maid a wife, sir,
 Whose name was buxom Joan.
 For now the time was ended,
 When she no more intended,
 To lick her lips at men, sir,
 And gnaw the sheets in vain, sir,
 And lie o' nights alone.

2

The soldier swore like thunder,
 He loved her more than plunder,
 And showed her many a scar, sir,
 That he had brought from far, sir,
 With fighting for her sake.
 The tailor thought to please her,
 With off'ring her his measure.
 The tinker, too, with mettle,
 Said he could mend her kettle,
 And stop up ev'ry leak.

8. Hull of a ship.

9. Hit exactly.

3

But while these three were prating,
 The sailor, slyly waiting,
 Thought if it came about, sir,
 That they should all fall out, sir,
 He then might play his part.
 And just e'en as he meant, sir,
 To loggerheads they went, sir,
 And then he let fly at her,
 A shot 'twixt wind and water,
 That won this fair maid's heart.

BEN. If some of our crew that came to see me are not gone, you shall see that we sailors can dance sometimes, as well as other folks. [*Whistles.*] I warrant that brings 'em, an they be within hearing.

[*Enter SEAMEN.*]

O here they be, and fiddles along with 'em. Come my lads, let's have a round, and I'll make one.

[*Dance.*]

We're merry folk, we sailors, we han't much to care for. Thus we live at sea; eat biscuit, and drink flip,¹ put on a clean shirt once a quarter, come home and lie with our landladies once a year, get rid of a little money, and then put off with the next fair wind. How d'ye like us?

MRS. FRAIL. Oh, you are the happiest, merriest men alive.

MRS. FORESIGHT. We're beholding to Mr. Benjamin for this entertainment. I believe it's late.

BEN. Why, forsooth, an you think so, you had best go to bed. For my part, I mean to toss a can² and remember my sweetheart afore I turn in. Mayhap I may dream of her.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Mr. Scandal, you had best go to bed and dream too.

SCANDAL. Why, faith, I have a good lively imagination, and can dream as much to the purpose as another, if I set about it. But dreaming is the poor retreat of a lazy, hopeless, and imperfect lover. 'Tis the last glimpse of love to worn-out sinners, and the faint dawning of a bliss to wishing girls and growing boys.

There's naught but willing, waking love that can
 Make blessed the ripened maid, and finished man.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END OF THE THIRD ACT

Act Four

SCENE ONE

VALENTINE'S *lodging.*

[*Enter SCANDAL and JEREMY.*]

SCANDAL. Well, is your master ready? Does he look madly and talk madly?

JEREMY. Yes, sir, you need make no great doubt of that. He that was so near turning poet yesterday morning can't be much to seek in playing the madman today.

1. Beer with brandy, sweetened and spiced.

2. Drink a cup.

SCANDAL. Would he have Angelica acquainted with the reason of his design?

JEREMY. No sir, not yet. He has a mind to try whether his playing the madman won't make her play the fool and fall in love with him, or at least own that she has loved him all this while, and concealed it.

SCANDAL. I saw her take coach just now with her maid, and think I heard her bid the coachman drive hither.

JEREMY. Like enough, sir, for I told her maid this morning my master was run stark mad only for love of her mistress. I hear a coach stop; if it should be she, sir, I believe he would not see her till he hears how she takes it.

SCANDAL. Well, I'll try her. 'Tis she, here she comes.

[Enter ANGELICA with JENNY.]

ANGELICA. Mr. Scandal, I suppose you don't think it a novelty to see a woman visit a man at his own lodgings in a morning?

SCANDAL. Not upon a kind occasion, madam. But when a lady comes tyrannically to insult a ruined lover, and make manifest the cruel triumphs of her beauty, the barbarity of it something surprises me.

ANGELICA. I don't like raillery from a serious face. Pray tell me what is the matter.

JEREMY. No strange matter, madam; my master's mad, that's all. I suppose your ladyship has thought him so a great while?

ANGELICA. How d'you mean, mad?

JEREMY. Why faith, madam, he's mad for want of his wits, just as he was poor for want of money. His head is e'en as light as his pockets, and anybody that has a mind to a bad bargain can't do better than to beg him for his estate.

ANGELICA. If you speak truth, your endeavoring at wit is very unseasonable.

SCANDAL. [*aside*] She's concerned, and loves him.

ANGELICA. Mr. Scandal, you can't think me guilty of so much inhumanity as not to be concerned for a man I must own myself obliged to. Pray tell me truth.

SCANDAL. Faith, madam, I wish telling a lie would mend the matter. But this is no new effect of an unsuccessful passion.

ANGELICA. [*aside*] I know not what to think—yet I should be vexed to have a trick put upon me. [*Aloud*] May I not see him?

SCANDAL. I'm afraid the physician is not willing you should see him yet. Jeremy, go in and inquire.

[Exit JEREMY.]

ANGELICA. Ha! I saw him wink and smile—I fancy 'tis a trick. I'll try³—I would disguise to all the world a failing, which I must own to you. I fear my happiness depends upon the recovery of Valentine. Therefore I conjure you as you are his friend, and as you have compassion upon one fearful of affliction, to tell me what I am to hope for. I cannot speak, but you may tell me. Tell me, for you know what I would ask.

SCANDAL. [*aside*]: So, this is pretty plain. [*Aloud*] Be not too much concerned, madam: I hope his condition is not desperate. An acknowledgement of love from you, perhaps, may work a cure, as the fear of your aversion occasioned his distemper.

3. Find out.

ANGELICA. [*aside*] Say you so? Nay, then I'm convinced, and if I don't play trick for trick, may I never taste the pleasure of revenge. [*Aloud*] Acknowledgement of love! I find you have mistaken my compassion, and think me guilty of a weakness I am a stranger to. But I have too much sincerity to deceive you, and too much charity to suffer him to be deluded with vain hopes. Good nature and humanity oblige me to be concerned for him, but to love is neither in my power nor inclination, and if he can't be cured without I suck the poison from his wounds, I'm afraid he won't recover his senses till I lose mine.

SCANDAL. Hey, brave woman, i'faith. Won't you see him, then, if he desire it?

ANGELICA. What signify a madman's desires? Besides, 'twould make me uneasy. If I don't see him, perhaps my concern for him may lessen. If I forget him, 'tis no more than he has done by himself; and now the surprise is over, methinks I am not half so sorry for him as I was.

SCANDAL. So, faith, good nature works apace; you were confessing just now an obligation to his love.

ANGELICA. But I have considered that passions are unreasonable and involuntary. If he loves, he can't help it, and if I don't love, I can't help it; no more than he can help his being a man, or I my being a woman; or no more than I can help my want of inclination to stay longer here. Come, Jenny.

[*Exit ANGELICA and JENNY.*]

SCANDAL. Humh! An admirable composition, faith, this same womankind.

[*Enter JEREMY.*]

JEREMY. What, is she gone, sir?

SCANDAL. Gone? Why, she was never here, nor anywhere else, nor I don't know her if I see her, nor you neither.

JEREMY. Good lack! What's the matter now? Are any more of us to be mad! Why, sir, my master longs to see her, and is almost mad in good earnest with the joyful news of her being here.

SCANDAL. We are all under a mistake. Ask no questions, for I can't resolve you; but I'll inform your master. In the meantime, if our project succeed no better with his father than it does with his mistress, he may descend from his exaltation of madness into the road of commonsense and be content only to be made a fool with other reasonable people. I hear Sir Sampson. You know your cue; I'll to your master. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter SIR SAMPSON LEGEND with a LAWYER.*]

SIR SAMPSON. D'ye see, Mr. Buckram, here's the paper signed with his own hand.

BUCKRAM. Good, sir. And the conveyance is ready drawn in this box, if he be ready to sign and seal.

SIR SAMPSON. Ready? Body o' me, he must be ready. His sham sickness shan't excuse him. Oh, here's his scoundrel. Sirrah, where's your master?

JEREMY. Ah, sir, he's quite gone.

SIR SAMPSON. Gone! What, he is not dead?

JEREMY. No, sir, not dead.

SIR SAMPSON. What, is he gone out of town, run away, ha? Has he tricked me? Speak, varlet.

JEREMY. No, no, sir, he's safe enough, sir, an he were but as sound, poor gentleman. He is indeed here, sir, and not here, sir.

SIR SAMPSON. Heyday, rascal, do you banter me? Sirrah, d'ye banter me? Speak, sirrah, where is he, for I will find him.

JEREMY. Would you could sir, for he has lost himself. Indeed, sir, I have a'most

broke my heart about him. I can't refrain tears when I think of him, sir. I'm as melancholy for him as a passing-bell, sir, or a horse in a pound.

SIR SAMPSON. A pox confound your similitudes, sir. Speak to be understood, and tell me in plain terms what the matter is with him, or I'll crack your fool's skull.

JEREMY. Ah, you've hit it, sir. That's the matter with him, sir. His skull's cracked, poor gentleman; he's stark mad, sir.

SIR SAMPSON. Mad!

BUCKRAM. What, is he *non compos*?⁴

JEREMY. Quite *non compos*, sir.

BUCKRAM. Why, then all's obliterated, Sir Sampson. If he be *non compos mentis*, his act and deed will be of no effect, it is not good in law.

SIR SAMPSON. Ouns, I won't believe it. Let me see him, sir. Mad! I'll make him find his senses.

JEREMY. Mr. Scandal is with him, sir; I'll knock at the door.

[*Goes to the scene,*⁵ *which opens and discovers VALENTINE upon a couch disorderly dressed, SCANDAL by him.*]

SIR SAMPSON. How now, what's here to do?

VALENTINE. [*starting*] Ha! Who's that?

SCANDAL. For Heav'n's sake softly, sir, and gently. Don't provoke him.

VALENTINE. Answer me. Who is that? And that?

SIR SAMPSON. Gads-bobs, does he not know me? Is he mischievous? I'll speak gently. Val, Val, dost thou not know me, boy? Not know thy own father, Val? I am thy own father, and this is honest Brief Buckram, the lawyer.

VALENTINE. It may be so. I did not know you. The world is full. There are people that we do know, and people that we do not know; and yet the sun shines upon all alike. There are fathers that have many children, and there are children that have many fathers. 'Tis strange! But I am Truth, and come to give the world the lie.

SIR SAMPSON. Body o' me, I know not what to say to him.

VALENTINE. Why does that lawyer wear black? Does he carry his conscience without-side? Lawyer, what art thou? Dost thou know me?

BUCKRAM. O Lord, what must I say? Yes, sir.

VALENTINE. Thou liest, for I am Truth. 'Tis hard, I cannot get a livelihood amongst you. I have been sworn out of Westminster Hall⁶ the first day of every term. Let me see—no matter how long—But I'll tell you one thing; it's a question that would puzzle an arithmetician, if you should ask him, whether the Bible saves more souls in Westminster Abbey, or damns more in Westminster Hall. For my part, I am Truth, and can't tell; I have very few acquaintance.

SIR SAMPSON. Body o' me, he talks sensibly in his madness. Has he no intervals?

JEREMY. Very short, sir.

BUCKRAM. Sir, I can do you no service while he's in this condition. Here's your paper, sir. He may do me a mischief if I stay. The conveyance is ready, sir, if he recover his senses. [*Exit.*]

SIR SAMPSON. Hold, hold, don't you go yet.

SCANDAL. You'd better let him go, sir, and send for him if there be occasion, for I fancy his presence provokes him more.

VALENTINE. Is the lawyer gone? 'Tis well, then we may drink about without

4. Not in control (of one's mind).

5. Curtained recess or "inner stage."

6. I.e., the law courts.

going together by the ears.⁷ Heigh ho! What a clock is't? My father here? Your blessing, sir.

SIR SAMPSON. He recovers. Bless thee, Val. How dost thou do, boy?

VALENTINE. Thank you, sir, pretty well. I have been a little out of order. Won't you please to sit, sir?

SIR SAMPSON. Ay, boy. Come, thou shalt sit down by me.

VALENTINE. Sir, 'tis my duty to wait.

SIR SAMPSON. No, no; come, come, sit you down, honest Val. How dost thou do? Let me feel thy pulse. Oh, pretty well now, Val. Body o' me, I was sorry to see thee indisposed. But I'm glad thou'rt better, honest Val.

VALENTINE. I thank you, sir.

SCANDAL. [*aside*] Miracle! the monster grows loving.

SIR SAMPSON. Let me feel thy hand again, Val. It does not shake. I believe thou canst write, Val. Ha, boy? Thou can'st write thy name, Val? [*In whisper to JEREMY*] Jeremy, step and overtake Mr. Buckram, bid him make haste back with the conveyance. Quick, quick!

[*Exit JEREMY.*]

SCANDAL. [*aside*] That ever I should suspect such a heathen of any remorse!

SIR SAMPSON. Dost thou know this paper, Val? I know thou'rt honest, and wilt perform articles.

[*Shows him the paper but holds it out of his reach.*]

VALENTINE. Pray let me see it, sir. You hold it so far off that I can't tell whether I know it or no.

SIR SAMPSON. See it, boy? Ay, ay, why thou dost see it. 'Tis thy own hand, Val. Why let me see, I can read it as plain as can be. Look you here [*reads*]: *The condition of this obligation*—Look you, as plain as can be, so it begins. And then at the bottom, *As witness my hand*, VALENTINE LEGEND, in great letters. Why, 'tis as plain as the nose in one's face. What, are my eyes better than thine? I believe I can read it farther off yet. Let me see. [*Stretches his arm as far as he can.*]

VALENTINE. Will you please to let me hold it, sir?

SIR SAMPSON. Let thee hold it, say'st thou? Ay, with all my heart. What matter is it who holds it? What need anybody hold it? I'll put it up in my pocket, Val. And then nobody need hold it. [*Puts the paper in his pocket.*] There, Val: it's safe enough, boy. But thou shalt have it as soon as thou hast set thy hand to another paper, little Val.

[*Re-enter JEREMY with BUCKRAM.*]

VALENTINE. What, is my bad genius here again? Oh no, 'tis the lawyer with an itching palm, and he's come to be scratched. My nails are not long enough. Let me have a pair of red-hot tongs quickly, quickly, and you shall see me act St. Dunstan, and lead the devil by the nose.⁸

BUCKRAM. O Lord, let me be gone; I'll not venture myself with a madman. [*Exit BUCKRAM.*]

VALENTINE. Ha, ha, ha! you need not run so fast, honesty will not overtake you. Ha, ha, ha! The rogue found me out to be in *forma pauperis*⁹ presently.

SIR SAMPSON. Ouns! What a vexation is here! I know not what to do or say, nor which way to go.

7. I.e., fighting.

8. Pictured on a tavern sign near St. Dunstan's

church.

9. Bankrupt.

VALENTINE. Who's that, that's out of his way? I am Truth, and can set him right. Harkee, friend, the straight road is the worst way you can go. He that follows his nose always will very often be led into a stink. *Probatum est.*¹ But what are you for? Religion or politics? There's a couple of topics for you, no more like one another than oil and vinegar. And yet those two beaten together by a state-cook² make sauce for the whole nation.

SIR SAMPSON. What the devil had I to do, ever to beget sons! Why did I ever marry?

VALENTINE. Because thou wert a monster, old boy. The two greatest monsters in the world are a man and a woman. What's thy opinion?

SIR SAMPSON. Why, my opinion is that those two monsters joined together make yet a greater, that's a man and his wife.

VALENTINE. Aha! Old truepenny, say'st thou so? thou hast nicked it. But it's wonderful strange, Jeremy!

JEREMY. What is, sir?

VALENTINE. That gray hairs should cover a green head—and I make a fool of my father.

[*Enter* FORESIGHT, MRS. FORESIGHT, and FRAIL.]

VALENTINE. What's here! Erra Pater?³ or a bearded sybil? If prophecy comes, Truth must give place. [*Exit with* JEREMY.]

FORESIGHT. What says he? What, did he prophesy? Ha, Sir Sampson, bless us! How are we?

SIR SAMPSON. Are we? A pox o'your prognostication. Why, we are fools as we use to be. Ouns, that you could not foresee that the moon would predominate; and my son be mad.—Where's your oppositions, your trines, and your quadrates? What did your Cardan and your Ptolomee tell you? Your Messahalah and your Longomontanus,⁴ your harmony of chironomy with astrology? Ah! pox on't, that I that know the world, and men and manners, that don't believe a syllable in the sky and stars, and sun and almanacs, and trash, should be directed by a dreamer, an omen-hunter, and defer business in expectation of a lucky hour. When, body o' me, there never was a lucky hour after the first opportunity. [*Exit* SIR SAMPSON.]

FORESIGHT. Ah, Sir Sampson, heaven help your head. This is none of your lucky hour; *nemo omnibus horis sapit.*⁵ What, is he gone, and in contempt of science? Ill stars and unconverted ignorance attend him!

SCANDAL. You must excuse his passion, Mr. Foresight, for he has been heartily vexed. His son is *non compos mentis*, and thereby incapable of making any conveyance in law, so that all his measures are disappointed.

FORESIGHT. Ha! say you so?

MRS. FRAIL. [*aside to* MRS. FORESIGHT] What, has my sea lover lost his anchor of hope then?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Oh, sister, what will you do with him?

MRS. FRAIL. Do with him? Send him to sea again in the next foul weather. He's used to an inconstant element, and won't be surprised to see the tide turned.

FORESIGHT. [*considers*] Wherein was I mistaken, not to foresee this?

SCANDAL. [*aside to* MRS. FORESIGHT] Madam, you and I can tell him something

1. It is proven.

2. I.e., politician.

3. A legendary astrologer.

4. All were mathematicians and astrologers; "chironomy": palmistry.

5. No one is wise at every hour.

- else that he did not foresee, and more particularly relating to his own fortune.
- MRS. FORESIGHT. What do you mean? I don't understand you.
- SCANDAL. Hush, softly. The pleasures of last night, my dear, too considerable to be forgot so soon.
- MRS. FORESIGHT. Last night! And what would your impudence infer from last night? Last night was like the night before, I think.
- SCANDAL. 'S'death, do you make no difference between me and your husband?
- MRS. FORESIGHT. Not much; he's superstitious, and you are mad, in my opinion.
- SCANDAL. You make me mad. You are not serious. Pray recollect yourself.
- MRS. FORESIGHT. Oh, yes, now I remember. You were very impertinent and impudent, and would have come to bed with me.
- SCANDAL. And did not?
- MRS. FORESIGHT. Did not! With that face can you ask the question?
- SCANDAL. [*aside*] This I have heard of before, but never believed. I have been told she had that admirable quality of forgetting to a man's face in the morning that she had lain with him all night, and denying favors with more impudence than she could grant 'em. [*Aloud*] Madam, I'm your humble servant, and honor you. You look pretty well, Mr. Foresight. How did you rest last night?
- FORESIGHT. Truly Mr. Scandal, I was so taken up with broken dreams and distracted visions that I remember little.
- SCANDAL. 'Twas a very forgetting night. But would you not talk with Valentine? Perhaps you may understand him. I'm apt to believe there is something mysterious in his discourses, and sometimes rather think him inspired than mad.
- FORESIGHT. You speak with singular good judgment, Mr. Scandal, truly. I am inclining to your Turkish⁶ opinion in this matter, and do reverence a man whom the vulgar think mad. Let us go in to him.
- MRS. FRAIL. Sister, do you stay with them; I'll find out my lover and give him his discharge, and come to you. O'my conscience, here he comes.
- [*Exeunt* FORESIGHT, MRS. FORESIGHT *and* SCANDAL.]
- [*Enter* BEN.]
- BEN. All mad, I think. Flesh, I believe all the calentures⁷ of the sea are come ashore, for my part.
- MRS. FRAIL. Mr. Benjamin in choler?
- BEN. No, I'm pleased well enough, now I have found you. Mess, I've had such a hurricane upon your account yonder.
- MRS. FRAIL. My account? Pray, what's the matter?
- BEN. Why, father came and found me squabbling with yon chitty-faced⁸ thing, as he would have me marry, so he asked what was the matter. He asked in a surly sort of a way. (It seems brother Val is gone mad, and so that put'n into a passion; but what did I know that, what's that to me?) So he asked in a surly sort of manner, and gad, I answered 'n as surlily. What though'f he be my father, I an't bound prentice to 'n. So, faith I told 'n in plain terms, if I were minded to marry, I'd marry to please myself, not him. And for the young woman that he provided for me, I thought it more fitting for her to learn her sampler,⁹ and make dirt-pies, than to look after a husband. For my part I was

6. I.e., esoteric or occult; "vulgar": common people.

7. Tropical fevers.

8. Baby-faced.

9. Embroidery of the alphabet or other lessons for children.

none of her man. I had another voyage to make, let him take it as he will.
MRS. FRAIL. So then you intend to go to sea again?

BEN. Nay, nay, my mind run upon you, but I would not tell him so much. So he said he'd make my heart ache, and if so be that he could get a woman to his mind, he'd marry himself. Gad, says I, an you play the fool and marry at these years, there's more danger of your head's aching than my heart. He was woundy angry when I gav'n that wipe.¹ He hadn't a word to say, and so I left'n, and the green girl together. Mayhap the bee may bite, and he'll marry her himself, with all my heart.

MRS. FRAIL. And were you this undutiful and graceless wretch to your father?

BEN. Then why was he graceless first? If I am undutiful and graceless, why did he beget me so? I did not get myself.

MRS. FRAIL. O impiety! How have I been mistaken! What an inhumane merciless creature have I set my heart upon? Oh, I am happy to have discovered the shelves and quicksands that lurk beneath that faithless smiling face.

BEN. Hey toss! What's the matter now? Why, you ben't angry, be you?

MRS. FRAIL. Oh, see me no more, for thou wert born amongst rocks, suckled by whales, cradled in a tempest, and whistled to by winds; and thou art come forth with fins and scales, and three rows of teeth, a most outrageous fish of prey.

BEN. O Lord, O Lord, she's mad, poor young woman. Love has turned her senses, her brain is quite overset. Welladay, how shall I do to set her to rights?

MRS. FRAIL. No, no, I am not mad, monster, I am wise enough to find you out. Hadst thou the impudence to aspire at being a husband with that stubborn and disobedient temper? You that know not how to submit to a father, presume to have a sufficient stock of duty to undergo a wife? I should have been finely fobbed² indeed, very finely fobbed.

BEN. Harkee, forsooth. If so be that you are in your right senses, d'ye see, for ought as I perceive I'm like to be finely fobbed, if I have got anger here upon your account, and you are tacked about³ already. What d'ye mean, after all your fair speeches, and stroking my cheeks, and kissing and hugging, what, would you sheer off so? Would you, and leave me aground?

MRS. FRAIL. No, I'll leave you adrift, and go which way you will.

BEN. What, are you false-hearted then?

MRS. FRAIL. Only the wind's changed.

BEN. More shame for you! The wind's changed? It's an ill wind blows nobody good. Mayhap I have good riddance on you, if these be your tricks. What d'ye mean all this while, to make a fool of me?

MRS. FRAIL. Any fool, but a husband.

BEN. Husband! Gad I would not be your husband if you would have me, now I know your mind, though'f you had your weight in gold and jewels, and though'f I loved you never so well.

MRS. FRAIL. Why, canst thou love, porpoise?

BEN. No matter what I can do, don't call names. I don't love you so well as to bear that, whatever I did. I'm glad you show yourself, mistress. Let them marry you as don't know you. Gad, I know you too well, by sad experience. I believe he that marries you will go to sea in a henpecked frigate—I believe

1. Swipe or cutting remark; "woundy": extremely.
2. Cheated.

3. Changed in direction (sailing against the wind).
"Sheer off": swerve away.

that, young woman—and mayhap may come to an anchor at Cuckold's Point. So there's a dash for you, take it as you will. Mayhap you may holla after me when I won't come too. [*Exit.*]

MRS. FRAIL. Ha, ha, ha! No doubt on't. [*Sings.*] *My true love is gone to sea.*—
[*Enter* MRS. FORESIGHT.]

O sister, had you come a minute sooner, you would have seen the resolution of a lover. Honest Tar and I are parted; and with the same indifference that we met. O' my life, I am half vexed at the insensibility of a brute that I despised.

MRS. FORESIGHT. What then, he bore it most heroically?

MRS. FRAIL. Most tyrannically, for you see he has got the start of me, and I, the poor forsaken maid, am left complaining on the shore. But I'll tell you a hint that he has given me. Sir Sampson is enraged, and talks desperately of committing matrimony himself. If he has a mind to throw himself away, he can't do it more effectually than upon me, if we could bring it about.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Oh, hang him old fox, he's too cunning; besides, he hates both you and me. But I have a project in my head for you, and I have gone a good way towards it. I have almost made a bargain with Jeremy, Valentine's man, to sell his master to us.

MRS. FRAIL. Sell him, how?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Valentine raves upon Angelica, and took me for her, and Jeremy says will take anybody for her that he imposes on him. Now I have promised him mountains, if in one of his mad fits he will bring you to him in her stead, and get you married together, and put to bed together; and after consummation, girl, there's no revoking. And if he should recover his senses, he'll be glad at least to make you a good settlement. Here they come, stand aside a little, and tell me how you like the design.

[*Enter* VALENTINE, SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, and JEREMY.]

SCANDAL. [*to* JEREMY] And have you given your master a hint of their plot upon him?

JEREMY. Yes, sir; he says he'll favor it, and mistake her for Angelica.

SCANDAL. It may make sport.

FORESIGHT. Mercy on us!

VALENTINE. Husht. Interrupt me not. I'll whisper prediction to thee, and thou shalt prophesy. I am Truth, and can teach thy tongue a new trick. I have told thee what's past; now I tell what's to come. Dost thou know what will happen tomorrow? Answer me not, for I will tell thee. Tomorrow, knaves will thrive through craft, and fools through fortune; and honesty will go as it did, frost-nipped in a summer suit. Ask me questions concerning tomorrow.

SCANDAL. Ask him, Mr. Foresight.

FORESIGHT. Pray what will be done at court?

VALENTINE. Scandal will tell you. I am Truth, I never come there.

FORESIGHT. In the city?

VALENTINE. Oh, prayers will be said in empty churches at the usual hours.

Yet you will see such zealous faces behind counters, as if religion were to be sold in every shop. Oh, things will go methodically in the city, the clocks will strike twelve at noon, and the horned herd buzz in the Exchange at two. Wives and husbands will drive distinct trades, and care and pleasure separately occupy the family. Coffee houses will be full of smoke and stratagem. And the cropped⁴ prentice, that sweeps his master's shop in the

4. Short-haired; i.e., in training.

morning, may, ten to one, dirty his sheets before night. But there are two things that you will see very strange; which are wanton wives, with their legs at liberty, and tame cuckolds, with chains about their necks. But hold, I must examine you before I go farther, you look suspiciously. Are you a husband?

FORESIGHT. I am married.

VALENTINE. Poor creature! Is your wife of Covent Garden parish?

FORESIGHT. No. St. Martins-in-the-Fields.

VALENTINE. Alas, poor man! His eyes are sunk, and his hands shriveled; his legs dwindled, and his back bowed. Pray, pray, for a metamorphosis. Change thy shape, and shake off age; get thee Medea's kettle,⁵ and be boiled anew, come forth with lab'ring callous hands, a chine of steel, and Atlas shoulders. Let Taliacotus⁶ trim the calves of twenty chairmen, and make thee pedestals to stand erect upon, and look matrimony in the face. Ha, ha, ha! That a man should have a stomach to a wedding supper, when the pigeons ought rather to be laid to his feet,⁷ ha, ha, ha!

FORESIGHT. His frenzy is very high now, Mr. Scandal.

SCANDAL. I believe it is a spring tide.

FORESIGHT. Very likely, truly. You understand these matters, Mr. Scandal.

I shall be very glad to confer with you about these things which he has uttered. His sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical.

VALENTINE. Oh, why would Angelica be absent from my eyes so long?

JEREMY. She's here, sir.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Now, sister.

MRS. FRAIL. O Lord, what must I say?

SCANDAL. Humor him, madam, by all means.

VALENTINE. Where is she? Oh, I see her. She comes, like riches, health, and liberty at once, to a despairing, starving, and abandoned wretch. Oh, welcome, welcome.

MRS. FRAIL. How de'e you, sir? Can I serve you?

VALENTINE. Harkee; I have a secret to tell you. Endymion⁸ and the moon shall meet us upon Mount Latmos, and we'll be married in the dead of night. But say not a word. Hymen⁹ shall put his torch into a dark lantern, that it may be secret; and Juno shall give her peacock poppy-water, that he may fold his ogling tail, and Argus's hundred eyes be shut, ha?¹ Nobody shall know, but Jeremy.

MRS. FRAIL. No, no, we'll keep it secret. It shall be done presently.

VALENTINE. The sooner the better. Jeremy, come hither; closer, that none may overhear us. Jeremy, I can tell you news. Angelica is turned nun, and I am turning friar, and yet we'll marry one another in spite of the Pope. Get me a cowl and beads, that I may play my part, for she'll meet me two hours hence in black and white, and a long veil to cover the project, and we won't see one another's faces, till we have done something to be ashamed of; and then we'll blush once for all.

[*Enter TATTLE and ANGELICA.*]

5. According to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Medea's potions made Jason's father young again; "chine": spine.

6. Tagliacozzi was a famous Italian plastic surgeon.

7. Treatment administered to the dying.

8. Legendary shepherd loved by the goddess of the moon on Mount Latmos, in Asia Minor.

9. God of marriage.

1. When Argus, Juno's watchman, was killed, she put his hundred eyes into the peacock's tail. "Poppy-water": a narcotic.

JEREMY. I'll take care, and—

VALENTINE. Whisper.

ANGELICA. Nay, Mr. Tattle, if you make love to me you spoil my design, for I intended to make you my confidant.

TATTLE. But, madam, to throw away your person—such a person!—and such a fortune, on a madman!

ANGELICA. I never loved him till he was mad; but don't tell anybody so.

SCANDAL. [*aside*] How's this? Tattle making love to Angelica!

TATTLE. Tell, madam? Alas, you don't know me. I have much ado to tell your ladyship how long I have been in love with you. But encouraged by the impossibility of Valentine's making any more addresses to you, I have ventured to declare the very inmost passion of my heart. Oh madam, look upon us both. There you see the ruins of a poor decayed creature. Here, a complete and lively figure, with youth and health, and all his five senses in perfection, madam, and to all this, the most passionate lover—

ANGELICA. O fie, for shame, hold your tongue. A passionate lover, and five senses in perfection! When you are as mad as Valentine, I'll believe you love me, and the maddest shall take me.

VALENTINE. It is enough. Ha, who's here?

MRS. FRAIL. [*to JEREMY*] O Lord, her coming will spoil all.

JEREMY. No, no, madam, he won't know her; if he should, I can persuade him.

VALENTINE. [*whispers*] Scandal, who are all these? Foreigners? If they are, I'll tell you what I think. Get away all the company but Angelica, that I may discover my design to her.

SCANDAL. [*whispers*] I will. I have discovered something of Tattle, that is of a piece with Mrs. Frail. He courts Angelica. If we could contrive to couple 'em together.—Hark'ee—

MRS. FORESIGHT. He won't know you, cousin, he knows nobody.

FORESIGHT. But he knows more than anybody. O niece, he knows things past and to come, and all the profound secrets of time.

TATTLE. Look you, Mr. Foresight, it is not my way to make many words of matters, and so I shan't say much, but in short, d'ye see, I will hold you a hundred pound now that I know more secrets than he.

FORESIGHT. How? I cannot read that knowledge in your face, Mr. Tattle. Pray, what do you know?

TATTLE. Why, d'ye think I'll tell you, sir? Read it in my face? No sir, 'tis written in my heart. And safer there, sir, than letters writ in juice of lemon, for no fire can fetch it out. I am no blab, sir.

VALENTINE. [*to SCANDAL*] Acquaint Jeremy with it, he may easily bring it about. They are welcome, and I'll tell 'em so myself. [*Aloud*] What, do you look strange upon me? Then I must be plain. [*Coming up to them.*] I am Truth, and hate an old acquaintance with a new face.

[SCANDAL *goes aside with* JEREMY.]

TATTLE. Do you know me, Valentine?

VALENTINE. You? Who are you? No, I hope not.

TATTLE. I am Jack Tattle, your friend.

VALENTINE. My friend, what to do? I am no married man, and thou canst not lie with my wife; I am very poor, and thou canst not borrow money of me. Then what employment have I for a friend?

TATTLE. Hah! A good open speaker, and not to be trusted with a secret.

ANGELICA. Do you know me, Valentine?

VALENTINE. Oh, very well.

ANGELICA. Who am I?

VALENTINE. You're a woman; one to whom heaven gave beauty, when it grafted roses on a brier. You are the reflection of heaven in a pond, and he that leaps at you is sunk. You are all white, a sheet of lovely spotless paper, when you first are born; but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose's quill. I know you; for I loved a woman, and loved her so long, that I found out a strange thing: I found out what a woman was good for.

TATTLE. Ay, prithee, what's that?

VALENTINE. Why, to keep a secret.

TATTLE. O Lord!

VALENTINE. O exceeding good to keep a secret. For though she should tell, yet she is not to be believed.

TATTLE. Hah! good again, faith.

VALENTINE. I would have music. Sing me the song that I like.

SONG

I

I tell thee, Charmion, could I time retrieve,
And could again begin to love and live,
To you I should my earliest off 'ring give;
I know my eyes would lead my heart to you,
And I should all my vows and oaths renew,
But to be plain, I never would be true.

2

For by our weak and weary truth, I find,
Love hates to center in a point assigned,
But runs with joy the circle of the mind.
Then never let us chain what should be free,
But for relief of either sex agree,
Since women love to change, and so do we.

No more, for I am melancholy. [*Walks musing.*]

JEREMY. [*to SCANDAL*] I'll do't, sir.

SCANDAL. Mr. Foresight, we had best leave him. He may grow outrageous, and do mischief.

FORESIGHT. I will be directed by you.

JEREMY. [*to MRS. FRAIL*] You'll meet, Madam; I'll take care everything shall be ready.

MRS. FRAIL. Thou shalt do what thou wilt, have what thou wilt; in short, I will deny thee nothing.

TATTLE. [*to ANGELICA*] Madam, shall I wait upon you?

ANGELICA. No, I'll stay with him. Mr. Scandal will protect me. Aunt, Mr. Tattle desires you would give him leave to wait on you.

TATTLE. [*aside*] Pox on't, there's no coming off, now she has said that. [*Aloud*] Madam, will you do me the honor?

MRS. FORESIGHT. Mr. Tattle might have used less ceremony.

[*Exeunt* FORESIGHT, MRS. FORESIGHT, TATTLE, MRS. FRAIL,
JEREMY.]

SCANDAL. Jeremy, follow Tattle.

ANGELICA. Mr. Scandal, I only stay till my maid comes, and because I had a mind to be rid of Mr. Tattle.

SCANDAL. Madam, I am very glad that I overheard a better reason, which you gave to Mr. Tattle; for his impertinence forced you to acknowledge a kindness for Valentine, which you denied to all his sufferings and my solicitations. So I'll leave him to make use of the discovery, and your ladyship to the free confession of your inclinations.

ANGELICA. O heavens! You won't leave me alone with a madman?

SCANDAL. No, madam; I only leave a madman to his remedy.

[Exit SCANDAL.]

VALENTINE. Madam, you need not be very much afraid, for I fancy I begin to come to myself.

ANGELICA. [*aside*] Ay, but if I don't fit² you, I'll be hanged.

VALENTINE. You see what disguises love makes us put on. Gods have been in counterfeited shapes for the same reason; and the divine part of me, my mind, has worn this mask of madness, and this motley livery³ only as the slave of love, and menial creature of your beauty.

ANGELICA. Mercy on me, how he talks! Poor Valentine!

VALENTINE. Nay, faith, now let us understand one another, hypocrisy apart. The comedy draws toward an end, and let us think of leaving acting, and be ourselves; and since you have loved me, you must own I have at length deserved you should confess it.

ANGELICA. [*sighs*] I would I had loved you, for Heaven knows I pity you; and could I have foreseen the sad effects, I would have striven. But that's too late. [*Sighs.*]

VALENTINE. What sad effects? What's too late? My seeming madness has deceived my father, and procured me time to think of means to reconcile me to him, and preserve the right of my inheritance to his estate; which otherwise, by articles, I must this morning have resigned. And this I had informed you of today, but you were gone before I knew you had been here.

ANGELICA. How? I thought your love of me had caused this transport in your soul, which it seems you only counterfeited for mercenary ends and sordid interest.

VALENTINE. Nay, now you do me wrong, for if any interest was considered, it was yours, since I thought I wanted more than love to make me worthy of you.

ANGELICA. Then you thought me mercenary. But how am I deluded by this interval of sense, to reason with a madman?

VALENTINE. Oh, 'tis barbarous to misunderstand me longer.

[Enter JEREMY.]

ANGELICA. Oh, here's a reasonable creature; sure he will not have the impudence to persevere. Come, Jeremy, acknowledge your trick, and confess your master's madness counterfeit.

JEREMY. Counterfeit, madam? I'll maintain him to be as absolutely and substantially mad as any freeholder in Bethlehem.⁴ Nay, he's as mad as any projector, fanatic, chemist, lover, or poet in Europe.

VALENTINE. Sirrah, you lie. I am not mad.

2. Get back at.

3. I.e., fool's clothing.

4. Bedlam, the madhouse. "Projector": schemer or inventor.

ANGELICA. Ha, ha, ha! You see, he denies it.

JEREMY. O Lord, madam, did you ever know any madman mad enough to own it?

VALENTINE. Sot, can't you apprehend?⁵

ANGELICA. Why, he talked very sensibly just now.

JEREMY. Yes, madam, he has intervals: but you see he begins to look wild again now.

VALENTINE. Why, you thick-skulled rascal, I tell you the farce is done, and I will be mad no longer. [*Beats him.*]

ANGELICA. Ha, ha, ha! Is he mad or no, Jeremy?

JEREMY. Partly, I think, for he does not know his mind two hours. I'm sure I left him just now in a humor to be mad. And I think I have not found him very quiet at this present. [*One knocks.*] Who's there?

VALENTINE. Go see, you sot. [*Exit JEREMY.*] I'm very glad that I can move your mirth, though not your compassion.

ANGELICA. I did not think you had apprehension enough to be exceptious.⁶ But madmen show themselves most by overpretending to a sound understanding, as drunken men do by overacting sobriety. I was half inclining to believe you, till I accidentally touched upon your tender part. But now you have restored me to my former opinion and compassion.

[*Enter JEREMY.*]

JEREMY. Sir, your father has sent to know if you are any better yet. Will you please to be mad, sir, or how?

VALENTINE. Stupidity! You know the penalty of all I'm worth must pay for the confession of my senses. I'm mad, and will be mad to everybody but this lady.

JEREMY. So: just the very backside of truth. But lying is a figure in speech that interlards the greatest part of my conversation. Madam, your ladyship's woman. [*Goes to the door.*]

[*Enter JENNY.*]

ANGELICA. Well, have you been there? Come hither.

JENNY. [*aside to ANGELICA*] Yes, madam, Sir Sampson will wait upon you presently.

VALENTINE. You are not leaving me in this uncertainty?

ANGELICA. Would anything but a madman complain of uncertainty? Uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life. Security is an insipid thing, and the overtaking and possessing of a wish discovers the folly of the chase. Never let us know one another better, for the pleasure of a masquerade is done when we come to show faces. But I'll tell you two things before I leave you. I am not the fool you take me for, and you are mad and don't know it. [*Exeunt ANGELICA and JENNY.*]

VALENTINE. From a riddle you can expect nothing but a riddle. There's my instruction and the moral of my lesson.

JEREMY. What, is the lady gone again, sir? I hope you understood one another before she went.

VALENTINE. Understood! She is harder to be understood than a piece of Egyptian antiquity, or an Irish manuscript; you may pore till you spoil your eyes, and not improve your knowledge.

5. Understand.

6. Disposed to make objections.

JEREMY. I have heard 'em say, sir, they read hard Hebrew books backwards; maybe you begin to read at the wrong end.

VALENTINE. They say so of a witches' prayer, and dreams and Dutch almanacs are to be understood by contraries. But there's regularity and method in that. She is a medal without a reverse or inscription, for indifference has both sides alike. Yet while she does not seem to hate me, I will pursue her, and know her if it be possible, in spite of the opinion of my satirical friend, Scandal, who says,

That women are like tricks by sleight of hand,
Which, to admire, we should not understand.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END OF THE FOURTH ACT

Act Five

SCENE ONE

A room in FORESIGHT'S house.

[*Enter ANGELICA and JENNY.*]

ANGELICA. Where is Sir Sampson? Did you not tell me he would be here before me?

JENNY. He's at the great glass in the dining room, madam, setting his cravat and wig.

ANGELICA. How! I'm glad on't. If he has a mind I should like him, it's a sign he likes me; and that's more than half my design.

JENNY. I hear him, madam.

ANGELICA. Leave me, and d'ye hear, if Valentine should come or send, I am not to be spoken with.

[*Exit JENNY.*]

[*Enter SIR SAMPSON.*]

SIR SAMPSON. I have not been honored with the commands of a fair lady a great while.—Odd, madam, you have revived me—not since I was five and thirty.

ANGELICA. Why, you have no great reason to complain, Sir Sampson, that is not long ago.

SIR SAMPSON. Zooks, but it is, madam, a very great while to a man that admires a fine woman as much as I do.

ANGELICA. You're an absolute courtier, Sir Sampson.

SIR SAMPSON. Not at all, madam. Odsbud, you wrong me; I am not so old neither to be a bare courtier, only a man of words. Odd, I have warm blood about me yet, I can serve a lady any way. Come, come, let me tell you, you women think a man old too soon, faith and troth you do. Come, don't despise fifty; odd, fifty, in a hale constitution, is no such contemptible age.

ANGELICA. Fifty a contemptible age! Not at all, a very fashionable age I think. I assure you I know very considerable beaux that set a good face upon fifty.

Fifty! I have seen fifty in a side box⁷ by candlelight out-blossom five and twenty.

SIR SAMPSON. O pox, outsides, outsides, a pize⁸ take 'em, mere outsides. Hang your side box beaux; no, I'm none of those, none of your forced trees that

7. Enclosed seat at the side of a theater.

8. Pox.

pretend to blossom in the fall, and bud when they should bring forth fruit. I am of a long-lived race, and inherit vigor. None of my family married till fifty, yet they begot sons and daughters till fourscore. I am of your patriarchs, I, a branch of one of your antediluvian⁹ families, fellows that the flood could not wash away. Well, madam, what are your commands? Has any young rogue affronted you, and shall I cut his throat? Or—

ANGELICA. No, Sir Sampson, I have no quarrel upon my hands. I have more occasion for your conduct than your courage at this time. To tell you the truth, I'm weary of living single, and want a husband.

SIR SAMPSON. Odsbud, and 'tis a pity you should. [*Aside*] Odd, would she would like me, then I should hamper my young rogues. Odd, would she would; faith and troth she's devilish handsome. [*Aloud*] Madam, you deserve a good husband, and 'twere a pity you should be thrown away upon any of these young idle rogues about the town. Odd, there's ne'er a young fellow worth hanging, that is, a very young fellow. Pize on 'em, they never think beforehand of anything; and if they commit matrimony, 'tis as they commit murder, out of a frolic; and are ready to hang themselves, or to be hanged by the law, the next morning. Odso, have a care, madam.

ANGELICA. Therefore I ask your advice, Sir Sampson. I have fortune enough to make any man easy that I can like, if there were such a thing as a young agreeable man, with a reasonable stock of good nature and sense—for I would neither have an absolute wit nor a fool.

SIR SAMPSON. Odd, you are hard to please, madam. To find a young fellow that is neither a wit in his own eye nor a fool in the eye of the world is a very hard task. But, faith and troth, you speak very discreetly; for I hate both a wit and a fool.

ANGELICA. She that marries a fool, Sir Sampson, commits the reputation of her honesty or understanding to the censure of the world. And she that marries a very witty man submits both to the severity and insolent conduct of her husband. I should like a man of wit for a lover, because I would have such an one in my power; but I would no more be his wife than his enemy. For his malice is not a more terrible consequence of his aversion than his jealousy is of his love.

SIR SAMPSON. None of old Foresight's sybils¹ ever uttered such a truth. Odsbud, you have won my heart. I hate a wit. I had a son that was spoiled among 'em; a good hopeful lad, till he learned to be a wit—and might have risen in the state—But a pox on't, his wit run him out of his money, and now his poverty has run him out of his wits.

ANGELICA. Sir Sampson, as your friend I must tell you you are very much abused in that matter. He's no more mad than you are.

SIR SAMPSON. How, madam? Would I could prove it.

ANGELICA. I can tell you how that may be done. But it is a thing that would make me appear to be too much concerned in your affairs.

SIR SAMPSON. [*aside*] Odsbud, I believe she likes me. [*Aloud*] Ah, madam, all my affairs are scarce worthy to be laid at your feet; and I wish, madam, they stood in a better posture, that I might make a more becoming offer to a lady of your incomparable beauty and merit. If I had Peru in one hand, and Mex-

9. I.e., before the flood ("patriarchs" were the heads of tribal families in the Old Testament).

1. Prophetesses.

ico in t'other, and the Eastern empire under my feet, it would make me only a more glorious victim to be offered at the shrine of your beauty.

ANGELICA. Bless me, Sir Sampson, what's the matter?

SIR SAMPSON. Odd, madam, I love you. And if you would take my advice in a husband—

ANGELICA. Hold, hold, Sir Sampson. I asked your advice for a husband, and you are giving me your consent. I was indeed thinking to propose something like it in a jest, to satisfy you about Valentine. For if a match were seemingly carried on, between you and me, it would oblige him to throw off his disguise of madness, in apprehension of losing me. For you know he has long pretended a passion for me.

SIR SAMPSON. Gadzooks, a most ingenious contrivance, if we were to go through with it. But why must the match only be seemingly carried on? Odd, let it be a real contract.

ANGELICA. O fie, Sir Sampson, what would the world say?

SIR SAMPSON. Say? They would say you were a wise woman, and I a happy man. Odd, madam, I'll love you as long as I live, and leave you a good jointure when I die.

ANGELICA. Ay, but that is not in your power, Sir Sampson; for when Valentine confesses himself in his senses, he must make over his inheritance to his younger brother.

SIR SAMPSON. Odd, you're cunning, a wary baggage! Faith and troth, I like you the better. But I warrant you, I have a proviso in the obligation in favor of myself. Body o' me, I have a trick to turn the settlement upon the issue male of our two bodies begotten. Odsbud, let us find children, and I'll find an estate.

ANGELICA. Will you? Well, do you find the estate, and leave the other to me.

SIR SAMPSON. O rogue! But I'll trust you. And will you consent? Is it a match then?

ANGELICA. Let me consult my lawyer concerning this obligation, and if I find what you propose practicable, I'll give you my answer.

SIR SAMPSON. With all my heart. Come in with me and I'll lend you the bond. You shall consult your lawyer and I'll consult a parson. Odzooks, I'm a young man. Odzooks I'm a young man, and I'll make it appear. Odd, you're devilish handsome. Faith and troth, you're very handsome, and I'm very young, and very lusty. Odsbud, hussy, you know how to choose, and so do I. Odd, I think we are very well met: Give me your hand, odd, let me kiss it. 'Tis as warm and as soft—as what? Odd, as t'other hand. Give me t'other hand, and I'll mumble 'em, and kiss 'em till they melt in my mouth.

ANGELICA. Hold, Sir Sampson, you're profuse of your vigor before your time. You'll spend your estate before you come to it.

SIR SAMPSON. No, no, only give you a rent-roll² of my possessions. Ah, baggage! I warrant you for little Sampson. Odd, Sampson's a very good name for an able fellow. Your Sampsons were strong dogs from the beginning.

ANGELICA. Have a care, and don't overact your part. If you remember, the strongest Sampson of your name pulled an old house over his head at last.³

SIR SAMPSON. Say you so, hussy? Come, let's go then. Odd, I long to be pulling down too; come away. Odo, here's somebody coming.

[*Exeunt.*]

2. Inventory.

3. See Judges 16:30.

[Enter TATTLE and JEREMY.]

TATTLE. Is not that she, gone out just now?

JEREMY. Ay, sir, she's just going to the place of appointment. Ah sir, if you are not very faithful and close in this business, you'll certainly be the death of a person that has a most extraordinary passion for your honor's service.

TATTLE. Ay, who's that?

JEREMY. Even my unworthy self, sir. Sir, I have had an appetite to be fed with your commands a great while. And now, sir, my former master having much troubled the fountain of his understanding, it is a very plausible occasion for me to quench my thirst at the spring of your bounty. I thought I could not recommend myself better to you, sir, than by the delivery of a great beauty and fortune into your arms, whom I have heard you sigh for.

TATTLE. I'll make thy fortune; say no more. Thou art a pretty fellow, and canst carry a message to a lady in a pretty soft kind of phrase, and with a good persuading accent.

JEREMY. Sir, I have the seeds of rhetoric and oratory in my head. I have been at Cambridge.

TATTLE. Ay. 'Tis well enough for a servant to be bred at an university, but the education is a little too pedantic for a gentleman. I hope you are secret in your nature, private, close, ha?

JEREMY. O sir, for that sir, 'tis my chief talent. I'm as secret as the head of Nilus.⁴

TATTLE. Ay? Who's he, though? A Privy Counselor?

JEREMY. [*aside*] O ignorance! [*Aloud*] A cunning Egyptian, sir, that with his arms would overrun the country, yet nobody could ever find out his headquarters.

TATTLE. Close dog! A good whoremaster, I warrant him. The time draws nigh, Jeremy. Angelica will be veiled like a nun, and I must be hooded like a friar. Ha, Jeremy?

JEREMY. Ay, sir, hooded like a hawk, to seize at first sight upon the quarry. It is the whim of my master's madness to be so dressed. And she is so in love with him, she'll comply with anything to please him. Poor lady, I'm sure she'll have reason to pray for me, when she finds what a happy exchange she has made, between a madman and so accomplished a gentleman.

TATTLE. Ay, faith, so she will, Jeremy. You're a good friend to her, poor creature. I swear I do it hardly so much in consideration of myself as compassion to her.

JEREMY. 'Tis an act of charity, sir, to save a fine woman with thirty thousand pound from throwing herself away.

TATTLE. So 'tis, faith. I might have saved several others in my time. But i'Gad I could never find in my heart to marry anybody before.

JEREMY. Well, sir, I'll go and tell her my master's coming, and meet you in half a quarter of an hour, with your disguise, at your own lodgings. You must talk a little madly, she won't distinguish the tone of your voice.

TATTLE. No, no, let me alone for a counterfeit. I'll be ready for you.

[Enter MISS PRUE.]

MISS PRUE. O Mr. Tattle, are you here! I'm glad I have found you. I have been looking up and down for you, like anything, till I'm as tired as anything in the world.

4. The source of the river Nile was not yet known.

TATTLE. [*aside*] O pox, how shall I get rid of this foolish girl?

MISS PRUE. Oh I have pure⁵ news, I can tell you pure news. I must not marry the seaman now—my father says so. Why won't you be my husband? You say you love me, and you won't be my husband. And I know you may be my husband now if you please.

TATTLE. O fie, Miss. Who told you so, child?

MISS PRUE. Why, my father. I told him that you loved me.

TATTLE. O fie, Miss, why did you do so? And who told you so, child?

MISS PRUE. Who? Why, you did, did not you?

TATTLE. O pox, that was yesterday, Miss, that was a great while ago, child. I have been asleep since; slept a whole night, and did not so much as dream of the matter.

MISS PRUE. Pshaw! Oh, but I dreamt that it was so, though.

TATTLE. Ay, but your father will tell you that dreams come by contraries, child.

O fie! What, we must not love one another now. Pshaw! That would be a foolish thing indeed. Fie, fie, you're a woman now, and must think of a new man every morning, and forget him every night. No, no, to marry is to be a child again, and play with the same rattle always. O fie, marrying is a paw⁶ thing.

MISS PRUE. Well, but don't you love me as well as you did last night then?

TATTLE. No, no, child, you would not have me.

MISS PRUE. No? Yes, but I would, though.

TATTLE. Pshaw, but I tell you, you would not. You forget you're a woman, and don't know your own mind.

MISS PRUE. But here's my father, and he knows my mind.

[*Enter* FORESIGHT.]

FORESIGHT. Oh, Mr. Tattle, your servant; you are a close man. But methinks your love to my daughter was a secret I might have been trusted with. Or had you a mind to try if I could discover it by my art, hum, ha? I think there is something in your physiognomy that has a resemblance of her, and the girl is like me.

TATTLE. [*aside*] And so you would infer that you and I are alike. What does the old prig mean? I'll banter him, and laugh at him, and leave him. [*Aloud*] I fancy you have a wrong notion of faces.

FORESIGHT. How? What? A wrong notion? How so?

TATTLE. In the way of art. I have some taking⁷ features, not obvious to vulgar eyes, that are indications of a sudden turn of good fortune in the lottery of wives, and promise a great beauty and great fortune reserved alone for me by a private intrigue of destiny, kept secret from the piercing eye of perspicuity, from all astrologers, and the stars themselves.

FORESIGHT. How? I will make it appear that what you say is impossible.

TATTLE. Sir, I beg your pardon, I'm in haste.

FORESIGHT. For what?

TATTLE. To be married, sir, married.

FORESIGHT. Ay, but pray take me along with you, sir.

TATTLE. No, sir, 'tis to be done privately. I never make confidants.

FORESIGHT. Well, but my consent I mean. You won't marry my daughter without my consent?

5. Good.

6. Naughty.

7. Attractive.

TATTLE. Who, I, sir? I'm an absolute stranger to you and your daughter, sir.

FORESIGHT. Heyday! What time of the moon is this?

TATTLE. Very true, sir, and desire to continue so. I have no more love for your daughter than I have likeness of you; and I have a secret in my heart which you would be glad to know, and shan't know; and yet you shall know it too, and be sorry for't afterwards. I'd have you to know, sir, that I am as knowing as the stars and as secret as the night. And I'm going to be married just now, yet did not know of it half an hour ago, and the lady stays for me, and does not know of it yet. There's a mystery for you. I know you love to untie difficulties. Or if you can't solve this, stay here a quarter of an hour, and I'll come and explain it to you. [*Exit.*]

MISS PRUE. O father, why will you let him go? Won't you make him be my husband?

FORESIGHT. Mercy on us, what do these lunacies portend? Alas, he's mad, child, stark wild.

MISS PRUE. What, and must not I have e'er a husband then? What, must I go to bed to nurse again, and be a child as long as she's an old woman? Indeed but I won't. For now my mind is set upon a man, I will have a man some way or other. Oh! methinks I'm sick when I think of a man, and if I can't have one, I would go to sleep all my life. For when I'm awake, it makes me wish and long, and I don't know for what. And I'd rather be always asleeping than sick with thinking.

FORESIGHT. O fearful! I think the girl's influenced too. Hussy, you shall have a rod.

MISS PRUE. A fiddle of a rod, I'll have a husband, and if you won't get me one, I'll get one for myself. I'll marry our Robin the butler; he says he loves me, and he's a handsome man, and shall be my husband. I warrant he'll be my husband and thank me too, for he told me so.

[*Enter SCANDAL, MRS. FORESIGHT, and NURSE.*]

FORESIGHT. Did he so? I'll dispatch him for't presently. Rogue! O nurse, come hither.

NURSE. What is your worship's pleasure?

FORESIGHT. Here, take your young mistress and lock her up presently, till farther orders from me. Not a word, hussy. Do what I bid you, no reply, away! And bid Robin make ready to give an account of his plate and linen, d'ye hear, be gone when I bid you.

[*Exit NURSE and MISS PRUE.*]

MRS. FORESIGHT. What's the matter, husband?

FORESIGHT. 'Tis not convenient to tell you now. Mr. Scandal, heav'n keep us all in our senses. I fear there is a contagious frenzy abroad. How does Valentine?

SCANDAL. Oh, I hope he will do well again. I have a message from him to your niece Angelica.

FORESIGHT. I think she has not returned since she went abroad with Sir Sampson.

[*Enter BEN.*]

MRS. FORESIGHT. Here's Mr. Benjamin; he can tell us if his father be come home.

BEN. Who, father? Ay, he's come home with a vengeance.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Why, what's the matter?

BEN. Matter! Why, he's mad.

FORESIGHT. Mercy on us, I was afraid of this.

BEN. And there's the handsome young woman, she as they say Brother Val went mad for, she's mad too, I think.

FORESIGHT. O my poor niece, my poor niece, is she gone too? Well, I shall run mad next.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Well, but how mad? How d'ye mean?

BEN. Nay, I'll give you leave to guess. I'll undertake to make a voyage to Antigua.⁸ No, hold, I mayn't say so neither—but I'll sail as far as Leghorn and back again before you shall guess at the matter, and do nothing else. Mess, you may take in all the points of the compass and not hit right.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Your experiment will take up a little too much time.

BEN. Why, then I'll tell you, there's a new wedding upon the stocks;⁹ and they two are a going to be married to rights.

SCANDAL. Who?

BEN. Why father and—the young woman. I can't hit of her name.

SCANDAL. Angelica?

BEN. Ay, the same.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Sir Sampson and Angelica? Impossible!

BEN. That may be, but I'm sure it is as I tell you.

SCANDAL. 'S'death, it's a jest. I can't believe it.

BEN. Look you, friend, it's nothing to me, whether you believe it or no. What I say is true, d'ye see? They are married, or just going to be married, I know not which.

FORESIGHT. Well, but they are not mad, that is, not lunatic?

BEN. I don't know what you may call madness, but she's mad for a husband, and he's horn-mad, I think, or they'd ne'er make a match together. Here they come.

[Enter SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, with BUCKRAM.]

SIR SAMPSON. Where is this old soothsayer? This uncle of mine elect? Aha, old Foresight, uncle Foresight, wish me joy uncle Foresight, double joy, both as uncle and astrologer. Here's a conjunction that was not foretold in all your Ephemeris. The brightest star in the blue firmament is shot from above in a jelly of love,¹ and so forth; and I'm lord of the ascendant. Odd, you're an old fellow, Foresight; uncle I mean, a very old fellow, uncle Foresight; and yet you shall live to dance at my wedding, faith and troth you shall. Odd, we'll have the music of the spheres for thee, old Lilly, that we will, and thou shalt lead up a dance in *via Lactea*.²

FORESIGHT. I'm thunder-strook! You are not married to my niece?

SIR SAMPSON. Not absolutely married, uncle, but very near it, within a kiss of the matter, as you see. [Kisses ANGELICA.]

ANGELICA. 'Tis very true indeed, uncle. I hope you'll be my father, and give me.

SIR SAMPSON. That he shall, or I'll burn his globes. Body o' me, he shall be thy father, I'll make him thy father, and thou shalt make me a father, and I'll make thee a mother, and we'll beget sons and daughters enough to put the weekly bills³ out of countenance.

SCANDAL. Death and hell! Where's Valentine? [Exit.]

MRS. FORESIGHT. This is so surprising—

8. In the West Indies.

9. In preparation.

1. Quoted from Dryden's *Tyrannic Love* (1669).

2. The Milky Way.

3. Official lists of births and deaths.

SIR SAMPSON. How! What does my aunt say? Surprising, aunt? Not at all, for a young couple to make a match in winter? Not at all. It's a plot to undermine cold weather, and destroy that usurper of a bed called a warming pan.

MRS. FORESIGHT. I'm glad to hear you have so much fire in you, Sir Sampson.

BEN. Mess, I fear his fire's little better than tinder. Mayhap it will only serve to light up a match for somebody else. The young woman's a handsome young woman, I can't deny it. But, father, if I might be your pilot in this case, you should not marry her. It's just the same thing as if so be you should sail so far as the Starits⁴ without provision.

SIR SAMPSON. Who gave you authority to speak, sirrah? To your element, fish, be mute, fish, and to sea. Rule your helm, sirrah, don't direct me.

BEN. Well, well, take you care of your own helm, or you mayn't keep your own vessel steady.

SIR SAMPSON. Why, you impudent tarpaulin! Sirrah, do you bring your fore-castle jests upon your father? But I shall be even with you, I won't give you a groat. Mr. Buckram, is the conveyance so worded that nothing can possibly descend to this scoundrel? I would not so much as have him have the prospect of an estate, though there were no way to come to it but by the northeast passage.⁵

BUCKRAM. Sir, it is drawn according to your directions; there is not the least cranny of the law unstopped.

BEN. Lawyer, I believe there's many a cranny and leak unstopped in your conscience. If so be that one had a pump to your bosom, I believe we should discover a foul hold. They say a witch will sail in a sieve. But I believe the devil would not venture aboard o'your conscience. And that's for you.

SIR SAMPSON. Hold your tongue, sirrah. How now, who's there.

[*Enter TATTLE and MRS. FRAIL.*]

MRS. FRAIL. Oh, sister, the most unlucky accident!

MRS. FORESIGHT. What's the matter?

TATTLE. Oh, the two most unfortunate poor creatures in the world we are!

FORESIGHT. Bless us! How so?

MRS. FRAIL. Ah, Mr. Tattle and I, poor Mr. Tattle and I are—I can't speak it out.

TATTLE. Nor I. But poor Mrs. Frail and I are—

MRS. FRAIL. Married.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Married! How?

TATTLE. Suddenly—before we knew where we were—that villain Jeremy, by the help of disguises, tricked us into one another.

FORESIGHT. Why, you told me just now you went hence in haste to be married.

ANGELICA. But I believe Mr. Tattle meant the favor to me; I thank him.

TATTLE. I did, as I hope to be saved, madam, my intentions were good. But this is the most cruel thing, to marry one does not know how, nor why, nor wherefore. The devil take me if ever I was so much concerned at anything in my life.

ANGELICA. 'Tis very unhappy, if you don't care for one another.

TATTLE. The least in the world. That is for my part, I speak for myself. Gad,

4. I.e., of Gibraltar.

5. An impossible route to the east, sailing north of Russia.

I never had the least thought of serious kindness. I never liked anybody less in my life. Poor woman! Gad, I'm sorry for her too, for I have no reason to hate her neither; but I believe I shall lead her a damned sort of a life.

MRS. FORESIGHT. [*aside to* MRS. FRAIL] He's better than no husband at all, though he's a coxcomb.

MRS. FRAIL. [*to her*] Ay, ay, it's well it's no worse. Nay, for my part I always despised Mr. Tattle of all things. Nothing but his being my husband could have made me like him less.

TATTLE. Look you there, I thought as much. Pox on't, I wish we could keep it secret. Why, I don't believe any of this company would speak of it.

MRS. FRAIL. But, my dear, that's impossible. The parson and that rogue Jeremy will publish it.

TATTLE. Ay, my dear, so they will, as you say.

ANGELICA. Oh, you'll agree very well in a little time. Custom will make it easy to you.

TATTLE. Easy! Pox on't, I don't believe I shall sleep tonight.

SIR SAMPSON. Sleep, quotha? No, why, you would not sleep o'your wedding night? I'm an older fellow than you, and don't mean to sleep.

BEN. Why there's another match now, as though'f a couple of privateers were looking for a prize, and should fall foul of one another. I'm sorry for the young man with all my heart. Look you, friend, if I may advise you, when she's going—for that you must expect, I have experience of her—when she's going, let her go. For no matrimony is tough enough to hold her, and if she can't drag her anchor along with her, she'll break her cable, I can tell you that. Who's here, the madman?

[*Enter* VALENTINE *dressed*, SCANDAL, *and* JEREMY.]

VALENTINE. No; here's the fool; and if occasion be, I'll give it under my hand.

SIR SAMPSON. How now?

VALENTINE. Sir, I'm come to acknowledge my errors, and ask your pardon.

SIR SAMPSON. What, have you found your senses at last, then? In good time, sir.

VALENTINE. You were abused, sir, I never was distracted.

FORESIGHT. How? Not mad, Mr. Scandal?

SCANDAL. No, really, sir; I'm his witness, it was all counterfeit.

VALENTINE. I thought I had reasons. But it was a poor contrivance, the effect has shown it such.

SIR SAMPSON. Contrivance! What, to cheat me? To cheat your father? Sirrah, could you hope to prosper?

VALENTINE. Indeed, I thought, sir, when the father endeavored to undo the son, it was a reasonable return of nature.

SIR SAMPSON. Very good, sir. Mr. Buckram, are you ready? Come, sir, will you sign and seal?

VALENTINE. If you please, sir. But first I would ask this lady one question.

SIR SAMPSON. Sir, you must ask my leave first. That lady? No, sir, you shall ask that lady no questions till you have asked her blessing, sir. That lady is to be my wife.

VALENTINE. I have heard as much, sir, but I would have it from her own mouth.

SIR SAMPSON. That's as much as to say, I lie, sir, and you don't believe what I say.

VALENTINE. Pardon me, sir. But I reflect that I very lately counterfeited mad-

ness. I don't know but the frolic may go round.

SIR SAMPSON. Come, chuck, satisfy him, answer him.—Come, come, Mr. Buckram, the pen and ink.

BUCKRAM. Here it is, sir, with the deed, all is ready.

[VALENTINE goes to ANGELICA.]

ANGELICA. 'Tis true, you have a great while pretended love to me; nay, what if you were sincere? Still you must pardon me if I think my own inclinations have a better right to dispose of my person than yours.

SIR SAMPSON. Are you answered now, sir?

VALENTINE. Yes, sir.

SIR SAMPSON. Where's your plot, sir, and your contrivance now, sir? Will you sign, sir? Come, will you sign and seal?

VALENTINE. With all my heart, sir.

SCANDAL. 'S'death, you are not mad indeed, to ruin yourself?

VALENTINE. I have been disappointed of my only hope, and he that loses hope may part with anything, I never valued fortune but as it was subservient to my pleasure, and my only pleasure was to please this lady. I have made many vain attempts, and find at last that nothing but my ruin can effect it, which for that reason I will sign to. Give me the paper.

ANGELICA. [*aside*] Generous Valentine!

BUCKRAM. Here is the deed, sir.

VALENTINE. But where is the bond by which I am obliged to sign this?

BUCKRAM. Sir Sampson, you have it.

ANGELICA. No, I have it. And I'll use it, as I would everything that is an enemy to Valentine. [*Tears the paper.*]

SIR SAMPSON. How now?

VALENTINE. Ha!

ANGELICA. [*to VALENTINE*] Had I the world to give you, it could not make me worthy of so generous and faithful a passion. Here's my hand, my heart was always yours, and struggled very hard to make this utmost trial of your virtue.

VALENTINE. Between pleasure and amazement I am lost. But on my knees I take the blessing.

SIR SAMPSON. Ouns, what is the meaning of this?

BEN. Mess, here's the wind changed again. Father, you and I may make a voyage together now.

ANGELICA. Well, Sir Sampson, since I have played you a trick, I'll advise you how you may avoid such another. Learn to be a good father, or you'll never get a second wife. I always loved your son, and hated your unforgiving nature. I was resolved to try him to the utmost. I have tried you too, and know you both. You have not more faults than he has virtues, and 'tis hardly more pleasure to me that I can make him and myself happy than that I can punish you.

VALENTINE. If my happiness could receive addition, this kind surprise would make it double.

SIR SAMPSON. Ouns, you're a crocodile.

FORESIGHT. Really, Sir Sampson, this is a sudden eclipse.

SIR SAMPSON. You're an illiterate fool, and I'm another, and the stars are liars; and if I had breath enough, I'd curse them and you, myself and everybody. Ouns! Cullied, bubbled, jilted, woman-bobbed⁶ at last—I have not patience.

6. Made a fool; "cullied": duped.

[Exit SIR SAMPSON.]

TATTLE. If the gentleman is in this disorder for want of a wife, I can spare him mine. [To JEREMY] Oh, are you there, sir? I'm indebted to you for my happiness.

JEREMY. Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons, 'twas an errant mistake. You see, sir, my master was never mad, or anything like it. Then how could it be otherwise?

VALENTINE. Tattle, I thank you, you would have interposed between me and heaven, but Providence laid purgatory in your way. You have but justice.

SCANDAL. I hear the fiddles that Sir Sampson provided for his own wedding. Methinks 'tis pity they should not be employed when the match is so much mended. Valentine, though it be morning, we may have a dance.

VALENTINE. Anything, my friend, everything that looks like joy and transport.

SCANDAL. Call 'em, Jeremy.

ANGELICA. I have done dissembling now, Valentine, and if that coldness which I have always worn before you should turn to an extreme fondness, you must not suspect it.

VALENTINE. I'll prevent that suspicion, for I intend to dote on at that immoderate rate, that your fondness shall never distinguish itself enough to be taken notice of. If ever you seem to love too much, it must be only when I can't love enough.

ANGELICA. Have a care of large promises; you know you are apt to run more in debt than you are able to pay.

VALENTINE. Therefore I yield my body as your prisoner, and make your best on't.

SCANDAL. The music stays for you.

[Dance]

Well, madam, you have done exemplary justice, in punishing an inhumane father and rewarding a faithful lover. But there is a third good work, which I, in particular, must thank you for. I was an infidel to your sex, and you have converted me. For now I am convinced that all women are not like fortune, blind in bestowing favors, either on those who do not merit, or who do not want 'em.

ANGELICA. 'Tis an unreasonable accusation that you lay upon our sex. You tax us with injustice, only to cover your own want of merit. You would all have the reward of love, but few have the constancy to stay till it becomes your due. Men are generally hypocrites and infidels. They pretend to worship, but have neither zeal nor faith. How few, like Valentine, would persevere even unto martyrdom, and sacrifice their interest to their constancy. In admiring me you misplace the novelty.

The miracle today is that we find
A lover true, not that a woman's kind.

[Exeunt omnes.]

FINIS

*Epilogue Spoken at the Opening of the New House*BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE⁷

Sure Providence at first designed this place
 To be the player's refuge in distress;
 For still in every storm they all run hither,
 As to a shed that shields 'em from the weather.
 5 But thinking of this change which last befell us,
 It's like what I have heard our poets tell us:
 For when behind our scenes their suits are pleading,
 To help their love, sometimes they show their reading;
 And wanting ready cash to pay for hearts,
 10 They top⁸ their learning on us, and their parts.
 Once of philosophers they told us stories,
 Whom, as I think they called—Py—Pythagories,
 I'm sure 'tis some such Latin name they give 'em,
 And we, who know no better, must believe 'em.
 15 Now to these men (say they) such souls were given,
 That after death, ne'er went to hell, nor heaven,
 But lived, I know not how, in beasts; and then
 When many years were past, in men again.
 Methinks, we players resemble such a soul,
 20 That does from bodies, we from houses⁹ stroll.
 Thus Aristotle's soul, of old that was,
 May now be damned to animate an ass;
 Or in this very house, for ought we know,
 Is doing painful penance in some beau;
 25 And this our audience, which did once resort
 To shining theaters to see our sport,
 Now find us tossed into a tennis court.¹
 These walls but t'other day were filled with noise
 Of roaring gamesters, and your damme boys.²
 30 Then bounding balls and rackets they encompassed,
 And now they're filled with jests, and flights, and bombast!
 I vow I don't much like this transmigration,
 Strolling from place to place by circulation.
 Grant Heaven, we don't return to our first station.
 35 I know not what these think, but for my part
 I can't reflect without an aching heart,
 How we should end in our original, a cart.³
 But we can't fear, since you're so good to save us,

7. Anne Bracegirdle (ca. 1663–1748), a leading actress as well as Congreve's mistress, created the role of Angelica.

8. Complete or surmount. "To top a part" is to play a role to its utmost; here with a pun ("top": cover; "parts": private parts).

9. I.e., playhouses. The actors migrate from one

house to another as, according to the Greek philosopher Pythagoras, souls move from body to body.

1. The new theater was located in a former tennis court.

2. Swearing rowdies.

3. Where the first plays were performed.

That you have only set us up, to leave us.
40 Thus from the past, we hope for future grace,
I beg it—
And some here know I have a begging face.
Then pray continue this your kind behavior,
For a clear⁴ stage won't do, without your favor.

1695

4. Without debt.