

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Boniface's Inn. Enter Boniface running.

Boniface Chamberlain! maid! Cherry! daughter Cherry! all asleep? all dead?

Enter Cherry running.

Cherry Here, here! why d'ye bawl so, father? d'ye think we have no ears?

Boniface You deserve to have none, you young minx! The company of the Warrington coach has stood in the hall this hour, and nobody to show them to their chambers.

Cherry And let 'em wait farther; there's no footman behind it.

Boniface But they threaten to go to another inn to-night.

Cherry That they dare not, for fear the coachman should overturn them to-morrow.— Coming! coming!— Here's the London coach arrived. *[Exit]*

Enter Aimwell in a riding-habit, and Archer as footman, carrying a portmanteau.

Boniface This way, this way, gentlemen!

Aimwell *[To Archer.]* Set down the things; go to the stable, and see my horses well rubbed.

Archer I shall, sir. *[Exit.]*

Aimwell You're my landlord, I suppose?

Boniface Yes, sir, I'm old Will Boniface, pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

Aimwell O Mr. Boniface, your servant!

Boniface O sir!—What will your honour please to drink, as the saying is?

Aimwell I have heard your town of Lichfield much famed for ale; I think I'll taste that.

Boniface Sir, I have now in my cellar ten tun of the best ale in Staffordshire; 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy. I'll show you such ale! Here, tapster *[Enter Tapster]* broach number 1706, as the saying is.

Tapster *[looking puzzled]* 1706? Ah!! *[disdainfully]* As the saying is! *[goes to fetch ale]*

Boniface Sir, I have fed purely upon ale; I have eat my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale. *[Enter Tapster with a bottle and glass, and exit.]* Now, sir, you shall see!— *[Fitting out a glass.]* Your worship's health.—*[Drinks.]* Ha! delicious, delicious! fancy it burgundy, only fancy it, and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

Aimwell *[Drinks]* 'Tis confounded strong!

Boniface Strong! it must be so, or how should we be strong that drink it?

Aimwell And have you lived so long upon this ale, landlord?

Boniface Eight-and-fifty years, upon my credit, sir—but it killed my wife, poor woman, as the saying is.

Aimwell How came that to pass?

Boniface I don't know how, sir; she would not let the ale take its natural course, sir; she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is; and an honest gentleman that came this way from Ireland, made her a present of a dozen bottles of whiskey—but the poor woman was never well after: but, however, I was obliged to the gentleman, you know.

Aimwell Why, was it the whiskey that killed her?

Boniface My Lady Bountiful said so. She, good lady, did what could be done; she cured her of three distentions, but the fourth carried her off. But she's happy, and I'm contented, as the saying is.

Aimwell Who's that Lady Bountiful you mentioned?

Boniface 'Ods my life, sir, we'll drink her health.—*[Drinks.]* My Lady Bountiful is one of the best of women. Her last husband, Sir Charles Bountiful, left her worth a thousand pound a year.

Aimwell Has the lady been any other way useful in her generation?

Boniface Yes, sir; she has a daughter by Sir Charles, the finest woman in all our country, and the greatest fortune. She has a son too, by her first husband, Squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day; if you please, sir, we'll drink his health.

Aimwell What sort of a man is he?

Boniface Why, sir, the man's well enough; says little, thinks less, and does—nothing at all, faith. But he's a man of a great estate, and values nobody.

Aimwell And married, you say?

Boniface Ay, and to a curious woman, sir. But he's a—he wants it here, sir. *[Pointing to his forehead.]* But that's none of my business; he's my landlord, and so a man, you know, would not—But— Sir, my humble service to you.— *[Drinks.]* Though I value not a farthing what he can do to me; I pay him his rent at quarter-day; I have a good running-trade; I have but one daughter, and I can give her—but no matter for that.

Aimwell You're very happy, Mr. Boniface. Pray, what other company have you in town?

Boniface A power of fine ladies; and then we have the French officers.

Aimwell Oh, that's right, you have a good many of those gentlemen: pray, how do you like their company?

Boniface So well, as the saying is, that I could wish we had as many more of 'em; they're full of money, and pay double for everything they have. They know, sir, that we paid good round taxes for the taking of 'em, and so they are willing to reimburse us a little. One of 'em lodges in my house.

Re-enter Archer. Count Bellair walks across from the other side with much florid bowing, which Archer, in surprise, returns.

Archer Landlord, there are some gentlemen below that ask for you.

Boniface I'll wait on 'em.—*[Aside to Archer.]* Does your master stay long in town, as the saying is?

Archer I can't tell, as the saying is.

Boniface Come from London?

Archer No.

Boniface Going to London, mayhap?

Archer No.

Boniface *[Aside.]* An odd fellow this.—*[To Aimwell.]* I beg your worship's pardon, I'll wait on you in half a minute. *[Exit.]*

Aimwell The coast's clear, I see.—Now, my dear Archer, welcome to Lichfield!

Archer I thank thee, my dear brother in iniquity.

Aimwell Iniquity! prithee; you need not change your style with your dress.

Archer Don't mistake me, Aimwell, for 'tis still my maxim, that there is no scandal like rags, nor any crime so shameful as poverty.

Aimwell Upon which topic we proceed, and, I think, luckily hitherto. Would not any man swear now, that I am a man of quality, and you my servant, when if our intrinsic value were known—

Archer Come, come, we are the men of intrinsic value who can strike our fortunes out of ourselves, whose worth is independent of accidents in life, or revolutions in government: we have heads to get money and hearts to spend it.

Aimwell As to our hearts, I grant ye, they are as willing nags as any within a thousand miles: but I can have no great opinion of our heads from the service they have done us hitherto, unless it be that they have brought us from London hither to Lichfield, made me a lord and you my servant.

Archer That's more than you could expect already. But what money have we left?

Aimwell But two hundred pound.

Archer And our horses, clothes, rings, etc.—Why, we have very good fortunes now for moderate people—Our friends, indeed, began to suspect that our pockets were low, but we came off with flying colours, showed no signs of want either in word or deed.

Aimwell Ay, and for our sudden disappearing, our friends must imagine what they will.

Archer Well, you command for the day, and so I submit: at Nottingham, you know, I am to be master.

Aimwell And at Lincoln, I again.

Archer Then, at Norwich I mount, which, I think, shall be our last stage; for, by there, we surely will have welcomed 'Venus'.

Re-enter Boniface.

Boniface What will your worship please to have for supper?

Aimwell What have you got?

Boniface Sir, we have a delicate piece of beef in the pot, and a pig at the fire.

Aimwell Good supper-meat, I must confess. I can't eat beef, landlord.

Archer And I hate pig.

Aimwell Hold your prating, sirrah! do you know who you are?

Boniface Please to bespeak something else; I have everything in the house.

Aimwell Have you got any fish or wildfowl?

Boniface As for fish, truly, sir, we are an inland town, and indifferently provided with fish, that's the truth on't; and then for wildfowl—we have a delicate couple of rabbits.

Aimwell Get me the rabbits fricasseed.

Boniface Fricasseed! Lard, sir, they'll eat much better smothered with onions.

Archer Psha! Damn your onions!

Aimwell Again, sirrah!—Well, landlord, what you please. But hold, I have a small charge of money, and your house is so full of strangers that I believe it may be safer in your custody than mine; for when this fellow of mine gets drunk he tends to nothing.—Here, sirrah, reach me the strong-box.

Archer Yes, sir.—*[Aside.]* This will give us a reputation. *[Brings Aimwell the box.]*

Aimwell Here, landlord; the locks are sealed down, both for your security and mine; it holds somewhat above two hundred pound: if you doubt it I'll count it to you after supper; but be sure you lay it where I may have it at a minute's warning; for my affairs are a little dubious at present; perhaps I may be gone in half an hour, perhaps I may be your guest till the best part of that be spent; and pray order your ostler to keep my horses always saddled. But one thing above the rest I must beg, that you would let this fellow have none of your ale; for he's the most insufferable sot—Here, sirrah, light me to my chamber.

[Exit, lighted by Archer.]

Boniface Cherry! daughter Cherry!

Re-enter Cherry.

Cherry D'ye call, father?

Boniface Ay, child, you must lay by this box for the gentleman: 'tis full of money.

Cherry Money! all that money! Who is the gentleman, father?

Boniface I don't know what to make of him; he talks of keeping his horses ready saddled, and of going perhaps at a minute's warning, or of staying perhaps till the best part of this be spent.

Cherry Ay, ten to one, father, he's a highwayman.

Boniface A highwayman! upon my life, girl, you have hit it, and this box is some new-purchased booty. Now, could we find him out, the money were ours.

Cherry He don't belong to our gang.

Boniface Since he don't belong to our fraternity, we may betray him with a safe conscience: I don't think it lawful to harbour any rogues but my own. Look'ee, child, as the saying is, we must go cunningly to work, proofs we must have; the gentleman's servant loves drink, I'll ply him that way, and ten to one loves a wench: you must work him t'other way.

Cherry Father, would you have me give my secret for his?

Boniface Consider, child, there's two hundred pound to boot.—*[Ringing without.]* Coming! coming! *[Exit.]*

Cherry What a rogue is my father! My father! I deny it. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest, and debauch his daughter into the bargain—by a footman too!

Re-enter Archer.

Archer What footman, pray, mistress, is so happy as to be the subject of your contemplation?

Cherry Whoever he is, friend, he'll be but little the better for't.

Archer I hope so, for, I'm sure, you did not think of me.

Cherry *[Aside.]* A pretty fellow! I like his pride.— *[Aloud.]* Sir, pray, sir, you see, sir. I have the credit to be entrusted with your master's fortune here, which sets me a degree above his footman. What's your name, sir?

Archer *[Aside.]* Name! egad, I have forgot it.—*[Aloud.]* Oh! Martin.

Cherry Where were you born?

Archer In St Martin's parish.

Cherry What was your father?

Archer St Martin's parish.

Cherry Then, friend, good-night.

Archer I hope not.

Cherry You may depend upon't.

Archer Upon what?

Cherry That you're very impudent.

Archer That you're very handsome.

Cherry That you're a footman.

Archer That you're an angel.

Cherry I shall be rude.

Archer So shall I.

Cherry Let go my hand.

Archer Give me a kiss. *[Kisses her.]*

Boniface *[Call without.]* Cherry! Cherry!

Cherry I'm—my father calls; you plaguey devil, how durst you stop my breath so? Offer to follow me one step, if you dare. *[Exit.]*

Archer A fair challenge, by this light! this is a pretty fair opening of an adventure; but we are knight-errants, and so Fortune be our guide. *[Exit.]*

ACT 1, SCENE 2

Lady Bountiful's Garden. Enter Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda, meeting.

- Dorinda Morrow, my dear sister; are you for church this morning?
- Mrs Sullen Anywhere to pray; for Heaven alone can help me. But I think, Dorinda, there's no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands:
- Dorinda I swear, as being sister to the husband and friend to the wife, your example gives me such an impression of matrimony, that I shall be apt condemn my person to a long vacation all its life. But supposing, madam, that you brought it to case of separation, what can you urge against your husband? My brother is, first, the most constant man alive.
- Mrs Sullen The most constant husband, I grant ye.
- Dorinda He allows you a maintenance suitable to your quality.
- Mrs Sullen A maintenance! I brought your brother ten thousand pounds, out of which I might expect some pretty things, called pleasures.
- Dorinda You share in all the pleasures that the country affords.
- Mrs Sullen Country pleasures! racks and torments! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clambering over stiles? or that my parents instructed me in rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoking tobacco with my husband? Not that I disapprove rural pleasures, as the poets have painted them; in their landscape, every murmuring stream gives fresh alarms to love. Besides, you'll find, that their couples were never married! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry, he's my husband, and your brother; and, between both, is he not a sad brute?
- Dorinda I have nothing to say to your part of him, you're the best judge.
- Mrs Sullen O sister, sister! if ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot, one that's always musing, but never thinks. He came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else, by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces; after his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as a furnace, and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel night-cap. O matrimony! But now, sister, you shall see how handsomely, being a wellbred man, he will beg my pardon.

Enter Squire Sullen.

- Squire Sul My head aches consumedly.
- Mrs Sullen Will you be pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning? it may do your head good.

Squire Sul No.
Dorinda Coffee, brother?
Squire Sul Psha!
Mrs Sullen Will you please to dress, and go to church with me? the air may help you.
Squire Sul *[Calls]* Scrub!

Enter Scrub.

Scrub Sir!
Squire Sul What day o' th' week is this?
Scrub Sunday, an't please your worship.
Squire Sul Sunday! bring me a dram; and d'ye hear, set out the venison-pasty, and a tankard of strong beer upon the hall-table, I'll go to breakfast *[Exit with Scrub.*
Mrs Sullen O sister, sister! shall I never ha' good of the beast? I think, one way to rouse my lethargic, sottish husband, is to give him a rival: security begets negligence in all people, and men must be alarmed to make 'em alert in their duty. Women are like pictures, of no value in the hands of a fool, till he hears men of sense bid high for the purchase.
Dorinda But how do you know, sister, but that, instead of rousing your husband by this artifice to a counterfeit kindness, he should awake in a real fury?
Mrs Sullen Let him: if I can't entice him to the one, I would provoke him to the other.

[Exeunt.

ACT 1, SCENE 3

Boniface's Inn. Enter Aimwell dressed, and Archer.

Archer Now to our business, good sir. You are so well dressed, Tom, and make so handsome a figure, that I fancy you may do execution in a country church.

Aimwell There's something in that which may turn to advantage. The appearance of a stranger in a country church draws as many gazers as a blazing-star; a train of whispers runs buzzing round the congregation in a moment: 'Who is he? Whence comes he? Do you know him?' Then I, sir, tips me the verger with half-a-crown; he pockets the simony, and inducts me into the best pew in the church; I turn myself round, bow to the bishop; single out a beauty, rivet both my eyes to hers, set my nose a-bleeding by the strength of imagination, and show the whole church my concern, by my endeavouring to hide it; after the sermon, the whole town gives me to her for a lover, and she in good earnest falls in love with me.

Archer Instead of riveting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix 'em upon a fortune; that's our business at present.

Aimwell Psha! no woman can be a beauty without a fortune. Let me alone, for I am a marksman.

Archer Tom, when were you at church before, pray?

Aimwell Um—I was there at the coronation.

Archer And how can you expect a blessing by going to church now?

Aimwell Blessing! nay, Frank, I ask but for a wife. *[Exit.*

Archer Truly, the man is not very unreasonable in his demands.
[Exit at the opposite door.

Enter Boniface and Cherry.

Boniface Well, daughter, as the saying is, have you brought Martin to confess?

Cherry Pray, father, don't put me upon getting anything out of a man; I'm but young, you know, father, and I don't understand wheedling.

Boniface Young! why, you jade, as the saying is, can any woman wheedle that is not young? I tell you, his silence confesses it, and his master spends his money so freely, and is so much a gentleman every manner of way, that he must be a highwayman.

Enter Tapster with a jug and glasses

Tapster There's a 'gentleman' here to see you, sir. And I had the presumption to draw another jug of the 1706 *[mimicing Boniface]* ... as the saying goes. *[exit*

Enter Gibbet, in a cloak.

Gibbet Landlord, landlord, is the coast clear?

Boniface O Mr Gibbet, what's the news?

Gibbet No matter, ask no questions, all fair and honourable.—Here, my dear Cherry.—
[Gives her a bag.] Two hundred sterling pounds, as good as any that ever hanged or saved a rogue; and here—three wedding or mourning rings, 'tis much the same you know; here, two silver-hilted swords; I took those from fellows that never show any part of their swords but the hilts; here is a diamond necklace which the lady hid in the privatest place in the coach, but I found it out — this gold watch I took from a pawnbroker's wife; it was left in her hands by a person of quality: there's the arms upon the case. Here, take my cloak, and go, secure the premises.

Cherry I will secure 'em. *[Exit.]*

Boniface But, hark'ee, where's Hounslow and Bagshot?

Gibbet They'll be here to-night.

Boniface D'ye know of any other gentlemen o'the pad on this road?

Gibbet No.

Boniface I fancy that I have two that lodge in the house just now.

Gibbet The devil! how d'ye smoke 'em?

Boniface Why, the one is gone to church.

Gibbet That's suspicious, I must confess.

Boniface And the other is now in his master's chamber; he pretends to be servant to the other; we'll call him out and pump him a little.

Gibbet With all my heart.

Boniface *[Calls]* Mr. Martin! Mr. Martin!

Enter Archer, combing a periwig.

Gibbet A good pretty fellow that; whose servant are you, friend?

Archer My master's.

Gibbet Really!

Archer Really.

Gibbet That's much.—The fellow has been at the bar by his evasions.—But, pray, sir, what is your master's name?

Archer Name, sir—I never asked him his name in my life.

Boniface What think you now? [*Aside to Gibbet.*]

Gibbet [*Aside to Boniface.*] Plain, plain, he talks now as if he were before a judge.—[*To Archer.*] But pray, friend, which way does your master travel?

Archer A-horseback.

Boniface Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Martin, you're very arch. This gentleman is only travelling towards Chester, and would be glad of your company, that's all.— Come, captain, you'll stay to-night, I suppose? I'll show you a chamber.

Gibbet Farewell, friend!

Archer Captain, your servant.—[*Exeunt Boniface and Gibbet.*] Captain! 'Sdeath, I wonder that the officers of the army don't conspire to beat the scoundrel.

Re-enter Cherry.

Cherry [*Aside.*] Gone, and Martin here! I hope he did not listen —[*Aloud*] Mr. Martin, who was that man with my father?

Archer Some recruiting Serjeant, or whipped-out trooper, I suppose.

Cherry All's safe, I find. [*Aside*]

Archer Come, my dear, we'll go in and make my master's bed.

Cherry Hold, hold, Mr. Martin! I find that your discourse and your habit are contradictions, and it would be nonsense in me to believe you a footman any longer.

Archer 'Oons, what a witch it is!

Cherry Depend upon this, sir, nothing in this garb shall ever tempt me; for, though I was born to servitude, I hate it. Own your condition, swear you love me, and then—

Archer And then we shall go make my master's bed?

Cherry Yes.

Archer You must know, then, that I am born a gentleman, my education was liberal; but I went to London a younger brother, fell into the hands of sharpers, who stripped me of my money, my friends disowned me, and now my necessity brings me to what you see.

Cherry Then take my hand—promise to marry me before you sleep, and I'll make you master of two thousand pounds.

Archer How!

Cherry Two thousand pounds that I have this minute in my own custody; so, throw off your livery this instant, and I'll go find a parson.

Archer What said you? a parson!

Cherry What! do you scruple?

Archer Scruple! no, no. *[Aside.]* 'Sdeath, what shall I do?—*[Aloud.]* But hark 'ee, child, what need you make me master of yourself and money, when you may have the same pleasure out of me, and still keep your fortune in your hands?

Cherry Then you won't marry me?

Archer I would marry you, but—

Cherry O sweet sir, I'm your humble servant, you're fairly caught! Would you persuade me that any gentleman who could bear the scandal of wearing a livery would refuse two thousand pounds, let the condition be what it would? no, no, sir. But I hope you'll pardon the freedom I have taken, since it was only to inform myself of the respect that I ought to pay you. *[Going.]*

Archer *[Aside.]* Fairly bit, by Jupiter!—*[Aloud.]* Hold! hold!—And have you actually two thousand pounds?

Cherry Sir, I have my secrets as well as you; when you please to be more open I shall be more free. *[Exit.]*

Archer So! two thousand pounds—if the wench would promise to die when the money were spent, egad, one would marry her; but the fortune may go off in a year or two, and the wife may live—Lord knows how long. Then an innkeeper's daughter! ay, that's the devil—there my pride brings me off.
[Exit.]

ACT 1, SCENE 4

Lady Bountiful's Garden. Enter Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda.

Dorinda Your hand, sister, I an't well.

Mrs Sullen Come, child, now tell me, don't you like the gentleman that we saw at church just now?

Dorinda The man's well enough.

Mrs Sullen Well enough! is he not a demigod, a Narcissus, a star, the man i'the moon?

Dorinda O sister, I'm extremely ill!

Mrs Sullen Come, unlace your stays, unbosom yourself. The man is perfectly a pretty fellow; I saw him when he first came into church.

Dorinda I saw him too, sister, and with an air that shone, methought, like rays about his person. His looks so humble were, and yet so noble, that they aimed to tell me that he could with pride die at my feet, though he scorned slavery anywhere else.—Oh, here comes our Mercury!

Enter Scrub.

Dorinda Well, Scrub, what news of the gentleman?

Scrub Madam, I have brought you a packet of news.

Dorinda Open it quickly, come.

Scrub In the first place I inquired who the gentleman was; they told me he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was; they answered and said, that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I inquired what countryman he was; they replied, 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came; their answer was, they could not tell. And, fifthly, I asked whither he went; and they replied, they knew nothing of the matter,—and this is all I could learn.

Mrs Sullen But what do the people say? can't they guess?

Scrub Why, some think he's a spy, some guess he's a mountebank, some say one thing, some another.

Dorinda What sort of livery has the footman?

Scrub Livery! Lord, madam, I took him for a captain, he's so bedizzened with lace! And then he has tops to his shoes, up to his mid leg, a silver-headed cane dangling at his knuckles; he carries his hands in his pockets just so—*[walks in the French air.]*—and has a fine long periwig tied up in a bag. —Lord, madam, he's clear another sort of man than I!

Dorinda Scrub, you have a world of simplicity, and some cunning. We have a great mind to know who this gentleman is, only for our satisfaction. You must go and get acquainted with his footman, and invite him hither to drink a bottle of your ale because you're butler to-day.

Scrub Yes, madam, I am butler every Sunday.

Mrs Sullen And we drop in by accident, and ask the fellow some questions ourselves.

Enter Gipsy.

Gipsy Ladies, dinner's upon table.

Dorinda Scrub, we'll excuse your waiting—go where we ordered you.

Scrub I shall.

[Exeunt.]

ACT 1, SCENE 5

Bonifaces Inn. Enter Aimwell and Archer.

Archer Well, Tom, I find you're a marksman.

Aimwell O Archer! I read her thousands in her looks, she looked like Ceres in her harvest: corn, wine and oil, milk and honey.

Archer Her face! her pocket, you mean; the corn, wine and oil, lies there. In short, she has ten thousand pounds, that's the English on't.

Enter Boniface.

Boniface Mr Martin, as the saying is—yonder's an honest fellow below, my Lady Bountiful's butler, who begs the honour that you would go home with him and see his cellar.

Archer Do my baise-mains to the gentleman, and tell him I will do myself the honour to wait on him immediately. *[Exit Boniface.]* You say, there's another lady very handsome at Lady Bountiful's?

Aimwell Yes, faith.

Archer I'm in love with her already.

Aimwell Landlord!

Re-enter Boniface.

Aimwell Have you any tolerable company in the house? I don't care for dining alone.

Boniface Yes, sir, there's a captain below, as the saying is, that arrived about an hour ago.

Aimwell Gentlemen of his coat are welcome everywhere; will you make him a compliment from me and tell him I should be glad of his company?

Boniface Who shall I tell him, sir, would—

Aimwell *[Aside.]* Ha! that stroke was well thrown in!—*[Aloud.]* I'm only a traveller, like himself, and would be glad of his company, that's all.

Boniface I obey your commands, as the saying is. *[Exit.]*

Archer 'Sdeath! I had forgot; what title will you give yourself?

Aimwell My brother's, to be sure; he would never give me anything else, so I'll make bold with his honour this bout—you know the rest of your cue.

Archer Ay, ay. *[Exit.]*

Enter Gibbet.

Gibbet Sir, I'm yours.

Aimwell 'Tis more than I deserve, sir, for I don't know you.

Gibbet I don't wonder at that, sir, for you never saw me before—*[Aside]* I hope.

Aimwell And pray, sir, how came I by the honour of seeing you now?

Gibbet Sir, I scorn to intrude upon any gentleman—but my landlord—

Aimwell O sir, I ask your pardon, you're the captain he told me of?

Gibbet At your service, sir.

Aimwell What regiment, may I be so bold?

Gibbet A marching regiment, sir, an old corps.

Aimwell *[Aside.]* Very old, if your coat be regimental—
[Aloud.] You have served abroad, sir?

Gibbet Yes, sir—in the plantations, 'twas my lot to be sent into the worst service; I would have quitted it indeed, but a man of honour, you know.

Aimwell And where is your company now, captain?

Gibbet They an't come yet.

Aimwell Why, d'ye expect 'em here?

Gibbet They'll be here to-night, sir.

Aimwell Which way do they march?

Gibbet Across the country.—*[Aside.]* The devil's in't, if I han't said enough to encourage him to declare! But I'm afraid he's not right; I must tack about.

Aimwell Is your company to quarter in Lichfield?

Gibbet In this house, sir.

Aimwell What! all?

Gibbet My company's but thin, ha! ha! ha! we are but three, ha! ha! ha!

Aimwell You're merry, sir.

Gibbet Ay, sir, you must excuse me, sir; I understand the world, especially the art of travelling: I don't care, sir, for answering questions directly upon the road— for I generally ride with a charge about me.

Aimwell *[Aside]* Three or four, I believe.

Gibbet I am credibly informed that there are highwaymen upon this quarter; not, sir, that I could suspect a gentleman of your figure—but truly, sir, I have got such a way of evasion upon the road, that I don't care for speaking truth to any man.

Aimwell *[Aside.]* Your caution may be necessary.—
[Aloud.] Then I presume you're no captain?

Gibbet Not I, sir; captain is a good travelling name, and so I take it; it stops a great many foolish inquiries.

Aimwell And pray, sir, what is your true profession?

Gibbet O sir, you must excuse me!—upon my word, sir, I don't think it safe to tell ye.

Aimwell Ha! ha! ha! upon my word I commend you.

Re-enter Boniface.

Aimwell Well, Mr. Boniface, what's the news?

Boniface There's another gentleman below, as the saying is, that hearing you were but two, would be glad to make the third man, if you would give him leave.

Aimwell What is he?

Boniface A clergyman, as the saying is.

Aimwell A clergyman! is he really a clergyman? or is it only his travelling name, as my friend the captain has it?

Boniface O sir, he's a priest, and chaplain to the French officers in town.

Aimwell Is he a Frenchman?

Boniface Yes, sir, born at Brussels.

Aimwell Can he speak English, landlord?

Boniface Very well, sir; you may know him, as the saying is, to be a foreigner by his accent, and that's all.

Aimwell Then he has been in England before?

Boniface Never, sir; but he's a master of languages, as the saying is; he talks Latin—it does me good to hear him talk Latin.

Aimwell Then you understand Latin, Mr Boniface?

Boniface Not I, sir, as the saying is; but he talks it so very fast, that I'm sure it must be good.

Aimwell Pray, desire him to walk up.

Boniface Here he is, as the saying is.

Enter Foigard. Exit Boniface.

Foigard Save you, gentlemens, bote.

Aimwell *[Aside.]* A Frenchman!—*[To Foigard.]* Sir, your most humble servant.

Foigard Och, dear joy, I am your most faithful shervant, and yours alsho.

Gibbet Doctor, you talk very good English, but you have a mighty twang of the foreigner.

Foigard My English is very veil for the vords, but we foreigners, you know, cannot bring our tongues about the pronounciation so soon.

Aimwell *[Aside.]* A foreigner! a downright Paddy, by this light!—*[Aloud.]* Were you born in France, doctor?

Foigard I was educated in France, but I was borned at Brussels; I am a subject of the King of Spain, joy.

Gibbet What King of Spain, sir? speak!

Foigard Upon my shoul, joy, I cannot tell you as yet.

Aimwell Nay, captain, that was too hard upon the doctor; he's a stranger.

Foigard Oh, let him alone, dear joy; I am of a nation that is not easily put out of countenance.

Aimwell Come, gentlemen, I'll end the dispute.—Here, landlord, is dinner ready?

Boniface Upon the table, as the saying is.

Aimwell Gentlemen—pray—that door—

Foigard No, no, fait, the captain must lead.

Aimwell No, doctor, the church is our guide.

Gibbet Ay, ay, so it is.

[Exit Foigard foremost, the others following.]

ACT 1, SCENE 6

Servants enter and start changing set. Gipsy and Cook enter from opp sides carrying some set piece; they meet centre stage.

Gipsy Is the dinner all cleared away, mistress?

Cook Ay, but the ladies had faint appetite today. [I know not why, as the I am sure the food was wholesome. There's plenty set aside in the kitchen if you be hungry.

Gipsy I fancy that may have something to do with the two strange gentlemen exciting their interest at church. They have had no conversation but upon this matter since. Scrub has been despatched to quiz the footman and discover what manner of men they are. I hear they are most becoming.

Cook *[to a servant pointing]* Not there but here, boy!
Well, Mistress Gipsy, we should welcome that Miss Dorinda finds some handsome entertainment in this dull place. I can only wish it goes well with her; but that the married lady should find amusement in these gentlemen can bring only trouble for us all. If you ask me, her eye wanders too liberally already, if you understand me ... Why, she has been observed conversing too closely with that Frenchman ...

Gipsy *[Interrupting]* If my mistress has found some diversion I would not deprive her of it. The fault lies with the Squire for taking so little care of his marriage vows. If I were to wed, I should demand constant attention ... and sober at that. Do you think this picture is in place here?

Cook It seems so. And on the other matter, should Master Scrub entertain any hopes of your affection? He is treated most trivially and with little humour by you, yet shows constant devotion. I should be well satisfied if his thoughts were in my direction.

Gipsy His dog-like fawning and sad eyes are not the means to this prize, but I tolerate him for my amusement. And now I shall seek him out and catch what I can of his discourse with the footman. For knowledge is a trusty weapon in the game ...
[Exit]

Cook checks all sets in place and exits

ACT 1, SCENE 7

Lady Bountiful's House. Enter Archer and Scrub singing, and hugging one another, the latter with a tankard in his hand. Gipsy listening at a distance.

Archer But will you be sure to keep the secret?

Scrub Pho! upon my honour, as I'm a gentleman. [*Gives Archer the tankard.*]

Archer 'Tis enough. You must know, then, that my master is the Lord Viscount Aimwell; he fought a duel t'other day in London, wounded his man so dangerously, that he thinks fit to withdraw till he hears whether the gentleman's wounds be mortal or not. He never was in this part of England before, so he chose to retire to this place, that's all.

Gipsy And that's enough for me. [*Exit.*]

Archer With all my heart; who knows but you and I may come to be better acquainted, eh? Here's your ladies' healths; you have three, I think, and to be sure there must be secrets among 'em. [*Drinks.*]

Scrub Secrets! ay, friend.—I wish I had a friend!

Archer Am not I your friend? come, you and I will sworn brothers.

Scrub Shall we?

Archer From this minute, brother Scrub—

Scrub And now, brother Martin, I will tell you a secret that will make your hair stand on end. You must know that I am consumedly in love.

Archer That's a terrible secret, that's the truth on't

Scrub That Gipsy, that was with us just now in the cellar, is the arrantest whore that ever wore a petticoat; and I'm dying for love of her. Now this is my misfortune—I dare not speak in the house, while that Gipsy dings about like a fury.—Once I had the better of the staff.

Archer And how comes the change now?

Scrub Why, the mother of all this mischief is a priest.

Archer A priest!

Scrub Ay. There's not a day goes over his head without a dinner or supper in this house.

Archer How came he so familiar in the family?

Scrub Because he speaks English as if he had lived here all his life, and tells lies as if he had been a traveller from his cradle.

Archer And this priest, I'm afraid, has converted the affections of your Gipsy?

Scrub Converted! ay, and perverted, my dear friend: for, I'm afraid, he has made her a whore and a papist!

Archer A very hopeful family yours, brother Scrub! suppose the maiden lady has her lover too?

Scrub Not that I know: she's the best on 'em, that's the truth on't: but they take care to prevent my curiosity, by giving me so much business, that I'm a perfect slave. What d'ye think is my place in this family?

Archer Butler, I suppose.

Scrub Ah, Lord help you! I'll tell you. Of a Monday I drive the coach, of a Tuesday I drive the plough, on Wednesday I follow the hounds, a Thursday I dun the tenants, on Friday I go to market, on Saturday I draw warrants, and a Sunday I draw beer.

Archer Ha! ha! ha! if variety be a pleasure in life, you have enough on't, my dear brother. But what ladies are those?

Scrub Ours, ours; that upon the right hand is Mrs. Sullen, and the other is Mrs. Dorinda. Don't mind 'em; sit still, man.

Enter Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda.

Mrs Sullen I have heard my brother talk of my Lord Aimwell; but they say that his brother is the finer gentleman.

Dorinda That's impossible, sister.

Mrs Sullen He's vastly rich, but very close, they say.

Dorinda No matter for that; if I can creep into his heart, I'll open his breast, I warrant him: I have heard say, that people may be guessed at by the behaviour of their servants; I could wish we might talk to that fellow.

Mrs Sullen So do I; for I think he's a very pretty fellow. Come this way, I'll throw out a lure for him presently.

[Dorinda and Mrs. Sullen walk a turn towards the opposite side of the stage.]

Archer *[Aside.]* Corn, wine, and oil indeed!—But, I think, the wife has the greatest plenty of flesh and blood; she should be my choice.
[Mrs. Sullen drops her glove. Archer runs, takes it up and gives to her.]
Madam—your ladyship's glove.

Mrs Sullen O sir, I thank you!—*[To Dorinda.]* What a handsome bow the fellow has!

Dorinda Bow! why, I have known several footmen come down from London set up here for dancing-masters, and carry off the best fortunes in the country.

Archer *[Aside.]* That project, for aught I know, had been better than ours.—
[To Scrub.] Brother Scrub, why don't you introduce me?

Scrub Ladies, this is the servant of the gentleman you saw at church to-day; I understood he came from London, and so I invited him to the cellar, that he might show me the newest flourish in whetting my knives.

Dorinda And I hope you have made much of him?

Archer Oh yes, madam, but the strength of your ladyship's liquor is a little too potent for the constitution of your humble servant.

Mrs Sullen What, then you don't usually drink ale?

Archer No, madam; my constant drink is tea, or a little wine and water. 'Tis prescribed me by the physician for a remedy against the spleen.

Scrub Oh la! Oh la! a footman have the spleen!

Mrs Sullen I thought that distemper had been only proper to people of quality?

Dorinda *[Aside to Mrs. Sullen.]* How affectedly the fellow talks!—
[To Archer.] How long, pray, have you served your present master?

Archer Not long; my life has been mostly spent in the service of the ladies.

Mrs Sullen And pray, which service do you like best?

Archer Madam, the ladies pay best; the honour of serving them is sufficient wages; there is a charm in their looks that delivers a pleasure with their commands, and gives our duty the wings of inclination.

Mrs Sullen *[Aside.]* That flight was above the pitch of a livery.—
[Aloud.] And, sir, would not you be satisfied to serve a lady again?

Archer As a groom of the chamber, madam, but not as a footman.

Scrub Madam, he recites rarely! I was thought to do pretty well here in the country till he came; but alack a day, I'm nothing to my brother Martin!

Dorinda Does he?—Pray, sir, will you oblige us with a recitation?

Archer Are you for tragedy or humour?

Scrub Oh le! he has the purest ode to love—

Mrs Sullen Love! pray, sir, let's have it.

Archer I'm ashamed, madam; but since you command me—

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Mrs Sullen Very well, sir, we're obliged to you.— Something for a pair of gloves. [*Offering him money.*]

Archer I humbly beg leave to be excused: my master, madam, pays me; nor dare I take money from any other hand, without injuring his honour, and disobeying his commands.

[Exit Archer and Scrub.

Dorinda This is surprising! Did you ever see so pretty a well-bred fellow?

Mrs Sullen The devil take him for wearing that livery!

Dorinda I fancy, sister, he may be some gentleman, a friend of my lord's, that his lordship has pitched upon for his courage, fidelity, and discretion, to bear him company in this dress, and who ten to one was his second too.

Mrs Sullen It is so, it must be so, and it shall be so!— for I like him.

Dorinda But now, sister, for an interview with this lord and this gentleman; how shall we bring that about?

Mrs Sullen Patience! you country ladies give no quarter if once you be entered. Would you prevent their desires, and give the fellows no wishing-time? Look'ee, Dorinda, if my Lord Aimwell loves you or deserves you, he'll find a way to see you, and there we must leave it.

Enter Squire Sullen.

Squire Sul What man was that I heard reciting just now?

Mrs Sullen The voice was in your head, my dear; you complained of it all day.

Squire Sul You're impertinent.

Mrs Sullen I was ever so, since I became one flesh with you.

Squire Sul One flesh! rather two carcasses joined unnaturally together.

Mrs Sullen Or rather a living soul coupled to a dead body.

Dorinda So, this is fine encouragement for me!

Squire Sul Yes, my wife shows you what you must do.

Mrs Sullen And my husband shows you what you must suffer.

Squire Sul 'Sdeath, why can't you be silent?

Mrs Sullen 'Sdeath, why can't you talk?

Squire Sul Do you talk to any purpose? *[Exit.*

Mrs Sullen *[Calling]* Do you think to any purpose? *[showing interest in the approaching Count Bellair]* But here comes the Count: vanish Dorinda!

Exit Dorinda. Enter Count Bellair.

Mrs Sullen Don't you wonder, Monsieur le Count, that I was not at church this afternoon?

Count *[flirting outrageously]* I more wonder, madam, that you go dere at all, or how you dare to lift those eyes to heaven that are guilty of so much killing. Consider, madam, I am doubly a prisoner; first to the arms of your general, then to your more conquering eyes. My first chains are easy—there a ransom may redeem me; but from your fetters I never shall get free.

Mrs Sullen Alas, sir! why should you complain to me of your captivity, who am in chains myself? I am like you, a prisoner of war—of war, indeed—I have given my parole of honour!

Count You are a slave, madam, slave to a husband.

Mrs Sullen There lies my foible, I confess; no fortifications, no courage, conduct, nor vigilancy, can pretend to defend a place where the cruelty of the governor forces the garrison to mutiny.

Count And where de besieger is resolved to die before de place.—Here will I fix *[Kneels]*; —with tears, vows, and prayers assault your heart and never rise till you surrender; or if I must storm — Love and St. Michael!—And so I begin the attack.

Mrs Sullen Stand off!—*[Aside.]* Sure he hears me not! —And I could almost wish—he did not!—The fellow makes love very prettily.

Enter Squire Sullen. He draws a sword.

Squire Sul Hold, villain, hold!

Exit Count, rapidly, with much bowing.

Mrs Sullen Pray, Mr. Sullen, put up; suspend your fury for a minute.

Squire Sul Look'ee, madam, don't think that my anger proceeds from any concern I have for your honour, but for my own, and if you can contrive any way of being a whore without making me a cuckold, do it and welcome.

Mrs Sullen Sir, I thank you kindly, you would allow me the sin but rob me of the pleasure. No, no, I'm resolved never to venture upon the crime without the satisfaction of seeing you punished for't.

Squire Sul Then will you grant me this, my dear? Let anybody else do you the favour but that Frenchman, for I mortally hate his whole generation.

[Exeunt on opposite sides]

ACT 1, SCENE 8

Lady Bountiful's House, Mrs Sullen and Lady Bountiful enter

Mrs Sullen Were I born an humble Turk, where women have no soul nor property, there I must sit contented. But in England, a country whose women are its glory, must women be abused? where women rule, must women be enslaved? Nay, cheated into slavery, mocked by a promise of comfortable society into a wilderness of solitude!

Enter Dorinda, who runs to Mrs. Sullen.

Dorinda News, dear sister! news! news!

Enter Archer, running.

Archer Where, where is my Lady Bountiful?—Pray, which is the old lady of you three?

Lady B I am.

Archer O madam, the fame of your ladyship's charity, goodness, benevolence, skill and ability, have drawn me hither to implore your ladyship's help in behalf of my unfortunate master, who is this moment breathing his last.

Lady B Your master! where is he?

Archer At your gate, madam. Drawn by the appearance of your handsome house to view it nearer, and walking up the avenue within five paces of the courtyard, he was taken ill of a sudden with a sort of I know not what, but down he fell, and there he lies.

Lady B Here, Scrub! Gipsy! all run, get my easy chair down stairs, put the gentleman in it, and bring him in quickly! quickly!

Archer Heaven will reward your ladyship for this charitable act.

Lady B Is your master used to these fits?

Archer O yes, madam, frequently: I have known him have five or six of a night.

Lady B What's his name?

Archer Lord, madam, he's a-dying! a minute's care or neglect may save or destroy his life.

Lady B Ah, poor gentleman!—Come, friend, show me the way; I'll see him brought in myself. *[Exit with Archer.]*

Dorinda O sister, my heart flutters about strangely! I can hardly forbear running to his assistance.

Mrs Sullen Did not I tell you that my lord would find a way to come at you? Love's his distemper, and you must be the physician; put on all your charms, summon all your fire into your eyes, plant the whole artillery of your looks against his breast, and down with him.

Dorinda O sister! I'm but a young gunner; I shall be afraid to shoot, for fear the piece should recoil, and hurt myself.

Enter Aimwell in a chair carried by Archer and Scrubs and counterfeiting a swoon; Lady Bountiful and Gipsy following.

Lady B Here, here, let's see the hartshorn drops.— Gipsy, a glass of fair water! His fit's very strong. —Bless me, how his hands are clinched!

Archer *[To Dorinda.]* Pray, madam, take his hand, and open it, if you can, whilst I hold his head. *[Dorinda takes his hand.]*

Dorinda Poor gentleman!—Oh!—he has got my hand within his, and squeezes it unmercifully—

Lady B 'Tis the violence of his convulsion, child.

Dorinda Oh, my hand! my hand!

Lady B What's the matter with the foolish girl? I have got his hand open, you see, with a great deal of ease.

Archer Ay, but, madam, your daughter's hand is somewhat warmer than your ladyship's, and the heat of it draws the force of the spirits that way.

Mrs Sullen I find, friend, you're very learned in these sorts of fits.

Archer 'Tis no wonder, madam, for I'm often troubled with them myself; *[Looking hard at Mrs. Sullen.]* I find myself extremely ill at this minute.

Mrs Sullen *[Aside]* I fancy I could find a way to cure you.

Lady B His fit holds him very long.

Archer Longer than usual, madam.—Pray, young lady, open his breast and give him air.

Lady B Where did his illness take him first, pray?

Archer To-day at church, madam.

Lady B In what manner was he taken?

Archer Very strangely, my lady. He was of a sudden touched with something in his eyes, which, at the first, he only felt, but could not tell whether 'twas pain or pleasure.

Lady B Wind, nothing but wind!

Archer By soft degrees it grew and mounted to his brain, there his fancy caught it, and straight conveyed it to his heart.

Lady B Oh—he recovers! The lavender-water—some feathers to burn under his nose—Hungary water to rub his temples.—Oh, he comes to himself!—Gipsy! bring the cordial-water.

[Aimwell seems to awake in amaze.]

Dorinda How d'ye, sir?

Aimwell Where am I? *[Rising.]*
 Sure I have pass'd the gulf of silent death,
 And now I land on the Elysian shore!—
 Behold the goddess of those happy plains,
 Fair Proserpine—let me adore thy bright divinity.
[Kneels to Dorinda, and kisses her hand.]

Mrs Sullen So, so, so! I knew where the fit would end!

Aimwell Eurydice perhaps—
 How could thy Orpheus keep his word,
 And not look back upon thee?
 No treasure but thyself could sure have bribed him
 To look one minute off thee.

Lady B Delirious, poor gentleman!

Archer Very delirious, madam, very delirious.

Aimwell Martin's voice, I think.

Archer Yes, my Lord.—How does your lordship?

Aimwell Where am I?

Archer In very good hands, sir. You were taken just now with one of your old fits, under the trees, just by this good lady's house; her ladyship had you taken in, and has miraculously brought you to yourself, as you see.

Aimwell I am so confounded with shame, madam, that I can now only beg pardon. I dare be no longer troublesome.—Martin! give two guineas to the servants.
[gives Archer coins]

Dorinda Sir, you may catch cold by going so soon into the air; you don't look, sir, as if you were perfectly recovered.

Aimwell That I shall never be, madam; my present illness is so rooted that I must expect to carry it to my grave.

Lady B Come, sir, your servant has been telling me that you're apt to relapse if you go into the air: your good manners shan't get the better of ours— you shall sit

down again, sir. Come, sir, we don't mind ceremonies in the country—here, sir, my service t'ye.—You shall taste my water; 'tis a cordial I can assure you, and of my own making— drink it off, sir.—*[Aimwell drinks.]* And how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Aimwell Somewhat better—though very faint still.

Lady B Ay, ay, people are always faint after these fits.—Come, girls, you shall show the gentleman the house.—'Tis but an old family building, sir; but you had better walk about, and cool by degrees, than venture immediately into the air. You'll find some tolerable pictures.—Dorinda, show the gentleman the way. I must go to make more cordial. *[Exit.]*

Dorinda This way, sir.

Aimwell Ladies, shall I beg leave for my servant to wait on you, for he understands pictures very well?

Mrs Sullen Sir, we understand originals as well as he does pictures, so he may come along.

[Exeunt all except Mrs. Sullen and Archer]

Mrs Sullen How d'ye like that Venus over the chimney?

Archer Venus! I protest, madam, I took it for your picture; but now I look again, 'tis not handsome enough.

Mrs Sullen Oh, what a charm is flattery! If you would see my picture, there it is over that cabinet. How d'ye like it?

Archer I must admire anything, madam, that has the least resemblance of you. But, methinks, madam —*[He looks at the picture and Mrs. Sullen three or four times, by turns.]* Pray, madam, who drew it?

Mrs Sullen A famous hand, sir.

Archer A famous hand, madam!—Your eyes, indeed, are featured there; but where's the sparking moisture, shining fluid, in which they swim? The picture, indeed, has your dimples; but where's the swarm of killing Cupids that should ambush there? The lips too are figured out; but where's the carnation dew, the pouting ripeness that tempts the taste in the original?

Mrs Sullen *[Aside]* Had it been my lot to have matched with such a man!

Archer Your breasts too—presumptuous man! what, paint Heaven! There's the finest bed in that room, madam! I suppose 'tis your ladyship's bedchamber.

Mrs Sullen And what then, sir?

Archer I think the quilt is the richest that ever I saw. I can't at this distance, madam, distinguish the figures of the embroidery; will you give me leave, madam?

Mrs Sullen *[Aside.]* The devil take his impudence!— Sure, if I gave him an opportunity, he durst not offer it?—I have a great mind to try.—*[Going: Returns.]* 'Sdeath, what am I doing?—And alone, too! —Sister! sister! *[Runs out.]*

Archer I'll follow her close *[Going.]*

Re-enter Scrub.

Scrub Martin! brother Martin!

Archer O brother Scrub, I beg your pardon, I was not a-going: here's a guinea my master ordered you.

Scrub A guinea! hi! hi! hi! a guinea! eh—by this light it is a guinea! But I suppose you expect one-and-twenty shillings in change?

Archer Not at all; I have another for you. For a plot! This very night!

Scrub Sir, give me that guinea, and I'll discover it.

Archer 'Tis a mystery and riddle in which I am. I hear but a word here and there; a closet, a back-door, a key.

Scrub *[knowingly]* Do you hear something of Mrs. Sullen?

Archer I do hear some word that sounds that way.

Scrub To hide in a lady's closet when it is dark would be a sin, Brother Martin.

Archer Well, is there any sin a man's being in a closet? one may make one's prayers in a closet.

Scrub But if the lady should come into her chamber, and go to bed?

Archer Well, and is there any sin in going to bed?

Scrub Ay, but if the parties should meet, brother?

Archer Well then—the parties must be responsible. A guinea will give you absolution. And you will tell this matter to nobody, brother?

Scrub Tell! no, sir, I thank you for that; I'm resolved never to speak one word pro nor con.

Archer You're i'the right, brother Scrub.

Aimwell *[From without.]* Martin! Martin!

Archer I come, sir, I come. *[Going]*

Scrub But you forget the other guinea, brother Martin.

Archer Here, I give it with all my heart.

Scrub And I take it with all my soul.—*[Exeunt]*

Re-enter Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda, meeting.

Mrs Sullen Well, sister!

Dorinda And well, sister!

Mrs Sullen What's become of my lord?

Dorinda What's become of his servant?

Mrs Sullen Servant! he's a prettier fellow, and a finer gentleman by fifty degrees, than his master.

Dorinda My lord has told me that I have more wit and beauty than any of my sex; and truly I begin to think the man is sincere.

Mrs Sullen I'll lay you a guinea that I had finer things said to me than you had.

Dorinda Done! What did your fellow say to ye?

Mrs Sullen My fellow took the picture of Venus for mine.

Dorinda But my lover took me for Venus herself.

Mrs Sullen Common cant! Had my spark called me a Venus directly, I should have believed him a footman in good earnest.

Dorinda But my lover was upon his knees to me.

Mrs Sullen And mine was upon his tiptoes to me.

Dorinda Mine vowed to die for me.

Mrs Sullen Mine swore to die with me.

Dorinda Mine spoke the softest moving things.

Mrs Sullen Mine had his moving things too.

Dorinda Mine kissed my hand ten thousand times,

Mrs Sullen Mine has all that pleasure to come.

Dorinda Mine offered marriage.

Mrs Sullen O Lard! d'ye call that a moving thing?

Dorinda The sharpest arrow in his quiver, my dear sister! Why, my ten thousand pounds may lie brooding here this seven years, and hatch nothing at last but some ill-natured clown like yours. Whereas if I marry my Lord Aimwell, there will be title, place, and precedence, the Park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendour, equipage, noise, and flambeaux.—“Hey, my Lady Aimwell’s servants there!—Lights, lights to the stairs!—My Lady Aimwell’s coach put forward!—Stand by make room for her ladyship!”—Are not these things moving?

Mrs Sullen Happy, happy sister! your angel has been watchful for your happiness, whilst mine has slept regardless of his charge. Long smiling years of circling joys for you, but not one hour for me! *[Weeps.*

Dorinda Come, my dear, we’ll talk of something else.

Mrs Sullen O Dorinda! Must the fair apartment of my breast be made a stable for a brute to lie in?

Dorinda Meaning your husband, I suppose?

Mrs Sullen Husband! no; even husband is too soft a name for him.—But, come, I expect my brother here to-night or to-morrow; he was abroad when my father married me; perhaps he’ll find a way to make me easy. — Though, to confess the truth, I do love that fellow; —and if I met him dressed as he should be, and I undressed as I should be—look’ee, sister, I have no supernatural gifts—I can’t swear I could resist the temptation; though I can safely promise to avoid it; and that’s as much as the best of us can do.

[Exeunt.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2, SCENE 1

Boniface's Inn. Enter Aimwell and Archer laughing.

- Archer And the awkward kindness of the good motherly old gentlewoman—
- Aimwell And the coming easiness of the young one— 'Sdeath, 'tis pity to deceive her!
- Archer Nay, if you adhere to these principles, stop where you are.
- Aimwell I can't stop; for I love her to distraction.
- Archer 'Sdeath, if you love her a hair's-breadth beyond discretion, you must go no further.
- Aimwell Well, well, anything to deliver us from sauntering away our idle evenings at White's, Tom's, or Will's and be stinted to bear looking at our old acquaintance, the cards; because our impotent pockets can't afford us a guinea for the game.
- Archer Or be obliged to some purse-proud coxcomb for a scandalous bottle, because we can't pay our reckoning.—Damn it, I had rather sup upon a dish of bones thrown out the door!
- Aimwell And ten thousand such rascally tricks—had we outlived our fortunes among our acquaintance. — But now—
- Archer Ay, now is the time to prevent all this:—strike while the iron is hot.—This priest is the luckiest part of our adventure; But here comes the doctor—we must get him ready. *[Exit.]*

[Enter Foigard.]

- Foigard Sauve you, noble friend.
- Aimwell O sir, your servant! Pray, doctor, may I crave your name?
- Foigard Fat naam is upon me? My naam is Foigard, joy.
- Aimwell Foigard! a very good name for a clergyman. Pray, Doctor Foigard, were you ever in Ireland?
- Foigard Ireland! no, joy. Fat sort of plaace is dat saam Ireland? Dey say de people are catched dere when dey are young.
- Aimwell And some of 'em when they are old:—as for example.—
[Takes Foigard by the shoulder.] Sir, I arrest you as a traitor against the government; you're a subject of England, and this morning showed me a commission, by which you served as chaplain in the French army. This is death by our law, and your reverence must hang for it.
- Foigard Upon my shoul, noble friend, dis is strange news you tell me! Fader Foigard a subject of England! de son of a burgomaster of Brussels, a subject of England!

Aimwell The son of a bog-trotter in Ireland! Sir, your tongue will condemn you before any bench in the kingdom.

Foigard And is my tongue all your evidensh, joy?

Aimwell That's enough.

Foigard No, no, joy, for I vill never spake English no more.

Aimwell Sir, I have other evidence. Martin, you know this fellow?

Archer *[In a brogue.]* Saave you, my dear cussen, how does your health?

Foigard *[Aside.]* Ah! upon my shoul dere is my countryman, and his brogue will hang mine.—*[To Archer.]* Mynheer, Ick wet neat watt hey xacht, Ick universton ewe neaty sacramant!

Aimwell Altering your language won't do, sir; this fellow knows your person, and will swear to your face.

Foigard Faash! fey, is dere a brogue upon my faash too?

Archer Upon my soulvation dere ish, joy!—But cussen Mackshane, vil you not put a remembrance upon me?

Foigard *[Aside]* Mackshane! by St. Paatrick, dat ish my naam shure enough!

Aimwell *[Aside to Archer]* I fancy, Archer, you have it.

Foigard The devil hang you, joy! by fat acquaintance are you my cussen?

Archer Oh, de devil hang yourshelf, joy! you know we were little boys togeder upon de school, and your foster-moder's son was married upon my nurse's chister, joy, and so we are Irish cussens.

Foigard De devil taake de relation! vel, joy, and fat school was it?

Archer I tinks it vas—aay—'twas Tipperary.

Foigard No, no, joy; it vas Kilkenny.

Aimwell That's enough for us—self-confession,—come, sir, we must deliver you into the hands of the next magistrate.

Archer He sends you to jail, you're tried next assizes, and away you go swing into purgatory.

Foigard And is it so wid you, cussen?

Archer It vil be sho wid you, cussen, if you don't do as we say. We shall have a job or you in a day or two, I hope.

Aimwell Here's company coming this way; let's into my chamber, and there concert our affairs farther.

Archer Come, my dear cussen, come along. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Boniface, Hounslow, and Bagshot at one door, Gibbet at the opposite.

Gibbet Well, gentlemen, 'tis a fine night for our enterprise.

Hounslow Dark as hell.

Bagshot And blows like the devil; our landlord here has showed us the window where we must break in, and tells us the plate stands in the wainscot cupboard in the parlour.

Boniface Ay, ay, Mr. Bagshot, as the saying is, knives and forks, and cups and cans, and tumblers and tankards. There's one tankard, as the saying is, that's near upon as big as me.

Hounslow Then you say we must divide at the stairhead?

Boniface Yes, Mr Hounslow, as the saying is. At one end of that gallery lies my Lady Bountiful and her daughter, and at the other Mrs. Sullen. As for the squire—

Gibbet He's safe enough; he's more than half seas over already. But such a parcel of scoundrels are got about him now, that, egad, I was ashamed to be seen in their company.

Boniface 'Tis now twelve, as the saying is—gentlemen, you must set out at one.

Gibbet Hounslow, do you and Bagshot see our arms fixed, and I'll come to you presently.

Hounslow, Bagshot We will. [*Exeunt.*]

Gibbet Well, my dear Bonny, you assure me that Scrub is a coward?

Boniface A chicken, as the saying is. You'll have no creature to deal with but the ladies.

Gibbet And I can assure you, friend, there's a great deal of address and good manners in robbing a lady; I am the most a gentleman that way that ever travelled the road.—But, my dear Bonny, I warrant you we shall bring off three or four thousand pounds.

Boniface In plate, jewels, and money, as the saying is, you may.

Gibbet Why then, Tyburn, I defy thee! I'll get up to town, sell off my horse and arms, buy myself some pretty employment in the household, and be as snug and as honest as any courtier of 'em all.

[Exeunt.]

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Boniface's Inn, Knocking without, enter Boniface.

Boniface Coming! Coming!—A coach and six foaming horses at this time o' night! some great man, as the saying is, for he scorns to travel with other people.

Enter Tapster, followed by Sir Charles Freeman.

Tapster This way, sir. Here is the landlord.

Sir Charles *[to Boniface]* What, fellow! a public house, and abed when other people sleep?

Boniface Sir, I an't abed, as the saying is.

Sir Charles Is Mr Sullen's family abed, think'ee?

Tapster All but the squire himself, sir; he's in the house.

Sir Charles What company has he?

Tapster Why, sir, there's the constable, Mr. Gage the exciseman, the hunch-backed barber, and two or three other gentlemen.

Sir Charles *[Aside]* I find my sister's letters gave me the true picture of her spouse.

Enter Squire Sullen, drunk.

Tapster *[to Sir Charles]* Sir, here's the squire. *[to Boniface]* Shall I bring the gentlemen another jug of the '1706'? *[Sir Charles glares]*

Boniface We shall leave you two gentlemen to your business, as the saying is. *[exit, hurriedly, with Tapster]*

Squire Sul The puppies left me asleep! Sir, I am an unfortunate man—I have three thousand pounds a year, and I can't get a man to drink a cup of ale with me.

Sir Charles That's very hard.

Squire Sul Ay, sir; and unless you have pity upon me, and smoke one pipe with me, I must e'en go home to my wife, and I had rather go to the devil by half.

Sir Charles But I presume, sir, you won't see your wife to-night; she'll be gone to bed. You don't use to lie with your wife in that pickle?

Squire Sul What? not lie with my wife! why, sir, do you take me for an atheist or a rake?

Sir Charles If you hate her, sir, I think you had better lie from her. Why don't you part with her?

Squire Sul Will you take her, sir?

Sir Charles With all my heart.

Squire Sul You shall have her to-morrow morning, and a venison-pasty into the bargain.

Sir Charles You'll let me have her fortune too?

Squire Sul Fortune! why, sir, I have no quarrel at her fortune: I only hate the woman, sir, and none but the woman shall go.

Sir Charles But her fortune, sir—

Squire Sul Burn me, sir! I can't go home, 'tis but two a clock.

Sir Charles For half an hour, sir, if you please; but you must consider 'tis late. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Cherry, runs across the stage, and knocks at Aimwell's chamber door. Enter Aimwell in his nightcap and gown.

Aimwell What's the matter? you tremble, child; you're frightened.

Cherry No wonder, sir—But, in short, sir, this very minute a gang of rogues are gone to rob my Lady Bountiful's house. I dogged 'em to the very door, and left 'em breaking in.

Aimwell Will you guide me immediately to the house?

Cherry With all my heart, sir; my Lady Bountiful is my godmother, and I love Mrs Dorinda so well—

Aimwell Dorinda! the name inspires me, the glory and the danger shall be all my own.—Come, my life, let me but get my sword.

[Exeunt.]

ACT 2, SCENE 3

*Servants enter and start changing the set;
then chambermaids enter carrying the bedding and make up the bed whilst talking.*

Maid Biddy We must make haste, Minnie. My lady will wish to change her dress before supper, lest the new gentlemen return. She must not be in the same attire.

Maid Minnie Well I am now confused, Biddy. Methought it was the French Count who was winning favour with her; she seemed most pleased that he did attend upon her earlier. Had the Squire not arrived at the most inconvenient moment, I could not say what might have occurred! *[She flirts with a servant whilst speaking]*

Biddy Ay, but I overheard Gipsy and Scrub talking of another gentleman, a footman at that! He has been talking very prettily with my lady and commending her great beauty! And we both know how ill her Squire treats her and how miserable she is.

Minnie Goodness! Methinks suddenly Lichfield has become a place of intrigue and mystery; we might be in service in some disreputable town like ... well Kingston upon Thames!

Biddy Well it is most fortunate that her ladyship is detained with her cures and knows nothing of these matters; our employment may be uncertain if this household falls. We must guard our tongues most carefully in front of others *[looking around at servants]* Take heed now!

Minnie Yes indeed, but it would be the pity if Miss Dorinda is denied her suitor as it falls out. There, all is in place; *[to servant]* hurry up there and be gone. I am away to the laundry. If you should perchance hear more, I expect you to divulge it in the instant!

Biddy You may be certain on it.

[Exeunt]

ACT 2, SCENE 4

*A Bedchamber in Lady Bountiful's House; a table and lights.
Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda enter, dressed for bed.*

- Dorinda 'Tis very late, sister, no news of your spouse yet?
- Mrs Sullen No, I'm condemned to be alone till towards four, and then perhaps I may be executed with his company.
- Dorinda Well, my dear, I'll leave you to your rest; you'll go directly to bed, I suppose?
- Mrs Sullen I don't know what to do.—Heigh-ho!
- Dorinda That's a desiring sigh, sister.
- Mrs Sullen This is a languishing hour, sister.
- Dorinda And might prove a critical minute if the pretty fellow were here.
- Mrs Sullen Here! what, in my bedchamber at two o'clock o'th'morning, I undressed, the family asleep, my hated husband abroad, and my lovely fellow at my feet!—O 'gad, sister!
- Dorinda Thoughts are free, sister, and them I allow you.— So, my dear, good night.
- Mrs Sullen A good rest to my dear Dorinda!—*[Exit Dorinda.]*
Thoughts free! are they so? Why, then, suppose him here, dressed like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom, *[Here Archer steals out of a closet behind.]* with tongue enchanting, eyes bewitching, knees imploring.—
[Turns a little on one side and sees Archer in the posture she describes.]—Ah!—
[Shrieks, and runs to the other side of the stage.]
Have my thoughts raised a spirit?—What are you, sir, a man or a devil?
- Archer A man, a man, madam. *[Rising.]*
- Mrs Sullen How shall I be sure of it?
- Archer Madam, I'll give you demonstration this minute. *[Takes her hand.]*
- Mrs Sullen What, sir! do you intend to be rude?
- Archer Yes, madam, if you please.
- Mrs Sullen In the name of wonder, whence came ye?
- Archer From the skies, madam—I'm a Jupiter in love.
- Mrs Sullen How came you in?
- Archer I flew in at the window, madam; your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus opened the casement.

Mrs Sullen I'm struck dumb with wonder!

Archer And I—with admiration! [*Looks passionately at her.*]

Mrs Sullen What will become of me? [*Archer runs to her.*] Ah! [*Shrieks.*]

Archer 'Oons, madam, what d'ye mean? you'll raise the house.

Mrs Sullen Sir, I'll wake the dead before I bear this!— What! approach me with the freedom of a keeper! I'm glad on't, your impudence has cured me.

Archer If this be impudence—[*Kneels.*] No panting pilgrim e'er bowed before his saint with more devotion.

Mrs Sullen [*Aside.*] Now, now, I'm ruined if he kneels! —[*Aloud.*] Rise, thou prostrate engineer, not all thy undermining skill shall reach my heart. I can love to all the tenderness of wishes, sighs, and tears—but go no farther.

[Archer goes to lay hold on her.]

Mrs Sullen Hold, sir! for my most mortal hatred follows if you disobey what I command you now.—Leave me this minute.—[*Aside.*] If he denies I'm lost.

Archer And why not now, my angel? the time, the place, silence, and secrecy, all conspire. And the now conscious stars have preordained this moment for my happiness. [*Takes her in his arms.*]

Mrs Sullen You will not! cannot, sure!

Archer If the sun rides fast, and disappoints not mortals of to-morrow's dawn, this night shall crown my joys.

Mrs Sullen My sex's pride assist me!

Archer My sex's strength help me!

Mrs Sullen You shall kill me first!

Archer I'll die with you. [*Carrying her off.*]

Mrs Sullen Thieves! thieves! murder!

Enter Scrub in his breeches, and one shoe.

Scrub Thieves! thieves! murder!

Archer draws, and offers to stab Scrub.

Scrub [*Kneeling.*] O pray, sir, spare all I have, and take my life!

Mrs Sullen [*Holding Archer's hand.*] What does the fellow mean?

Scrub O madam, down upon your knees! —he's one of 'em.

Archer Of whom?

Scrub One of the rogues—I beg your pardon, one of the honest gentlemen that just now are broke into the house.

Mrs Sullen I hope you did not come to rob me?

Archer Indeed I did, madam, but I would have taken nothing but what you might ha' spared; but your crying 'Thieves' has waked this dreaming fool.

Mrs Sullen The fellow looks as if he were broke out of Bedlam.

Scrub 'Oons, madam, they're broke into the house with fire and sword! I saw them, heard them; they'll be here this minute.

Archer What, thieves!

Scrub Under favour, sir, I think so.

Mrs Sullen What shall we do, sir?

Archer Madam, I wish your ladyship a good night.

Mrs Sullen Will you leave me?

Archer Leave you! Lord, madam, did not you command me to be gone just now, upon pain of your immortal hatred?

Mrs Sullen Nay, but pray, sir— *[Takes hold of him.]*

Archer Ha! ha! ha! now comes my turn to be ravished. —You see now, madam, you must use men one way or other; but take this by the way; good madam, that none but a fool will give you the benefit of his courage, unless you'll take his love along with it. —How are they armed, friend?

Scrub With sword and pistol, sir.

Archer Hush!—I see a dark lantern coming through the gallery—Madam, be assured I will protect you, or lose my life.

Mrs Sullen Your life! no, sir, they can rob me of nothing that I value half so much.

Archer Madam, have you courage enough to stand the appearance of 'em?

Mrs Sullen Yes, yes, since I have 'scaped your hands, I can face anything.

Archer Come hither, brother Scrub! don't you know me?

Scrub Eh, my dear brother.

Archer This way—here—

*[Archer and Scrub hide behind the bed.
Enter Gibbet, with a dark lantern in one hand, and a pistol in the other.]*

Gibbet Ay, ay, this is the chamber, and the lady alone.

Mrs Sullen Who are you, sir? what would you have? d'ye come to rob me?

Gibbet Rob you! alack a day, madam, I'm only a younger brother, madam; and so, madam, if you make a noise, I'll shoot you through the head; but don't be afraid, madam.—*[Laying his lantern and pistol upon the table.]* These rings, madam; don't be concerned, madam, I have a profound respect for you, madam; your keys, madam; don't be frightened, madam, I'm the most of a gentleman. — *[Searching her pockets.]* This necklace, madam; I never was rude to any lady;—I have a veneration —for this necklace—

[Here Archer having come round, and seized the pistol takes Gibbet by the collar, trips up his heels, and claps the pistol to his breast.]

Archer Hold, profane villain, and take the reward of thy sacrilege!

Gibbet Oh! pray, sir, don't kill me; I an't prepared.

Archer How many is there of 'em, Scrub?

Scrub Five-and-forty, sir.

Archer Then I must kill the villain, to have him out of the way.

Gibbet Hold, hold, sir, we are but three, upon my honour.

Archer Scrub, run to Gipsy's chamber, there you'll find the doctor; bring him hither presently.—*[Exit Scrub, running.]*
Come, rogue, if you have a short prayer, say it.

Gibbet Sir, I have no prayer at all; the government has provided a chaplain to say prayers for us on these occasions.

Mrs Sullen Pray, sir, don't kill him: you fright me as much as him.

Archer The dog shall die, madam, for being the occasion of my disappointment.—Sirrah, this moment is your last.

Gibbet Sir, I'll give you two hundred pounds to spare my life.

Archer Have you no more, rascal?

Gibbet Yes, sir, I can command four hundred, but I must reserve two of 'em to save my life at the sessions.

Re-enter Scrub and Foigard.

Archer Here, doctor, I suppose Scrub and you between you may manage him. Lay hold of him, doctor.

[Foigard lays hold of Gibbet.

Gibbet What! turned over to the priest already!— Look'ee, doctor, you come before your time; I an't condemned yet, I thank ye.

Foigard Come, my dear joy; I vill secure your body and your shoul too; I vill make you a good catholic, and give you an absolution.

Gibbet Absolution! can you procure me a pardon, doctor?

Foigard No, joy—

Gibbet Then you and your absolution may to the devil!

Archer Convey him into the cellar, there bind him:— take the pistol, and if he offers to resist, shoot him through the head—and come back to us with all the speed you can.

Scrub Ay, ay, come, doctor, do you hold him fast, and I'll guard him.

[Exit Foigard with Gibbet, Scrub following.

Mrs Sullen But how came the doctor—

Archer In short, madam—*[Shrieking without.]* 'Sdeath! the rogues are at work with the other ladies —I'm vexed I parted with the pistol; but I must fly to their assistance.—Will you stay here, madam, or venture yourself with me?

Mrs Sullen *[Taking him by the arm.]* Oh, with you, dear sir, with you.

[Exeunt.

ACT 2, SCENE 5

The same Bedchamber.

Enter Hounslow and Bagshot, with swords drawn, hauling in Lady Bountiful and Dorinda.

Hounslow Come, come, your jewels, mistress!

Bagshot Your keys, your keys, old gentlewoman!

Enter Aimwell and Cherry.

Aimwell Turn this way, villains! I durst engage an army in such a cause.
[He engages them both.]

Dorinda O madam, had I but a sword to help the brave man!

Lady B There's three or four hanging up in the hall; I'll go fetch one. *[Exit.]*

Enter Archer and Mrs. Sullen.

Archer Hold, hold, my lord! every man his bird, pray.

[They engage man to man; Hounslow and Bagshot are thrown and disarmed.]

Cherry *[Aside.]* What! the rogues taken! then they'll impeach my father: I must give him timely notice. *[Runs out.]*

Archer Shall we kill the rogues?

Aimwell No, no, we'll bind them.

Archer Ay, ay.—
[To Mrs. Sullen, who stands by him.] Here, madam, lend me your garter.

Mrs Sullen *[Aside.]* The devil's in this fellow! he fights, loves, and banters, all in a breath.—
[Aloud.] Here's a cord that the rogues brought with 'em, I suppose.

Archer Right, right, the rogue's destiny, a rope to hang himself.
[Binding the Highwaymen together.]

Enter Scrub.

Archer Well, Scrub, have you secured your Tartar?

Scrub Yes, sir, I left the priest and him disputing about religion.

Aimwell And pray carry these gentlemen to reap the benefit of the controversy. *[Delivers the prisoners to Scrubs who leads them out.]*

Mrs Sullen Pray, sister, how came my lord here?

Dorinda And pray, how came the gentleman here?

Aimwell I fancy, Archer, you have been more successful in your adventures than the housebreakers.

Archer No matter for my adventure, yours is the principal.—Press her this minute to marry you.—speak some romantic nonsense or other —The priest is now in the cellar, and dare not refuse to do the work.

Re-enter Lady Bountiful with a sword.

Aimwell But how shall I get off without being observed?

Archer You a lover, and not find a way to get off!—Let me see—

Aimwell You bleed, Archer.

Archer 'Sdeath, I'm glad on't; this wound will do the business. I'll amuse the old lady and Mrs. Sullen about dressing my wound, while you carry off Dorinda.

Lady B Gentlemen, could we understand how you would be gratified for the services—

Archer Come, come, my lady, this is no time for compliments; I'm wounded, madam.

Lady B, Mrs Sullen How! wounded!

Dorinda I hope, sir, you have received no hurt?

Aimwell None but what you may cure—

Lady B Let me see your arm, sir—I must have some powder-sugar to stop the blood.—O me! an ugly gash; upon my word, sir, you must go into bed.

Archer Ay, my lady, a bed would do very well.—*[To Mrs. Sullen.]* Madam, will you do me the favour to conduct me to a chamber.

Lady B Do, do, daughter—while I get the lint and the probe and the plaster ready.

[Runs out one way, Aimwell carries off Dorinda another.]

Archer Come, madam, why don't you obey your mother's commands?

Mrs Sullen How can you, after what is passed, have the confidence to ask me?

Archer And if you go to that, how can you, after what is passed, have the confidence to deny me? Was not this blood shed in your defence, and my life exposed for your protection?

Enter Cook.

Cook Madam, my lady ordered me to tell you, that your brother is below at the gate.
[Exit.]

Mrs Sullen My brother! Heavens be praised!—Sir, he shall thank you for your services; he has it in his power.

Archer Who is your brother, madam?

Mrs Sullen Sir Charles Freeman.—You'll excuse me, sir; I must go and receive him. *[Exit.*

Archer Sir Charles Freeman! 'sdeath and hell! my old acquaintance. Now unless Aimwell has made good use of his time, all our fair machine goes souse into the sea like the Eddystone. *[Exit.*

ACT 2, SCENE 6

Enter Minnie and Biddy who start to unmake the bed whilst chatting.

Minnie Do you think we be safe now from highwaymen, Biddy? I am most a-feared to be abroad alone. And who could have imagined these happenings in Lichfield!

Biddy I hardly dare venture forth from the servants' rooms for fear of attack; I doubt the villains would have any interest in our meagre belongings, but what of my honour?!

Minnie Oh, I am no expert in the matter, but I would deem you to be fairly safe in that way. But what about the valour of the two gentlemen? They have certainly proved their worth to our Lady and the household. I wonder in what manner they shall be repaid?

Enter Gipsy

Minnie Oh, Mistress Gipsy, what is happening now about the rogues? Are they quite held safe? We are exceeding afraid to move about the house for fear of attack.

Gipsy Be calm, Minnie. All is now secured; there is no further need for concern. One of the young gentlemen is wounded, but methinks that will only endear him the more to the ladies. *[musing]* I must confide I am much amazed and gratified by the bravery of my Scrub; I may have to reconsider his advances after these adventures. Such lack of concern for his own safety ... *[to the maids]* But now Sir Charles is arrived. It is greatly to be hoped that some good sense can be restored to this household.

Biddy Well I am sure that means more work for us, Minnie, so make haste.

Enter Cook in distress

Cook Minnie! Biddy! What's keeping you? I am much put upon in the kitchen, what with all these arrivals; and now Sir Charles is come from London. I cannot fathom how many there be for lunch, or what to give 'em, i'faith, *[looking at the audience]* now that we've given all the beef to these hordes! I shall have to send Scrub out to shoot more rabbits for the pot and quickly!

Biddy We are nearly done here, mistress, and will attend you with all speed. Minnie, take this away now and straight to the kitchen. *[Minnie and Biddy exit.]*

Cook Idle minxes the pair of them! Why, they would gossip away the day if I kept not close eye on them. Now I must hurry to find Scrub or the day will be ruined.

Gipsy *[to Cook]* I will away to find Scrub and convey your needs; I am sure after the night's adventures he will be up to the challenge of a few rabbits.

Gipsy and Cook exit

ACT 2, SCENE 7

Lady Bountiful's House. Enter Aimwell and Dorinda.

Dorinda Well, well, my lord, you have conquered; you will, I hope, excuse my easy yielding.

Aimwell Here, doctor—

Enter Foigard with a book.

Foigard Are you prepared boat?

Dorinda I'm ready. But first, my lord, one word.—I have a frightful example of a hasty marriage in my own family; when I reflect upon't it shocks me. Pray, my lord, consider a little—

Aimwell Consider! do you doubt my honour or my love?

Dorinda Neither. But, my lord; colours, concealments may hide a thousand faults in me, therefore know me better first; I hardly dare affirm I know myself in anything except my love.

Aimwell *[Aside.]* Such goodness who could injure! I find myself unequal to the task of villain; she has gained my soul, and made it honest like her own.— I cannot, cannot hurt her.—

[Aloud.] Doctor, retire. —*[Exit Foigard]* Madam, behold your lover and your proselyte, and judge of my passion by my conversion!—I'm all a lie, nor dare I give a fiction to your arms; I'm all counterfeit, except my passion.

Dorinda Forbid it, Heaven! a counterfeit!

Aimwell I am no lord, but a poor needy man, come with a mean, a scandalous design to prey upon your fortune; but the beauties of your mind and person have so won me from myself that, like a trusty servant, I prefer the interest of my mistress to my own.

Dorinda Pray, sir, who are you?

Aimwell Brother to the man whose title I usurped, but stranger to his honour or his fortune.

Dorinda Matchless honesty!—Once I was proud, sir, of your wealth and title, but now am prouder that you lack it: now I can show my love was justly levelled, and had no aim but love.—Doctor, come in.

Enter Foigard at one door, Gipsy at another, who whispers Dorinda.

Dorinda *[To Foigard.]* Your pardon, sir, we shan't want you now.—*[To Aimwell.]* Sir, you must excuse me —I'll wait on you presently. *[Exit with Gipsy.]*

Foigard Upon my shoul, now, dis is foolish. *[Exit.]*

Aimwell Gone! and bid the priest depart!—It has an ominous look.

Enter Archer.

Archer Courage, Tom!—Shall I wish you joy?

Aimwell No.

Archer 'Oons, man, what ha' you been doing?

Aimwell O Archer! my honesty, I fear, has ruined me.

Archer How?

Aimwell I have discovered myself.

Archer Discovered! and without my consent? You may remember, Mr. Aimwell, that you proposed this folly: as you begun, so end it. Henceforth I'll hunt my fortune single—so farewell!

Aimwell Stay, my dear Archer, but a minute.

Archer Stay! No, I would sooner change conditions with the worst of the rogues we just now bound, than bear one scornful smile from the proud knight that once I treated as my equal.

Aimwell What knight?

Archer Sir Charles Freeman, brother to the lady that I had almost—but no matter for that, 'tis a cursed night's work, and so I leave you to make the best on't.
[Going.]

Aimwell One word, Archer. Still I have hopes; methought she received my confession with pleasure. She consented after to the match; and still I dare believe she will be just. By all my hopes she comes, and smiling comes!

Re-enter Dorinda, mighty gay.

Dorinda Come, my dear lord—I fly with impatience to your arms—the minutes of my absence were a tedious year. Where's this priest?

Re-enter Foigard.

Archer 'Oons, a brave girl!

Dorinda I suppose, my lord, this gentleman is privy to our affairs?

Archer Yes, yes, madam, I'm to be your father.

Dorinda Come, priest, do your office.

Archer Make haste, make haste.
[Takes Aimwell's hand .] Come, madam, I'm to give you—

Dorinda My mind's altered; I won't.

Archer Eh!

Aimwell I'm confounded!

Foigard Upon my shoul, and sho is myshelf.

Archer What's the matter now, madam?

Dorinda Look'ee, sir, one generous action deserves another. —This gentleman's honour obliged him to hide nothing from me; my justice engages me to conceal nothing from him. In short, sir, you are the person that you thought you counterfeited; you are the true Lord Viscount Aimwell, and I wish your Lordship joy.—Now, priest, you may be gone; if my Lord is pleased now with the match, let his Lordship marry me in the face of the world.

Aimwell, Archer What does she mean?

Dorinda Here's a witness for my truth.

Enter Sir Charles Freeman and Mrs Sullen.

Sir Charles My dear Lord Aimwell, I wish you joy.

Aimwell Of what?

Sir Charles Of your honour and estate. Your brother died the day before I left London. 'Tis truth, upon my honour.

Aimwell Thanks to my guardian angel that led me to the prize!
[Taking Dorinda's hand].

Archer And double thanks to the noble Sir Charles Freeman.—My Lord, I wish you joy.—My Lady, I wish you joy. 'Sdeath, I'm grown strange airy upon this matter!—My Lord, how d'ye?—A word, my Lord; don't you remember something of a previous agreement, that entitles me to the half of this lady's fortune, which I think will amount to five thousand pounds?

Aimwell Not a penny, Archer; you would ha' cut my throat just now, because I would not deceive this lady.

Archer Ay, and I'll cut your throat again, if you should deceive her now.

Aimwell That's what I expected; and to end the dispute, the lady's fortune is ten thousand pounds, we'll divide stakes: take the ten thousand pounds or the lady.

Dorinda How! is your lordship so indifferent?

Archer No, no, no, madam! his Lordship knows very well that I'll take the money; I leave you to his Lordship, and so we're both provided for.

Enter Count Bellair.

Count Mesdames et Messieurs, I am your servant trice humble! I hear you be rob here.

Aimwell The ladies have been in some danger, sir.

Enter Squire Sullen.

Squire Sul What's all this? They tell me, spouse, that you had like to have been robbed.

Mrs Sullen Truly, spouse, I was pretty near it, had not these two gentlemen interposed.

Squire Sul How came these gentlemen here?

Mrs Sullen That's his way of returning thanks, you must know.

Sir Charles You promised last night, sir, that you would deliver your lady to me this morning.

Squire Sul Humph!

Archer Humph! what do you mean by humph? Sir, you shall deliver her—in short, sir, we have saved you and your family; and if you are not civil, we'll unbind the rogues, join with 'em, and set fire to your house.

Mrs Sullen Hold, gentlemen, all things here must move by consent, compulsion would spoil us; let my dear and I talk the matter over, and you shall judge it between us.

Squire Sul Let me know first who are to be our judges. Pray, sir, who are you?

Sir Charles I am Sir Charles Freeman, come to take away your wife.

Squire Sul And you, good sir?

Aimwell Thomas, Viscount Aimwell, come to take away your sister.

Squire Sul And you, pray, sir?

Archer Francis Archer, esquire, come—

Squire Sul To take away my mother, I hope. Gentlemen, you're heartily welcome; I never met with three more obliging people since I was born!— And now, my dear, if you please, you shall have the first word.

Mrs Sullen How long have we been married?

Squire Sul By the almanac, fourteen months; but by my account, fourteen years.

Mrs Sullen 'Tis thereabout by my reckoning.

Count Garzoon, their account will agree.

Mrs Sullen Pray, spouse, what did you marry for?

Squire Sul To get an heir to my estate.

Sir Charles And have you succeeded?

Squire Sul No.

Archer The condition fails of his side.—Pray, madam, what did you marry for?

Mrs Sullen To support the weakness of my sex by the strength of his, and to enjoy the pleasures of an agreeable society.

Sir Charles Are your expectations answered?

Mrs Sullen No.

Sir Charles What are the bars to your mutual contentment?

Mrs Sullen In the first place, I can't drink ale with him.

Squire Sul Nor can I drink tea with her.

Mrs Sullen I can't hunt with you.

Squire Sul Nor can I dance with you.

Mrs Sullen Your silence is intolerable.

Squire Sul Your prating is worse.

Mrs Sullen Have we not been a perpetual offence to each other? a gnawing vulture at the heart?

Squire Sul A frightful goblin to the sight?

Mrs Sullen A porcupine to the feeling?

Squire Sul Perpetual wormwood to the taste?

Mrs Sullen Is there on earth a thing we could agree in?

Squire Sul Yes—to part.

Mrs Sullen With all my heart

Squire Sul Your hand.

Mrs Sullen Here.

Squire Sul These hands joined us, these shall part us. —Away!

Mrs Sullen North

Squire Sul South.

Mrs Sullen East.

Squire Sul West—far as the poles asunder.

Count Begar, the ceremony be vera pretty!

Sir Charles Now, Mr. Sullen, there wants only my sister’s fortune to make us easy.

Squire Sul Sir Charles, you love your sister, and I love her fortune; every one to his fancy.

Aimwell Then you won’t refund;

Squire Sul Not a stiver.

Aimwell Then I find, madam, you must e’en go to your prison again.

Archer What is the portion?

Sir Charles Ten thousand pounds, sir.

Count Pfff, I’ll pay it, and she shall go home wid me.

Archer Ha! ha! ha! French all over.— Do you know, sir, what ten thousand pounds English is?

Count Non, pas exactement.

Archer Why, sir, ’tis a hundred thousand livres.

Count A hundred tousand livres! Ah! Mon Dieu, c’est pas possible, your beauties and their fortunes are both too much for me.

Archer Then I will.—This night’s adventure has proved strangely lucky to us all—for Captain Gibbet in his walk had made bold, Mr Sullen, with your study and escritoir, and had taken out all the writings of your estate, all the articles of marriage with this lady, bills, bonds, leases, receipts to an infinite value: I took ’em from him, and I deliver ’em to Sir Charles.
[Gives Sir Charles Freeman a parcel of papers and parchments.]

Squire Sul How, my title deeds!—my head aches consumedly.—Well, gentlemen, you shall have her fortune, but I can’t talk. If you have a mind, Sir Charles, to be merry, and celebrate my sister’s wedding and my divorce, you may command my house—but my head aches consumedly.—Scrub, bring me a dram.

Company freezes in a tableau. Lady B appears

Lady B 'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleased, the couple joined, or the couple parted; the one rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.

Sir Charles Both happy in their several states we find,

Foigard Those parted by consent, and those conjoined.

Squire Sul Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee.

Mrs Sullen Consent is law enough to set you free.

END OF PLAY