

Love at a Venture

Susanna Centlivre

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A COMEDY.

By

Susanna Centlivre



THE PROLOGUE.

*Lest any here shou'd blame our Author's
Toil,
For strolling with her Brat a Hundred Mile,
By me to such, She does this Reason give,
Seeing how many Men by Ventures live.
She straight embark'd, and hoisted Sail to
try,
What pure good Nature in these Bottoms lye.
Beside, she hop'd, she might divert you too,
By adding to your Pleasures something new.
The Virtue of these Baths had ne're been
known,
If o're these Hills, no Man had ventur'd
down.*

*Here Doctors Venturing, come in Hopes of
Fees,* }

*And Patients Venture, on their Skill for
Ease,* }

*For Wealth, the Merchant Ventures on the
Seas.* }

*The Lawyer Ventures upon any Cause,
The Venturing Client's beggar'd by the
Laws.*

The Lover Ventures, to Address the Fair, }

With broken Speeches, and dejected Air, }

She runs a Venture, who relieves his Care. }

*The Gamester Ventures, to improve his
Store,*

And having lost, he Ventures on for more.

*The London Punk, in Garret shut all Day,
At Night, with last Half-crown she Ventures
to the Play.*

*The Amorous Cully meeting with the Miss,
Ventures at Water-Gruel for a Kiss.*

*Since every Man, Adventures in his Way,
Hither our Author Ventur'd with her Play.*

And hopes her Profits will her Charge

*defray,
If that bright Circle Ventures to adorn her
Day.*



THE EPILOGUE

Spoken by Miss JACOBELLA POWER.

*In Spight of dull insipid Rules, I'm come
To learn what Fate attends my Virgin Bloom.
Strange Things I've heard this Night, that
makes me fear,
Least I shou'd find such Entertainment here.
You Men are grown so witty in Deceit,
That We, poor Girls, are often ruin'd by't.
'Tis Pity—but I hope to cross this Play,
And be reveng'd on you some other Way.
Well—but consider, We are tender Things,
That Innocence, and sprightly Beauty
brings.*

*Soft Accents, broken Words, and yielding Air,
Are all the Weapons, that attend the Fair.
And can you long resist, the sweet
Temptation,
Give us at least a Bill of Reformation.
That the succeeding Age may say of you,
You dare be Civil, tho' you can't be true.
But if at last no Charms have Power to win
ye,
You're past Repentance——or the Devil's in
ye.*

[Runs off.



Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Belair, a Gentleman just come from Travel, an Airy Spark.

Sir William Freelove, Friend to Belair, in Love with Beliza.

Sir Thomas Belair, Father to Belair.

Sir Paul Cautious, a Whimsical, Desponding, Old Fellow.

Ned Freelove, younger Brother to Sir William.

Wou'dbe, *a Silly, Projecting Coxcomb.*
Positive, *Father to Camilla.*
Robin, *Servant to Belair.*

WOMEN.

Lady Cautious, Wife to Sir Paul, and Sister to Sir William.
Beliza.
Camilla, *Cousin to Beliza, a great Fortune.*
Patch, *Maid to Beliza.*
Flora, *Maid to Camilla.*



LOVE AT A VENTURE.

ACT I.

SCENE *Sir Paul Cautious's House. Sir William Freelove's Apartment.*

Enter Belair and Robin, meeting Sir William.

Belair. Oh *Sir William*, I am so transported, I cannot speak in the common Strain of Mankind.

Sir Will. And pry'thee, *Belair*, What occasions this Transport?

Bel. Had'st thou been my profest Enemy all thy Life, and done me as much Mischief as the *Turk* in *Hungary*, or the *French* in *Flanders*; if thou'lt but help me now, thou woud'st make Amends for all—such a Creature! such an

Angel!

Sir *Will*. What Visions! Apparitions?

Bel. Cou'd I but hope to see her once more,
I'd change the happiest half of my Life for that
one Moment.

Sir *Will*. If you please to descend from your
high-flown Raptures, and walk Hand in Hand
with my Understanding.

Bel. You'l lead me to her. [*Hastily.*]

Sir *Will*. Ha, ha, ha, what, before I know
where she is—you wou'd be landed at your
Port before you have taken Shipping, or told
the Place you design for.

Bel. Pho; you know all my Designs.

Robin. When a Woman's concern'd. [*Aside.*]

Sir *Will*. Are extravagant—you have more
Intrigues upon your Hands, than a handsome
young Poet on the Success of his first

Play——like a Dog in a Herd, you run at all,
and catch none, because you run with such
ungovern'd Heat, you spring the Quarry before
you can draw your Net.

Bel. But if I miss Sitting, I commonly hit 'em
Flying—but this is nothing to the Purpose; the
Lady, Man, the Lady——

Sir *Wil.* Ay, the Lady; what of her?

Bel. Which I saw last Night——Oh, such a
Creature!

Sir *Will.* At what Window?

Bel. Such a charming Air.——

Sir *Wil.* What House was it at?

Bel. As much Youth as wou'd serve to
recover half the decay'd Faces in the Town.

Sir *Will.* What Street?

Bel. Wanton as a Nun, yet look'd demure as a

Quaker——

Sir Will. Z'death, where, where, is this rare Creature to be seen?

Bel. Then her Features, *Sir William!* Oh, such Features: she is the most perfect Piece in the World——her Shape clean and easy——a profuse Quantity of dark brown Hair——and such a Complexion, as the Gods form when they design a Miracle of Beauty.

Sir Will. Nay, since you will have your own Way, I'll strike in with you——a charming high Forehead.

Bel. Ay, and such a Mouth——

Sir Will. Sparkling black Eyes——

Bel. And such a Cast——

Sir Will. Such Dimples in her Cheeks——

Bel. Ay, ay, Rapture, Rapture.

Sir *Will*. Ah, he's got above the Clouds already—when you have recover'd your Senses, *Belair*, you may be fit for Conversation; I have a little Business to dispatch——and must beg your Pardon——

Bel. Thou wilt not leave me.

Sir *Will*. Why, what Service can I do you?

Bel. You must assist me in the Management of this Affair.

Sir *Will*. What Affair? Who is she? Where did you see her?

Bel. Why, when I left you last Night, I took a Boat resolving to go up the River for a little Air, when the luckiest Occasion presented to make me the happiest Man living.

Rob. I have known a hundred of these lucky Occasions; in a Month's Time the most unlucky Occasions, that ever Man had. [*Aside.*]

Sir *Will*. What was it?

Bel. A Lady designing to land at *Whitehall* Stairs, stepping short from the Boat, fell into the Water, I jump't in after her, caught her in my Arms, and brought her safe ashore.

Rob. Who cou'd have believ'd he shou'd be burnt in the Middle of the *Thames* now.

Sir *Will.* What's her Name?

Bel. I know not, she enquir'd mine, and where I liv'd; gave me a thousand Thanks, and promis'd I shou'd hear from her.

Sir *Will.* Well, and what can I do for you?

Bel. I'll tell you, I must have Lodgings in this House, for here I directed her; told her my Name was *Constant*, tho', Faith, *Belair* was at my Tongue's End; but you know my Reasons for concealing my Name, least my Father hear I'm in *England*, before I'd have him, and force me to marry the Woman he commanded me Home for, which, for ought I know, may be ugly, old, ill-natur'd, foolish, conceited, vain,

and so forth—at least, I shall think her such, because of his chusing—I like no Caterer in Love's Market—

Sir Will. You shall have these Lodgings to oblige you, good Mr. *Constant*—but what have you done with the other Lady you told me of Yesterday; you was then dying for her?

Bel. Faith, I like her still——but t'other, t'other, is a perfect Venus——

Rob. Pray, Sir, what is your Name to her? I shall certainly forget all these Names.

Bel. Colonel *Revel*, you Sot.

Rob. Just come from where. Sir?

Bel. From *Portugal*, Blockhead.

Rob. And——are you an——Officer too in t'other Place with your new Amour; Co, co, co, con, pray, Sir, do me the Favour to tell me your Name to this Incognita once more?

Bel. Constant, Coxcomb.

Rob. And what are you, Sir, pray, what are you?

Bell. An *Oxfordshire* Gentleman: remember that, Sirrah, come up to Town about a Law-Suit.

Rob. Yes, Sir—Colonel *Revel* just come from *Portugal*,—Mr. *Constant*, an *Oxfordshire* Gentleman, come up to Town about a Law-Suit.—Very well, I have it now, Sir, I warrant you.

Sir Will. Well but do you think to manage both these Intrigues with Secresy.

Bel. I do; and in order to't, I'll keep my own Lodgings, that are known to the other, and these for my Incognita, and I'll engage to play my Part with both.

Sir Will. To what Purpose?

Bel. Why, since my old Dad will have me

marry, I would willingly chuse for my self;
now, you must know, I design to take my swing
of Love and Liberty——if, in the Chase, I
chance to meet one that can fix me, her I'll
marry; till when I'll, like the Bee, kiss every
Plant, and gather Sweetness from every
Flower——Youth is the Harvest of our Lives,
Sir *William*.

Sir *Will*. Well, in my Conscience, Travel has
given thee a large Assurance.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Here is Mr. *Wou'dbe* to wait on you.

Bel. Who's he?

Sir *Will*. The Projecting Coxcomb, I told you
of Yesterday.

Bel. What, he that mimicks thee in his
Cloaths?

Sir *Will*. The same——now, for hard Words,
and soft Sense; bring him up. [*Exit Servant.*]

Bel. I'll not stay——I expect a Message from my t'other Mistress at my Lodgings; I'll send a Night-Gown, and a Suit of Cloaths hither; and *Robin* shall wait to call me, if my Fair unknown sends——Oh the Pleasure of Intrigue; it finds Employment for every Sense, sharpens the Wit, and gives a Life to all our Faculties.

*When pal'd with one, another still supplies,
Thus different Women give us different Joys.
Beauty in one; in t'other Wit we find; }
In this a Shape, in that a spacious Mind; }
But Change, dear Change, thou Life of }
human Kind.*

[*Exit.*]

Enter Wou'dbe.

Wou'd. Dear, Sir *William*, my Stars are superabundantly propitious, in administring the seraphick Felicity of finding you alone.

Sir Will. Oh, Mr. *Wou'dbe*——spare me, I beseech you——

Wou'd. My Soul's inhabited; or, rather canoniz'd, with an Alacrity to see you.

Sir Will. I know not how his Soul's inhabited; but his Head might pass for a Colony, in *Greenland*, it is so thinly Peopled.
[*Aside.*]

Enter Ned Free-Love.

Ned. Brother, good Morrow; Mr. *Wou'dbe*, yours.

Wou'd. Sir, I am most obsequiously your Servant.

Ned. What Gentleman was that I saw go out just now?

Sir Wil. A Friend of mine, who, for some Reasons, I have promis'd this Apartment to; I hope Sir *Paul* won't be alarm'd; I think 'tis best not to let him know it, if he does not find

it out.

Ned. Much the best, for he'll ask so many impertinent Questions about him, and be in such a Fright, he'll call in half the Parish to watch with him——Who is the Gentleman?

Sir Will. If you remember, I told you, when I was in *Spain*, a Gentleman rescu'd me from the Hands of Ruffians, when I was set upon in the Night; this is he, and ever since we have held a strict Friendship——Perhaps he may have kill'd his Man, I know not; he desires Privacy——and I am bound, in Honour, to give it.

Ned. Doubtless——What's his Name?

Sir Will. Constant.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, the Taylor has brought home your Cloaths.

Sir Will. Bring him in.

Wou'd. But, Sir *William*, pray, how do you like my Way of greeting—I never want Words, you see—I hate those dull Rogues, that have no better Expressions at meeting their Friends than, dear *Jack*, how is't?

Enter Taylor, and Sir William dresses.

Meer Fustian—ha! What do I see? Another Suit—and, upon my Veracity, a charming one—I must put down the Trimming exactly, I shall obliterate half else.

[*Takes out a Book and writes.*]

Ned. Our *English* Tongue is much oblig'd to you, Mr. *Wou'dbe*.

Sir Will. Is it not too short Mr. *Measure*? [*To the Taylor.*]

Tayl. Not at all, Sir.

Wou'd. The Suit my Taylor is making, is the very same Colour; I'll send, and have it trimm'd exactly like that. [*Aside.*]

Sir *Will*. How do you like my Fancy in this Suit, Mr. *Wou'dbe*?

Wou'd. Sir *William*, I reverence the Sublimity of your Fancy——If mine be not done by Play-time, I'll break my Taylor's Head, and never pay the Bill. [*Aside*.]

Ned. But what new Discoveries have you made lately, Mr. *Wou'dbe*; Never a Project, ha!

Wou'd. Yes, Sir, I am going to erect an Office for Poetry.

Ned. How! An Office for Poetry?

Wou'd. Ay, Sir, where all Poets may have free Access, paying such a Moiety of their Profits, and be furnish'd with all Sorts of refin'd Words adapted to their several Characters.

Sir *Will*. The Poets will be very much oblig'd to you truly, Sir.

Wou'd. I think so——hark ye, I'm upon another Project, which you'll not guess for a Wager?

Sir Will. No, really, Mr. *Wou'dbe*; 'tis not in my shallow Capacity, to fathom the Profundity of your Wit.

Wou'd. Oh, Sir *William*, such accumulated Kindness will bankrupt my poor Acknowledgements——Profundity of your Wit——spoke like a Gentleman, and a Scholar——thou art expensively obliging, therefore I will communicate——tho' it is not grown to a full Maturity, yet——'tis this——for the Good of the Public, I am contriving how to save the Charges of Hackney-Coaches; the Rascals are so saucy, especially to Ladies, there's no enduring them; I resolve to destroy their Constitution.

Ned. As how, pry'thee?

Sir Will. They are the most necessary Things in the World; a Hackney-Coach carries us

from one End of the Town to the other in a Trice.

Wou'd. Ay, Sir *William*——but my Project carries 'em quicker——and without going out of their Houses.

Ned. That's a Stratagem, indeed, beyond my Comprehension.

Sir *Will.* If you can do that, Mr. *Wou'dbe*, you need not fear a Patent; the Ladies will be all of your Side.

Wou'dbe. They will have Reason, Sir, for they may dress, patch, paint, drink Tea, or play at Piquet, all the while they are going to the Play-house——Is not this an excellent Project?

Sir *Will.* Excellent, indeed; but, pry'thee, how is it?

Ned. Ay, ay, how is it, you must deal with the Devil certainly.

Wou'd. No, without his Help, I assure you, 'tis all my own——this individual Brain contriv'd it——were I known at Court, I shou'd be a great Man——a most magnificent Man.

Sir Will. Oh, this Project, Sir, will do your Business.

Wou'd. I know you are impatient for the Secret; you are my Friends, or I'd not impart a Matter of this Consequence.

Sir Will. I hope you don't doubt our Secresy?

Wou'd. Not in the least——to convince you, 'tis this, I'll make the Streets to move.

Ned. Ha, ha, the Streets move! Pry'thee, how wilt thou do that?

Wou'd. Oh, by Clock-work, Sir.

Sir Will. By Clock-work? What make the solid Earth move by Clock-work?

Wou'd. Ay, Sir——I affirm that's possible——You mistake, the Earth is not solid; read but *Baker's Chronicle*, and you'll find a whole Field walk'd ten Mile in Queen *Bess's Days*.

Ned. But not by Clock-work, Mr. *Wou'dbe*.

Wou'd. Humph——ha——I can't be positive in that, but——if it can walk at all——why can't it be made to walk by Clock-work——but in a Month's Time I shall be able to answer that, and all other Objections——For, you must know, Yesterday I began my Study, in order to search out the Curiosity of every Country, Language, Art and Science——you shall hear how I have canton'd out the Day——I rise about five, my first Hour is laid out upon Law——'tis fit a Gentleman shou'd understand the Laws of his Country, tho' I hate the confounded Study, 'tis so crabbed——At Six, I read a Lesson of Greek——at Seven, one of Hebrew——Eight, is for Italian——Nine, for Spanish——Ten, for French——Eleven,

Astronomy——Twelve, is proper for
Geometry, then the Sun Beams are
perpendicular——

Ned. Excellent, ha, ha, ha.

Wou'd. At One, I dine——then repose an
Hour for Digestion——at Three, I study
Physic——, that, if I'm poison'd by the
Vintners, I may not be kill'd by the
Doctors——at Four, Logic——at Five,
Philosophy——at Six, Husbandry——that
when my Father dies, my Steward and Tenants
mayn't cheat me.

Sir Will. A politic Thought——

Wou'd. Hawking, hunting, fishing, fowling, at
Seven——Architecture, at Eight——for to
understand the Art of Building, is of mighty
Consequence towards raising a Man's Fortune,
you know,——Nine, for Poetry, in Honour of
the Nine Muses——because I love the Ladies
Company towards Bed-time——Thus, in a
Month, I hope to become Master of all these

Things; how like you my Rules, Gentlemen,
ha?

Ned. Oh, wonderfully, ha, ha.

Wou'd. Well, Poetry is one of the noblest
Parts of the Mathematics—but we have such
Factions now on Foot, that Music has put
Poetry quite out of Tune—but that Suit—I must
to my Taylor immediately. [*Aside.*]

Ned. But, Mr. *Wou'dbe*, the Town say you are
much in Beliza's Favour—you won't rival
my Brother, will you?

Wou'd. Not I, upon my Soul—but does the
Town really say so?

Ned. Why shou'd I tell you so else?

Wou'd. Nay, the Elegance of my Fabric, has
titulated the Imagination of many a fine Lady, I
assure you.

Sir *Will.* Ha, ha, ha, the Fool believes you.

Wou'd. Where do you dine, Sir *William*?

Sir *Will.* With my Sister *Cautious*.

Wou'd. If *Beliza* likes me——I'm a happy Mortal; I'll make some Advance, and give her to understand I'm not inexorable. [*Aside.*] I'll rendezvous you at the Portal of her Apartment after Dinner; your most obsequious— [*Exit.*]

Ned. He took particular Notice of your Cloths, Brother; I'll venture a Guinea, the next Time he appears, he's equipt to a Hair, if either Money or Credit be in his Power; ha, ha, ha.

Sir *Will.* I believe that, but I'll give him enough on't if he is——'tis the most whimsical Coxcomb I ever saw.—

Ned. Well, but how goes it between you and *Beliza*, Brother?

Sir *Will.* I begin to doubt a Rival there, but who, I can't find out——She is grown indifferent of late, often abroad, and seldom in

Humour, when at Home; if there be a
Favourite in reserve, let her take Care to
conceal him, for Faith, I have suck'd in the
Spaniard's Jealousy with their Air, and shou'd
breath a Vein without Scruple——

Ned. Well, if ever I be in Love——of all
Passions which agitate the Mind of
Man——grant I may never be infected with
Jealousy.

Sir Will. Thou prayest against the only Thing
that gives Love a Relish.

*Love like to luscious Meat will Surfeits
breed,
And hurt the Stomach which they're sent
to feed.
Without a Grain of Jealousy apply'd,
Your Appetite, your Health, and Life's
destroy'd. [Exit.]*

The SCENE changes to Belair's Lodgings.

Enter Belair meeting Mrs. Patch.

Bel. I foresee this Day, Mrs. *Patch*, will be a lucky Day——the Sight of thee——

Patch. Will not please you, I dare be positive, my Lady can't see you to-day, being oblig'd to go abroad.

Bel. Oh, propitious Disengagement——Now, if my Incognita does but send——[*Aside.*] I'll wait for her return, let it be never so late——

Patch. Not to Day, sweet Sir——your Love runs on Wheels——Pray, more softly, Sir.

Bel. This Girl's very pretty, I never minded her so much before——Harkye, Child, I will come, if I miss thy Lady, thou shalt keep me Company.

Patch. You are merry, Sir.

Bel. I must be so, when I am near any Thing——belonging to *Beliza*——Methinks I

entertain her whilst thou art near me.

Patch. I can't tell how you mean it,
Sir——but I assure you, as fine Gentlemen as
yourself, have paid their Devotions to me,
before now——

Bel. Why not? he must be insensible, that to
so much Beauty cannot warm. [*Kisses her.*]

Enter Robin.

Rob. Why, the Devil's in my
Master——egad, I shall starve with him in
Love's Kitchen, for he engrosses all Sorts of
Flesh, I find. [*Aside.*]

Patch. Not so close, I beseech you, Sir.

[*Pushing him away.*]

Bel. I protest my Heart feels a thousand
Emotions for thee——

Patch. Pray stop your Emotions, Sir——and
don't load me with your Heart, for I have so

many already I don't know where to put 'em, without choaking one another.

Rob. She need never fear that, he'll not stay so long.—

Bel. I protest it is a Pleasure to look on thee——

Rob. He does not love to be idle, I'll say that for him; but I bring him Employment and must disturb him—Sir.

Patch. I am not surpriz'd at that—for I take Pleasure to look on my self, and generally do it a thousand Times a Day.

Rob. Sir,—Sir,—Sir.

Bel. Ha! has she sent? [*Aside to Robin.*]

Rob. The Maid stays for you, Sir.

Bel. Oh! Transport—run—fly, let every Thing be ready for my Change of Dress, I'll be there in an Instant—I wish this Girl were

gone.

Rob. So, the Tide's turn'd already—Why, what a hurrying Life's this I lead. [*Exit.*]

Patch. Well, what more fine Things, Sir.

Bel. Nay, I see you don't believe what I have said already—and an, an——pish pox——how shall I get rid of her——

Patch. You are out of Humour, Sir, I hope, I——

Bel. No, no, no, no, Child, I, I, I,—what the Devil shall I say—this is the most unlucky Accident.

Patch. What is, Sir?

Bel. A good Hint—why, my Man tells me there is a Friend of mine wounded in a Duel, and desires me to bring a Surgeon immediately—so dear little Rogue, excuse me, this Kiss to thy Lady, and tell her *Revel* lives not in her Absence——if this don't do't, I shall go

distracted, that's certain—— [*Aside.*]

Patch. Nay, I have done my Message, so
your Servant. [*Exit.*]

Bel. So, now for my dear unknown——Let
me see, what am I?—ho, a Country Gentleman
—I must restrain my Humour—a little Gravity
will be necessary to adorn that Character—
besides, the Invention's new, and gives the
Intrigue the greater Gusto——

*To gain my Point, I'll every Art improve,
All Policy's allow'd in War and Love.
[Exit.]*



ACT II.

Beliza's Lodgings.

Beliza *and* Camilla.

Beliz. And you are really in Love with this Stranger, Cousin?

Cam. I fear so, *Beliza.*

Beliz. To what Purpose?

Cam. To no Purpose at all, without thy Help.

Beliz. You are assur'd of me——but pr'ythee, in what can I help thee? You neither know who he is, nor what he is——he may, for ought you know, be a Wretch unworthy of your Esteem.

Cam. Impossible——I tell thee he's a Country Gentleman, which the Term brought up to Town on Business.

Beliz. Then how are you sure he is not married in the Country?

Cam. Start no Objections, I beseech you—I am sure he is not married——he did not look as if he was.

Beliz. Well, suppose he is what you'd have him be, you know your Father has dispos'd of you, and I'm afraid won't be prevail'd upon to alter his Mind.

Cam. Ay, there's the only bar to all my Wishes; why shou'd our Parents impose upon our Inclinations, in that one Choice which makes us ever happy, or ever miserable?

Beliz. 'Tis an unjust Prerogative Parents have got, from whence I see no Deliverance without an Act of Parliament.

Cam. If thou art my Friend, *Beliza*, I may chance to cross my Father's Design, without the Help of the Senate.

Beliz. I confess I am a Well-wisher to Disobedience in Love Affairs——there's my Hand, instruct me how I may be serviceable.

Cam. Thus: I have sent *Flora* to give him an Invitation hither.——

Beliz. Hither!——to my Lodgings; 'tis well I

sent Colonel *Revel* Word I shou'd not be at home. [*Aside.*]

Cam. Yes, I hope you'll forgive the Liberty I have taken, I was not willing he shou'd know mine, till I had your Approbation of him.

Beliz. But how if my Lover, Sir *William*, shou'd happen to come, who is grown a perfect *Spaniard* since his Travels, and has of late been apprehensive of a Rival, tho' from what Cause I know not——the Country Gentleman wou'd be in Danger, I assure you.

Cam. To prevent his being seen, I have order'd him to be brought in the Back-way——he is yet a Stranger to every Thing that concerns me——he neither knows my Name nor Family——nor shall he, if you approve him not; therefore, after I have thank'd him for the Service he did me, I'll give him to understand I have a Relation whose Judgment I rely on——and from her Mouth he must receive his Hopes, then I'll call you in and retire.

Beliz. You have a very good Opinion of me,
Cousin.

Cam. I have so.

Enter Flora.

Flo. He waits your Pleasure, Madam.

Cam. Bring him in——Cousin, you'll be at
Hand.

Beliz. In the next Room. [*Exit* Beliza.]

Enter Belair, *gravely drest.*

Bel. This is an Honour so much above my
Merit, Madam——that I receive it with
Confusion, and shall be uneasy till you inform
me how I may return this wonderful
Favour——I am caught by *Venus*: What Eyes
are there.

Cam. Rather instruct me, Sir, how I may
return the Obligations I have to you; they are
no common Ones—you purchas'd my Life at

the Hazard of your own, and it shall be the Business of that Life you sav'd (if ever ought falls within my Power) to serve you.—Oh, my Heart. [*Aside.*]

Bel. On that kind Promise will I build my Hopes; nay, I will rely upon it—and now, Madam, I must declare that it is in your Power to over-pay the Hazard you have mention'd; the only Woman I could be content to take, for Better for Worse, I ever saw; egad, I'm upon the very Precipice of Matrimony, if she consents. [*Aside.*]

Cam. Gratitude obliges generous Souls——then be assur'd, and ask——pray Heaven his Designs be honourable——that he asks the Right. [*Aside.*]

Bel. 'Tis done, faith, [*Aside.*] your Heart—I fear you'll think I am too bold in my Desires——but you commanded me to speak——and I durst not tell you a Lye——yourself wou'd have discover'd it, for your beauteous Image is drawn so lively in my

Breast, that you are Mistress of every Thought,
and every Wish about it.

Cam. My Soul tells him, thro' my Eyes, (I
fear) that his Request is granted, [*Aside.*] I
confess you have surpriz'd me, Sir, and I know
not well what to answer you; only
this——were I free to dispose of my Person,
with my Heart, your Services shou'd not go
unrewarded.

Bel. Ha! what say you, Madam! your Words
shake me like an Ague Fit—you are not—
(forbid it Heaven) married?

Cam. Not married.

Bel. Nor vow'd against it?

Cam. Neither—but I've a Father to whom my
Duty must submit, without his Leave I measure
not a Foot of his Estate, tho' I'm his only Child.

Bel. Let him keep it then,—if Love had any
Power o'er your Soul——or had I Charms to
wound like you, this wou'd be no Obstacle.

Cam. You have too many, and I find my Heart
but too inclining—were it possible, but my
Duty——

Bel. Oh, Extasy! I shan't contain myself
[*Aside.*] it is, it shall be possible——give me
to understand your Father, Madam, that I may
apply myself to him; if Avarice affects him,
and Wealth be his only Aim, I am Heir to an
Estate, perhaps, as large as he can wish.

Cam. But how are you sure your Father will
consent; and why wou'd you hazard his
Displeasure for a Stranger, Sir?

Bel. The Estate's intail'd, he cannot hurt me
there, and here I must be happy, or not at
all——may I not know your Family?

Cam. Yet you must not.

Bel. Why shou'd you deny me——Is it not in
my Power to know——Can I not enquire
when I go out, whose House this is?

Cam. Without any Benefit by it——for these

are a Friend's Lodgings, whose Judgment I esteem, you shall consult her; if she approves it, perhaps, you may know mine before Night—Who's there?

Enter Flora.

Desire *Beliza* to walk in——

Bel. Ha! Did she not name *Beliza*? I hope it is not that *Beliza* I know——if it shou'd, I'm in a fine Condition—— [*Enter Beliza and Patch.*] by ill Luck—the very She—what the Devil shall I do? [*Aside.*]

Cam. Cousin, this is the Gentleman I'm so much oblig'd to——Mr. *Constant*, this is a Relation of mine.

Beliz. What do I see? Colonel *Revel* here——

Pat. Ay, 'tis even he.

Bel. There is no Excuse to be made now——thou never failing Power of Impudence assist

me. [*Aside.*] I must honour every Thing that's related to you, Madam. [*Salutes her.*]

Beliz. How grave he is in this Disguise—picques me, methinks, tho' I had no Design upon him.

Pat. How sober he looks——

Cam. This is the Friend I refer you to, Mr. *Constant.*

Pat. Constant!—Yes, he is constant with a Witness.

Cam. What she promises, I'll confirm. [*Exit.*]

Bel. I'm in a hopeful Way, faith——Egad I'm so confounded, I know not how to look—but I'm resolv'd to carry it off, and persuade her I'm not the Man. [*Aside.*] Madam, I'm oblig'd to my Stars; however, tho' they conceal the Family, and Name of her I adore, they give me an Opportunity of knowing her second Self, you being made so by the strictest Bonds of Friendship——This is the hardest Talk I ever

went thro', by *Jupiter*. [*Aside.*]

Beliz. I don't wonder that you know me——but I am surpriz'd at your Impudence.

Bel. This is the first Time I was ever accus'd of that by a fair Lady: Wherein have I incurr'd your Displeasure?

Beliz. Pray, Sir, do you act this Part upon a Wager, or do you think I have lost my Senses——very pretty, truly——

Bel. A Wager.—Part—and Senses——What do you mean, Madam?—Oh, mischievous Encounter. [*Aside.*]

Beliz. Colonel *Revel* can inform Mr. *Constant* of my Meaning.

Bel. Colonel *Revel*! Who's he?——A Pox of the Name. [*Aside.*]

Pat. So he don't know himself——

Beliz. You don't know such a Man as Colonel

Revel?

Bel. Not I, upon my Word, Madam——

Beliz. Well, such an Assurance I never saw, and do you think this will pass upon me?

Bel. I hope so, [*Aside.*] I protest, Madam, I can't guess what you aim at——

Pat. Were I in your Place, Madam, I'd have him tost in a Blanket.

Bel. Well said, Mrs. *Patch*: Egad, wou'd I were well out of their Hands. [*Aside.*]

Beliz. Lookye, Sir, your Declaration for my Cousin concerns me not; for from the First, to me you appear'd as indifferent as now——But if you think to impose upon my Understanding, you'll draw my utmost Malice on your Head.

Bel. And I need no more——for the Malice of a Woman exceeds the Devil's. [*Aside.*] Your Rallery is very pleasant, Madam, but very different from what I expected——for I confess I

am a Stranger to your Meaning.

Beliz. Oh, you shift your Shape so often, you may easily forget—an excellent Contrivance, to take as many Names as you make Mistresses.

Pat. Consult your Pocket-Book, Sir; and you'll find your name was *Revel* two Hours ago——

Bel. This is a new Way of treating Strangers, Madam; Do you call this telling me the Secrets of the unknown Fair? This will make the prettiest Novel in the World—— [*Aside.*]

Beliz. The Secrets of the unknown Fair; yes, she shall know your Secrets, I promise you, and who you are—believe me, your Affairs are done with her; you shall neither know her Name, nor Quality.

Bel. Recal that Sentence, Madam; or, let me fall a Sacrifice, to your supposed Resentments——never to know my lovely,

dear Incognita is Death, with all the additional Racks *Barbarians* e'er invented, to separate Soul and Body. I begin to grow perfect in my double Art, I find. [*Aside.*]

Beliz. This is the most bare-fac'd Impostor I ever saw. [*Aside.*] Really, now in my Opinion, Colonel, you act the same Person too long— Come, come, pull off the Mask, and I'll forgive you, ha, ha.

Bel. That Wheedle shan't take, I'm in, and must go thro' it. [*Aside.*] Mask, Madam! by all the Pangs of Love I feel for your beauteous Friend, I wou'd wear no Disguise to any Thing that belongs to her——

Pat. Well, was I my Lady, I'd have that Tongue pull'd out of your Head.

Bel. Pray, Madam, who is that pretty Enemy? is she Friend, or some Relation?

Pat. Do, do, seem ignorant, poor Devil—you don't know me; not long since, you knew me

for this Lady's Maid, and lik'd me well enough, to think me worth a Compliment.

Beliz. Make Love to my Woman! Pray, Sir, what Name wou'd you have taken to her, ha, ha.

Bel. You are in a pleasant Humour, Ladies, I hope I shall find the Benefit of it; to my Knowledge, I never saw any of you till this Hour——This is a Master-piece of Art, to face down two Women at once. [*Aside.*]

Pat. Nay, if I had believ'd all he said to me, I shou'd have registered him amongst my Lovers. That is not true neither.

Bel. As the rest—Poor Gentlewoman, I pity thee; pr'ythee get Advice, before thy Frenzy increase too much.

Beliz. So, you'll persuade us we are mad by and by—and you don't bear a Colonel's Commission, and have not been in *Portugal* with *Charles* the Third?

Bel. No, upon my Honour, Madam—My Name is *Constant*, born in *Oxfordshire*, and come up about a Suit in *Chancery*; and know this Colonel no more than you know me; if you please, I'll give you my Oath on't——which I can do without Perjury, that's my Comfort.
[*Aside.*]

Beliz. A pleasant Quibble, ha, ha.

Pat. This Story has cost you some Pains——

Bel. I wish I cou'd see this Gentleman which you take me for: Can you believe I cou'd be so base to make Love to another, if once I had presum'd to mention it to you—your Charms are full Security against such Proceedings; I am concern'd, that Nature has made any Resemblance between us: I shall hate myself for being like him.

Beliz. Well, whether you will, or you will not be him, it is the same Thing——provided you'll tell him, that I suffer'd his Addresses only for my Diversion, and that I never had

any Passion for him, but loath, detest, and hate him.

Bel. Tell him——where shall I find him?

Beliz. I have done, and desire you'd know your Way out.

Bel. I wou'd not willingly disobey a Lady; but here, Madam, you must pardon me, since my future good or ill depends on you; I cannot stir from hence, till I obtain your Promise to assist my Suit, and give me hopes that I, at last may know my beauteous Fair.

Beliz. Ha, ha, ha, all that I can say, Colonel, is, that you are very unlucky in this Affair, not but you counterfeit to a Miracle; but the Mischief is, that I have all my Senses, can see Colonel *Revel*, hear Colonel *Revel*, and understand Colonel *Revel* too well to solicit his Cause, I assure you.

Pat. There's your Answer, Sir,——and if you please to follow me, I'll shew you a Way

out better known to you than that you came in by.

Bel. Pray, good Mrs. *Civility*, be not so hasty—give me leave, at least, to see your Cousin before I go Madam.

Beliz. To what End, pray?

Bel. To convince you of your Error.

Beliz. That's the hardest Task that you ever undertook, Colonel, and not to be effected; therefore, once more I tell you, you have seen your last of her, and your Absence wou'd oblige me.

Bel. 'Tis very hard, Madam, that because Nature has made me resemble another Person, who may, for ought I know, be a Man of Honour too, tho' unhappily under your Displeasure, I shou'd have the ill Fortune to suffer for Nature's Fault.

Beliz. That wou'd, indeed, be unjust—but I shall not be prevail'd upon to believe Nature

in the Fault here; therefore pray retire, the Scene is long enough, 'tis time to change it; good Colonel don't oblige one to treat you below your Title.

Pat. Don't you understand my Lady, Sir?

Bel. Yes, yes, Madam, but too well; and if I must go without the Satisfaction I expected, let me implore this Favour; tell her, I die hers.
[*Exit.*]

Pat. And every Body's, I dare swear, in his turn.

Beliz. This Man is the very Epitome of his Sex; the compleatest Juggler I ever saw: I protest his Assurance has put me quite out of Countenance.

Re-enter Camilla.

Cam. Well, how do you like him, Cousin: Is he not a charming Fellow?

Beliz. I think not.

Cam. Pish! I know you do.

Bel. Indeed I don't; and if you knew as much as I, you wou'd think him as ugly as I do.

Cam. Ugly! Can any Mortal think that Man ugly? But pr'ythee, what have you discover'd——won't you tell me?

Beliz. Yes, if you promise to make right use on't.

Cam. What do you mean?

Beliz. That your pretended Lover is a Villain.

Cam. How! Pray, Cousin, explain yourself within the Rules of good Manners.

Beliz. He deserves it not.

Cam. I don't understand you——and the Introduction grows tedious——of what do you accuse Mr. *Constant*?

Bel. In the first Place, his Name is not
Constant, but *Revel*.

Cam. How know you that?

Beliz. From his own Mouth.

Cam. When?

Beliz. A Week ago.

Cam. Where?

Beliz. Here in this House.

Cam. In this House, how came he hither?

Beliz. Upon his Legs, I think.

Cam. On what Business, pray?

Beliz. Much upon the same Errand—Love.

Cam. Love! to whom?

Beliz. To your Friend and Servant.

Cam. Ha, ha, ha, now I find your Drift——
you like him yourself, and this is an Artifice to
blast my good Opinion—'tis poorly done,
Beliza.

Beliz. No, my Constitution is not so warm as
yours—remember you took Fire in the middle
of Water; I despise him.

Cam. We never despise indifferent
Things——I little expected this from a Friend.

Beliz. If you'd have the Friend continu'd,
don't provoke me to return Suspicious, Cousin.

Cam. Don't you provoke me, by traducing of
the Man I love—he has not been in Town two
Days, and you'd persuade me he has made
Overtures of Love to you a Week ago.

Beliz. If I don't prove this is Colonel *Revel*,
lately come from *Portugal*, and been in Town
this Fortnight, and made me several Visits
under Pretence of Courtship *A-la Mode*, I'm
content to forfeit both Friendship and Estate.

Cam. How shall it be prov'd? 'Tis sure impossible.

Beliz. Write to him, and tell him what I have confirm'd; desire him to come hither to justify himself, if he expects any farther Favours from you—at the same Time I'll send for him by the Name of *Revel*, and appoint him here also, if there appear two Men exactly the same, (as I am sure they are) then I'll own myself in the Wrong, and ask your Pardon; if not, you shall mine.

Cam. Agreed, I'll in, and write to him this Moment; pray Heaven there be two *Socia's*.
[*Exit.*]

Enter Sir William.

Sir Will. I am pleas'd.

Beliz. That's more than I am, I assure you, *Sir William*.

Sir Will. To find you alone, I meant, Madam; I am not surpriz'd at your being out of Humour,

for I have seldom found you in it of late, the Reason of which I'm yet to learn, not being conscious of having given you any Cause, except the truest Passion that e'er possess'd the Heart of Man be one.

Beliz. Sometimes, and in some Persons it is so; but from whence you derive your Suspicions, I can't imagine.

Sir *Will.* From your excessive Coldness——for some Days past, I have beheld such a Reserve in all your Carriage to me, very different from what it us'd to be, and I begun to fear your Heart had entertain'd some new Amour.

Bel. I hope he has not discover'd this Impostor, he could not meet him, sure. [*Aside.*] You have no Reason to doubt my Sincerity, Sir *William*; I am not subject to fall in Love, I may venture to say, you hold the greatest Share in my Heart.

Sir *Will.* That's kind—but this thin airy Diet

of Hope and Expectation, *Beliza*, starve those which feed on't—will you not admit me to the Banquet of Possession——when shall I receive from this Hand the Confirmation of those Lips.

[*Kisses her Hand.*]

Beliz. When I can bring my Heart to a Resolution, Sir *William*, of quitting all these little innocent Pleasures a single Life permits, you shall have timely Notice for a License.

Enter Patch.

Pat. Madam, your Cousin *Camilla* desires one Word with you.

Beliz. Pardon my leaving you in my own Lodgings, Sir *William*, some Affairs of my Cousins, who is lately come to Town, press me at present; I shall come to Cards at Lady *Cautious*'s in the Evening. [*Exit.*]

Sir *Will.* I'll not fail being at home——there's something more in this than I

can fathom; I resolve to watch her narrowly, if I have a Rival, and 'scapes me, I forgive him.
[*Exit.*]



ACT III.

Sir William's Lodgings.

Sir William meeting Lady Cautious.

Sir Will. In tears, Sister, what's the Matter?

Lady. What shou'd be the Matter, but my Husband? that doating, old, disponding Wretch, whose Fears, Mistrusts and Jealousies, is enough to distract any Body, still doubting Providence, and fearing every Wind——yet you are so far from pitying my Condition, you add to my Misfortunes, by making my Confinement stricter, under

Pretence of the Honour of our Family—I hope I'm of Age to know how far that concerns me.

Sir Will. Ay, Sister, but the Wife that is displeas'd with the Husband—and the Husband that does not please the Wife, are always in Danger——she of liking some Body else—and he of being a Cuckold——now, while there is such a Probability, the Honour of our Family requires a Guard.

Lady. Why was I marry'd then to that I cannot love?

Sir Will. My Father knew his Reasons, doubtless, Sister.

Lady. Yes, and I know 'em too——*Sir Paul* took me without a Fortune, by which yours is the greater, yet the Consideration has no Weight with you; it pleases you to see your Sister condemn'd to the idle Fancies, and whimsical Mistrusts of this impertinent Dotard; he is so apprehensive of Death, that he allows a Surgeon a Hundred a Year

perpetually to attend him, and wou'd not set a Step without him for a Thousand—nay, he lays in the same Chamber——just now he fancied himself call'd three Times, which he takes for an Omen of his Death, pray Heaven it prove so—and has sent for twenty People to watch by him.

Sir Will. Ridiculous Folly—but you must bear with it, Sister; he is old——

Lady. That's the worst Argument under the Sun, for a young Woman to bear with. [*Aside.*] Pray, Brother, what Gentleman is that which you have oblig'd with these Lodgings?

Sir Will. Ha! has she seen him—Why do you ask?

Lady. Is it a Crime to ask who is in my own House?

Sir Will. Yes, if they are not in your own Apartment—'tis not Modesty in your Sex to inquire after ours—now I foresee my Error

too late, in letting him have these Lodgings—
How came you to know there was a Man here?

Lady. I must not say, I have seen him
— [*Aside.*] my Woman brought me Word, there
was a Stranger dressing himself, when I sent
her this Morning, to ask if you wou'd not drink
some Chocolate with me.

Sir *Will.* Then you did not see him yourself?

Lady. No.

Sir *Will.* I'm glad to hear that, for he is
Libertine enough to engage her.

Lady. But suppose I had, where had been the
Crime?

Sir *Will.* Nay, no Crime, Sister——only I
wou'd not have you affronted; therefore, pray
take care not to come near this Apartment, for
he hates the Sight of Women.

Lady. That's false, to my Knowledge—for he
said the softest Things to me that Love cou'd

form; [*Aside.*] say you so, Brother? an unpolished Brute, I hope he is not to continue long here?

Sir *Will.* Only, for two or three Days.—

Lady. Oh, my Heart—so short a Stay.
[*Aside.*]

Sir *Will.* Ho, here he comes, retire Sister.

Lady. I must see him again——tho' you prevent me now; if I don't break through this Constraint, say, Woman wants Contrivance.
[*Exit.*]

Enter Belair and Robin.

Rob. Why then, this prov'd a confounded Mistake, Sir, but were it possible you cou'd not know the House again?

Bel. How cou'd I, when I was convey'd the back Way into an Apartment, where I never was before; the cunningest Man alive, might have been deceived, as well as I——but the

Gift of Impudence is a wonderful Gift; ha! Sir *William*, I did not see thee.

Sir *Will*. I believe not, Love and Variety clouds thy Sight, but what is the Disappointment you speak of?

Bel. I am an unlucky Dog, that's all—I fell into the Company of both my Mistresses, at once.

Sir *Will*. This 'tis to have more Intrigues than one can manage, ha, ha, ha; and how did you behave yourself.

Bel. Faith en'cavalierement—I stuck close to the Name of *Constant*, and my Incognita—for I like her best.

Rob. Till he sees somebody he likes better.
[*Aside.*]

Bel. And swore I never saw t'other, in my Life, nor never heard of the Name of *Revel*—but was as down-right a Country Gentleman, and made Love as gravely, as ever

a Squire of 'em all.

Sir Will. And did the Imposition pass?

Bel. Not without Scruple——but I'll undertake to make myself two distinct Persons, as clear as the Sun at Noon-day, if thou'lt assist me.

Sir Will. How? for the Frolick's sake, I care not if I do——

Bel. Then, as I have Occasion, you shall receive Instructions, I want a Messenger in my Interest.

Sir Will. That I can procure you—but to what Purpose.

Bel. You shall know in Time—I shall want thy personal Appearance too.

Sir Will. You shall want nothing, in my Power—but pr'ythee do you like either of 'em well enough to marry?

Bel. In my Conscience I think I cou'd be content with the Noose, if my Incognita's Family be answerable to her Beauty——

Rob. Nay, if he grows honourably in Love, I may hope for some rest at last. [*Aside.*]

Sir *Will.* Why will ye not quit the other then?

Bel. T'other is related, and a Friend—if I deceive her not, she'll maliciously spoil my Intrigue; besides, 'tis a pretty Amusement, and the Design so Novel, that I must pursue it for the Pleasure of Invention, and I think it possible to perform; we have seen two People so very like, that when absent they cou'd not be distinguish'd from one another.

Sir *Will.* But if the Faces wore Resemblance, the Voice or Shape discover'd it.

Bel. But a good Assurance solves all that.

Rob. Why, Sir, if the worst comes to the worst—that they will both have you—why e'en marry them both, keep one for yourself,

and t'other to entertain your Friends—or, if you please, Sir,—to do you a Service, I don't care if I take one of 'em off your Hands.

Sir Will. Then you'll venture to rely upon your Master's Choice, ha, ha, ha.

Rob. Ay, Sir, sooner than ere a Man in *England*; my Master has tasted so many of those Dishes—that I dare trust to his Palate.

Bel. You are witty, Rascal, ha! Who have we here, thy Mimick.

Enter Wou'dbe, drest like Sir William, and Ned Freelove.

Wou'd. Well, I have surpriz'd some Ladies, strangely, that stop'd their Coach, and call'd out *Sir William, Sir William*; and when I turn'd back, and they discover'd their Mistake, they blush'd intolerably, ha, ha, ha. [*Aside to Ned.*]

Ned. Nay, your Dress is exactly the same with his; the Mistake was very easy.

Sir *Will*. Mr. *Wou'dbe*, your Servant.

Wou'd. Surprizing! another Suit!

Bel. Ha, ha, ha, what a Consternation you have put him in!

Ned. What's the Matter with you, Sir? This Minute you look'd as gay, and pleasant as the Month of *June*, and now it is *December* at least—he has discover'd you, Brother.

Wou'd. Most beatifically exprest, and worthy of Quotation.

Takes out a Pocket-book and writes.

Bel. I presume, Sir, you are examining, what Assignations fall out this Hour, that you may not disappoint the Ladies.

Wou'd. No, Sir, I am taking Cognizance of the Gentleman's Wit.

Bel. I hope you are not one of those Spungy-brain'd Poets, that suck something from all

Companies to squeeze into a Comedy, at acting of which, the Pit and Boxes may laugh at their own Jests.

Ned. Where each may claim his Share of Wit.

Bel. And by my Consent, shou'd claim a Share of the Profits too, ha, ha.

Wou'd. This is a Gentleman of an intellectual Sublimity—No, Sir, I contemn the terrene Extraction of those poor Animals, whose barren Intellects thrusts such spurious Brats abroad; when I write, it shall be all my own I assure you.

Sir Will. Oh, Mr. *Wou'dbe* can never want Assistance of that kind.

Wou'd. What shall I do with these Cloths! I wou'd not give a Farthing for 'em, now he has left 'em off—and that's ten Times the prettier Suit in my Opinion—Well, he is the most genteel Fellow in *Europe*.

Enter Robin.

Rob. Sir, Sir, the Incognita's Maid, Sir, has brought you this Letter, and stays for an Answer.

[Gives him a Letter.]

Bel. Ha! Reads—*My Cousin has a strange Opinion of you, and nothing but your Personal Appearance immediately can prevent my giving Credit to her Story; make Haste, if you expect any farther Favours from your Incognita*——any farther Favours! Yes, I do expect farther Favours, or I'd never take half this Pains—Let me see. *[Pauses.]*

Wou'd. I wish'd I cou'd sell this Coat——I shall never indure the Sight of it, that's certain. *[Aside.]*

Bel. Hark ye, Sirrah, do you tell the Maid, I'll not fail the Summons——and do you hear, follow her at a Distance, till you see her Hous'd; if she goes to *Beliza's*, do you ask to

Speak with *Beliza's* Cousin, and tell her you left me in the Street talking to somebody, but that she might not think me long, I sent you before; be sure you make no Blunders, Sirrah.

Rob. I warrant you, Sir, Lying is become my Vocation; but, Sir, what Name, Sir?

Bel. Constant, you forgetful Blockhead.

Rob. Ha, I have it, the Country Gentleman, Sir——

Bel. Ay, ay, away. [*Aside to Robin.*]

[*Exit Robin.*]

Sir *Will.* What, another Billet-doux?

Bel. 'Tis from my unknown—now for thy Assistance.

Wou'd. What Contrivance shall I have for such a Dress—my Rogue of a Taylor will not trust, that's certain. Let me think——that won't do—nor that——ho, I have it——

Takes out his book and writes.

Bel. This Messenger must be had immediately, Sir *William*.

Sir Will. I'll procure you one instantly.

Bel. Then I'm Master of my Art.

Wou'd. Sir *William*, I recommend that to your Perusal [*Gives him the Tablets.*] If this Project takes not, I'm undone——[*Aside.*]

Sir Will. What's this [*Reads.*] *We whose Names are here subscrib'd, do promise to make our Personal Appearance in the Side-Box, the third Day of a new Play, either Tragedy, Comedy, Farce, or Opera, that shall be written by Timothy Wou'dbe, Esq; and play'd at one of the Houses or both, as the Players can agree about that, on Forfeit of a Guinea, which we have deposited in the Hands of the Author.*

Ned. Ha, ha, ha, a pretty Contrivance for another Suit.

Bel. This is new, indeed, ha, ha, ha.

Sir Will. I love to encourage Ingenuity, he has flung away many a Guinea after me, now I'll give him one—pray enter me down Mr. *Wou'dbe*.

Wou'd. Let me intreat your own Hand, for the Incouragement of others.

[*Sir William writes.*

Bel. I'll not be out at a Frolic, there's mine, Sir.

Sir Will. There, Brother, enter your Name too——

[*Gives Ned a Guinea.*]

Ned. Ha, ha, with all my Heart there is *Belvil*, *Loveil*, and *Freewit*—you may depend on Mr. *Wou'dbe*.

Wou'd. I'll wait on 'em incontinently.

Bel. But when is this Play to be writ, Sir?

Wou'd. That I must consider on, Sir; too many Things at once destroy the Thought, and dull the Fancy.

Ned. But suppose it shou'd not live till the third Day, the Town is very capricious.

Wou'd. I know it, Sir, for that Reason I took this Method; when their Gold is at Stake, they'll bring in their Bodies, to save their Bail——egad, I shan't have Money enough——Let me see——I'll sell these Clothes, to make it up——Gentlemen, I'm your most oblig'd——[*Exit.*]

Ned. Ha, ha, ha, he is upon the Wing, with his Subscription, I'll follow, and see if he goes to their Lodgings. [*Exit.*]

Sir *Will.* Now, for thy Business, *Belair*, where shall I find you half an Hour hence?

Bel. Here, for I must now dress me.

Sir *Will.* Very well. [*Exit.*]

Bel. So, thus far I'm right——now for half an Hour's Respite from the Fatigue of Business——egad, I wish the pretty Creature, I saw in the Morning, wou'd fall in my Way—who the duce is she, I wonder—no Matter who, she's handsome—and that's Knowledge enough, to recommend her——Ha! here she comes by *Jove*.

Enter Lady Cautious.

Lady. Here he is! a charming handsome Fellow——what Excuse shall I make?—ha—I thought Sir *William* had been here—Sir, I beg your Pardon——

Bel. He's just gone out, Madam, he's a happy Man to have so much Beauty in Quest of him.

Lady. Beauty's an Epithet your Sex never fail to make Use of to raise our Vanity, when present, but the Object once remov'd, you soon recall your Praises.

Bel. Sometimes, Madam, good Manners produce Adulation; but here Flattery dares not show her Face, your Charms are so conspicuous, they need no Art to inform your Knowledge, nor I no Cunning to inslave myself; I am chain'd already, your Eyes at first Sight reduc'd me, and the short Moments which we pass'd this Day together, made such an Impression on my Heart, that I have thought of nothing since but how to see you again.

Lady. Oh! how his Words run thro' my Soul——alas, Sir, to what Purpose shou'd you see me, I am married.

Bel. Good——

Lady. Wretchedly married.

Bel. Better and better——wretchedly married, say you?

Lady. Wretchedly——to an old peevish desponding Wretch.

Bel. As I cou'd wish——her Dislike of her

Husband is my first Step to Possession——
[*Aside.*]

Lady. Forc'd by my Friends to wed him, by
which all my Happiness in this World is lost.

Bel. Banish that Thought, my charming
Creature——'tis a false one; there are Joys,
inestimable Joys in Store, give me but Leave,
and I'll inform you where they may be reap'd.

[*Taking her Hand.*]

Lady. Not by me without a Crime.

Bel. The Crime be on their Heads that forc'd
your Marriage, Nature ne'er design'd these
Charms shou'd wither in the Arms of Age, and
destin'd only to a Clod——besides your not
consenting to the Match makes it invalid, and
of no force to hold you——take Pity, then,
both of yourself and me, I languish, sigh,
despair—nay, e'en die for you.

Lady. Help me, Heaven, I have no Power to
speak—

Bel. Oh! do not struggle so, nor dash my rising Hopes, leave me not, except you wish my Death, which I resolve the Moment you depart——

Lady. Forbid that Thought, I cannot see you die—yet must not yield; let me go for Virtue's sake——

Bel. Love forbids it—Oh! I shall faint with Extacy of Pleasure—no Jessamin nor Rose has half the Sweets that dwell upon these Lips, 'tis Essence from the Throne of *Jove*—this Neck, this Breast—Oh, every Part about thee is Celestial, Loadstone like, thy Breath attracts and draws my Lips to thine. [*Kissing her.*]

Lady. Oh! the Difference between his Kisses, and my Husband's, what shall I do?——

Bel. Do! Consent to bless the Man that loves you.

Lady. But how long will he do so?

Bel. That's ever the Women's Question—ask

not that; can I prove false to so much Beauty,
oh, no, faithful as the Needle to its Pole, or
Turtle to his Mate, secret as a Priest——and
loving as the Vine——give me Possession
once, and bind the truest of his Sex for ever.
[*Pulling her.*]

Sir Paul within.

Sir Paul. Basilicon——

Lady. Ah, [Shrieks.] my Husband's Voice.

Sir Paul. [Within.] Ah, Thieves, Thieves.

*Bel. A Curse of all ill Luck——Just in the
critical Minute when she was
yielding——'Death, what shall I do, Madam,
can, can, can, can, you put me no where?*

*Lady. Impossible, he'll search all the House
——now the Duce take me for
shrieking——[Aside.]*

*Bel. Then there's no way——but to cut his
Throat.*

Lady. Now help me, dear, dear Invention.
[*Pauses.*]

Sir Paul. Basilicon, why where's my Surgeon there—I shall be murder'd; here's Thieves got into my House.

Lady. A lucky Hint, improve it.

Bel. Improve what?

Enter Sir Paul, and Servants.

Sir Paul. What's here, a Man, a Thief, a Thief, fall on, fall on.

Bel. I shall be apprehended for a Rogue, here—make your Mermidons be civil, Sir, or I shall whip you thro' the Guts, by *Hercules.*

[*Lays his Hand on his Sword.*]

Sir Paul. Basilicon, keep near me
Basilicon——

Lady. Oh! Hold, hold, *Sir Paul,* What do you

do! Abuse a Gentleman that came to save your Life.

Bel. What the Devil does she mean now— some Turn, to bring me off, if I can but hit her right.

Lady. Tell him you saw the House beset with Rogues, tell him, tell him any Thing. [*Aside to Bel.*]

Bel. Humph, ha, Oh, witty Rogue——

Sir Paul. Ha, how's that?

Bel. Yes, Sir, I came to do you Service.

Sir Paul. As how, pray, sweet, Sir? To lye with my Wife, ha!

Bel. No, Sir, coming by your House I saw four Men, and heard 'em say, that's the Door, dog him to some convenient Place, and then secure him.

Sir Paul. Secure me, for what, Sir? I owe no

body nothing, I have no Employment in the State, Sir.

Bel. Your Riches is much talked on, Sir, and People imagine you have got that which we call the Philosopher's Stone; I believe they design to rob and murder you, I heard 'em mutter something of ripping you up, and Dissecting you.

Sir Paul. Oh! Bloody Villains.

Lady. Excellent Fellow—— [*Aside.*]

Bel. They talk'd as if you swallow'd the Stone every Morning, and kept it in your Body for greater Security all Day.

Sir Paul. Monstrous!

Bel. I find their Design is to search for that Stone, which, if they get it, will make them as rich as Aldermen ever after.

Sir Paul. Barbarous——Sir, if you'll believe me, I don't know what they mean by the

Philosopher's Stone, as I hope for long
Life—I have no Stone worth a Groat, except
the Stone of this Ring.

Bel. Nay, I know nothing of that, Sir, I
thought myself bound in Honour, tho' unknown
to you, to give you Notice of your Danger.

Sir Paul. Sir, I heartily thank you—My
Coachman, indeed, told me there was four
Men behind my Coach last Night, which made
me not go abroad to Day; these must be the
Rogues.

Lady. It passes as I would have it—but I
wish he had been at the Bottom of the Sea,
when he interrupted us, for that charming
Fellow has got my Heart, I find that. [*Aside.*]

Bel. Pox take him for his unseasonable
Intrusion. [*Aside.*]

Sir Paul. I thought I heard you shriek out,
Wife.

Lady. I wish I had been dumb when I did—

yes, my Dear, with design to raise the House, to pursue, and take the Rogues, this Gentleman told me of, at least disperse 'em, that my Love might be in no Danger.

Sir Paul. Oh, was it that, very well—come, you and I will retire to my Closet, and return Thanks for this Deliverance, *Basilicon*; come you along with us, Sir, I thank you. [*Exit.*]

Lady. I never had less Religion about me in my Life. [*Exit.*]

Bel. If thou had'st stay'd but one Quarter of an Hour longer, Old Noll, thou shou'dst have had something to have thank'd me for.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir *William* sends to tell you, that he, and the Gentleman you want, stays for you at the Coffee-house, Sir.

Bel. I come— [*Exit Servant.*] was there ever such a promising Project crost; I must have her—and I find she must have me too——

*What various Hazards do we Rovers run, }
To purchase what we slight as soon as }
won; }
And Women know it too, yet long to be }
undone. }*

The End of the THIRD ACT.



ACT IV.

Robin, *solus*.

Rob. Here she went in!—let me see—I am to say—what am I to say?—pox on't, my Master gives me so many different Lessons, one knocks t'other out of my Head—he is doing—doing, no, no, he did not bid me say he was doing—he was stopt in the Street—ay, ay, that's right, and his Name——ads bud, I have forgot his Name now——but here's the Maid,

and so 'tis no Matter.

Enter Flora.

Flor. Ha! *Robin!* is your Master come?

Rob. He's coming, Child—a Lawyer, I believe, for he had a swinging Stroke with his Tongue, stopt him in the Street, about his Law-Suit, I suppose, so he sent me Express, fraught with his eager Wishes, to beg thy Lady's Patience for two Minutes only, and then he'll throw himself at her Feet——egad, I think I have made as noble a Speech as ever a Courtier of 'em all. [*Aside.*]

Flora. Why don't you come in, and deliver your Message, then?

Rob. Now I have seen thee I dare not.

Flor. Why, what do you fear?

Rob. Those pinking Ogles of thine—But now I think on't, if my Master and your Lady Couple, thou'lt fall to me of Course.

Flor. To you——I believe not, Sir.

Rob. But I believe yes—are not we Perquisites made for one another?——our Station's the same——our Employment alike——you dress your Lady——so do I my Master——you receive and deliver Messages, so do I—and lying is the common Vocation of us both.

Flor. You are very familiar in your Courtship.

Rob. 'Tis my Way—but I know Truth is an out-of-fashion'd Courtship, which your Sex is not us'd to. Ha! my Master. [*Enter Belair drest for Revel.*] Sir, I did your Message.

Bel. My Message, Fellow, what Message? This Dog will spoil all by his Blunders; he does not see that I'm *Revel* now; [*Aside.*] do you know who you speak to?

Rob. By my Troth, I don't know—and yet methinks I shou'd know too.

Flor. 'Tis very strange if he shou'd not know his Master.

Rob. Why, Sir, pray are not you my Master, co, co, co.

Bel. I'll tell you Rascal.

[*Strikes him a Box on the Ear.*]

Rob. Egad, I'm in the wrong, but where I can't tell—his Fingers are grown plaguy flippant of late.

Bel. Is *Beliza* within, my Dear, dost know?

Flor. I believe she is, Sir—I'll let her know you'd speak with her, if you'll please to signify what Name you'll wear at present——

Bel. Name! Why, my own Name, Child, *Revel*; what Name shou'd I wear? Thou art pleasant, ha, ha, ha.

Rob. There was my Mistake, now. [*Aside.*]

Flor. Here she comes, Sir.

Enter Beliza.

Bel. So darts the Sun thro' all the thick
wrought Clouds, to chear the labouring Swain.

[*Catching her in his Arms.*]

Beliza. Hold, Sir! Who are you pray? The
Colonel, or the Country Gentleman—the
grave, serious, formal Lover, or the gay rakish
Soldier?—let me know, I beseech you, that I
may square my Conversation to yours.

Bel. Ha, ha, ha, Why these Interrogatories?
Madam, do you walk in your Sleep?—now I
fancy you are in a Dream; ay, it is so,
faith—and I cannot resist the Opportunity
for Gloves. [*Kisses her.*]

Beliza. Away, thou exquisite
Dissembler—How can you look me in the
Face?

Bel. Because I don't know a Face in *Europe*

that pleases me half so well—but pr'ythee,
why this Air of Indifference, or rather,
Resentment? Look ye, Madam, if you affect
this Quarrel by the Way of poignant Sauce—
you have no Need of those little Recourses of
your Sex——*Revel* loves as much as ever, and
dare promise——

Beliza. More than you perform.——

Bel. Accuse me not before you try me—but
why these cross Purposes—ha, my Incognita!
now *Belair*, play thy Part. [*Aside.*]

Beliza. Here's one will inform you.——

Enter Camila.

Cam. Oh, Mr. *Constant*, are you come?

Bel. Constant! Yes, faith, Madam, I'm as
constant as any Man——this Lady can witness
for me.

Beliza. Not in the Court of Conscience, Sir.

Bel. Then you have no Conscience at all.

Rob. If my Master took up Lying by the Week, what a confounded Interest 'twou'd come to in a Year. [*Aside.*]

Cam. Do you know why I sent for you so soon, Mr. *Constant*?

Bel. No, Madam—nor that you sent for me at all.

Beliz. You mistake, Cousin, this is Colonel *Revel*, ha, ha.

Cam. Colonel fiddle, is it not?—sure I know Mr. *Constant*.

Bel. *Constant!* Who is he, Madam?

Cam. Who's he? Why, are not you he?

Bel. Not that I know of.

Beliza. Ha, ha, ha, you shall be *Revel*, Sir, till *Constant* comes, if my Cousin will give

you leave——

Cam. I'm surpriz'd at his Impudence—pray, were not you here two Hours ago, Sir?

Bel. Not that I remember——

Cam. Impossible—did not you save me from drowning, yesterday.

Bel. 'Twas in my Sleep, then—for waking I'm sure I did not.

Cam. Distraction—Nor is not your Name *Constant?* And *Oxfordshire.*

Bel. Quite wrong——this is a pretty *Christmas Game Lady*——but, pray let me have some Commands, as well as all Questions.

Cam. Nor don't you know this Footman?

Bel. Again—No, Madam, never saw him in my Life.

Rob. Oh Lord, Oh Lord, who am I
now——for he has renounc'd me heartily.
[*Aside.*]

Beliza. What say you, Friend, don't you know
this Gentleman, neither?

Rob. No more than I do the great *Mogul*,
Madam.

Cam. Who do you belong to——

Rob. Belong to, Madam! why, why, why, a
Pox of his 'tother Name, now I can't think on't,
if I were to be hang'd. [*Aside.*]

Cam. Ay, who do you belong to, I say, again?

Rob. Why, I belong to my Master, Madam.

Beliza. And what is that Master's Name,
pray?

Rob. Name, Madam——his name is——ad, now
I think on't, I won't tell his Name——why,
sure I'm too big to be catechis'd.

Bel. This Dog will betray me. [*Aside.*]

Flor. You challeng'd this for your Master,
just now.

Rob. What if I did, Mistress, what then? He
is not, it seems, without his being double, as
you pretend—the Devil shou'd have doubled
me too.

Cam. What Business have you here?

Rob. Business! why, I brought a Message
from my Master to one of you—and so good
by——

Cam. Hold, stay, Sir—pray, what was that
Message?

Rob. Why, that my Master wou'd be here,
presently——

Bel. Oh, I suppose, this is Mr. *Constant's*
Man, that you mistake me for—ah, Pox of his
Memory. [*Aside.*]

Rob. You have hit it, Sir—Mr. *Constant* is my Master, now his Name's out——

Cam. I'm astonish'd! Cousin, did you ever hear the like?

Beliza. Yes, the very same——but I traduc'd Mr. *Constant* then, you know——What say you, *Revel*, did I?

Bel. Hey, Ladies! do you design to bait me, if so, give me fair Play, at least——hark ye, draw off your Cousin and confess your Plot——or egad I'll humour her Frenzy, take the Name of *Constant*, and make Love to her before your Face.

Beliza. With all my Heart, 'tis not the first Time——and I have no further Services for you, ha, ha, ha.

Rob. So, he's in a fair Way to lose 'em both.
[*Aside.*]

Enter Messenger and Attendant.

Mess. I arrest you, Sir, in an Action of High Treason.

Bel. Treason, Sir! Sure you mistake the Man.

Beliza. Ha! how's this?

Mess. Your Name's *Revel*, Sir.

Bel. My name is *Revel*, Sir, but guilty of no such Crime.

Rob. Here's a Turn now—I must second him.
[*Aside.*]

Mess. That must be prov'd, 'tis no Business of mine, I am only to execute my Orders.

Cam. I am concern'd for him
methinks——won't you take Bail, Sir?

Mess. In these Cases no Bail is admitted,
Madam.

Beliza. My Mind misgives me this is a Trick.

Mess. Come, Sir, I can't stay——

Rob. Hold, hold, Sir, pray enter my Action too, for a Box of the Ear he gave me just now——this is some Comfort, however, I shall see him hang'd.

Bel. Come, Gentlemen, I can easily prove my Innocence——If I stand fair in this Lady's Opinion, I cannot fear the World. [*To Beliza.*]

[*Exit with Messengers.*]

Beliza. I wish you a good Deliverance, Colonel——I know not what to think.

Rob. I'll see him lodg'd, I'm resolv'd. [*Exit.*]

Cam. Nor I——to what End can a Man affect these Disguises?

Beliza. Out of Gallantry, Cousin——I shall hardly be convinc'd without I saw them both together——I pity the Colonel's unhappy Disgrace; but, believe me, now he is arrested, *Constant* is no more, his Man following him

plainly shew'd the Cheat.

Cam. Nay, I confess, they are extremely alike, but observing very narrowly, I think their Features are not exactly the same.

Flor. You are of my Mind, Madam—for methinks, he is half an Inch taller than Mr. *Constant*.

Cam. And something about his Face, I don't know what—

Flor. I fancy his Nose is something longer.

Cam. Thou hast hit it; it is his Nose, I'm sure.

Enter Belair for Constant.

Beliza. You are both mad, I'm sure——ha, ha, ha,——bless me! Pray Heaven it ben't the Devil that thus deludes us.

Bel. I am come, Madam, according to your Commands——but if my Reception prove like the last, the Pleasure of seeing you will very

much abate—I am first at the Rendezvous, I perceive.

Cam. Now, Cousin, you are convinc'd, I hope.

Beliza. You are, I see.

Flor. Now, Madam, I can tell you the very Difference, his Eyes are a little-little larger.

Cam. Nay, I think they are a great deal larger.

Bel. Why do you survey me so, Madam? is it possible that you can be deceiv'd too—Where is this Colonel to be found? Will he not come?

Cam. He is just gone.

Beliza. He has disengag'd himself, Sir, to leave you Room to act your Part.

Bel. Why did you not keep him, I sent my Man before me to let you know, I would instantly be here.

Beliza. How could we when the Queen's Authority favour'd his Retreat?

Bel. How say you, Madam? has the Queen sent for him?

Beliza. How cunningly you dissemble—but that's not new, Dissimulation seems your natural Gift.

Bel. Still these Reproaches, will nothing that I say convince you?—Why did you consent to let him go?

Cam. Why, do you really think this is still the same? [*To Beliza.*]

Beliza. I do really—the Trap was laid with too much Policy to be prevented, knowing the Messenger I never suspected the Truth of the Action—but I may change to counter-plot you yet. [*Exit.*]

Bel. So, she is gone to the Prison—but she'll return as unsatisfied as she went. [*Aside.*] Why do you take Pleasure to insult the

Man, your Beauty has inslav'd? If my Visits be offensive—tho' I die without you—I prefer your peace so much above my own, I'll never disturb you with my Presence more.

Cam. He looks, methinks, with such an honest Face, it can be only *Constant*; [*Aside.*] you must own, I have Reason to suspect you—but you have a powerful Advocate within, which pleads in your Excuse, and fain wou'd justify you.

Enter Robin.

Rob. At last, I am satisfied—the Spark is Cag'd.

Flo. Did you follow him?

Rob. Do you doubt it?

Bel. Whom, speak.

Rob. Oh, Sir, are you there?—you'll be hang'd in Effigy To-morrow—

Bel. How, Sauce-box!

Rob. Ay, Sir, he did box me, but I shall have a swinging Revenge.

Bel. Revenge, for what?

Rob. Why, Sir, your Likeness—that here has been such a Sputter about—is taken up for Treason, Murder, Robbery, and the Devil and all——

Bel. Oh, Misfortune! to be like such a Rascal.

Rob. Ay, so it is indeed, Sir—I thought he wou'd have been pull'd to pieces in the Street—there were Girls of Fourteen, and Women of Fourscore, with Actions of Ravishment against him—and Tavern, and Eating-house Bills in abundance.

Bel. The Rogue has improv'd the Hint admirably. [*Aside.*]

Rob. ('Tis an ill-bred Scoundrel, he is very

like you, Sir, that's the Truth on't) he gave me the damndest Box on the Ear, only because I mistook him for you——he has a swinging Fist, Sir, that was all the Distinction I cou'd make between you——but I shall see him truss'd up for it, that's my Comfort.

Cam. I am extremely pleas'd to find they are two different Persons.

Enter Sir William.

Sir Will. Constant! I can't believe my Eyes.

Bel. Why, what surprizes thee?

Sir Will. I met thy very Likeness in Custody of a Messenger, and stop'd 'em to examine the Reason——the Spark snapp'd me up short, and told me 'twas none of my Business, bad 'em pass on——I admir'd at the Meaning, for I cou'd have sworn it had been thee—ha! that is *Beliza's* Lodgings certainly. [*Aside.*]

Bel. Was he drest like me too?

Sir *Will*. No, that was the only Distinction I found about him——I wish *Beliza* ben't the other Woman——

Bel. Now, Madam——are you still in Suspence?

Cam. I'm convinc'd, and over-joy'd, to find you what I wish you.

Sir *Will*. If my Suspicious be true, I have a pretty Kind of an Employment here——serving my Rival against myself.
[*Aside.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, your Father wants you——he talks of having you married to-night——

Rob. How's that, egad, my Master will be fobb'd at last, I fear. [*Aside.*]

Cam. Oh, Unfortunate——

Sir *Will*. If it be so, 'tis some Pleasure at

least to know the Man. [*Aside.*]

Bel. What do I hear? Oh, Madam, if ever Pity touch'd your Soul, exert it now—think where you are going, think too, who you leave—give me some Assurance to support my Hope, that you will disobey your Father—or I am miserable.

Cam. Believe me, my Surprize is as great as yours, I promise to use my utmost Arguments against it; if I fail, you shall then know my Father, and use your own Discretion.

[*Exit with Flora.*]

Bel. That's all I ask—unexpected Turn of ill Fortune; this News has chang'd the very Countenance.

Sir Will. Why, one wou'd swear thou wer't really in Love.

Bel. And not be forsworn, Sir *William*; for, faith, I do love her heartily, and am ready to capitulate for better for worse, as soon as she

pleases.

Sir *Will*. I'm glad to hear that—one Thing, pray, tell me, without Reserve——

Bel. Most willingly——

Sir *Will*. What Design have you upon the other? for you can't marry 'em both?

Bel. Humph—faith, no Design at all, if I cou'd come off handsomely; tho' she's very pretty, but too well acquainted with my Incognita, to have any Intrigue with.

Sir *Will*. Does she love you *Belair*?

Bel. Not that ever I cou'd discover, to say the Truth.

Sir *Will*. One Thing more——Is not her Name *Beliza*?

Bel. Ha! does he know her——I'm afraid my Plot's spoil'd again. [*Aside.*] Nay, Sir *William*, don't force me to tell Names, especially after

the Stratagem I have made Use of.

Sir Will. Nay, nay, I am convinc'd 'tis the same; had I apprehended it sooner, Friend, you had not carried your Design thus far.

Bel. So, I have made my Rival my Confident; I find I am a lucky Fellow, now, may he, out of pure Revenge discover me. [*Aside.*] If I have committed any Fault, *Sir William*, 'twas a Fault of Ignorance; could I divine the Lady was your Acquaintance—so that I am assur'd your Friendship must forgive me.

Sir Will. What Friendship must forgive, Love denies—as I imagin'd, here she comes.

Bel. Well, *Sir William*, whatever Satisfaction you demand I'm ready to return——this Favour let me obtain, as you are a Gentleman betray me not, to my fair Unknown——this 'tis the most unfortunate Thing. [*Exit.*]

Rob. Quite undone again. [*Exit.*]

Enter Beliza.

Beliza. I am confounded! I know not whether there be two or not—the Messenger affirms that *Revel* is in his Custody, but his Orders run so strict, that none must be admitted to see him—ha, Sir *William*.

Sir *Will.* Pray what was the Subject of your Ladyship's Contemplation—Colonel *Revel*.

Beliza. He has found it then at last—why, do you know Colonel *Revel*, Sir *William*?

Sir *Will.* You do, I find—perfidious Woman—have I discovered thy Falshood—all thy Turnings and Windings of Indifference, had their Source from hence.

Beliza. The readiest Way to stop his Tonge is to let loose mine. [*Aside.*] Do, do, exalt your Voice, and raise your Passion higher—but know! your jealous Rage shall extort no Submission from me, tho' I cou'd clear my Innocence with Ease—but the Man that dares suspect my Conduct—and start a Quarrel Husband-like, e'er I have confirmed his Title, I

scorn to disabuse——so leave him to what Method he thinks best. [*Exit.*]

Sir *Will.* Oh, Guilt! What an Assurance dost thou give, Oh, Hell, Hell.

*What Fate than this cou'd more injurious prove,
Deceived by Friendship, and destroy'd by Love.* [*Exit.*]

SCENE *changes to Sir William's Lodgings.*
Enter Belair and Robin.

Rob. You act your Part very well, Sir, but there was one Thing superfluous in that of *Revel.*

Bel. What was that, pr'ythee?

Rob. The Box o'th' Ear, Sir; 'twas very uncomfortable.

Bel. Oh, there's a Cordial for thee. [*Gives him Money.*] 'twas only to teach you a good Decorum.

Rob. Oh, Sir, your humble Servant, I am ready to be taught, Sir, when ever you please.

Bel. But how, are you sure my Father knows I am in Town?

Rob. Sure on't, Sir! Why, I saw him, and told him you came but two Hours ago—and that, you'd wait upon him as soon as you had refresh'd yourself with clean Linen——

Bel. Z'death, and why did you so, Sirrah?

Rob. Because, Sir, that was the first Excuse that came at my Tongue's End—and you know there is no humming and hawing with my old Master, Sir.

Bel. I am in a blessed Condition,—in Love, with I know not who, to be found I know not where——undoubtedly out of Favour with my Father, if I refuse his Choice, as I most certainly shall——

Rob. Nay, good Sir, be'nt over certain——may be she's as handsome as t'other—and you

may like her as well.

Bel. And, in all Probability, in Danger of a Duel with my Friend——to rectify all these Matters, require a Machivilian Brain——go you wait at t'other Lodgings.

Rob. Yes, Sir.——Now has he so many Women upon his Hands, he knows not what to do with 'em——the first Time I ever saw him puzzled in these Matters— [*Exit.*]

Lady Cautious *passing over the Stage.*

Bel. My Charmer! the Sight of thee dispels my Melancholly, and revives the Joy within my Breast, which first those Eyes inspired——

Lady. Why, were you melancholly, Sir? impossible.

Bel. How shou'd I be otherwise in the Absence of my Love.

Lady. Abundance of Love, but not a Grain of

Constancy, I fear.

Bel. As constant as the Sun my Fairest——

Lady. What, like him, court all you meet, and quit as soon as tasted——Nature never design'd my Sex to feed your Luxury—but for Health, Content, and Necessaries.

Bel. Right, why then can you deny the Man that endeavours to engross those Necessaries you speak of.

Lady. Where they are lawful——but upon second Thoughts, I find I have Scruples.——

Bel. Vapour, Vapours, all——lawful! Why the mechanical Notion I have of the World, is a rich Banquet, set off with all the choicest Things of the Creation——where Man's the Guest—and would it not be the Height of ill Manners to snatch a Dish, and run away with it, when, perhaps, twenty more had a Mind to the same Meat.

Lady. And would it not be the Extremity of

Folly to taste of every Dish—when your
Curiosity may bring a Surfeit——

Bel. Then there's Physicians enough in Town
to cure me——

Lady. Or kill you.

Bel. With all my Heart——because a House
may fall on my Head——must I therefore lie
in the Field—but what have we to do with
Philosophy?

*For softer Pleasures was your Sex design'd,
Heaven form'd and sent 'em to delight
Mankind.*

*No Rule or Custom did we first obey,
But freely lov'd where Nature led the Way.*

[Embracing her.]

Lady. Bless me! you'l smother me——

Bel. Let us not in cold disputing waste the
Time, least Fortune, angry at our dull Delay,
send another Interruption——

Lady. Well, you was born to ruin me——but do not, pray do not——use your Force——for well I find my Weakness——

[*In a yielding Tone.*

Bel. A good Hint——sure Fortune will not jilt me again——but hold, I'll secure the Door——
[Shuts the Door.] now shew me a Man possest of half an Hour's Happiness above me.

[*Takes Hold of her.*

Knocking without.

Lady. Undone for ever——there's some body at the Door, if I'm discover'd——Ruin attends me.

Bel. Another malicious Devil has crost me again——why, why, why——which Way shall I get out? Is there no back Stairs, nor Trap-Door——I, I, I, I'll jump out of the Window.

Lady. By no Means——what will come of me——here, here, get into that Closet.

[Knocks again.]

Bel. Ay, ay, any where—oh, Success,
Success, thou hast forsaken me. [*Exit.*]

She shuts the Door, then opens 'tother.

Lady. Who knocks with that Authority?
Brother, is it you! what shall I say? [*Aside.*]

Sir Will. What Business have you
here——Confusion, how shall I contain
myself? [*Aside.*]

Lady. If he has discover'd me, I'm a dead
woman. [*Aside.*] Why do you look so angry,
Brother——Is it a Crime to be in your
Lodgings?

Sir Will. Yes, I forbid you——and what was
the Door shut for, ha?

Lady. I shall be found out, there's no
avoiding it——because I was afraid the
Stranger which you say hates Women shou'd
surprise me—I came hither to be private, and

to avoid the Impertinency of Sir *Paul*—I tremble every Joint. [*Aside.*]

Sir *Will*. Ay, she did come to avoid Sir *Paul*, that's plain enough——Oh Nature, Nature, why did'st thou make a Woman——I'm sure I heard his Voice—far off he cannot be—that Closet must conceal him—I'm glad to find you was so circumspect, Sister——I am out of Humour——you'll forgive me——how shall I get rid of her? [*Aside.*]

Lady. Better than I expected——[*Aside.*]

Sir *Will*. Pray oblige me with Pen, Ink, and Paper, I have lost the Key of my Scrutore, and can't come at mine——

Lady. With all my Heart, Brother——a fortunate Escape. [*Exit.*]

Sir *Will*. Let me consider shall I sacrifice his Blood to my injur'd Honour—no, I owe this Life to him which now I bear—and a solemn League of Friendship join'd our Souls—I

lodg'd him here—and shall I break the Laws of Hospitality?—no—first, let me know how far my Honour is concern'd—if my Sister has betrayed her Virtue—and I prove it—my just Resentment then shall fall on both—'tis resolv'd——

Puts out the Candle, goes to the Closet and knocks.

Sir, Sir—

Belair opens the Door, and comes out.

Bel. Are they gone, my Life, my Love——

Sir Will. My Life, my Love! Damnation [*Aside.*] they are gone, hush, make no Noise for your Life, I expect my Husband every Minute, therefore if you love me retire instantly—

Bel. Love thee; do I live? But, oh, I fear these curst malicious Planets ne'er will crown my Wishes. [*Exit.*]

Sir *Will*. By that I find he has not enjoy'd her
—now know how far she's inclin'd.——

*Goes into the Closet, and shuts the Door
after him.*

*Enter Lady Cautious, with Pen, Ink, and
Paper.*

Lady. Here's Pen and Ink, Brother——ha, in
the dark, Brother—Brother—ha! gone—lucky
Opportunity—let me 'scape now, and I'll never
run the Danger more——[*Goes to the Closet.*]
you may come out, the Coast is clear.

Enter Sir William.

Sir *Will*. Then I'm happy—now let's lose no
Time—but improve the precious
Moments——conduct me to some more
private Place, there let me breathe my Soul
into your Bosom, and pay the Hazards which
we have both run——

Lady. This is no Time except you wish my

Ruin——my Brother is alarm'd and may return
this Minute, and sacrifice me to his jealous
Fears——have you no Regard for my
Safety——yet will you loiter to undo me.

Sir *Will*. Destruction seize thee. [*Aside.*] I
will go, but first tell me when, and where I
shall be blest again.

Lady. Press me not to further Folly—I own
the tender Sentiments of my Heart——and I
fear I love you——

Sir *Will*. Excellent Confession——[*Aside.*]

Lady. But my Fears grow strong, and
represent Vice in hideous Forms——twice
this Day Surprize preserv'd my Virtue.

Sir *Will*. Twice! Oh, Traiteress. [*Aside.*]

Lady. And now by all the Virtuous Stars, I'll
never see you more.

[*Flings from him.*

[*Exit.*]

Sir *Will*. I'm glad to hear that——but did not she know me, so took her Opportunity to start from my Vengeance? It may be so, and this be all a Lye——it must be so——and now I cou'd rip that Bosom where her Heart, her hot lustful Heart resides——yes, if thou be'st guilty—these Hands shall strait let out thy tainted Blood, to wash the Stains thou hast thrown upon our Family.

Enter Sir Paul with a Candle.

Sir *Paul*. Mercy on me, what a Noise is here in this House—Adsbud, it were a Blessing to be deaf—what did I say—Heaven forgive me——if I shou'd be struck deaf now, what a lamentable Thing 'twou'd be——humph—ha——in my Conscience, my Ears sing, I have a strange Humming in my Head—pray, Heaven, I grow not deaf in earnest—Well, my Wife has so many Relations—that lodge here, and visit her together—I shall certainly be undone—it costs me, at least, Five Pounds a Week in Coffee—Tea—Chocolate—and Ratafee—Mercy upon me—if I shou'd come to want now

in my old Age——I may thank Marriage for it
——if I shou'd come to be maintain'd by the
Parish now——Oh, sad——Oh, sad——or shou'd
live to be blind——and led with a Dog and a
Bell——what shall I do, if I come to that, and
who knows but I may——Let me see, let me see,
I'll try how I can walk in the Dark.

[*Puts out the Candle.*]

Enter Belair.

Bel. The Devil take these Disappointments, I
say——I have peep'd into every Room I cou'd
find open, but no Sight of her——well, if my
Incognita——falls to my Lot at last, 'twill be
some Amends——

Sir Paul. What a wretched Condition is it to
be depriv'd of Sight——the very
Apprehension puts me in a Sweat all over——
ah, ah, within there, Lights, Lights.

Bel. I can't imagine into what Part of the
House I'm got.

[*Runs against Sir Paul.*]

Sir Paul. What's that? Thieves, Thieves.

Bel. Pox take this old Cuff, how came I to stumble on him?

Sir Paul. *Basilicon*, why *Basilicon*, I say, Murder, Murder.

Enter Servants, with Lights, and Basilicon.

Bel. Sir, I'm glad to see you with all my Heart——

Sir Paul. That's a Lye, I believe——but what's your Business here now, Sir? Answer me that——do you come to bring me another Information of Rogues, ha! I know you again——either you come, Sirrah, to make me a Cuckold——or to rob my House——but I'll have you laid by the Heels——I will so——

Bel. Very fine, Faith——my next Step will be to *Tyburn*.

Sir Paul. Bind his Hands, there——

Bel. Keep off Scoundrels——without you'll have your Guts full of Oylet-holes.

Sir Paul. Oh, *Basilicon*, see, see, am I not wounded? Keep close to me.

Enter Sir William.

Bas. Not in the least, Sir.

Sir Will. How now, what's the Matter here——

Bel. Oh, *Sir William*, you come opportunely, to save me from these Rascals.

Sir Will. *Sir Paul*, why these Disorders? Of what are you Apprehensive——this Gentleman is a Friend of mine.

Sir Paul. But how came he here, Sir, in the Dark——

Bel. I mistook this for *Sir William's* Apartment——

Sir Will. Oh, Hippocrisy—but e'er you and I have done, you'll own 'twas upon another Score, [*Aside.*] it must be so, *Sir Paul*, I lent my Lodgings to the Gentleman for two or three Days—curse of my shallow Reason—I did not tell you of it, Sir, not thinking it material enough to trouble you about.

Sir Paul. Say you so, Sir——then Cuckoldom is nothing material, you shall all out of my House——you shall so, every Mother's Child of you——

Sir Will. What you please, *Sir Paul*——hark ye, *Belair*, there's something to adjust between you and I, which require more Privacy—follow me. [*Exit.*]

Bel. So my affair goes swimmingly. [*Exit.*]

Sir Paul. What the Devil had I to do with a young Wife?

They who in Age will drag the Marriage Chain,

*Like me they'll find the Hopes of Comfort
vain;
But if Relations usher in the Wife,
There needs no greater Curse to Human Life.*
[Exit.]

The End of the FOURTH ACT.



ACT V.

SCENE, *Sir William's Lodgings.*
Enter Sir William and Belair.

Sir *Will.* Thus far, Sir, I have had a strict
Regard to the League we made in *Spain*—
serv'd you in the minutest, as well as greatest
Things, even beyond the Character of a
Gentleman, in helping you to impose upon a
Lady, making good Manners subservient to my
Friendship.

Bel. Pr'ythee, Sir *William*, let me know the Sum at once, without this regular Account.

Sir Will. 'Twill be cast up immediately—at your Request, resign'd my own Lodgings, to oblige you, kept your Secret, even to the Woman I lov'd—tho' you abus'd her—

Bel. Nay, there's a false Tally, Sir *William*— I never abus'd a Lady in my Life——

Sir Will. Have you not abus'd *Beliza*?

Bel. Which Way? I never ask'd a Favour that cou'd put her to the Blush—or promis'd Marriage, and declin'd my Word.

Sir Will. Have you not pass'd by a wrong Name to her?

Bel. But the Person is the same, when once a Woman likes the Man—she seldom finds Fault with the Name.

Sir Will. Look'e, *Belair*, you may affect what Air you please—but supplanting my Love, and

dishonouring my Family, are Things not to be repair'd with a Smile——

Bel. The dishonouring of your Family! What mean you, Sir? Such Accusations are not like a Friend.

Sir *Will.* Nor such Actions, therefore draw——
[*Draws.*]

Bel. I'll never draw my Sword—till I know the Cause you allege; I endeavour'd to supplant you; I deny it—I wou'd not supplant my Friend, tho' I dy'd for the Woman—but this was only Gallantry—and I ignorant of your Pretences; and before I knew you lov'd *Beliza*, I had fix'd upon her Friend—that Point is clear'd with any reasonable Man——but the other Article it is that stings me—How have I dishonour'd your Family?——for there my Honour, Faith and Friendship are concern'd——

Sir *Will.* Are they gone, my Life——my Love——

Bel. Ha! my own Words!

Sir Will. And spoke to my Sister, Sir——

Bel. The Devil they were.

Sir Will. What! are you astonish'd, Sir?
Draw instantly——or by the base Affront you
offer'd me——

Bel. Nay, nay, hold, hold, *Sir William*, for
Faith I will not fight thee——one
Word——were it possible that I cou'd know
thy Sister by Instinct? Or, deny a fair Lady in
Distress.

Sir Will. Trifle no longer with my just
Resentment——

Bel. Hear me out, and if I plead not within
the Rules of Reason, Justice, and Probability,
pass Sentence on me freely——she's young
and handsome——her Husband old and
impotent——he full of Whimsies; she full of
Love; he wrinkled and decay'd——she warm
and wishing; I young and vigorous——she

married against her Will——I not married at all——we met by Accident——she lamented her Misfortune——I pity'd her——and what Return she might have made——no Man——not yourself, cou'd have refus'd, had the Case been yours——Oh, but then she proves the Sister of my Friend——but my Friend never told me that——consequently he is the Aggressor——Now, Sir *William*, will you put yourself upon your Guard, or put up your Sword, ha, ha, ha.

Sir *Will*. My Friend, again——I confess thy Arguments are unanswerable——those we do not trust, can ne'er betray us.

Enter Robin hastily.

Rob. Oh, Sir, your Father, Sir *Thomas*, has found your Lodgings, and hears you have been in Town this Fortnight——and swears if I don't find you out immediately, he'll slice me into Hash-meat; he says, he shall forfeit a Thousand Pounds if you come not presently——

Bel. What shall I conclude on——is he at my Lodgings?

Rob. No, Sir, he's upon the Hunt like any Blood-hound; I run down twenty Bye-ways, least he shou'd dog me——for you know, Sir, I am your most careful Servant.

Sir Will. That thou art indeed——you must resolve to see him.

Bel. And if I see him, there will be no avoiding this hated Match——

Rob. Without, Sir, you shou'd take another Name, and persuade him you are not his Son——I have the same honest, lying Face, Sir, still, I'll swear you are none of my Master.
[*Knocks without.*]

Bel. No, Sirrah, that won't do with him——ha, see who knocks.

Rob. If it be my old Master——what shall I say, Sir, must I lye, or speak Truth?

Bel. Which you will, the Condition's
desperate.

Re-enter Robin with a Letter.

Rob. Safe, Sir, safe, a Letter from your
Incognita, Sir.

[*Gives him the Letter.*

Bel. Thou dear Cordial to my love-sick Mind
[*Kisses it.*] [*Reads.*] *I have us'd all my
Rhetoric without Effect; my Father resolves
this Night to give me to thy Rival—therefore
if thou hast any Stratagem to relieve me, be
quick in the Execution—We are now
coming to Sir Paul Cautious's, who, it seems,
is an old Friend of my Father's, you being in
the same House, renders you capable of
seeing—your Incognita—now, Sir William,
I'll throw off Disguise, confess who I am, and
ask her of her Father——if he refuse, my
Rival must measure Blades with me; you'll be
my Second, if it come to a Push, Sir William.*

Sir *Will*. My Sword is still at my Friend's Service.

Bel. Have at him, then——I'll to my Lodgings, Dress, and return in an Instant——Now all ye Stars, that favour faithful Lovers, prevent my meeting with my Father. [*Exit.*]

Rob. And his Cane meeting my Shoulders. [*Exit.*]

Enter Sir Paul, pulling in Lady Cautious.

Sir *Paul*. You, troop, troop——there, Sir, take your Sister, and get out of my House——do so——you shan't bring Gallants under my Nose, and lend your Lodgings to Rascals that would cut my Throat——Mercy upon me, 'tis a Miracle the House don't tumble on our Heads——I admire I'm alive——

Lady. Thou art alive, indeed, and that's all——

Sir *Paul*. All, Housewife, why, why, why,

you han't poison'd me, or wounded me, have you?

[*Looking and feeling about him.*

Enter Basilicon.

Why, where are you, Rascal? Look, am I hurt—do I Bleed anywhere?

Basil. Not a Drop, Sir.

Sir Paul. Can you know by my Eyes or Hands, or any Thing, if all be right within me?

Basil. Very easily, Sir—you are in perfect Health—

Sir Paul. You are sure on't?

Basil. I am sure on't, Sir!

Sir Paul. Why then, Mistress, what do you mean, ha!

Lady. That thou art an old doating,—

despicable Wretch.

Sir *Will*. Hold, Sister——better Language to your Husband wou'd become you—and for you, Sir, since your ill Manners proceeds from groundless Jealousies, taxing a Gentleman with Crimes of which I know him innocent—making that a Pretence to traduce the Virtue of your Wife—I advise you to recall your Temper, and use her like my Sister——or I shall use you like my Enemy.

Sir *Paul*. And run me thro' the Guts, I suppose——was ever Man thus plagu'd before!

Lady. [*Weeping*.] This is the Life I lead——my Virtue still suspected——my Innocence accused, and the Quiet of my Life destroy'd——Did I truly merit his Abuses——Patience and Submission wou'd become me—but I defy, even the Tongue of Malice, to asperse my Fame or Conduct——and do you think, Brother, I'll endure this——tamely to submit and cringe to what I hate?

Sir *Will*. One Word, Madam— [*Pulls her aside.*] Boast not of your Conduct, nor your Virtue—vile audacious Woman—the Closet, Mistress, think on the Closet.

Lady. Does he know that? now, I'm lost for ever.

Sir *Will*. Now, vent your clamorous Virtue——while those in whose Hands you lodge it, Echo back, you have none.

Lady. What sure Disgrace attends unlawful Love; had I really fall'n, I now shou'd die with shame.

Sir *Paul*. What are they whispering about, Now——contriving to make me away, ten to one, *Basilicon*.

Bas. Oh, Sir, I defy 'em to do that whilst I am near you.

Lady. Oh, Brother, forgive me; 'twas the only Slip I ever made——methinks I hate myself, for having, but in Wish, consented, and grow

in Love with Virtue.—Since I have not stain'd my Family—the most was Thought, for some good Angel still did interpose to prop my nodding Virtue.

Sir Will. Take heed it nods no more.

Lady. I will, for now the Shame and Ruin that must have attended me, are so conspicuous to my Sight, that I will shun even the resemblance of a Crime like this; if you'll but pardon me, I'll vow never to fall again from Duty.

Sir Will. On that Condition I do—and, now, Sister, since your Marriage-Knot can never be dissolv'd, till Nature slips it—shew yourself the Pattern of a virtuous Wife, indulge his Age—and that Way preserve your Ease, and by your Meekness and Humility, fix your Reputation.

Lady. I readily obey—*Sir Paul*, my Youth has hitherto engaged me in a foolish Passion, contradictory to your Will, but my Brother's

Instructions has so far inform'd me of my Duty,
that my Behaviour, for the future, shall give
you no Cause for Complaint.

Sir Will. I'll engage my Honour for the
Performance of her Promise.

Sir Paul. Here's a Turn; who can find what
Plot is going forward——Are you both in
Earnest now, or not?

Sir Will. Pray, be less suspicious, and more a
Man—the less you suspect, the more you are
secur'd, *Sir Paul.*

Lady. A generous Confidence, will always
oblige your Wife.

Sir Paul. Well, for once I will trust
thee——come to my Arms then——hold,
hold, let me see——you have no Penknife nor
Pistol about you, have you?

Lady. To what Purpose, my Dear——Nay,
did you not say, you'd trust me——

Sir *Paul*. Well, so I will then. [*Embrace.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's a Gentleman, calls himself *Positive*, to wait on you, Mrs. *Beliza*, and another young Lady, with him.

Sir *Paul*. Bring them in immediately, I have not seen him this many a Year——and your Mistress too *Will*, we'll have a Match before you part, a Faith we will, my old Friend——

Enter Mr. Positive, Beliza, Camilla, Patch, and Flora.

Welcome, I'm glad to see thee with all my Heart, Ladies, you are welcome——

Pos. Sir *Paul*, your Hand——I cou'd not come to Town without seeing you, Faith——this is your Lady, I suppose; by your Leave, Madam. [*Salutes her.*] This is my Daughter, Sir *Paul*, I am come up to marry her.

Sir *Paul*. Why then, I wish her much Joy.

Lady. I shou'd be proud of being better known to you.

Cam. And I of your Acquaintance.

Lady. Dear *Beliza*, how do you expect I shou'd forgive your long Absence? Not see me in two Days.

Beliz. I confess my Fault.

Sir Will. The readiest Way to be pardon'd, is not to persist in the Wrong, indeed, Madam.

Beliz. But who shall judge between Right and Wrong?

Sir Will. Our Reason, Madam.

Beliz. That very often deceives us, especially if we put too much Trust in the Person.

Sir Will. It requires Judgment therefore, to make a proper Choice, for every Accident depends on that; but why this Indifference,

Madam?

Beliz. Why, that Question?

Sir *Will.* Because Love requires more Freedom.

Beliz. But Jealousy forbid it, Sir *William.*

Sir *Will.* Only the Effect of too much Love; I ask your Pardon for all past Offences.

Beliz. Rather of too much Folly.

Enter Belair.

Ha, *Revel*, at Liberty again——and here, what can this mean?

Bel. Ladies and Gentlemen, your Servant——

Sir William takes him aside.

Lady. Ha! the handsome Stranger——lie still my Heart, and think not of him. [*Aside.*]

Cam. Now am I distracted, to know whether this be her Lover, or mine. [*Aside.*]

Sir Will. Sir, here's a Gentleman begs Leave to unfold a Secret to you——[*To Mr. Positive.*]

Pos. To me——out with it then.

Sir Paul. Has he a Secret for him too.——This Spark is full of Secrets. [*Aside.*]

Bel. Sir, I presume you are the Father of this Lady.

Cam. This is *Constant*, that's certain. [*Aside.*]

Beliza. So, now the Game's up——as I suspected, all one Man. [*Aside.*]

Pos. And, what then, Sir?

Bel. Then, my Request is, to be admitted for your Son-in-Law.

Pos. For my Son-in-Law——

Bel. Yes, Sir, provided I make it appear my Fortune and Family are equal to yours——

Pos. Sir, in one Word—if you cou'd prove your Descent from the Blood-royal, and as many Acres of Land as the *Po* has engross'd, 'twou'd not avail you that, do you see [*Snaps his Fingers.*] my Word's my Word, she's dispos'd of already, and so give yourself no farther Trouble.

Cam. Heart-breaking Sentence. [*Aside.*]

Bel. Is this your final Resolution, Sir?

Pos. Why, Sir, what Reason have you to believe, I shou'd alter it?

Bel. Because, Sir, I have some Reasons to believe, your Daughter loves me—and I hope you'll not force her Inclinations——

Pos. You have some Reasons to believe she loves you—what Reasons, Sir, what Reasons?

You have not lain with her, have you? for that's the surest Reason a Man can build upon.

Bel. You surprise me, with your Question, Sir,—and make me blush, to hear you give Utterance to a Thought like that—Your Daughter's Virtue needs no Guard against such foul Advances.

Pos. I hope not—

Cam. I ne'er shall give you Cause to doubt my Virtue, Sir, and 'tis unkindly urg'd—I own, I love this Gentleman.

Pos. What, this is he, that you have pick'd up since you came to Town, is it?

Cam. This is he, that sav'd my Life, Sir—and if I have him not, I ne'er can love another; yet your Commands shall fix me as you please.

Sir Paul. Well said.

Pos. As to your Love, and Liking, that's out

of my Power, but your Portion and Person are not——so whether you consent or not, 'tis the same Thing——look ye, my Word's my Word, so never trouble yourself about that.

Bel. Is it so, I'll not leave the Sight of her——till I see my Rival——and then the best Arm carry her.

Beliza. And, this is your worthy Friend, you have so often mention'd, Sir *William*?

Sir Will. The same, another Time I'll inform you of every Thing, and hope to obtain your Pardon for him.

Beliza. Nay, I'm inclining to be good-natured; I like his Humour mightily——

Cam. But, Sir, have you no Regard to the Hazards which he run to save my Life; had not his generous Care preserv'd me, you had now been Childless in your Age.

Pos. Humph! Why, to say Truth, I wou'd be grateful, but I want the Means—he says, his

Estate is large, so that he's above a Present—
and I know not what to offer him——Sir, I
thank you for the Service which you did my
Daughter, and had I not given my Word, I might
have chose you, as soon as another, but now
there's no Help for't—if you'll be one of her
Bride-men, you shall have a Favour to keep
for her Sake.

Sir Paul. That's something.

Lady. Rude unpolished Monster. [*Aside.*]

Bel. Insult me not, Sir,——the Favour I
wou'd wear you have refus'd.

Enter Robin.

Rob. Sir, here's your Father will come in, in
Spite of my Teeth——or he swears he'll have
a File of Musquetteers, and blow the House
up. [*Aside to Bel.*]

Sir Will. What News brings *Robin*?

Bel. That my Father is at the Door, I must go

and try to appease him.

*Goes towards the Door, and meets Sir
Thomas.*

Sir *Tho.* Give me Entrance, or, I'll knock you down, you Dogs——

Enter Sir Thomas.

Where is this graceless Rogue.

Bel. [*Kneeling.*] Your Blessing, Sir, and with it your Pardon, for having thus long conceal'd myself, but when you shall know my Reasons——

Sir *Tho.* Reasons, Sirrah, what Reasons have you to shun your Father——and a handsome Woman; come along, come along, [*Pulling him.*] the Parson and the Bride has waited this two Hours, while I have been hunting you all over the Town, Sirrah.

Bel. And now you have found me, Sir, I cannot comply with what you propose.

Sir *Tho.* How, how's this?

Bel. There stands the Lady that destroys my Duty—

Sir *Tho.* Ha! What do I see?

Bel. Now, Sir, shew a true Paternal Love, and force me not to wed against my Will; for tho' the Lady you have chose, shou'd have all the Charms that bounteous Nature gave the whole Sex—there I am fix'd—and must, and will, refuse her.

Pos. Ha! Is not that Sir *Thomas Belair*?

Sir *Tho.* Sayst thou so——why, then, take her, my Boy; [*Throws him into Camilla's Arms.*] for this is she, thy Father did design for thee.

Bel. Oh, Transport, oh, unexpected Happiness!

Cam. Oh, Excess of Pleasure!

[*They embrace.*]

Sir Tho. Mr. *Positive*, your Servant; there's my Son.

Pos. So I see, Sir, and am glad of it with all my Heart.

Bel. Now, Sir, your Consent I hope is free.

Sir Paul. Why, this is the prettiest Turn I ever saw.

Rob. I, I, I, am so overjoy'd, I shall jump out of my Skin——

Pos. Camilla—there take him.

Calls her to him, and throws her to Belair.

Bel. My Love, my Life——my Soul's best Comfort——

Beliza. I am pleas'd to see the Event so lucky.

Sir *Will*. So am I, Love is the strongest
Guard to restrain Liberty.

Cam. Look up my *Constant*, and bless our
friendly Stars that thus have turn'd our
Disobedience into Duty.

Bel. Oh, I was lost in Rapture, the powerful
Torrent rowl'd too fast, and sinks me down
with Pleasure; now no more that Name, but
know thy Husband wears that of *Belair*——
and now, Madam, I must ask your Pardon too
—and you, my Friend, I give you a thousand
Thanks, and wish you as happy in *Beliza's*
Love——

Beliz. I'm glad to see you out of Prison, Sir;
but how?

Bel. Those Stratagems are vanish'd now, and
I rely on your good Nature to forgive me.

Sir *Paul*. Nay, Niece, I seldom ask Favours,
therefore must not be deny'd; you, and my
Wife's Brother, must make the second Couple.

Lady. I must second Sir *Paul*, in that Request.

Cam. Compleat my Happiness, and bear me Company.

Bel. Augment my Joys, by crowning of my Friends.

Sir *Will.* Let not all intreat in vain, Madam.

Beliz. Well, Sir *William*, I'll run the dangerous Venture of a Jealous Husband, for once; but let me caution you, aforehand——the more you suspect my Conduct, the less I shall consult your Humour? the more you watch me, the more I shall study to deceive you——Leave then, your Spanish Airs——and put the true English Husband on, that is the only Way to have a virtuous Wife.

Sir *Will.* Your Advice is so reasonable, that you shall be Mistress both of yourself, and me.

Sir *Paul.* Well said, Brother, thy Example shall be my Guide, for the future; come, we'll

be merry, I'm resolv'd; who is within there?

Enter Servant.

Go to the Play-House, and desire some of the Singers and Dancers to come hither; I am not often in this Humour, but will be merry while it lasts.

Sir *Will.* Go in my Name——they'll not refuse me.

Bel. No, thou art a good Benefactor to 'em.

Enter Ned.

Ned. Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you Joy, I overheard the Conclusion of your Happiness——and to crown your Mirth, here's a comical Figure upon Enterance.

Enter Wou'dbe, in his Waistcoat.

Sir *Will.* Ha, ha, ha, Mr. *Wou'dbe*, without his Clothes——what dost thou design this for a Masquerade, at my Wedding.

Wou'd. Married, and to *Beliza*, then the good Opinion *Ned* said she had of me, is come to nothing, I find [*Aside.*] Oh, Sir *William*, I am undone for ever, robb'd of my new Coat, that I but just put upon my Back, by the most whimsical Stratagem you ever hear'd.

Beliza. Ha, ha, ha, Mr. *Wou'dbe* out-plotted.

Sir *Will.* How was it, pr'ythee?

Wou'd. Why, Sir, you must know I had just made up such a Suit of Cloaths as that you have on——and was coming hither, but meeting your Brother *Ned*, he wou'd needs press me to the Tavern, to give him Beveridge, so in we went, the Fellow that waited on us, told me I had a Cut cross the Shoulder of my new Coat; I look'd, and found I had——he said there liv'd a Fine-drawer at the next Door——he wou'd draw it up in a Minute; Wherefore I gave it him, but my Eyes ne'er encounter'd him since.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Bel. Is your Subscription come to this, ha, ha, ha; why did not you examine the House?

Wou'd. I did, and they say he came in with me, and told them he was my Servant.

Ned. And that he never suffer'd a Drawer to wait on him, and therefore borrow'd an Apron of them to attend us.

Wou'd. To cheat me of my Coat——nothing vexes me so much, as that I have not been seen in it, had I but made the Tour of St. *James's*, and both Play-houses, my Passion for it would have ebb'd to an Indifference——and then——

Beliza. That was an unparallel'd Grievance, indeed.

Bel. Mr. *Wou'dbe*, might I advise you as a Friend, leave off this foolish Whim of Mimicking; Sir *William* he's a Gentleman of a plentiful Fortune, and can afford Change of Cloaths for every Day; but you, whose slender Allowance from a Father's Hand, admits of no

Profuseness——to imitate him is Madness.

Rob. What a grave Piece of Advice is there——well, Marriage has chang'd my Master already, I find.

Beliza. I heard you was about writing a Play, Mr. *Wou'dbe*, I'd advise you to make your top Character a Sharper——you see they can't out-wit a Gentleman; he has shew'd you Plot for Plot.

Wou'd. With what Courage can I proceed with the Play, when this Rascal is run away with the Subscription—Well, I'll into the Country, and never see this damn'd Town again. [*Exit.*]

Enter Servant.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Serv. The Singers and Dancers are come, Sir.

Here is Songs and Dances.

Sir *Will*. Bring 'em in, come, Gentlemen, take your Seats, but you forget, *Belair*—*Robin* is unrewarded yet.

Bel. Why, he shall chuse between the two Maids.

Rob. Ah, *Patch*!

Patch. Me do you chuse?

Rob. Thou tempts me, and if I shou'd look any longer, perhaps the Devil might be more cunning than I.

Patch. You don't like me then?

Rob. Look ye, Marriage is a lasting Thing——if it were for six Months only, I might venture upon thee——but for all the Days of my Life——Mercy upon me——thy Features are too high Priz'd Furniture for House keeping, especially where they must let Lodgings——therefore, *Flora*, have at thee——

Flora. Why will you quit her for me?

Rob. To shew the Extremity of my Love, I will.

Patch. Fool, didst thou think I wou'd have had thee? Dost thou know that I have had my Nativity cast, and am told that I shall marry a Knight, at least, if not a Lord.

Rob. Oh, good Night to your Ladyship, then.

Ned. Well, *Patch*, stay till my Brother dies, and I'll marry thee, to make good thy Calculation, ha, ha.

Patch. Though you shou'd make me a Lady, you'd not better my Fortune much by being your Wife, our Humours wou'd quickly consume our Estate;—I love fine Cloaths,——fine Coach,——fine Equipage, and fine House;——You Drinking, Wenching, Gaming, and so forth——that when I wanted a New Suit, in the Morning, you have flung off your Money over Night.——

Sir *Will*. She has hit you home, Brother, for your jesting.

Ned. Well, since we know one another's Infirmities so well, we'll keep as we are——

Bel. Now, my fair *Camilla*, I am happy——these Arms shall fix my rambling Heart.

*Ungovern'd Youth, of Taste not over-nice,
Roves thro' the various Fields of Pois'nous
Vice.
Cheated with Health, they ride thro' Pleasure
Post,
To purchase Liberty, what e'er it cost.
True English like, that Idol they adore,
And fear the Marriage-Knot, as much as
Gallick Power.
But if once Reason checks the looser Reins,
And bring sound Judgment into Play again,
Then all must own——
The truest Joy that waits on human Life,
Is a constant Temper——and a virtuous Wife.*

THE EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. PENKETHMAN.

*The Plodding Tribe are so resolv'd of late,
To model and refine our little State.
I fear to Great Ones we have this relation.
They'll ruin us at last by Reformation!
What heavy Race so far without the City,
Cou'd think of plaguing us for being Witty?
But were we broke (disbanded I wou'd speak,
For nothing but a Shopkeeper shou'd break!)
Men of our Quality's wou'd rise by falling,
And grow more eminent in any Calling.
Our various Virtues wou'd fit all Conditions;
They that want Piety might turn Physicians.
A Door-keeper whose Cheats we can't
prevent,
Wou'd surely thrive in any State-Employment.
He that his Hopes from Impudence does*

*draw,
Might turn his happy Genius to the Law.
The Under Fry a little Thing will serve,
For by the Laws of England, younger
Brothers starve.
No Change of Government the Women drop,*

[Putting on a Mask.

*For—Eighteen Pence in Velvet sets them up.
As for myself; may Marriage be my Fate,
Chain'd to a Cross, I may repent, tho' late;
Grow fit to turn Informer to the Town,
And thrive by the same Means I was undone.*



TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Contemporary spelling has been retained, including abbreviations that are now uncommon, e.g. cou'd. Hyphenation and spelling are inconsistent throughout, as are the abbreviations used for character names. An instance of "Family" was corrected to read "Family".

Three further changes were made, which can be identified in the body of the text by a grey dotted underline.

In the sentence "why can't it be made walk by Clock-work", the word "to" was added between "made" and "walk".

The word "to" was also added in the sentence, spoken by Belair, "Why not? he must be insensible, that **to** so much Beauty cannot warm." The previous sentence spoken by Patch makes this the logical interpretation.

The passage originally rendered as "*Pos. Camil.*—there take him." was changed to "*Pos. Camilla*—there take him." It is clear that Positive is speaking to Camilla rather than the two characters speaking at the same time. The error was presumably caused by the typesetter, who abbreviated her name.

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[The end of *Love at a Venture* by Susanna

Centlivre]