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THE

Perjur'd Husband:

OR, THE

Adventures of VENICE.

A

TRAGEDY.

Drawn from

THE

WORKS
OF THE CELEBRATED
Mrs. CENTLIVRE.

VOLUME ONE

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXI.



THE

PROLOGUE.

By a GENTLEMAN.

Spoken by Mrs. OLDFIELD.

*Such dreadful Laws of late 'gainst Wit are made,
It dares not in the City show its Head.
No Place is safe; each Cuckold turns Informer,
If we make merry—it must be in a Corner.
And here's To-night, what doubly makes it sweet,
A private Table, and a Lady's Treat:
At her Reflections none can be uneasy,
When the kind Creature does her best to please ye.
Humbly she sues, and 'tis not for your Glory
T'insult a Lady—when she falls before ye.
But since no human Wit can stand the Test,
With Gorman! and the Champion of the West!
She'll fill the Lists, and then you cannot slight her,
(With Honour safe) for she's a fair Inviter.
Expects no Favour, but at Honour's Call,
Defies the boldest Briton of you all;
Whate'er's her Fate, she's sure to gain the Field,
For Women always conquer, when they yield.*



Dramatis Personæ.

MEN

<i>Count Bassino, a Savoyard, married to Placentia, and in Love with Aurelia,</i>	} <i>Mr. Mills.</i>
<i>Armando, Bassino's Friend,</i>	<i>Mr. Simpson.</i>
<i>Alonzo, a Venetian Gentleman, betrothed to Aurelia,</i>	} <i>Mr. Thomas.</i>
<i>Pizalto, a Noble Venetian,</i>	<i>Mr. Norris.</i>
<i>Ludovico, a Frenchman,</i>	<i>Mr. Fairbank.</i>

WOMEN.

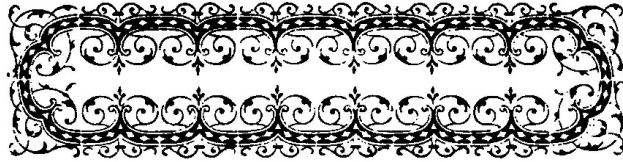
<i>Placentia, Bassino's Wife,</i>	<i>Mrs. Kent.</i>
<i>Aurelia, a young Venetian Lady, betrothed to Alonzo, but in Love with Bassino,</i>	} <i>Mrs. Oldfield.</i>

Forella, *her Woman*,
Lady Pizalta, *Pizalto's Wife*,
Lucy, *her Woman*,

Mrs. Baker.
Mrs. Moore.
Mrs. Lucas.

Maskers, Dancers, Singers, and Attendants.

SCENE, VENICE, in Carnival-Time.



THE

PERJUR'D HUSBAND.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Curtains fly up, and discover a Mask in Pizalto's House. Pizalto, Lady Pizalta, Lucy; Ludovico talking to Lady Pizalta; Bassino and Aurelia talking together; Florella and other Maskers.

A Spanish Entry.

While the Dance is performing, enter Armando, and gives Bassino two Letters, which he opens and reads.

Lady Pizalta and Lucy advance to the Front of the Stage.

L. Piz. Oh! *Lucy*, I'm undone——
That Stranger there has charm'd my Heart: I feel
The Pow'r of conquering Love; quick, quickly tell me,
What shall I do to ease this racking Passion?

Lucy. Nay, Madam, I fancy your Passion has little Occasion for Lenitives; it blazes so violently at first, 'tis like to be soon extinguish'd.

L. Piz. Dear *Lucy*, don't trifle with me; but contrive, imagine, do any thing, to bless thy Love-sick Mistress with the Sight of that dear Man: And as an Earnest of further Rewards, here, take this——

[*Gives her a Ring.*

Lucy. Madam, I receive your Commands with much Joy, but your Present with more——[*Aside.*] I'll try what this projecting Brain can do, and if you step into the next Room, I'll soon give you an Account of my Proceedings. [Exit L. Pizalta.

Bass. Ye Gods!
What have I done, that you pursue me thus?
Why did you e'er decree that I should wed
A Wife I now must hate? Why did I see
The bright *Aurelia*? Why am I thus torn
'Twixt Love and Duty? Oh! what Pangs, what Torments
My Soul endures! Oh! my *Aurelia*!

[*Exeunt omnes, but Lucy & Ludov.*

Lucy pulling Ludovico by the Sleeve.

Lucy. Sir, Sir, one Word with you.

Lud. Your Business——

Lucy. May one ask you a civil Question, and be resolv'd?

Lud. Hum—A civil Question, sayst thou? What's it, prithee, a Night's Lodging? If so, pull off thy Mask, and I'll resolve thee instantly—But I never strike Bargains in the Dark.

Lucy. I don't know, Sir, but it may tend to that, by way of Proxy, at the long-run: But at present my Commission reaches no further than to know your Lodgings; if any Thing comes on't, I fancy 'twill not displease you.

Lud. (Aside.) Hum—This is but a Pettifogger in Intrigues, I find—Egad, I'm like to be pretty well employ'd during the Carnival—Well, considering I am a Stranger here, this Hit may be a lucky one, and the Lady handsome—Egad, I'll fancy her so at least, wer't but for the Pleasure of Expectation.

Lucy. What are you studying, Sir? Are you so long resolving whether you shall accept a Lady's Favour, or no?

Lud. No, faith, Child: I am not over-scrupulous in those Matters—Let her be but Woman, and we shan't disagree—And so thou mayst tell her—There's a Direction for thee. [*Tears the Superscription of a Letter and gives it her.*]

[*Exit Ludovico.*]

Lucy. Frank and easy, *a la mode de Paris*—Well, these indifferent Sparks charm more than all your cringing Fops—Now for my Business—Let me see—I'll to my Lady, she'll write; I'll carry the Letter, and the Devil will turn Saint, if I don't bring 'em together, and merit a further Recompence.

*By Coupling many have their Fortunes made;
I only want Preferment, not my Trade.*

[*Exit Lucy.*]

SCENE II.

The Scene changes to Bassino's Lodgings, and discovers the Count in his Night-gown, a Table with Lights, and Letters lying on the Table.

Bass. All Things lie hush'd in peaceful Silence here:
All but *Bassino's* Mind—Oh! happy he
Who lives secure and free from Love's Alarms.
But happier far, who, Master of himself,
Ranges abroad without that Clog, a Wife.
Oh! rigorous Laws impos'd on Free-born Man!
On Man, by bounteous Nature first design'd
The Sovereign Lord of all the Universe!
Why must his generous Passion thus be starv'd,
And be confined to one alone?
The Woman, whom Heaven sent as a Relief,
To ease the Burden of a tedious Life,
And be enjoy'd when summon'd by Desire,
Is now become the Tyrant of our Fates. [*Takes up a Letter.*]
But hold, *Bassino!* whither does thy Passion
Hurry thy wandering Reason: Let this Letter
Re-call the Fugitive, and fix thy Senses

On duteous Love——A Wife, so young, so fair,
So excellent, whose Charms not three Months since
Did fire thy Soul; a Wife, who dotes on thee;
A Wife to whom thou swore eternal Love——
By Heaven, I swear again I will be true.
This Thought again restores my Peace of Mind——
No, charming Wife; no dear *Placentia*, no,
Thou shalt not beg in vain: I will return [*Kisses the Letter*.
But who comes here—My Friend *Armando*?

Enter Armando.

Arm. Dear Friend, I heard
The Conflict of your Passion, and my Joys
Are now compleat, since Virtue gains the Day.

Bass. Yes, dear *Armando*, the Conflict is o'er,
And I'm resolv'd to fly to my *Placentia*.

Arm. Cherish that Thought: By Heaven your Resolution
Transports my Soul with Joy!
A kind, a virtuous Wife waits your Embraces;
A Wife, who like a Turtle mourns the Absence
Of her dear Mate. Haste then, my Friend, to drive
That Cloud of Sorrow which o'ercasts her Mind,
And, like the Sun, dispel her gloomy Thoughts.

Bass. Thanks for your Counsel——
You like a God support my feeble Virtue.
This very Morning I'll prepare for *Turin*,
Where Time and Absence will deface the Image
Of that bewitching Beauty, which now haunts
My tortur'd Mind—Yet, first I'll take my Leave
Of this fair Charmer——And Heaven grant
That I may see her unconcern'd——

Arm. My Lord, what d'you mean?
Have you well weigh'd the Danger of this Visit?

Bass. What danger can there be?

Arm. Danger! my Lord—Consider well how feeble
Our Reason is against the Pow'r of Beauty——

Bass. My Resolution's firm; no Charm can shake it.

Arm. If not her Beauty, fear her Syren Tongue;
fear her endearing Prayers, her fond Reproaches,
Her tender Sighs, her Vows, her trickling Tears.
Nay—if all these prove vain, fear her Despair,
A Woman, an abandon'd Woman's Rage.

Bass. Were there more Dangers, yet I'll stand 'em all;
My Honour bids me pay this parting Visit:

My Heart shall have no Share in what I'll speak.
Trust me this once, and be yourself a Witness,
Bassino can controul unlawful Love.—

Arm. My Lord, 'tis with Regret I see you go,
May Heaven assist you in this dangerous Strife.

SCENE III.

Aurelia's Chamber; she in an Undress with Florella.

Aur. No more of that—Cease thy ungrateful Suit,
Alonzo is a Man I cannot love;
I own he's witty, generous, and brave;
Has all the Charms that Nature can bestow
To fire a Woman's Heart—Yet I'm insensible,
His very Sight chills all my trembling Spirits;
Therefore, name him no more—I charge thee do not.

Flor. Madam, I've done—Yet shall I be permitted
To ask a Question? Are you then resolved
Ne'er to admit a Passion in your Breast?

Aur. Oh! Dear *Florella*, press not a Confession,
Which but too well my Eyes themselves disclose.
Alas! I love—I love to such Excess,
That tho' I know I'm lov'd again, my Mind
Is still perplex'd with Doubts and jealous Fears.

Flor. You love and are belov'd! Then sure you reach
The Height of human Bliss, and bounteous Heaven
Can scarce give more—But who's the happy Man;
Is it not Count *Bassino*?

Aur. Oh! charming Name; there's Musick in that Sound!
Yes, Count *Bassino* is the Man I love.
Canst thou now blame my Coldness to *Alonzo*?

Flor. Forgive me, Madam, if I dare presume
To speak my Sentiments: I must confess
Bassino is a Man of excellent Virtue;
His Education at the Court of *Savoy*
Has still refin'd what he receiv'd from Nature;
His Person too is charming—
And, what most Women court, he has a Title—
But then consider, you are unacquainted
With his Estate, and tho' his Equipage
Denotes an ample Fortune, yet we see
Many a Stranger here during the Carnival,
Who makes a Figure here by industrious Gaming.
As for *Alonzo*, he was born at *Venice*,

Of noble Parents; his Estate, a large one——
Even from his Youth you had his amorous Wishes,
And as he grew in Years his Love increas'd:
You lov'd him too——Nay, which is more, your Father
Approv'd your mutual Loves, and at his Death
Bequeath'd you to *Alonzo*.

Aur. Oh! my *Florella*, thou hast rous'd a Thought,
Which will for ever break *Aurelia*'s Rest.
I know my Father's Tenderness to me
Made him confirm *Alonzo*'s Suit, for then
I lov'd *Alonzo*——
But were my gentle Father still alive,
I'm sure he would not cross my Inclinations,
But, Oh! name not my Father; I cannot bear
The sad Remembrance of so great a Loss.

[Weeps.]

Flor. But fear you not t'offend his peaceful Ghost,
By breaking with the Man he destin'd yours?

Aur. 'Tis not my Fault: and just Heaven must forgive
What Heaven decrees——Yes, 'tis my cruel Stars
That made my Heart inconstant to *Alonzo*,
'Tis with Regret I break my plighted Faith;
In vain I strive to check my new-born Love,
I cannot, cannot live without *Bassino*.

Flor. Madam, I wish your Passion ne'er prove fatal,
But much I fear this inauspicious Match.

Enter Bassino, Armando.

Aur. May Heaven avert th' unlucky Combination
Of our presaging Thoughts: For, know, I tremble too——
But here's the man that will dispel my Fears.

Arm. to *Bass.* My Lord, remember
To keep your Resolution.

Bass. to *Arm.* Yes—I will keep it—[To *Aur.*] Madam,
you will pardon
A Morning Visit, when you know what Reasons
Press'd me to fix it on this early Hour.——
By Letters from the Court I was last Night
Commanded to return with Speed to *Turin*,
And thence let out for *France*, to represent
My Sovereign Liege in solemn Embassy.
This Day I must prepare to take my Journey,
Tho' 'tis with killing Grief I leave my dear,
My fair *Aurelia*——[To *Arm.*] Now, my *Armando*.

Arm. My Lord, 'tis well: But still be on your Guard,
The dreadful Shock comes on——

Aur. This Day be gone! What means my Lord! Oh! Heaven,
My boding Fears are come to pass: I see
A Cloud of Woes just ready to o'erwhelm me.
Is't possible! how can that Form divine
Harbour such Treachery! Is then *Bassino* false?
Say, perjur'd Man, how often did you swear
This happy Day should make you mine for ever!
How can you now forget your solemn Vows?
Why have I met with this inhuman Usage?

Bass. Madam, my Prince's Orders
Are absolute: My Honour is concern'd.

Aur. Must a vain Title be preferr'd to Love?
But no—You never lov'd——'twas base Deceit.
Curs'd, curs'd dissembling Men! Their flattering Tongues
Can feign a Passion that will look like Love,
Till by Degrees they get us in their Power;
Then with bold Impudence they draw the Vizard,
And shew the Cheat that mock'd our credulous Hopes.
Faithless *Bassino*,
How oft you swore your Love could ne'er expire:
How oft you swore one Smile of mine had Charms,
Even above the Glories of a Crown.
Those were the Oaths I fondly did believe;
Those Words convey'd a Poison to my Heart,
And even now I feel its mighty Force:
My Head turns giddy, and my trembling Knees
Betray their sinking Burden——
Alas! I faint, I die——

[*She faints, Bassino runs and embraces her.*

Bass. Oh! stay, my Love, my Life, my Soul, my all:
The Conflict's past, and I am thine again,
But she is breathless! Oh! ye rigorous Gods,
Give back her Soul, or let my own be plung'd
To dark *Elysium*——Oh! my dear *Aurelia*!

[*Hugs her.*

Arm. Is this your Resolution? By Heaven, I blush
To call you Friend. Your Wife, my Lord, remember
Your Wife——

Bass. Curse on that Name——
Urge me no more to follow your Chimeras,
Lest you oblige me to break off that Friendship
You blush to own——Oh! my *Aurelia*!

Arm. aside. How sweet is treacherous Vice! how eagerly
Fond Man pursues his Ruin!
All Arguments were vain——yet still one Way remains,
Which cannot fail, to stop the Progress of this impious Love.
His Wife, by my Direction, comes to *Venice*:

Her Sight will soon awake his slumbering Virtue,
At least it will retrieve *Aurelia's* Senses.

[Exit Armando.]

Aur. recovering. Where am I? Where's my Lord, my false *Bassino*?

Bass. Here, here, my Soul, my charming Dear.

Aur. thrusts him off. Hold off—Approach me not—
urge not my Rage,
Or with this Dagger I'll revenge my Wrongs
On thy perfidious Heart——But, oh! his
Heart's too hard,
Even for temper'd Steel—Therefore I'll sheath it here.

[Offers at her Breast: *Bassino* snatches the Dagger, and throws himself at her Feet in a distracted Manner.]

Bass. Oh! hold——forbid it Gods!
I am the Cursed Cause, and I must die.
Oh! who could bear my Load of mortal Woe!
Ye heavenly Powers bestow the Stroke of Grace,
And rack *Bassino*: Let your vengeful Thunder
Now crush my guilty Head——Or thou, Oh! Parent Earth,
Open thy Bosom, and conceal my Crime.

[Tears the Ground.]

Aur. Is he then mine again!
Look up, my Lord, my Love, my Life!
My dear *Bassino*! 'Tis *Aurelia* calls.
Let me for ever fold thee in my Arms,
And beg thou't never speak of parting more.

[Falls down.]

[Embraces him.]

Both rise and embrace in an Extasy.

Bass. Oh! never, never——
The Poles shall meet, the Sun and Moon invert
Their wonted Motion e're I part from thee.
I fondly try'd how much I was belov'd,
And since you're true, my Bliss is now compleat.

Aur. Was't but a Trial? then my Griefs are vanish'd,
And I am lost in Joy——*Bassino's* mine.

[They embrace again.]

Bass. Thine, thine for ever: And this happy Day,
Shall end *Aurelia's* Fears——Ha——
This Day, said I, but where's *Placentia* then?
My Wife *Placentia*! Little does she think
What Baseness I intend—Oh! racking Thought!
But 'tis resolv'd, I'll change nor think no more:
I'll try to plunge, and reach the blissful Shore;
And if I sink, yet still this Hope's my Friend,

I'll snatch my Treasure e're my Course I end.

[*Aside.*]

Aur. My Lord, what makes you pause?

Bass. The ravishing Thoughts of mighty Joys to come
Kept me in Extasy and made me dumb;
When on thy snowy Breast dissolv'd I lie,
What Monarch can there be more blest than I?

[*Bassino leads her off with a languishing Air.*]

Enter Alonzo.

Alon. Sure, if my Eyes deceive me not, I saw
Aurelia with the Count just parting hence:
Dissolv'd in Love, and languishing they seem'd.
Damnation——
I cannot bear the Thought—I'll after 'em.

Alonzo going. Enter Florella.

Flor. aside. Ha——*Alonzo* here! I must prevent a Discovery.

Alon. *Florella* here! she comes opportunely——she may inform me of what I yet but fear——Good-morrow, *Florella*: How fares my Love, my dear *Aurelia*?

Flor. Signior, Good-morrow; you are an early Visitant.

Alon. Not for a Man in Love; but answer me, How does *Aurelia*?

Flor. Well in Health——Only she's now and then in a little Fit of Melancholy, such as usually proceeds from timorous Doubts about that dreadful State of Matrimony. You know the Time draws nigh that gives her to your Arms.

Alon. By Heaven! 'Tis an Age, there's six Days yet to come.

Flor. An Age, indeed, if he knew all.

[*Aside.*]

Alon. But haste, *Florella*; lead me to my Dear,
She only can contract that tedious Age
Of lingring Pain, and sooth it with her Smiles.
Say, is she alone?

Flor. Yes——No——
Oh! Heaven! What shall I say?
She, she's a——

[*Aside.*]

Alon. Ha——What means this faltering Answer?
All's not right, and my Suspicion's true.

Flor. Signior, my Lady is not drest, and I shall displease her, in admitting even you, without her Leave.

Alon. Ha——not drest——Take heed you mock me not;
Nor think to blind me with your feign'd Excuse:
For in your guilty Face I read the Truth.

Come, tell me who's with her? is't not *Bassino*?

Flor. aside. Oh! Heaven! What shall I say?

Alon. Nay, nay, no Study: Lying will not do:
I saw 'em part from hence, just now I saw 'em.
Harkee, sweet Mistress, how long have you practis'd
This subtle Trade? I find you're much improv'd.
Hell and Damnation——quickly, tell me
What did *Bassino* give for his Admittance?
I'll double the Reward—but she's not drest for me——
Oh! damn'd, damn'd Sex!

Flor. Signior, what do you mean?

Alon. To see *Aurelia*——see her instantly——
Nay by Heaven! I will: All Opposition's vain:
For by th' avenging Power of Love I swear,
Tho' in *Bassino*'s Arms, I'll drag her thence,
Only to cast her from my Sight for ever:
Nor shall he live to triumph in my Shame.
What tho' the Marriage Rites be not perform'd,
Yet I may call her Wife. Her Father gave her to me:
And her own Vows have fix'd my Heart in her's.
Must then *Alonzo* be deny'd Admittance,
Under that poor Pretence that she's not drest?
Whilst base *Bassino* lies dissolv'd in Pleasures
On her perfidious Breast——Oh! killing Thought!
She makes my Name of Husband infamous,
Even before the Priest has join'd our Hands.
I'll in, and if th' Affront I tamely bear,
May Heaven deny me at my latest Prayer.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. Ludovico's Lodgings.

Ludovico *solus.*

Lud. Who waits?

Enter Mountaine.

Mount. Did you call, Sir?

Lud. Mountaine, run to Signiora *Ronquilla*, and tell her I have done with her for ever, if she does not send this Evening the hundred Ducats she promised to lend me——And harkee, as you come back, acquaint Signiora *Cornara* I shall be busy To-morrow, and desire she will put off her Visit till another Day.

[*Knocking at the Door.*]

Mount. Sir, there's somebody at the Door.

Lud. See who 'tis.

Mount. Sir, a Gentlewoman desires to speak with you.

Lud. A Gentlewoman! admit her——Well,
'Tis a great Fatigue to oblige the whole Sex.

Enter Lucy.

Oh! what News from your Lady?

Lucy. This will inform you, Sir.

[*Gives him a Letter.*]

Lud. reads. Hum, hum, a Letter——*Tho' it may seem improper for one of my Sex to make the first Step in an Amour, yet you ought to consider, that the rigorous Confinement we are under all the Year round, may, in some Measure, excuse the Liberties we take during the Carnival. If you have the Courage to meet me, I shall be at four in the Afternoon in the Piazza d'Espagna, invisible to all but yourself.*——Well, I believe all Women in *Venice* are wild for Gallants.

Lucy. Sir, what Answer shall I return to my Lady?

Lud. aside. Egad——I am in Doubt whether I shall throw my Time away on this Intrigue or no——Harkee Child, step into the next Chamber, and I'll answer your Message instantly——

[*Exit Lucy.*]

Let me see——[*Reads in his Table-Book*] *Monday*, at Two in the Afternoon, I am to meet Signiora *Belleza* at her Nurse's——She's a pretty Rogue, and so I'll go——At Three of the Clock, Signiora *Dorinda*, the Senator's Wife, at the *Indian House*——Pshaw, she's an old Acquaintance,——I shan't go——At half an Hour past Three, the Countess *Wrinkle*, who presented me with a Gold-hilted Sword——Silly Fool! does she think I'll bestow one of my Visits on an old shrivelled Piece of Antiquity, for a trifling Present, not worth above three-score Pistoles——At a Quarter past Four, my Semstress *Dorothy Steenkirk*, who supplies me with Linen,——Oh! this Visit may be put off for a new Intrigue——And so I'll acquaint the Messenger.

[*Exit Ludovico.*]

The End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Chamber in Signior Pizalto's House.

Enter Lady Pizalta, Lucy.

Lady *Piz.* Did you deliver my Letter to *Ludovico*, *Lucy*?

Lucy. Madam, I did; I found him in his Study, reading the Lover's Watch, which he swears does not at

all agree with his Constitution. He hates Injunctions of Love, like those of Penance: For the one, says he, is no more pleasurable to the Body, than the other beneficial to the Soul.

L. Piz. What a fine Gallant I'm like to have with these Principles! Well——what did he say to a Summons from a Woman of my Quality? Did it not make him wish the Time of Assignation were sooner than the Appointment in the Letter?

Lucy. He first hum'd over your Billet; and pausing a while, he desired me to stay for an Answer in a next Room; then coming to me, he ask'd me what Countrywoman you were? For, said he, if she should prove an old Acquaintance, I would use her damnably——But when I had assured him you never saw the Outside of these Walls, he began to have that Desire which all Men have to a new Face.

L. Piz. Very well; and what then?

Lucy. He strait enquir'd whether you were black, brown, fair, old, young, Maid, Wife, or Widow? I told him you was a wretched Wife to an old, impotent, rich, covetous, noble *Venetian*; beautiful, young, generous, and of a fair Complexion. He hugg'd me at these Words, seem'd transported with the News, and swore that in Intrigues a Wife was most suitable to his Temper; for, said he, there's neither Children to father, nor Honour to repair: And where his Pocket and Liberty are safe, he is contented to venture his Body and Soul.

L. Piz. Excellent Maxims!

Lucy. In short, Madam, he says he has had several Bills of this Nature drawn upon him of late, and how much his Stock may be exhausted, he knows not; but however he'll meet you, and if he cannot answer your Expectation, he'll give you Earnest.

L. Piz. You talk merrily, Girl; I hope you did not tell my Name. I should be loath to trust a Man of his Character with my Reputation at first Dash.

Lucy. No, Madam, I only told your Quality.

L. Piz. That's well: Oh! Reputation, what several Sorts of Slavery do we undergo to preserve thee! for to be thought virtuous, we are forced to be constantly railing against Vice, tho' our Tongues and Maxims seldom agree.

Lucy. Alas! Madam, that Pretence is grown too common: For the Men now take it for granted, that a Lady is very near surrendering, when once she holds out that Flag of Defiance.

L. Piz. Well——Men use us very barbarously: They will neither suffer us to be honest, nor allow us to be thought so——Here, take this Key, and secure every thing that concerns my Reputation: And if my Husband wakes ere I come back, you may easily find some Excuse to prevent his Enquiries: for the Carnival allows us more Liberty, than at other times we dare pretend to——I know thy Honesty, and will rely upon't.

Lucy. Yes, indeed, Madam, I am honest at the Bottom.

L. Piz. Well, I'll be gone: 'Tis about the Hour.

[*Ex. L. Piz.*

Enter Pizalto.

Lucy. Good Luck attend you, Madam——Oh! Heavens! here's my Lord——Madam, Madam, Madam——Oh! Lord, what shall I say, now she's gone?

Piz. Hist, hist, *Lucy*: Don't, don't, don't call your Lady, for I have a Word or two to say to thee in private, and have waited for this lucky Opportunity a great while——

Lucy, aside. Now *Venus* be prais'd. I hope he has found some Business of his own, that may give my Lady an Opportunity to mind her's.

Piz. Well, *Lucy*, well,—canst thou guess my Business now?

Lucy. No, indeed, Sir—But I'm certain, an old Man's Business can't be great. [Aside.

Piz. [Gives her a Looking-glass.] Here, Child, this will tell thee—Look in't, look in't, I say——Ah! ah! thou hast a pretty pouting Lip, a delicate roguish Eye, such an Ogle, such a Cast——Ah! Rogue——Faith, thou'rt very pretty: And, in short, if any one rival thy Lady, it will be thee, *Lucy*——Egad, I have Fire in me, yet.

Lucy, aside. O' my Conscience, and little too. I believe: Yet I wish he has enough to serve my Ends. I'll make my Fortune——Lord, Sir, what do you mean? I rival my Lady! Heaven forbid; I would not injure so good a Woman for the World——

Piz. Pshaw, pshaw—Where's the Injury done to her, Child? Adod, I'll give thee a hundred Crowns.

Lucy. No Injury, say you, my Lord? Why, I wonder you should be so jealous of my Lady, and preach such religious Maxims to her, when your own Principles are quite opposite.

Piz. Look ye, Child, a Man may do that, which would look abominable in a Wife——A Woman's Reputation is a nice Thing——

Lucy. 'Tis so——and therefore 'tis but Reason I should take Care of mine.

Piz. Prithee, no more of that: Thy Reputation shall be safe; I'll marry thee to my Gentleman.

Lucy. Gentleman—Valet! Faugh—And what Good will a hundred Crowns do me, when my Virginity is gone? Indeed, if you lov'd me as much as you say, and would make my Fortune, (for I should love extreamly to be a Lady) I cannot tell how far you might persuade me——I know my Reputation would be safe in your Hands.

Piz. Make thy Fortune! Why, I've known some of our Nobles marry a Wife with less than a hundred Crowns——But adod, thou'rt a charming Girl, and therefore I'll make it a hundred Pistoles—What say'st thou now, *Lucy*? Ah! adod, I must buss thee; [Kisses her.] Ah! Rogue, methinks I'm a young, lusty, vigorous Fellow again——Thou shalt find I am, Girl.

Lucy, aside. I believe I shall fail you, old Gentleman. Well, my Lord, make it up a thousand Pistoles, and I am your's else I'll die a Maid, I'm resolv'd.

Piz. A thousand Pistoles, why thou art the most unconscionable Wench in *Italy*: Why, 'tis a Price for a Duchess in some Countries. Come, come, prithee be reasonable, *Lucy*?

Lucy. Reasonable! why you don't ask a reasonable Thing——Look you, you know my Mind, I'll not bate a Penny——I'll warrant my Lady will give me two hundred at least for my Discovery. [Going.

Piz. aside. Uds! she won't tell my Wife, sure, I'm ruin'd if she does; I'd rather give her two thousand——Hold, hold, *Lucy*, sweet *Lucy*, prithee come back——Faith, thou'rt so charming, I can deny thee nothing——Come, it shall be what thou wilt——Come now, Rogue, let's retire to thy Chamber——

Lucy. Nay, nay, no ent'ring the Premises, till you have paid the Purchase——

Piz. Adod, thou'rt a Wag——Come in then, and I'll discharge the Debt: Thou'rt a cunning Gipsy.

[*Exit Pizal.*

Lucy. You shall have Reason to say so, e're I have done with you, old Gentleman——For I am resolv'd to shew you a Trick, and preserve my Virtue. [Aside.

*For did base Men within my Power fall,
T' avenge my injur'd Sex, I'd jilt 'em all.
And would but Women follow my Advice,
They should be glad at last to pay our Price.*

[*Exit Lucy.*

SCENE II.

The Piazza d'Espagna in Venice.

Enter Lady Pizalta sola.

L. Piz. Not come yet! ungrateful Man! must a Woman of my Quality wait?
How have we lost our Pow'r since the Creation?
When the whole World had but one single Lord,
Whom every Creature readily obey'd?
Yet he, that mighty he, caught with a Smile,
Flew to th'Embraces of the tempting Fair.
But now each puny Sinner dares to cross
A Woman's Inclinations——

Enter Ludovico.

Oh! are you come, Signior? I suppose you have
Some other Assignation, that made you miss
My Hour——Pursue it pray——I'll not interrupt you——
Your Servant——
I hope he'll not take me at my Word.

[*Going.*
[*Aside.*

Lud. Nay, nay, Signiora, why this Passion?

[*Stops her.*

You sent me a Challenge, and I, like a Man of Courage, am come to answer it——Pray don't let a Quarter of an Hour break Squares——I own it was a fault to make a Lady wait; but Friends, Madam, Friends and good Wine are the Devil——Come I'll make you amends.

L. Piz. Friends and good Wine! I suppose those Friends were Female ones——

Lud. No, Faith: You shall judge of that——But suppose they were——Why should you be angry that I did not fly with the desired Haste, as long as I am come time enough to give you Satisfaction——Besides,

I han't seen your Face yet, and for aught I know, it mayn't reward my Complement in coming now——Prithee, Child, unmask, and then I'll tell thee more of my Mind.

L. *Piz.* The Devil take this Fellow——and yet methinks I love him for his Indifferency——[*Aside.*] You talk as if you were unskill'd in the Art of Love: Don't you know that Expectation feeds more than twenty tasted Pleasures?

Lud. Hum——some Sort of Fops it may: But I'm none of those——I never give my Opinion of a Dish till I've tasted; neither do I care to dine often on one Sort of Meat without changing the Sauce——But when that Cloud's withdrawn, how long I shall keep my Resolution I know not.

L. *Piz.* Say you so! Why then the only Way to preserve your Appetite is to feed you slenderly; or only let you see the food, but not to taste.

Lud. Faith, Madam, I'm no Camelion, but Flesh and Blood——Therefore these Prescriptions are of no Use——One Sight of that dear charming Face of your's, would be more obliging to your humble Servant.

L. *Piz. unmask.* Well, Sir, what think you? Is there any thing in this Face worth your Regard?

Lud. Ah! by Heaven, an Angel——Oh! Madam, now blame yourself for my Neglect, for had you sent the Picture of her, in whom all those Beauties center, I had in this Place waited the Coming of my Goddess, or rather flown on the Wings of eager Love, to meet my Fair, tho' in the Arms of ten thousand Dangers——Say, my charming Angel, do you forgive me? But why do I ask? your Eyes assure me you do; at least I'll force a Pardon from these dear, soft, ruby Lips.

[*Kisses her in Extasy.*]

L. *Piz.* Hold, hold! been't so lavish——a sparing Gamester is the likeliest to keep in Stock——whilst a profuse Hand at one Cast throws all he has away.

Lud. To fear that, were to doubt your Charms, in which a Lover is sure to find constant Supplies——But we lose Time——Let's retire to my Lodgings, where I'll give thee the best Proofs of my Love I can?

L. *Piz. aside.* Well! He's a charming Fellow——Oh! how happy are Wives in *France* and *England*, where such as he swarm!

Lud. Come, Madam, come——Why, what do you mean by this Delay? Consider I'm a Man, a mortal, wishing, amorous Man——

L. *Piz.* And consider I'm a Woman——

Lud. *aside.* Ay, ay: That I know: At least I hope to find you such——or I would not be in such Haste——

L. *Piz.* And have a Reputation to preserve.

Lud. Oh! Lord, what a damn'd Turn's here? Reputation, say you? Egad, I find all Women make Pretence to that mysterious Word. [*Aside.*] What! Are not you married, Madam?

L. *Piz.* Yes, what then?

Lud. Why then you have a Reputation to preserve——that's all.

L. *Piz.* All, Sir, yes, and all in all to me——Do you consider what Country you're in, Sir?

Lud. Yes, Faith, Madam; and what Constitution I am of too. I know Murder is as venial a Sin here, as Adultery is in some Countries; And I am too apprehensive of my mortal Part not to avoid Danger—Therefore, Madam, you have an infallible Security—if I should betray you, I bring myself into Jeopardy, and of all Pleasures, Self-Preservation is the dearest.

L. Piz. A very open Speaker, I vow.

Lud. Ay, Madam, that's best—Hang your creeping, cringing, whining, sighing, dying, lying Lovers—Pugh! Their Flames are not more durable than mine, tho' they make more Noise in the Blaze.

Sings:

*Hang the whining Way of Wooing,
Loving was design'd a sport.*

L. Piz. aside. The Duce take me if this Fellow has not charm'd me strangely—Well, the Carnival is almost over, and then must I be shut up like a Nun again—Hey! Hoa! This Time will be so short—

Lud. Let's make the better Use on't then, my Dear. We will consider when we have nothing else to do, but at present there's a Matter of the greatest Moment, which I must impart to you—Therefore, come dear Rogue, come—

L. Piz. [*Looking on her Watch.*] Hold—I have outstaid my Time, and must return Home instantly, to prevent Discoveries.

Lud. Faith, Madam, this is not fair—to raise a Man's Expectation, and then disappoint him! Would you be serv'd so yourself now?

L. Piz. I'll endeavour to disengage myself from my jealous Husband, and contrive another Meeting.

Lud. But will you be sure to meet me again?

L. Piz. I give you my Hand as a Pledge—

Lud. *Kisses it.* And I this Kiss in Return—Adieu, my Charmer.

L. Piz. Signior, farewell.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Bassino, Alonzo.

Bass. Well, Sir, your Business—

Alon. It is to tell you—
You are a Villain.

Bass. Ha—

Alon. And that as such
I ought to have treated you before the Face
Of false *Aurelia*—But I scorn to follow
The barbarous Custom of my native Country.
I seek with Honour to revenge my Wrongs;
Therefore, Sir, draw—

Bass. This Action speaks you noble—be likewise just,

And let me know the Cause that moves your Anger.
By Heaven I'd rather call you still my Friend,
Than be your Enemy——Yet, if I wrong'd you,
I'll give you Satisfaction——

Alon. Trifler, away——Too well thou know'st the Cause;
And now would'st sooth my Wrongs with Flattery,
But my Resolve is fix'd as Heaven's Decrees:
And one of us must fall——Let the Survivor
Dispose of that base, false, perjur'd *Aurelia*,
As both his Love and Honour shall direct.
If my propitious Stars defend my Life,
You shall not die alone——Th' adulterous Fair
Shall bear you Company——Now draw.

Bass. Oh! hold.
One Moment hold, I must unfold this Riddle:
Adulterous Fair, say you?

Alon. Yes: She's my Wife.

Bass. Ha——your Wife!
Sure there's a Curse entail'd upon that Name.
What! your real Wife?

[*Aside.*

Alon. If the Command of an expiring Father,
And her own Vows can make her mine, she's so:
Indeed the Marriage Rites are yet to come,
Which slyly she delay'd these two Months past,
On slight Pretence of finishing the Time
Of mourning for her Father——But 'tis plain,
I was a Property to your base Love,
And only design'd to fill up your Place,
When surfeited you should return to *Turin*.
Hell——Furies! Draw, or in my just Revenge,
I'll pin you to the Earth——

Bass. Oh! Woman! Woman!
Yes, I will draw——But ere the fatal Stroke
Is past Recal, I swear *Aurelia's* Virtue
Is clear and spotless, like *Diana's* self:
Nor was I prompted on this early Visit,
But with Design to take my last Farewel,
Having last Night receiv'd my Prince's Orders
To haste to *Turin*——Therefore if I fall,
I hope she'll meet with Mercy——Now come on.

[*Aside.*

Alon. Hold, hold, my Lord; Oh! could I credit this,
I would ask Pardon, and entreat your Friendship.

Bass. 'Tis true, upon my Honour——
But if you doubt my Words, I'm ready——
Tho' I have Reason to decline this Combat,

At least at present——Oh! *Placentia*!
Oh! my *Placentia*! why should I abuse thee?

[*Aside.*

Alon. My Lord, you seem disturb'd——

Bass. Oh! *Alonzo*! *Alonzo*!
Should I acquaint you with my wretched Fate,
You'd find that Life itself is grown a Burden,
I cannot bear, since I can ne'er be happy.
But 'tis a Story that must ne'er be told,
Let it suffice, to settle your Repose,
That *Turin* holds the Cause of my Misfortunes.

Alon. Then I am happy:
My Lord, I wish 'twere in my Power to serve you,
I'd do it as a Friend——

[*Aside.*

Bass. Generous Sir, I thank you;
As far as I am capable, I am *Alonzo*'s.
Oh! Force of treacherous Love! to gain my End,
I wrong a Wife, a Mistress, and a Friend.

[*Exit Alonzo.*

[*Exit Bassino.*

The End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Aurelia's Lodgings.

Enter Aurelia, Florella.

Aur. Oh! how I tremble for my dear *Bassino*!
Haste, fly, *Florella*, bring me News he lives,
Or else expect to see thy Mistress die.

Flor. Madam, be patient——
Consult your Reputation, and consider
That the least Noise you make on this Occasion,
Reflects upon your Virtue——

Aur. Away, away——Talk not of Reputation,
When Love's in t'other Scale—But what can shock my
Reputation;
Heaven's my Witness, I ne'er lodg'd a Thought,
For Count *Bassino* that could wrong my Virtue.
Perhaps the Gods pursue me with their Hatred,
Because I break my Promise to *Alonzo*.
But then, why did they not secure me his?

Why must weak Mortals be expos'd to Passions,
Which are not in our Power to subdue,
And yet account for what they prompt us to?
But I will think no more——Almighty Love,
Now hear my last Resolve——if angry Heaven
Refused to guard my dear *Bassino's* Life,
Aurelia too shall fall, and leave his Murderer
Accurst for ever——

Enter Alonzo.

Flor. Oh! Heaven! where will this end?

Aur. Ha——

[*Aside.*

The Gods have sent him to decide my Fate,
How now! how dare you meet my angry View?
Or think I'll e'er forgive the base Affront
This very Day you offer'd to my Fame?

Alon. Just Heaven refuses not a Penitent,
Therefore I cannot think that fair *Aurelia*,
Whose Charms are all divine, should fail in Goodness.
Oh! let my Love atone for my rash Deed:
The Count and I are Friends, why should *Aurelia* be
more severe?

Aur. He lives, blest News!

Do then rash Actions speak your Love to me?
Must I in publick bear with your Insults
Before I'm yours? what must I then expect
When the strict Ties of Marriage shall confirm
Your jealous Passions?
No, you have taught me to avoid the Shelf
I was just running on——know, base *Alonzo*,
That from this Moment I resume my Freedom,
I disengage you from your former Vows,
And will henceforth be Mistress of myself.

Alon. Ha——

[*Aside.*

This sudden Coldness has another Spring
Than my rash Carriage——Oh! my jealous Fears;
But I'm resolv'd to trace her winding Thoughts,
And fetch the Secret forth——
Madam, I hope you do but try my Love:
I cannot think *Aurelia* would be false.
Besides, you can't recal what's register'd in Heaven.

Aur. Then stay till we come there——There you'll
have Witness.

Alon. Witness!

Oh! faithless, perjurd Woman, can'st thou think
Upon thyself, and bid me call my Witness?

Yes, you are mine——By all the Gods you are.
And shall there be a Power on this Side Heaven,
To stop my Bliss? No——by my Love I swear.
I now can guess at your perfidious Meaning,
And tho' that cowardly Villain slyly thought
To blind me with a Tale his Guilt had fram'd,
'Tis plain he is your Minion——yet wants Courage
To own his Treachery.

Aur. Detracting, slanderous Villain!
How dare you treat me thus?
Oh! for the Look of a fierce Basilisk,
To punish this audacious Insolence!

Alon. Marry thee! No——by Heavens, I'd rather
Be rack'd to Death——And for thy vile Injustice,
None shall enjoy thee, while this Sword is mine.

[Lays hold on his Sword.

Nor shall your Lover 'scape, to serve your Lust,
Till he has forc'd a Passage thro' this Breast.

[Points to his Breast.
[Aside.

Aur. Oh! my *Bassino*.
Oh! cruel Man! Are not you then contented
To wreak your Spite on poor *Aurelia*?
Why must your Rage involve the Innocent?
Oh! let me fall your Passion's Sacrifice;
Let my Blood wash the Stain you fix on me,
But do not blast your Name with base Revenge.——

Alon. By Heaven! she doats on him! Oh! cunning Woman!
But this Pretence won't serve to save his Life;
I'll not be caught again——No, *Syren*, no.
Bassino dies——Nor will I leave to Fortune
The vengeful Stroke, but take a safer Way.

Aur. Oh! Heaven!
What Words shall I invent to soothe his Rage,
And save my dear *Bassino*? Oh! *Alonzo*.
My once-lov'd Dear, will you not hear me speak?
Oh! I conjure you by our plighted Loves,
Whose Purity outshone the Stars above,
Hear me this Time, then use me as you please.

[Kneels.
[Aside.

Alon. Oh! Woman, Woman!

Aur. If e'er *Aurelia*
So much as in her Thoughts did wrong *Alonzo*,
May sudden Death pursue her perjur'd Steps:
Heaven forgive
The Perjury, since I've no other way
To save *Bassino's* Life.——

[Aside.

Alon. *Aurelia*, rise——

[Raising her.

Oh! could I credit this, how happy were *Alonzo*!
But something tells me that thou art forsworn;
And yet thou seem'st as fair as Truth itself;
How is it possible that Guilt can look
With so divine a Face?

Aur. Oh! kill me instantly: kill me, I beg you, kill me;
Let me not linger out an Age in Pain,
For such is every Moment of your Anger;
I cannot bear to live in your Displeasure.

Alon. By Heaven she's true——
Hence frivolous Fears be gone——she's only mine.
Come to my Breast, my bright *Aurelia*, come.

[*Embraces her.*]

To that soft Shrine that holds that Sacred Image,
Which triumphs o'er my Soul, and grasps it all,
I knew my boundless Treasure, and the Thought
Of losing thee had rais'd my Love to Madness.
But now I'm calm—No more shall that fierce Passion,
Rude Jealousy, disturb my peaceful Mind.
Do but forgive the Faults my Rage committed,
And you will find our Loves will grow the purer;
Just as the Sky looks brighter when the Storm
Is chas'd away, and *Phæbus* smiles again.

Aur. Since both have been to blame, let it suffice,
We both repent, and will offend no more.

Alon. Oh! never, never,
I'll ne'er suspect you more—Only resolve me this—

Aur. What is it?

Alon. Why was *Bassino*
Admitted to your View, and I denied?

Aur. He came to take his Leave, and 't had been rude
Not to admit a Man of his high Birth
On this Occasion; nor was you denied,
But thro' Woman's Fears of your Suspicions.
She thought you would misconstrue the Count's Visit,
As you have really done——I blam'd her for it,
Indeed, this is the Truth—I hope *Alonzo*
Believes me now——

Alon. Believe Thee! Yes——As willingly as Martyrs
A State of endless Joy.
I will so love, my Dear, that all Mankind
Shall look with Envy on our mutual Bliss.
I'm like a Merchant tost at Sea by Storms,
Who his last Course with Pray'rs and Toil performs;
And the rich Cargo safely brought on Shore,

He hugs it thus, and vows to part no more.

[Embraces her.

Aur. So in a flow'ry Mead a Serpent lurks,
And the unwary Traveller surprizes,
Where he suspects least Danger! Cursed Cheat.
Oh! that I could disclose the fatal Story!
But it must never out—I beg, *Alonzo*,
You'd leave me for a while, and rest secure,
You have my Love——

[Aside.

Alon. Then the bright Sun in all his circling Turn,
Cannot behold a Man more truly happy,
What you command, I readily obey.
Farewel, my Dear.

[Exit Alonzo.

Aur. Where art thou now, *Aurelia*?
How wilt thou 'scape that dreadful Precipice,
On which thou art hurried on by thy fatal Passion?
With conscious Horror I deceiv'd *Alonzo*;
I hate this base Treachery, but 'twas unavoidable:
The Truth had been more fatal——
More fatal!——No——For I must never wed
My dear *Bassino*, whilst *Alonzo* lives.
Oh! the distracting Thought! what shall I do?
Why! die *Aurelia*: That's the only Way,
To keep thy Vows to both—Ha——die, said I?
But whether then? who knows what Punishment,
Just Heav'n prepares for guilty Souls like mine.
But I must think no more, lest I grow mad with Thought,
If there's a Power that guards us here below,
Oh! look with pitying Eyes on poor *Aurelia*:
Appease the Tumults of my anxious Fear,
And load me with no more than I can bear.

[Exeunt Aurelia, Florella.

SCENE II. *Lady Pizalta's Lodgings.*

Enter Lady Pizalta, Lucy.

L. Piz. Well, thou'rt an admirable Girl! What would half the Ladies in *Venice* give for such a Servant?

Lucy. (*Aside.*) Truly you have Reason to say so, for 'tis not the first Intrigue I have manag'd for you——Oh! dear Madam, your Ladyship does me too much Honour——But how do you like your new Servant, Madam?

L. Piz. Oh! above all Men living, *Lucy*: He has the most bewitching Conversation I ever met with——Say, is there no way to contrive a second Meeting? For I'm impatient till I see the dear Man again——The End of the Carnival draws near, which is indeed the End of Life to me: For then must I be coop'd up with Age: Condemned to an eternal Coughing, Spitting, Snoring and Ill-nature——Then let me

make the best of Life——since Hell cannot have a worse Plague in Store than I have felt already.

Luc. Indeed, Madam, I pity you: And wish 'twere in my Power to free you from this old wither'd Log, but tho' that's impossible, yet I may do you some little Services to make Life's tedious Journey pleasant——Let me see, I have it——What would you say now, Madam, if I should contrive a Way to have your Lover in your own Chamber?

L. Piz. That were worth a King's Revenue——Speak, quickly, how, how, good *Lucy*?

Luc. Why, thus: He shall put on my Cloaths, and in my Place attend you.

L. Piz. Rare Contrivance! but my Husband, *Lucy*?

Luc. Oh! let me alone, Madam, to manage him: He is defective in Sight, you know; and not mistrusting any thing, will not be over curious: But if he should, I have a way to bring you off——My Life on't——This Plot may be of Use to my design, I'll manage it with care. *[Aside.*

L. Piz. Oh! the Pleasure of hearing my Husband lie coughing and calling me to Bed: And my answering him, I'm coming, Dear; and while he imagines me in the next Room undressing, I'm happy in the Arms of my *Ludovico*. Certainly there's as much Satisfaction in deceiving a dull jealous Husband, as in getting a new Gallant; were it not grown so common——each Tradesman's Wife must have her Gallant too——and sometimes makes a Journeyman of the Apprentice e'er his Indentures be half out——'Tis an insufferable Fault, that Quality can have no Pleasure above the Vulgar, except it be in not paying their Debts. Well, dear *Lucy*, I admire thy Contrivance——About it instantly——

Lucy. (*Aside.*) About it instantly! is that all? I must have my t'other Fee first.——I will, Madam; and you may expect your Lover instantly. But, Madam, what's to be done with your brocade Night-Gown you tore last Night? it can ne'er be mended handsomely.

L. Piz. Nothing to be done without a Bribe I find, in Love as well as Law——Well, *Lucy*, if you manage this Intrigue with Care and Secrecy, the Gown is yours.

Enter Page.

Page. Madam, my Lord desires to speak with you.

Lucy. Madam, I'll go about your Business: Your Ladyship's very humble Servant. *[Exit Lucy.*

L. Piz. Tell him I'm coming——*[Exit Page.]* Now by way of Mortification, must I go entertain my old jealous Husband. *[Exit Lady Pizalta.*

SCENE III. *The Piazza.*

Enter Ludovico singing.

*Give me but Wine, that Liquor of Life,
And a Girl that is wholesome and clean,
Two or three Friends, but the Devil a Wife,
And I'd not change State with a King.*

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. What singing, Signior! Well you're a pleasant Gentleman——

Lud. Ah! my little female *Mercury*, what Message bring'st thou? Ha——will thy Lady bless me with another Sight——Ha——How——When? where? I am all in a Flame.

Lucy. Come along with me, Sir, I'll help you to an Extinguisher presently.

Lud. If thou meanest thy Lady, with all my Heart—But I can tell thee, she'll rather prove Oil, than what you speak of——But, say, where am I to see my lovely Charmer?

Lucy. In her Chamber——

Lud. Good! But how the Devil can that be done?

Lucy. Nay, without the Help of a Conjuror, I assure you; if you dare take me for your Pilot, I'll warrant you Success in your Voyage——I'll set you safe in the Island of Love; 'tis your Business to improve the Soil.

Lud. I warrant thee, Girl; do you but bring me there once, and if I play not my Part, may I never more know the Pleasure of an Intrigue.

Lucy. Which, if I mistake not, is the streatest Curse can fall on you——Well, you must suffer a small Metamorphosis: What think you of personating me a little? That is, dressing in my Cloaths, and waiting on your Mistress in her Bed-chamber—Ha——

Lud. Egad, I'm afraid I shall make but an aukward Chamber-maid, I'm undisciplin'd in dressing a Lady's Head——

Lucy. Oh! Sir, your Commission won't reach so high as the Head: I believe my Lady will excuse little Matters: You can undress, I suppose.

Lud. Oh! the best and the quickest of any Man in *Venice*. But a Pox on't—Can'st find no other way?——I, I, I,——I like Petticoats in their proper Places, but I don't care to have my Legs in 'em.

Lucy. And so you resolve against it? Ha——

Lud. No, not absolutely resolve, Child: But—a——

Lucy. But what, Sir!

Lud. Nothing—I will follow thy Directions, whatever comes on't. Now lead the way, for nothing suits better with my Humour than a Friend, a Bottle, a new Mistress and a convenient Place.

[*Exit Lucy, Ludovico.*]

SCENE IV. Pizalto's Lodgings.

Enter Pizalto with a Bond in his Hand.

Piz. Well—My Wife's a fine Woman! a very fine Woman! But a Pox she's a Wife still, and this young Jade runs in my Head plaguily: Well——here 'tis under my Hand; a Thousand Pistoles——A great Sum for a Maidenhead, as Maidenheads go now-a-days——Ah, had I been young now.

*A Fiddle and a Treat had bore the Prize away,
But when we old Fools doat, they make us pay.*

Enter Lucy.

Oh! are you come! Here, here, *Lucy*: Here's a Fortune for thee, worth twenty Maidenheads, adod! I have not so much Money by me at present, but there's Security.

[*Gives her the Bond.*]

Lucy. Your Lordship's Bond's sufficient——Well, but that I am satisfied my Reputation is safe with your Lordship, or twice the Sum should not have prevail'd—Go to my Chamber, my Lord, I'll but step and see if my Lady wants any thing, and I'll be with you instantly.

Piz. You won't stay, *Lucy*? Ah, Girl, buss thy Lady's Chucky; now, do now——

Lucy. Oh! Lord! not here, we shall be discovered.

Piz. Well, thou art a cunning Sinner: make haste, *Lucy*, dost hear?

[*Exit Pizalto.*]

Lucy. You're in mighty Haste, old Gentleman! but I shall deceive you,

*My End is gain'd; I have my Fortune made,
Man has not me, but I have Man betray'd.*

The End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Armando's Lodgings.

Enter Armando, Placentia.

Pla. Oh! *Armando*!
Thou more than Friend to the distress'd *Placentia*!
Say, how shall I regain my lost *Bassino*,
My false, perfidious Husband?

[*Weeps.*]

Arm. Dear Madam, moderate your Sorrow:
Reserve those Tears to move *Bassino*'s Heart,
Mine is all Pity: You may rest secure
Of all the Arguments a Friend can use
To bring him back to your endearing Arms.
Virtue's not quite extinguish'd in his Breast,
Therefore I hope the sight of bright *Placentia*
Will rouse his slumb'ring Reason——

Pla. Oh! *Bassino*! *Bassino*!

Oh! wretched Woman! Oh! that I had dy'd
E'er I had known him false: Then I were happy:
And tho' contented with his second Choice,
He with a pitying Sigh, perhaps, had grac'd
My Memory——
Oh! all ye Powers that virtuous Love inspire,
Assist me now: Inform my vocal Organs
With angel Eloquence, such as can melt
His Heart of Flint, and move his former Kindness.
(*Aside.*) But if that fail, I will remove the Cause
Of both our Woes——Yes, that happy Charmer,
That Rival of my Love shall surely die.

Arm. Doubt not of the Success; What Heart of Steel
Could e'er resist such Beauty dress'd in Tears?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, Count *Bassino* enquires if you are within.

Pla. Oh! Heavens! how I tremble!

Arm. Lucky Opportunity——shew him up.
Madam, be pleas'd to step into that Closet.
Till I can sound the utmost of his Thoughts,
And shew him naked to your secret View,
Then when he's in the height of impious Passion,
You like a Bolt from Heav'n shall rush on him,
And strike his Folly dumb.

Pla. Almighty Powers, whose providential Care
Is ever kind to virtuous Innocence,
Oh! help me now in this Extremity.

[*Exit Placentia.*

Enter Bassino.

Bass. How does my Friend *Armando*?

Arm. My Lord, *Armando*'s well,
And wishes you were so.

Bass. Dost thou discover aught that gives thee Cause To doubt I am not well? Indeed I think I am in
perfect Health——

Arm. My Lord, I should be glad To find that Fever of your Mind abated In which I left you last——

Bass. (*Aside.*) I must dissemble now,
Else I'll ne'er gain my Ends——my dear *Armando*,
That Fever thou speak'st of, is now succeeded
By a cold Ague-Fit: The bare Remembrance
Of my unlawful Passion shakes my Soul.

Arm. Such sudden Cures have often prov'd pernicious, And we have Reason to suspect a Wound Too
quickly heal'd——

Bass. Not when thou know'st what Balsam I applied.

Arm. There's scarce a Balm for the deep Wounds of Love, Besides Possession, and I cannot think You have enjoy'd *Aurelia*.

Bass. I swear I have not——
But I enjoy my Reason, my free Reason:
And who possesses that, can never cherish
A Thought against himself: For such I call
Whatsoever keeps me from my lawful Wife,
My dear *Placentia*, to whose Arms I'll fly
With all the eager Haste of a fond Bridegroom.
There I shall revel in the virtuous Pleasures
Of a chaste Bed—Oh! my Friend *Armando*!
My dear *Placentia*'s Friend! can'st thou forgive?
Indeed I'm penitent, and will offend no more.

Arm. My Lord, these are the Words you spoke before:
What greater Reason have I now to think
You'll keep your Promise?

Bass. Pride, Honour, Justice are come to my Aid,
And Love too feeble to withstand 'em all,
Has left the Field to my victorious Reason.
Pride, with the Prospect of my future Greatness,
Allures me to return with Speed to *Turin*,
T'obey my Prince's Orders.
Honour and Justice tell me I'm *Placentia*'s,
And that *Aurelia* is *Alonzo*'s Bride.
To him she gave her Virgin Vows: Nay, more,
To him her dying Father did bequeath her;
He loves her too, and shall not be depriv'd:
My Passion is subdu'd, and I'm resolv'd
Myself to give *Aurelia* to *Alonzo*.

Arm. If this be true, then you are my Friend again:
But how came you to learn *Aurelia*'s
Engagement to *Alonzo*?

Bass. I have it from himself, who an Hour since,
With eager Fury sought to 'venge on me
His injur'd Love, and challeng'd me to fight:
I chose with Justice to defend my Life,
And quit *Aurelia*, rather than to vanquish
In such a Cause—*Alonzo* strait embrac'd me,
Call'd me his Friend, and vow'd I should not go,
Till I had seen him join'd in solemn Marriage
With bright *Aurelia*——This I readily granted.
Canst thou believe me true?

Arm. My Lord, I do believe you——
And am o'erjoy'd to hear your Resolution:
By Heaven! there's more Glory in subduing

Our wild Desires, than an embattl'd Foe.
Now do I wish his Wife had never come.

[*Aside.*]

Bass. *Armando*, thou'rt my Friend, and on that Score
I must desire you to repair to *Turin*,
With all the Speed you can, to bear these Letters
To our great Prince, and beg he will excuse
My stay for three Days more——And here this Letter
Bear to *Placentia*——speak to her the kindest
The softest Things thy Fancy can suggest.
I shall make good thy Promise——
My dear *Placentia*! Oh! that she were here,
Panting and warm within these longing Arms!
'Tis a long Age since I did see her last!
But come, my Friend, you must this Hour set forward.

Arm. With all my Heart: But 'twill not be amiss,
Before I go, to fix the Victory,
Which conquering Virtue in your Breast has gain'd;
And if what you pretend be real Truth,
I have a welcome Present for *Bassino*.
Madam, come forth——

Enter Placentia.

Bass. What do I see! my Wife! This was a lucky Plot:
Hypocrisy did ne'er befriend me more.
This was not like a Friend——why should *Armando*
Disturb her soft Tranquility of Mind,
And give her ocular Proofs of my Disloyalty?
Oh! my *Placentia*! my beloved Wife!
Oh! that I should e'er think to wrong my Dear!

[*Aside.*]

[*Embraces her.*]

Pla. My Lord, waste not a Sigh on my Account:
My Joys are infinite, since you are mine,
And what is past I easily forget.
Nay, let me beg for Pardon: For I know
I have offended you in coming hither.
I should have waited this Return of Virtue:
Or, if abandon'd, silently have mourn'd
My Loss, without upbraiding my lov'd Lord,
All this I should have done, but mighty Love,
Too powerful for Duty to withstand,
Guided my Steps to *Venice*——
In hopes my Presence would retrieve your Heart.

Bass. Gods! that this Woman were *Aurelia*!
Thou Wonder of thy Sex! thou best of Women!
I blush to think that thou hast heard my Folly:
Yet since your Love cancels your just Complaints,
You make me doubly blest: And I'll reward
This excellent Goodness with eternal Fondness.
Oh! that thou hadst been here! Not all the Beauties

[*Aside.*]

That *Venice* holds could have diverted me;
No, not one Moment from my dear *Placentia*.
Long Absence is the Bane of new-born Love,
But Fate shall ne'er have Power to part us more.

Pla. Oh! my dear Lord, your Goodness is too great:
And I'm o'er paid for all my Sorrows past.
Armando, say, is not he wondrous kind?

Arm. Madam, I told you Virtue
Was struggling in his Breast; and that it might
O'ercome his vicious Love, I thought your Presence
Was requisite——And now, my Lord, I hope
You will forgive me, since all the Endeavours
I us'd before had been in vain. I once
Design'd to let *Aurelia* know your Marriage;
But then perhaps she would not have believ'd me:
Let this plead my Excuse in sending for *Placentia*
Without your Knowledge.

Bass. I must not let him see I am concern'd. [*Aside.*]
I know 'twas Friendship all, well-meaning Friendship:
I only am to blame: But I'll retrieve
My Credit in your Heart, and still deserve
The Name of Friend——And thou, the best of Wives,
Shalt ne'er have Cause to doubt my constant Love.

Pla. Oh! my *Bassino*! this Excess of Kindness
Exalts me o'er all Mortals, if you're true,
There's not a Blast within the Power of Fortune
Can shock my Happiness.

Bass. Thou shalt ne'er find me false, I swear thou shalt not.
Oh! that I could engage
She would return to *Turin* with *Armando*; [*Aside.*]
For if she stays, I never can enjoy
My bright *Aurelia*, and by Heaven I will,
Altho' ten thousand Lives should pay the Purchase.

Pla. My Lord, you seem disturb'd.

Bass. It troubles me
You can't appear in *Venice* with a Train
That may bespeak the Rank you hold in *Savoy*.

Pla. to *Arm.* Oh! *Armando*!
He is so kind, I with I ne'er had come!
What if I offer to return with you?

Arm. Madam, you will do well;
For I myself cannot suspect him now.

Pla. My Lord, let not my Presence here disturb you,

I doubt your Love no more, and to convince you,
I will go back before 'tis known I'm here.
Besides, 'tis fit I should prepare all things
To welcome you at home.

Bass. (aside.) Blest Opportunity!
Fortune I thank thee: Would my Dear then leave me
So very soon? Alas! 'twill be an Age
E'er I return to *Turin*: Three long Days!
No, my Dear, no; I will not part from thee,
At least this Night, my Love——

Pla. Will then *Armando* stay?

Bass. No, my best Hopes, he instantly departs
With Letters to my Prince.

Pla. Then suffer me to go this very Moment.
Three Days will soon be o'er, and your Return,
Shall make me fully blest——If I should stay
'Twould look like base Distrust, and I can't think
Bassino would be false——

Bass. (aside.) Oh! Heaven that I were not!

Arm. Indeed, my Lord, I think you're truly happy.
Scarce does any Age produce so good a Wife.

Bass. Oh! that I could reward this wondrous Goodness!

Pla. My Lord, what makes you sigh?

Bass. To part from thee: But since 'tis your Desire,
It shall be so. *Armando*, to thy Charge
I here commit the Treasure of my Soul,
Take Care of her, and think that on her Safety
My Life depends.

Arm. My Lord, I hope you do not doubt my Care.

Bass. Dear Friend, I do not——
May Heaven's Blessings still attend my Love,
My dear *Placentia*.

[*Embraces, and goes to lead her off.*]

Pla. As many more guard my *Bassino*.

Bass. (aside.) A sudden Horror seizes all my Limbs:
I tremble at the Thought of this base Deed——

[*Pulls out his Handkerchief and drops a Letter, which Armando takes up.*]

Ha——Tears uncall'd for bathe my guilty Eyes——
Gods! either give me Virtue to withstand

This impious Love, or Courage to pursue it
Without Remorse; for I'm but half a Villain.

[*Exeunt* Bassino, Placent.

Arm. opens the Letter. A Letter! and to *Aurelia!* now Curiosity prompts me to know the
Subject——What's here?

Reads. *I have dispatch'd Armando to the Court of Savoy, and found Pretence to stay
behind——*

False treacherous Man!

*This Night I give a Mask at my Lodgings, which, I hope, will divert Alonzo, till the Priest
has joined our Hands; and while all the Company are engaged in Mirth, I'll steal to the
dear Arms of my divine Aurelia.*

Oh! Villain, Villain! Monstrous Villain!
Oh! poor *Placentia!* But I will prevent
His Policy, and break his wicked Measures.

[*Exit* Armando.

SCENE II. Pizalto's Lodgings.

Enter Pizalto solus.

Piz. Why, what makes this young Jade stay so long? Adod, this is to pay before
hand——Ha——methinks I hear a Laughing and Giggling in my Wife's Apartment; I must know whence
their Mirth proceeds. Ho! here's *Lucy* coming——Harkee you, pray, why did you make me wait so long?
Nay, I'm resolved you shan't escape me now——[*Goes to the Door, and pulls in Ludovico in Lucy's
Cloaths, whose Commode falls off in the Struggle, and discovers his bald Head.*] Oh! Benedicite! What
have we here? A Man disguis'd in my Wife's Chamber! and I unarm'd! Oh! Curst Minute!——Speak, thou
wicked Prophet, thou Son of Iniquity, what camest thou here for? Ha——Thou Priest of *Baal*, to offer
Sacrifices on the Altar of my Wife? Oh! my Head! my Horns weigh it down to the Ground
already——Within there, bring me my Sword and Pistols.

Lud. A Pox on all Petticoats——What a Devil shall I say now? Oh! for a Sword! that would be of
more Use to me now than my Tongue.

Enter Lady Pizalto.

Piz. Oh! thou wicked fallacious Woman!

L. Piz. What ails my dear Chucky? Why dost thou call for Arms, Deary?

Piz. To cut down that vile Creeper which over-runs thy Garden of Virtue——

L. Piz. [*aside.*] Now Impudence assist me.
Ah! Heavens! What's here? A Man in Disguise? A Thief it must be——Raise the Servants——Oh!
Heaven! we might have had all our Throats cut in our Beds——Now for *Lucy*, for I am at a Loss to
come off. [*Aside.*

Piz. No, no, I warrant, you know he is more gentle in Bed.

Lud. [*aside.*] Oh! the Devil, what does she mean? Death, Hell and Furies! if I come off now, catch me at this Sport again, and hang me——

Enter Lucy.

L. Piz. Oh! are you there. Mistress? How came this Man here in your Cloaths? Ha! Gentlewoman——

Lucy. [*aside.*] How confidently she asks the Question, poor Lady? as if she knew nothing of it! Now must I bring her off——For Reasons you must not know, Madam.

Piz. Ah! Thou wicked Pair of Bellows to blow the Fire of Iniquity! Why, thou art the very Casement thro' which thy Mistress sucks the Air of Abomination——Tell me, I say, how he came here, and for what——and be sure it be a substantial Lie, or 'twill not pass.

Lucy. [*aside.*] All my Hopes are in her Impudence.

Lucy to Pizal. Harkee, Sir, one Word with you——Do you remember our Agreement To-night?

Piz. Why, what of that? ha——

Lucy. Then imagine what I design'd that Gentleman for; I'm honest, Sir, that's all——

Piz. I'm honest, Sir, that's all——[*Mimicking her Tone.*] Honest! with a Pox——What! and so you honestly provided a Companion for my Wife in my Absence——ha——

Lucy. No, Sir, I design'd him for your Companion in my Absence——This is the Business he was drest for: Therefore no more Words, but believe my Lady honest, or all shall out.

Piz. Oh! the Devil! this shan't pass, Hussy——Do you think I'll be cuckolded, jilted, bubbled, and let it pass for a *Christmas* Gambol. Adod, give me my Bond again, or——or——

[*Holds up his Cane.*

Lucy. No——hold there, Sir: Women and Lawyers ne'er refund a fee: But 'tis your best Way to be patient now, I'll not take Blows.

L. Piz. Why all this Whispering? Why mayn't I know the Business?

Piz. I am mistaken if you have not known too much Business already: But I am right enough serv'd——I had more Ground before than I could manage; I had no Need of my Neighbour's.

Lucy. Right, my Lord; Ground that lies fallow will breed Weeds in Time; but you's is clear yet.

Piz. Damn your Jests; I shall expect a better Account, do you hear? I'll find a Servant to see you out of Doors. [*To Ludovico.*

[*Exeunt Pizalto and Lady.*

Lud. Well, this was an admirable Lift at a Pinch——She has brought me off now——And if e'er they catch me at this Music again, I'll give 'em Leave to make an *Italian* Singer of me——No more Intrigues in Disguise——if it had not been for the Waiting-Woman now, I might have been hang'd for a Thief.

Lucy. What all amort, Signior, no Courage left?

Lud. Faith, not much—I think I have lost my Manhood with my Breeches—This Transformation may suit with Gods, but not with Mortals of my Humour—Come, prithee, good Mistress *Lucy*, help me to my proper Shape again; for tho' I have a natural Inclination to Petticoats, I hate 'em upon my own back.

[*A Flourish of Music Within.*]

Lucy. Hark! I hear Count *Bassino's* Music: He gives a Mask To-night; you are already drest for Masquerade, won't you stay and take a Dance?

Lud. Egad, I'd rather dance a Jig with thee elsewhere: Faith thou'rt a pretty Girl—and hast a good deal of Wit too—But then, Pox on't, thour't honest, thou sayest, thou cannot swallow a Pill, except 'tis gilded over with Matrimony.

Lucy. And that turns your Stomach, I warrant.

Lud. Why, Ay: Faith my Stomach is damn'd squeemish in these matters: Yet, egad, if I could find one with half as much Money as thou hast Wit and Beauty, I'd marry, and live honest.

Lucy. That is, you'd marry her Money—

Lud. One with the other, Child: There's no living upon Love thou knowest—Tho' Faith I could live well enough too.

Lucy. Well, suppose I help you to a Lady with a round Sum; you'd keep your Word, and marry her?

Lud. I am a Gentleman, I scorn to break my Word.

Lucy. Well, Sir, come to the Mask, and I'll engage you a Mistress, if you are not over-curious.

Lud. With all my Heart:

I'm now resolv'd to leave this Wenching-Trade;
For no man's safe upon a Hackney Jade;
Th' Allay of Danger makes the Pleasure Pain,
A Virtuous Wife will always be same.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Mask in Bassino's Lodgings.

Bassino, Alonzo, Armando, in a Disguise; Placentia in Man's Cloaths, Signior Pizalto, Lady Pizalta, Lucy, &c.

An Entry of three Men and three Women of several Nations.

Bass. I can't imagine where I dropt my Letter:
Pray Heaven it be where none can ever find it.
Gods! Let me once enjoy her, then call on me
Your Store of Plagues, and I will meet 'em all.

Enter Ludovico, singing.

Lud. Ah! Mistress *Lucy*! I'm come thou see'st—I expect thou shalt be as good as thy Word, Child—is the Lady here?

Lucy. The Lady is forth-coming, if you are still in the same Mind?

L. Piz. My Lover here! Harkee, *Lucy*.

Lucy. By and by, Madam, I am catering for myself now—Well, Sir, will two thousand Pistoles do?

Lud. I must humour her—[*Aside.*] Ay Child.

Lucy. Why then I take you at your Word, Sir, and can produce the aforesaid Sum—[*To Piz.*] With a little of your Assistance, My Lord.

Lud. (*aside.*) Hum—A pretty Wife I am like to have—Catch me there if you can—

Piz. Ha—How's that?

Lud. How! Mistress *Lucy*, worth two thousand Pistoles?

Lucy. Ay: And I have a very good Pay-master for one Half of it too—Do you know this Hand, my Lord? [*To Pizalto.*] (*Shews the Bond.*)

Piz. (*aside.*) Confound your jilting Sneer.

Lud. Ha, ha, ha—What, a thousand Pistoles a Dish, my Lord? I hope you don't change often, ha—ha—

Piz. Hussy, I'll be reveng'd—'Tis all false, 'tis counterfeit.

Lucy. Ha—ha—But it had been current Coin, if I had suffer'd you to put your Stamp upon't—in my Bed-chamber, my Lord—

L. Piz. How, Mistress, have you trick'd my Husband out of a thousand Pistoles, and never told me of it?

Lucy. Nay, Madam, don't frown—Remember you have trick'd him out of something too, which I never told him of—Don't urge me to more Discoveries.

Lud. (*aside.*) So—Here's Trick upon Trick: But, Faith, you shall never trick me out of my Liberty. I'm not so fond of a Wife to marry a Chamber-maid, tho' with ten Times as much Money: And so, sweet Mistress *Abigail*, your humble Servant. [Exit Ludovico.]

L. Piz. (*aside.*) The Jade has me upon the Hip—I must be silent.

*She who has her Husband's Bed abus'd,
Can ne'er expect she should be better us'd.*

[Exit.]

Lucy. Ha—What! my Lover gone! With all my Heart: Better now than after; for whilst I have my Fortune in my own Hands, I must have no Need to sue for a separate Maintenance, and get nothing for it neither.

Arm. to *Pla.* Now, Madam, go: May Heaven be propitious
To your Designs: I'll stay and watch *Bassino*:
And when he goes, will follow with *Alonzo*.

Pla. Oh! my sick Fancy frames a thousand Forms,
Which tell me that our Meeting will prove fatal.
And warn me not to go, what shall I do?
Must I bear calmly my *Bassino*'s Loss?
Why do I tremble thus?
Sure it can't be the Fear of Death——No, for if
I go not I must lose him, and that's more
Than Death to me——and if I go, I can but fall,
And Life without him is the greater Woe,
Therefore I'll on, I'll use the softest Words
That Tongue can frame to sooth her into Pity,
And dissuade her from this impious Marriage.
If I succeed I am compleatly happy,
If not, I'd rather die than live with Hate,
But first, curst Rival, thou shalt share my Fate.

[*Exit Placentia.*

A Flourish of Musick.

Bass. 'Tis now the Time——but whither do I go?
Shall I a Maid, a Wife, a Friend betray?
No matter——
All Arguments are vain, where Love bears Sway.

[*Exit Bassino.*

A SONG.

*When the Winds rage, and the Seas grow high,
They bid Mankind beware,
But when they smooth and calm the Sky,
'Tis then they would ensnare.*

*So the bright Thais Kindness shows,
By frowning on her Lovers,
For Ruin only from her flows,
When she her Charms discovers.*

Piz. Come now, Gentlemen and Ladies, be pleas'd to walk into the next Room, and take a small
Collation——But where's my Lord *Bassino*? Come, Gentlemen, he's gone before us.

Arm. Where we will quickly follow. (*Aside.*) *Alonzo*, a Word with you——

[*Exit Omnes.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber in Aurelia's House.

Two Arm-Chairs. Aurelia sola.

Aur. I wonder much at my *Bassino's* Stay:
Oh! Love! how swiftly fly thy Hours away
When we are blest! How tedious are thy Minutes
When cruel Absence parts two longing Lovers!

Enter Florella.

Is my *Bassino* come? speak——

Flor. No, Madam, a young Stranger desires to speak with you: He says, you are not acquainted with his Name, but will soon with his Business, which is something of great Import, that can be told to none but yourself.

Aur. A Stranger Business with me! I know of none
I have with Strangers—Heaven! what's this?
I feel a sudden Throbbing in my Heart,
As if 'twas conscious of some fatal News—
Womanish Fears——Admit him—(*Exit Florella*) it must be
One of *Bassino's* Friends, whom he intrusts
To be a Witness of our Marriage Vows.

[*Aside.*

Enter Placentia, in Man's Cloaths.

Pla. Madam, I was inform'd that Count *Bassino*
Was to be here—and having Things t'impart
That much concern him, I made bold to come——

Aur. Sir, I expect him straight—if you're his Friend
I will account you mine—Be pleas'd to sit.

[*Both sit.*

Pla. My Brother, Madam, is extremely happy
In being favour'd by so fair a Lady——

Aur. Your Brother, Sir! is then my Lord your brother?

Pla. Madam, he is.

Aur. Then I may call you Brother too;
For all the solemn Vows of Love have pass'd
'Twixt him and me—And blissful *Hymen* waits
With lighted Torch to tie the sacred Knot,
Which shall be done this Hour——

Pla. This Hour! say you? Oh! Madam, have a Care:
You tread enchanted Ground, and e'er you know
What Path you take, you're hurried to Destruction.

Aur. Where lies the Danger?

Pla. Oh! 'Tis a fatal Tale, yet you must hear it;
Therefore summon your Courage to your Aid,
For you will need it all, whilst I relate
The fatal Story——

Aur. Ah! how I tremble!
Say, is he dead? has any murderous Villain
Kill'd my *Bassino*?

Pla. No—he is well in Health: but his distemper'd Mind
Is of a wild and feverish Disposition,
Longing to taste, what tasted will undo him.

Aur. Your Speech is all a Riddle: Pray speak plainer:
But yet, e'er you proceed, if Count *Bassino* lives,
I care not what must follow, since he's mine.

Pla. No, he's not yours—Nor ever must.

Aur. 'Tis false——There's not a Pow'r on Earth
can part us:
Perhaps,
You think my Blood too base to mix with yours——
But, Sir, your Brother loves me, and in Love
All Ranks are equal——

Pla. No——I wish that were all:
But there's a greater Obstacle——He—is—married—
Oh! Gods! unfortunately married!

Aur. Married!

Pla. Yes,——Married——to my Sister,
To my unfortunate, abandon'd Sister.
Oh! do not you conspire t'undo her quite;
It is enough, she's false *Bassino*'s Wife.

Aur. Gods! Married!
And is it possible! Oh! faithless Men!
Oh! Truth! Oh! Justice! Whither are you fled?
Now all my Fears and Horrors are explain'd.

Pla. I'm glad I reach'd this Place in Time, to hinder
Those Ills that must have waited on your Marriage,
Now it is in your Power, both to be happy,
And, in some Measure, make my Sister so.

[*Both rise.*

Aur. A Paradox in Nature——Bid *Aurelia*
Be happy, when you rob her of her Heaven!
Her dear *Bassino*!
Indeed your Sister may be counted happy,
If she's his Wife—Ha—Wife—by Heaven! 'tis false—
No, no—He has no other Wife but me——
He is not married, you bely him basely——

He cannot be so treacherous——

Pla. Madam, I swear, whate'er I said is Truth—
Do but defer this Marriage for a Day,
And if I don't produce convincing Proofs,
May all the Plagues a Woman can invent
Fall on my perjur'd Head——

Aur. Defer our Marriage—No, by Heaven I will not.
I can't suspect him—Neither do I think
You durst maintain this Story to his Face.

Pla. Madam, I dare; nay, which is more, I'll die,
Or vindicate my injur'd Sister's Honour——

Aur. Bold Arrogance!
Oh! That he were but here to answer the Affront!
Perhaps he may have wrong'd your Family:
Debauch'd your Sister; for which you would force him
To marry her?——But, I must tell thee, Boy,
He's mine already: nor would he forsake me
To hold Command o'er all the Universe.

Pla. Oh! Heaven! must I bear this!

Aur. Nay, expect more, if he should find you here,
'Tis not your being Brother to his Mistress,
That will secure you from his just Revenge.

Pla. Revenge! Nay, then away with all Disguise,
Pity be gone——And in its Room fell Rage
Take place, that I may dash that haughty Insolence
That dares to treat me thus—Know, Madam,
I am his Wife—his lawful wedded Wife.
With borrow'd Shape I came to try your Virtue,
Which I have found so light that the least Puff
Of wanton Love will blast it——Else my Visit
Had met a better Welcome—Here with Sword in Hand
I'll wait his coming,
And as he enters, pierce thy haughty Breast.
I know he loves thee, and therefore 'tis brave
Revenge to let him see thy dying Pangs:
Thy parting Sighs will rack him worse than Hell.

[*Draws.*

Aur. His Wife! Oh! Insolence!
In vain you waste your Breath, it moves not me:
So much I love him, so much I'm belov'd,
That should an Angel from yon Heaven descend,
To tell me he's marry'd, I'd not credit him,
Kill me if you dare—He will revenge my Death:
That pleasing Thought gives Courage to my Soul:
To live without him would be Death indeed!
No—he'll ne'er leave me for a common Thing,

For such I'm sure thou art——

Pla. Common! Proud Wretch——by Heaven that
Word gives Wings
To my Revenge——Vile Creature, die——

[*Stabs her.*]

Aur. Help,—Murder, murder——

Enter Bassino.

Bass. Ha—That to thy Heart——[*Kills Plac.*] Wer't
thou a Demi-god
And durst attempt this Shrine, thus should'st thou fall——

Pla. (*Falling.*) Oh! *Bassino!* Oh!

Aur. Oh! hold, my Lord, what has your Rashness done?
I only should have dy'd——I'll not upbraid
Your Treachery—No, 'tis the Hand of Heaven
That guides the Stroke that takes my guilty Life,
For being faithless to *Alonzo*.

Bass. Talk not of Death, my fair, my dear *Aurelia*;
That very Sound does harrow up my Soul.
But who art thou, whose sacrilegious Hand
Durst to profane the Temple of my Love?

Pla. I am your Wife—Your loving Wife *Placentia*.
Oh! pardon this rash Deed; blame jealous Love—
And grace me with a Sigh, that I may die contented.

Bass. My Wife! and kill'd by me!
Under what Load of Miseries I stand!
Oh! Horror! Horror! Infinity of Guilt!
Hurl now your vengeful Bolts, Almighty Powers,
On my devoted Head!
Oh! I have wrong'd you both: Deceiv'd you basely:
Thus prostrate on the Ground, let me beg Pardon:

[*Throws himself on the Ground.*]

I do not ask it with Design to live.

Aur. Oh! dear *Bassino* live:
And try to save her, for she's innocent:
We only are in Fault——
I urg'd my wretched Fate with impious Language,
For which I beg Forgiveness: Generous Lady,
Let not my Soul depart with Guilt opprest.

Pla. As I forgive you, so may Heaven me.

Bass. Oh! *Placentia!* Oh! my Wife!

Aur. One thing more, and I'm happy——
Were but *Alonzo* here, that I might ask

Forgiveness for my Falshood! But, alas!
My Spirits faint within my frozen Veins,
And every Thing seems double to my Sight:
Oh! How I dread the uncertain future State!

Bass. Unhappy Maid! Oh! my once dear *Aurelia*!
Curst, Curst *Bassino*! Oh! my Wife! How dare
I stand the View of both these injured Women!
Oh! Heaven! Why name I Heaven! Heaven will not hear
A Wretch like me——No, even Hell wants Torment
Proportion'd to my Guilt——Oh! my *Placentia*! Oh!

Pla. Oh! my dear Lord, I cannot see you thus:
Live, live, my Lord; be happy when I'm dead.
Nay, for your Sake, I with *Aurelia* too
May live to make you happy——

Bass. Oh! Hold!
Heap not more Curses on me by your Kindness;
I wish that she might live, but not for me.
Only to clear me from her guilty Blood——Oh! *Placentia*!

Pla. Rise, my Lord, rise: Do not indulge your Woe,
Your Sighs atone for all, and make e'en Death a pleasure——
I see him coming, he will soon be here——

Bass. No, I will never rise: ne'er see the Day.
The Sun would blush to shine on such an impious Wretch.
Here let me lie, and tear with these curst Hands

[*Tears the Ground in a distracted Manner.*]

A Passage thro' the Earth, and hide my Face for ever.

Alon. (*Within.*) Where where's this Villain? Where's *Bassino*?

Aur. 'Tis *Alonzo*'s Voice.
Oh! fly, my Lord, fly from his just Revenge.

Enter Alonzo hastily.

Bass. Fly——
Where shall I fly from Justice? No, Heaven is kind
In sending him to help my Journey forward.

Alon. Where's *Bassino*?

Bass. (*Rising.*) Here Sir, I stand.

Alon. Then there stands a Villain——Ha——what
Do I see!——*Aurelia* murder'd!
Oh! treacherous Maid, thy Love has cost thee dear,
Think on thy broken Vows, and call to Heaven for Mercy.
Thy Death I will revenge, because I lov'd thee once.

Aur. Oh! *Alonzo*, pardon me.

Alon. to *Bass.* Now Villain, now what Story, what Pretence
Canst thou invent to avoid my just Revenge?
Oh! that I ne'er had list'ned to thy Tongue!
Thy base perfidious Tongue! Then all these Murders
Had been prevented, and thou curst in Hell——
Thou monstrous Fiend——

Bass. You talk too much—Let's see what you can do:
Thus I return your Villain——

Alon. Take thy Reward.

[*They fight, Bassino falls.*

Enter Armando.

Arm. Hold! hold: Oh Gods! I'm come too late,
What has my fatal Friendship done!
Ha——*Placentia* too——curst Letter!

Bass. My Friend *Armando*! Oh! I blush to see thee:
But let me have your Pardon——now I need it.

Arm. Oh! first pardon me——
For I have been the Cause of all this Mischief.
Whilst my officious Friendship strives to save you,
I bring you all to this unhappy End.
Say, can you pardon me?

Bass. I do——
And Oh! my Friend! had Virtue been my Guide,
As it was thine, I still were truly happy.

Aur. Where am I?
Why do I hover thus 'twixt Rest and Misery?
Oh! good *Alonzo*, say you pardon me,
And let me die in Peace, else full of Horror
My guilty Soul must wander in the Shades
Of gloomy Night, and never, never rest.

Alon. Thou hast my Pardon, and with it this Promise
Never to love again——

Aur. Oh! you're——too——kind—and I want—
Breath to thank——you——Farewel,

[*Dies.*

Bass. Oh! *Placentia*!
Thus in thy Arms my Thread of Life shall break.

[*Embraces her.*

Pla. My Lord, my Husband, Oh! come nearer yet,
That I may take a parting Kiss, to smooth
My Passage to the Realms of endless Night.
So—Now—I die——much happier than I lived.
Farewel——

[*Kissing him.*

[*Dies.*

Bass. Farewel, fair Excellence! Thou best of Wives!
But I shall quickly follow—Yet before I go,
I beg, *Alonzo*, let my Death atone
For all the Injuries my Life has done you.
Oh! spare my Memory, when I'm no more.

Alon. By Heaven!
I see such Virtue struggling in thy Breast,
As makes me wish I could prevent the Flight
Of thy departing Soul——

Bass. No, No——I would not live:
Hadst thou not come, my Hand had set me free,
But now I fell more nobly, and less guilty.
My Friend, my dear *Armando*,
Haste to inform my Prince, *Bassino* rests;
But hide, if possible, my Shame: And let
One Grave hold both this wretched Corps and mine,
Oh! my *Placentia*——

[*Dies.*

Alon. Unhappy Pair! But far more wretched me!
For I must live, and live without *Aurelia*!
Tho' I'm convinc'd she lov'd me not, I can't
Banish her Image from my Love-sick Mind.
Oh! that I ne'er had seen the charming Fair!

Arm. The Gods are just in all their Punishments:
And by this single Act, we plainly see
That Vengeance always treads on Perjury;
And tho' sometimes no Bolts be at us hurl'd,
Whilst we enjoy the Pleasures of this World;
Yet a Day awaits, a Day of general Doom,
When guilty Souls must to an Audit come;
Then that we may not tremble, blush, or fear,
Let our Desires be just; our Lives unsullied here.

[*Exeunt omnes.*



TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Contemporary spellings and hyphenation have been retained, even where inconsistent; so the text contains both, e.g. thou'rt and thour't, you'rs and your's.

At the very beginning of Act 5, Scene 1, a speech wrongly given to Ludovic has been assigned to Lucy in keeping with the logic of the dialogue.

Two obvious typographical errors were corrected: "Reputatron" became "Reputation" in Act 2, Scene 2 (Ludovic); "cconot" was changed to "cannot" in Act 4, Scene 1 (Placentia).

Along with the two additional changes listed below, these corrections can be identified in the body of the text by a grey dotted underline:

In vain I strive to check my new-born Love, cannot, cannot live without *Bassino*

In vain I strive to check my new-born Love, **I** cannot, cannot live without *Bassino*

What would you say now, Madam, if I should contrive a Way to have your Lover in your own own Chamber?

What would you say now, Madam, if I should contrive a Way to have your Lover in your **own** Chamber?

[The end of *The Perjur'd Husband* by Susanna Centlivre]