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**THE**

# GENEROUS ARTIFICE;

OR, THE

REFORMED RAKE.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WEALTHY.  
TRUMAN.  
CLERIMONT.  
SUBTLE.  
LA FLEUR.  
A Porter.

ISABELLA.  
LUCY.

SCENE, *Wealthy's house.*



# THE GENEROUS ARTIFICE.

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## ACT I. SCENE I.

*Enter WEALTHY and SUBTLE.*

SUBTLE.

Once more I must tell you, sir, that the only way to reform your son, is to get him a wife out of hand.

WEALTHY.

A wife! why what woman do'st think will venture on him, loaded as he is with debt, immers'd in debauchery, and ruined in his credit?

SUBTLE.

I'll warrant you there are those who would venture on him, notwithstanding all this.

WEALTHY.

But I really could not answer it to my conscience, to give my consent even if he was starving; and might have the greatest fortune in Paris.

SUBTLE.

Upon my word, sir, your seem violently enraged against him.

WEALTHY.

And have I not sufficient reason, think you? Besides, what vexes me more than all the rest, is, that his bad conduct has been the means of breaking off a match with a most amiable young woman, for whom I designed him; and who, by her merit, good-nature and virtues, would have made him the happiest of all men.

SUBTLE.

By your description of the lady I should presume it was miss Isabella whom you designed for him.

WEALTHY.

The same. But I have too great a friendship and regard for her to make her miserable. Ungracious wretch! I am resolved never to see him more; and I charge him never to appear before me again.

SUBTLE.

But after all, my dear sir, what occasion is there for all this outcry? Your son has done no more than all the young fellows of his age do now-a-days.

WEALTHY.

Hold your tongue, sirrah! I know what reason I have to be offended with him, and——

SUBTLE.

For God's sake, sir, don't put yourself in a passion; I only desire you to hear me a few words.

WEALTHY.

Well, mr. rascal, pray what can you say in excuse for him?

SUBTLE.

Ay, ay, you may abuse me as much as you please; but I shall speak only what is reasonable. Do you think that nothing is to be allowed for youth? Come, come, sir; you had your frolicks and your fancies, at his years.

WEALTHY.

No matter what I had, jackanapes; I am speaking of what my son now is.

SUBTLE.

Well, he is a rake; and have not you been the same?

WEALTHY.

No, impudence! tho' I was all life and gaiety in my younger days; yet my whole study was how to get money.

SUBTLE.

And his is how to spend it. I am sure the one is a much more noble passion than the other.

WEALTHY.

Look'e, Subtle, one word is as good as a hundred. I have done with him; he has nothing further to expect from me.

SUBTLE.

Good, good, stay now. With all this violent rage of yours, I would venture to lay a handsome wager that you doat on him still.

WEALTHY.

I! on the contrary I hate, I detest him; I——What is the scoundrel laughing at?

SUBTLE.

Excuse me, sir, but I cannot help it for the soul of me; when I hear so fond a parent as I know you to be, talk of hating so amiable a son as my master.

WEALTHY.

Why, I believe, Subtle, he has good principles; he is sound at heart, hey?

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir! he has the best heart in the world: and then his duty and tenderness for you are inexpressible.

WEALTHY.

I always thought it, and I have said as much to mr. Truman, but he will not believe it; nor suffer me for some time past to listen to the dictates of a father's love.

SUBTLE.

That same friend of your's, sir, give me leave to say it, is an implacable tyrant.

WEALTHY.

He is rather too severe, that's certain; but this very severity has been of great use to me: I have always profited by his advice, Subtle.

SUBTLE.

Sir?

WEALTHY.

I could wish to place a confidence in thee, Subtle; but thou hast so often deceived me.

SUBTLE.

Never, sir! when you paid me handsomely.

WEALTHY.

Rascal!

SUBTLE.

Rascal? there again! I disclose myself to you without reserve, and you call me rascal. Now, in my opinion, nothing can be a stronger mark of a man of honour than plain dealing.

WEALTHY.

And is it the mark of a man of honour to take money on both sides too?

SUBTLE.

Why, sir; when I take money from your son, it is for telling him what you say of him; when I take it from you, it is to acquaint you with what he does. Now, by telling him the reflections you make on his conduct, I furnish him with so many lessons of morality for amending it: and by giving you an account of his follies and extravagancies, I give you an opportunity of redressing them. So that by which soever party I am paid, you must confess I get the money honestly. Lord bless me, sir; you cannot think what a tender conscience I have.



WEALTHY.

Well! well! but to come to the point.—Tell me, Subtle, there's a good lad; and tell me truly, what sort of a disposition is my son in at present?

SUBTLE.

Why, sir; if I am not much mistaken, he begins to see his folly; and is heartily tired of being perpetually harrassed by his creditors and his mistresses.

WEALTHY.

I believe you are in the right, Subtle; for I have observed for these three or four days past, he has not stirred out of the house. Whence comes this sudden change?

SUBTLE.

From a love of liberty, sir.

WEALTHY.

How! can a love of liberty make a man confine himself?

SUBTLE.

Undoubtedly, sir.

WEALTHY.

I don't understand you.

SUBTLE.

Why, then, you must know, sir; that there are four or five honest gentlemen in daily waiting at our gate, who the instant they should set their eyes upon my master, would most earnestly intreat him to go along with them to a certain place on the other

side the water: nay, they would even themselves be at the trouble of shewing him the way thither.

WEALTHY.

How! what!—Has he any bad affair upon his hands?

SUBTLE.

Truth has he, sir. Oh! he is most cruelly persecuted.

WEALTHY.

I'm in a cold sweat! persecuted? by whom?

SUBTLE.

Some old friends of his, sir; who are now become his most implacable enemies.

WEALTHY.

Who are they? Dost know their names?

SUBTLE.

Ay, marry do I, as well as my own. The first is called mr. Selvedge; the second mr. Tinsel; the third mr. Fashion; and the fourth mr. Ragout.

WEALTHY.

Zounds! what names are here? Were these fellows my son's friends?

SUBTLE.

His most intimate ones. This one furnished him with the finest broad cloth; the other with the richest lace and embroidery; the third made his cloaths in the most fashionable manner; and the

fourth set off his table in the most elegant taste. But alas! such is the inconstancy of man: these very people, wearied out with shewing him a thousand civilities, for which he never made them any return, are now determined to shut him up in a jail for the remainder of his life, to punish him for his ingratitude, as they call it.

WEALTHY.

Ah! I understand thee; they have each a writ against him.

SUBTLE.

Neither better nor worse, indeed, sir.

WEALTHY.

But tell me; does he owe these worthy gentlemen any great sum?

SUBTLE.

A mere trifle! not worth mentioning.

WEALTHY.

Well, but what may the whole amount to?

SUBTLE.

In all I believe;—stay;—ay;—in all I think it may amount to about five thousand pounds; a little more or less.

WEALTHY.

Oons! you abominable rascal! Do you call five thousand pounds a trifle?

SUBTLE.

A mere nothing for a man of your substance to pay; and for a

beloved son too.

WEALTHY.

Get out of my sight! get out of my sight! or I'll treat you as you deserve.—Five thousand pounds!

SUBTLE.

Mighty well, sir:—extremely well; mr. Wealthy, this is very genteel usage.—But let me tell you, sir, you may have occasion for my services; and then you shall pay handsomely for them I assure you.

[*Going.*]

WEALTHY. [*Lifting up his cane.*]

Come back, mr. rascal! I have a word or two to say to you yet.

SUBTLE.

Sir! I kiss your hand.

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE II.

*Enter* TRUMAN.

WEALTHY. [*Walking about in a passion.*]

Five thousand pounds a trifle! what a villain! He has put my

blood in a ferment! Ah! my dear friend, are you here; well, what have you done?

TRUMAN. [*Giving him papers.*]

Here are discharges from twelve of the creditors. As I bestirred myself in the affair, I have brought you off for a thousand pounds this bout.

WEALTHY.

Well, we must have patience.

TRUMAN.

Igad I have saved you a good five hundred; I stood to the stuff; threaten'd, swore, wheedled. In short, the apprehensions of losing the whole, made these blood-suckers hearken to reason.

WEALTHY.

How much I am obliged to you, my good friend; and how sincerely ought I to make this spendthrift of a son smart for the trouble and expence he puts me to.

TRUMAN.

Let him only still suppose himself over head and ears in debt; and that you are neither able nor willing to pay them for him: and take my word for it this will be a sufficient punishment. I know he is already grieved to the soul, at having incurred your displeasure; and am persuaded that in the midst of all his extravagancies, which the bad company he has kept has drawn him into, he has still preserved a stock of honour and duty, and is at the bottom a good son.

WEALTHY.

A good son! ah, my friend!

TRUMAN.

Yes, mr. Wealthy, I repeat it; a good son. Some of his friends, men of character, and whose words may be depended upon, have assured me that he sincerely laments the uneasiness he causes you; and is under the most dreadful apprehensions lest you should come to the knowledge of his being so deeply in debt. Nay, he is even at this present time using all the methods he can devise to appease his creditors: and not above a day or two ago he brought three of them to my house and upon his knees entreated me to satisfy them.

WEALTHY. [*Wiping his eyes.*]

Upon his knees! poor boy! my heart bleeds for him.

TRUMAN.

Accordingly I paid them with your money, pretending it was my own, and obliged him to give me his note for the payment, which I now return you. You may suppose I promised him not to take any notice of it to you, but at the same time I rated him soundly.

WEALTHY.

I hope you was not too severe upon him.

TRUMAN.

Not enough so—However if there is any truth in man, you will see a surprising change in him.

WEALTHY.

Heavens grant it, and that he may at length make himself worthy of espousing the daughter of our deceased benefactor.

TRUMAN.

That is what I wish as earnestly as you can do; and to say the truth, I do not despair of it.

WEALTHY.

Indeed! Why then let us hasten to put him out of his pain.

TRUMAN.

What do you mean?

WEALTHY.

To let him know that I have paid all his debts.

TRUMAN.

Mercy on us! take care what you do; things are not ripe for such a discovery yet; he must bite of the bridle a little longer. I make it my business every time I see him, to tell him, that you have ruined yourself for him, and that if it was not for my assistance, you could no longer live with credit in the world.

WEALTHY.

And what does he say to that?

TRUMAN.

He weeps, tears his hair, and is ready to lay violent hands on himself.

WEALTHY. [*Wiping his eyes.*]

Can there be a more dutiful child! I'll go to him this instant,

and——

TRUMAN.

And what?

WEALTHY.

Tell him I forgive him, and that I have paid all his debts; for do you know the poor soul is now a prisoner in this house.——You smile!

TRUMAN.

I do, this is a trick that I have play'd him.

WEALTHY.

That you have play'd him!

TRUMAN.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

But how? Why? Wherefore?

TRUMAN.

I'll tell you then—but heark, I hear some one coming this way—  
Let us retire to the closet, and I will tell you the whole  
affair.——Odso! it is your son himself; what a dejected air he  
has!

WEALTHY.

My heart bleeds! I can scarcely support the sight; however I'll  
call up all my resolution, and second you as much as possible.



TRUMAN.

Be resolute and severe.

WEALTHY.

Never fear me; you shall see how cruel I will be to him now.

### SCENE III.

*Enter CLERIMONT.*

WEALTHY.

So, sir! methinks you are very bold to dare come into my presence! Have I not forbid you to appear in my sight? Let me never see you again.

CLERIMONT.

Sir, you shall be obey'd. I came hither to seek for Subtle, not expecting to meet with you.

WEALTHY.

I say, I command you never to appear before me again.—Oh, my friend, I can hold out no longer.

*[Aside to Truman.]*

TRUMAN. *[Aside to Wealthy.]*

Leave the room then as quick as possible.

CLERIMONT.

It is enough, sir; father, it is enough.

WEALTHY. [*In great agitation.*]

Father! Call me no more by that name——for look'e, my dear boy!——I am so incensed against you——And yet I hope——No, I hope for nothing——You are a wretch unworthy of my tenderness——a——Farewel, my child——Endeavour to amend your conduct; your father entreats it of you——Or by all that's sacred, I'll——Let me begone, I know not what I say. [*Aside to Truman, and Exit.*]

#### SCENE IV.

CLERIMONT.

What can my father mean? his words and looks little agree with one another. What am I to think?

TRUMAN.

Can you not perceive that you have driven him to despair. The poor old gentleman's brain is turned.

CLERIMONT.

Sure you have not told him——

TRUMAN.

Is there occasion to tell him any thing more than what your

follies and extravagancies daily inform him?

CLERIMONT.

My follies and extravagancies, sir!

TRUMAN.

Nay, nay, never put yourself in a passion; I could find a worse name for them, but I am willing to deal tenderly with you still.

CLERIMONT.

You are perfectly in the right, for I am not fond of harsh expressions.

TRUMAN.

Nor I of insolent airs: besides you know they cannot impose upon me.

CLERIMONT.

Mighty well, sir,——but no matter; there is a certain age, at which a man may say any thing. However you talk rather too much like the old man.

TRUMAN.

And you act too much like a young one.

CLERIMONT.

Sir, you used me like a dog the other day; like the vilest slave that——

TRUMAN.

I used you as you deserved.

CLERIMONT.

As I deserved! 'Tis well! I shall remember this.

TRUMAN.

You ought rather to remember what I have done for you—perhaps it may have slipt your memory; but however my hot young sir, you may, henceforward get somebody else to pay your debts. If any of your creditors apply to me again, I shall send them to your father, I assure you.

CLERIMONT.

For God's sake, mr. Truman, what do you mean? Would you drive me to despair?

TRUMAN.

To despair, quotha? No, no, you are in no danger of that; but I must tell you, Clerimont, that I tremble for the consequences of that haughty impatient temper of yours. Odso, I should not wonder to see you treat your father himself with disrespect, after your behaviour to me.

CLERIMONT.

I would sooner suffer a thousand deaths.

TRUMAN.

And why so? what reason have you to be under any restraint? The poor man has no longer any thing to give you; and if your behaviour should drive him to disinherit you, you can be no great loser you know.

CLERIMONT.

What do you mean?

TRUMAN.

That if it was not for me, he might want the common necessities of life.

CLERIMONT.

Impossible!

TRUMAN.

Will you be pleased only to set down and calculate with me what you have cost him for these last eight or nine years only.

CLERIMONT.

Oh Lord! I cannot reckon.

TRUMAN.

True; but you can spend.

CLERIMONT.

My father want the necessaries of life! Good God what do I hear? And what will become of me?

TRUMAN.

Oh! you will do well enough, you can live by your shifts, as many others of your stamp have done, after spending all their substance beforehand.

CLERIMONT.

How! I live by my shifts? I descend to such baseness! No, sir, let me tell you, when I can no longer live like a man of honour, I'll put an end to my misfortunes. I will, you may depend upon it.

TRUMAN.

And how, pray?

CLERIMONT.

As every man of honour does, when reduced to the last extremity. Live by my shifts! 'Sdeath!

TRUMAN.

The expression seems to shock your delicacy wonderfully.

CLERIMONT.

A soul such as mine starts at the thought of such expedients. Besides, I am not so destitute as you may imagine. I am greatly in debt, it is true, but at the same time I have considerable sums owing me; and could I but venture abroad——

TRUMAN.

What hinders you?

CLERIMONT.

Spare your interrogations, if you please; I have my reasons for keeping within doors; and that is sufficient.

TRUMAN.

You chuse retirement, perhaps?

CLERIMONT.

I do so.

TRUMAN.

It is a forced choice, I am afraid.

CLERIMONT.

Forced or not forced, it concerns not you.

TRUMAN.

Oh, oh, I find you have taken a distaste to the world: really this is very edifying.

CLERIMONT.

Zounds, sir, do you make a jest of me?

TRUMAN.

Lord bless me, how irascible you are. But I must take my leave of you. I am going to Fashion's, my taylor; that devil of a fellow never keeps his word with me.

CLERIMONT.

Is Fashion your taylor.

TRUMAN.

He is, and he is yours too, I think. Have you any commands for him?

CLERIMONT.

Only be so kind to tell him from me, that he is a damned scoundrel.

TRUMAN.

Oh, he has known that a long time. I am going also to take off some cloth for a suit of cloaths for your father, of a very honest fellow of a wollen-draper, one Selvedge; do you know him?

CLERIMONT.

Yes, by God, I know him well enough; that is another scoundrel.

TRUMAN.

'Odso, well remembered! Pray can you tell me where one Mr. Tinsel lives, a laceman, I want to buy some things of him for my nephew.

CLERIMONT.

Take good care how you deal with him, he cheats by the ell and yard.

TRUMAN.

Oh! he never imposes upon people of my age, he cheats none but your young rakes of quality, and the elder sons of good families, who take up his goods upon trust, in order to dispose of them for ready money. An expedient you are no stranger to, I presume. It helps one out at a dead lift, you know.—You are silent.

CLERIMONT.

You are a malicious devil, Mr. Truman.

TRUMAN. [*Looking at his watch.*]

'Odso! it is just the hour that I was to be at Ragout's; there are five or six of my intimate friends, and an elegant entertainment waiting for me. The donor of the feast does not pay ready money, indeed, but then Mr. Ragout is the most genteel person in his way. And now I think of it, he has a great regard for you: shall I make your compliments to him?

CLERIMONT.

Oh by all means! and pray tell him from me, that the first time I



have the honour to see him, I will wring his neck from his shoulders.

TRUMAN.

What, have you and he quarrelled? Upon my word I am very sorry for it. Your servant.

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE V.

CLERIMONT. [*Alone.*]

I cannot help having a respect for an old and faithful friend, otherwise I should not so long have borne with his reproaches and railleries. Cruel man! I see plainly he is informed of all my affairs, and will not fail to make my father acquainted with them, who will no longer be able to contain himself, and what reproaches shall I have to make myself! Good heavens, I cannot think of it without trembling! Surely there is not so unhappy a wretch upon earth as myself! I love my father, and I am the cause of his ruin: And for what? For blindly giving into the extravagancies of a herd of fools, whom I despise, and hunting after pleasures, that in the possession baffled my expectations, and left me a prey to remorse and disappointment, with the loss of fortune, character, and liberty. But what drives me to desperation, is, that I cannot extricate myself out of the labyrinth into which I have run thro' my imprudence. I have deceiv'd

women, who now persecute me with the most implacable hatred, and have rendered myself hateful to the only woman I ever truly loved; and I have brought a crowd of creditors upon me, that will not suffer me to enjoy a moment's peace, nor breathe in safety the common air. And then what is to become of my father? Oh thought! thought! thou art insupportable, I have nothing now left, but the wretch's last resource, death, and that I am always master to procure to myself.

[*Exit.*

END of the FIRST ACT.



## ACT II. SCENE I.

CLERIMONT *and* SUBTLE.

SUBTLE.

What will your father say, when he knows of all these fine doings?

CLERIMONT.

As you value your life, let him not know a single syllable.

SUBTLE.

I can answer for myself, but other people's tongues, you know——

CLERIMONT.

Well, we must do as we can, however, if he should take any notice of my affairs to you, be sure you deny every thing stoutly.

SUBTLE.

You may be sure of that. But pray, sir, are you under any apprehensions of being taken out of the house?

CLERIMONT.

And why that question, pray?

SUBTLE.

Because I surpriz'd you just now charging your pistols. What devilish design is forming in that brain of yours?

CLERIMONT.

To shoot a certain person thro' the head, who no longer deserves to live in the world.

SUBTLE.

And pray who is this same person?

CLERIMONT.

Time will shew.—I only wait 'till I have put some things in order to execute my design.

SUBTLE.

Some nocturnal rendezvous, I suppose?

CLERIMONT.

No, those follies are all at an end with me now; and even if I was as much at my liberty as heretofore, I would never quit this house.

SUBTLE.

Oh! ho! then it is vacation time with you, I find. Mighty well! but there are some poor female plaintiffs I fancy, who will be terribly enraged at your not giving audience.

CLERIMONT.

Truce with raillery, Subtle, I am no longer in a humour to bear with it——Leave me to my reflections.

SUBTLE.

Oh! with all my heart. Throw yourself into that elbow chair, and I will squat down in this, and then let's see who'll reflect the fastest.

CLERIMONT. [*Speaking to himself.*]

Ah too lovely, too deserving Isabella!

SUBTLE. [*The same.*]

Ah divine mrs. Lucy, flower of serving-maids!

CLERIMONT.

Why am I so unworthy of you?—But I will not die!—The thoughts of thee will sweeten life, and mitigate my despair.

SUBTLE.

How ravishing are thy smiles! how deserving art thou of all my tenderness, and how worthy am I of pleasing thee!

CLERIMONT.

My soul, and all its faculties are thine, and yet thou knowest it not. I shall grieve only to part with you; and my death will give you no uneasiness: that——that——distracts me.

SUBTLE.

When we are marry'd how fond shall I be of thee! I shall so hug——so kiss——so touzle thee——so——[*to his Master*] Sir, sir, what's the matter with you? You seem furiously agitated.

CLERIMONT.

I am distracted.

SUBTLE.

And I am quite at my ease.

CLERIMONT. [*Starting.*]

No! I will not die, till I have taken my last farewell of her.

SUBTLE.

Whither are you going?

CLERIMONT.

I know not——I wish——I dread——Subtle, fly this instant to Isabella's apartment, and tell her that I earnestly desire to speak with her.

SUBTLE.

You astonish me, what can you want with her? consider, she is a modest young lady; you will not know how to behave to her.

CLERIMONT.

Alas! it is but too true! yet no matter, she has such an hold on my heart.—I never loved any woman but her, and to overwhelm thee at once with surprize, know that I am still more enamour'd of her virtue than her beauty.

SUBTLE.

Her virtue? I am thunderstruck! enamoured of her virtue? I suppose it is to ruin it that you are so fond of it.

CLERIMONT.

I would sooner die a thousand deaths, than entertain such a thought. Alas! why have I been so long without knowing, that virtue alone is truly worthy of captivating the heart?

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir, you are over head and ears in the vapours; but after all, what reason is there to torment yourself in this manner? are you the only young man who has been guilty of follies? time gets the better of all these things. You think yourself unworthy of Isabella, perhaps she thinks in a different manner; come, come, you are not the first libertine, who has been beloved by a girl of virtue and understanding.

CLERIMONT.

I tell thee, Subtle, Isabella must hate and despise me, I am sure of it.

SUBTLE.

For my part, I love her maid Lucy; I cannot say whether it is on account of her virtue, for I never put it to the tryal, but I am very sure she will return my passion; Adad! and here she comes, with

her mistress.

## SCENE II.

*Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.*

LUCY.

But dear madam, have you really taken this strange resolution?

ISABELLA.

What else is left me? would'st thou have me let slip so favourable an opportunity?

LUCY.

Hush, we are overheard.

ISABELLA.

Mercy upon me! so we are [*advancing to Clerimont*]. Your servant, sir, it is something extraordinary to find you at home at this time of day, may I ask what detains you within doors?

CLERIMONT.

Madam, I have some business that——This is a puzzling question Subtle. [*Aside to Subtle.*]

SUBTLE.

A little malicious or so, indeed. [*Walks to the other end of the Stage, and coquets with Lucy.*] Good day, pretty mrs. Lucy.

LUCY.

Your humble servant, mr. Subtle, why, your master and you are in an idle humour to-day, methinks. [*Here they coquet in dumb shew.*]

CLERIMONT.

May I, without being impertinent, madam, ask what was the resolution you was just now speaking of?

ISABELLA.

It was, sir, to go and receive a legacy of five hundred pounds left me by an aunt, who died lately.

CLERIMONT.

I must own, I see nothing very extraordinary in such a resolution.

ISABELLA.

True; but the manner in which I propose to lay it out may perhaps surprize you.

SUBTLE. [*Aside to his master.*]

If she should have an inclination to make you a present of it, it would come very a-propos.

CLERIMONT. [*Aside to Subtle.*]

Peace! She has too much understanding to make so ridiculous an advance.

SUBTLE. [*Aside.*]

Put the question home, however; that can do no hurt.



CLERIMONT. [*To Isabella who is going out.*]

Are you going, madam?

ISABELLA.

Yes, sir; for I have no time to lose: the business is pressing, and my lawyer waits for me.

CLERIMONT.

Vouchsafe me a word before we part.

ISABELLA.

What have you to say to me?

CLERIMONT.

May I presume to ask one favour of you?

ISABELLA.

What is that, pray, sir?

CLERIMONT.

To inform me what use you propose to make of this legacy of your aunt's?

ISABELLA.

It is all the fortune I have in the world. You know my father left me young, an orphan, and without any dependence upon earth. Your's, with an excess of generosity rarely to be paralleled, received the daughter of his deceased friend as his own; bred me up under his hospitable roof; and has been a parent to me in every sense of the word. But now that, by my aunt's decease, I am in possession of wherewithal to procure me a comfortable subsistence, I am resolved to be no longer a burthen to him, but

to employ the little I have in such a manner as will answer all my wants for the rest of my life.

CLERIMONT.

They must be very circumscrib'd then.

ISABELLA.

And so they ought to be. The articles are already drawn.

SUBTLE.

What does she mean? articles of marriage?

LUCY.

No, truly, quite the contrary.

ISABELLA.

I am resolved to retire to a convent, where they are ready to receive me for life, in consideration of assigning over my fortune for my subsistence: and I declare to you, that I shall enter a convent with more joy, than many others leave it to enter into the world again.

CLERIMONT.

Good God! what can have obliged you to form so strange a design? and so suddenly too?

ISABELLA.

Can you ask that question? It is yourself; it is you who are the cause.

CLERIMONT.

Amazement! I, madam! I the cause?

ISABELLA.

You, and you alone.

CLERIMONT.

What is it you tell me?

ISABELLA.

The truth. Say, sir; is it not you who have ruined your father?

CLERIMONT.

Who has told you so?

ISABELLA.

Himself. He complains of it with tears in his eyes; every day, every hour, every moment. It was but this very morning, in my presence, that he sighed, and took on in such a manner as would have pierced the most obdurate heart. It is now above three years that I have been a burthen to him; and heaven knows with what satisfaction I now find myself possessed of a small pittance, that enables me to provide for myself, and rid him of that burthen; and should I not think myself to be the most unworthy of all creatures, if I did not make that use of the support which heaven has sent me, which my unhappy situation dictates to me.

CLERIMONT.

Alas! what you say is but too just. Farewell, too lovely Isabella; I shall not long regret your loss.

ISABELLA. [*Angrily.*]

I believe you, sir.

LUCY.

A very pretty compliment, truly! a mighty affectionate farewell.

CLERIMONT.

More affectionate than you imagine, Lucy.

SUBTLE. [*To Lucy, half-crying.*]

Are folks regretted after they are dead, Lucy?

LUCY.

Why? do you think your master is going to die?

SUBTLE.

Ay, and I too I can tell you, if you should follow your mistress.

LUCY.

Madam, this claims some attention.

ISABELLA.

Psha! you fool; canst thou not perceive that both master and man are making a jest of us? Is there any reason to believe, from the life mr. Clerimont has led, that he is a man to die for love? What a simple wench art thou, to give heed to such idle flourishes!

CLERIMONT. [*In great agitation.*]

Madam! madam! do not drive me to despair. I cannot dress my passion up in apt terms to please a lady's ear; but I am prepared to give you the most undeniable proofs of it, by sacrificing my life this instant at your feet. I am, madam; I am—

SUBTLE. [*To Lucy.*]

I am not quite so well prepared as my master; but I would not

have you tempt me too far; pr'ythee do not.

LUCY.

Lord, madam, they make me tremble!

ISABELLA. [*With an air of disdain.*]

Is it possible any creature can be so credulous?

CLERIMONT. [*Attempting to draw his sword.*]

Well, then, cruel fair one, if you must be convinced——

ISABELLA. [*Holding him.*]

Good heavens, mr. Clerimont! what are you about to do?

SUBTLE.

Make haste to prevent me, Lucy, or I shall——

LUCY.

Oh! I am in no such hurry.

SUBTLE.

Faith you are in the right;—I will not kill myself till I have seen you safe in the convent; but then—look to it——

CLERIMONT. [*Hastily to Isabella.*]

Confess this instant that you believe I love you; or——

ISABELLA.

Well, well, I do believe it.

CLERIMONT.

That I adore you.

ISABELLA. [*Tenderly.*]

Well, I will believe all you would have me.

CLERIMONT.

And that I shall die with regret for your loss, if I do not die before you enter the convent.

ISABELLA.

Before I enter the convent!

CLERIMONT.

Yes, madam. Believe what I now tell you, and I shall die contented.

ISABELLA.

I must confess you surprize me. I had not the least reason to expect such a behaviour from you; but your words carry an air of truth that convinces me; and I cannot refrain from owning that I am sensible——

CLERIMONT.

You overjoy me. To this goodness add that of promising me that you will not enter the convent till after I have disposed of this wretched being.

ISABELLA.

Good God! what do you mean?

CLERIMONT.

In all probability you will not long remain a stranger to my meaning. Do me the kindness to assure my father, from me, how sensibly I am grieved at having so barbarously abused his

goodness. Will you promise me what I now ask of you? I conjure you to do it by all that you hold most dear. Once more, adorable Isabella, farewell.

ISABELLA.

Yes, Clerimont, I do promise you,—I swear—I——Lucy, let us quit this place; his looks terrify me, I am ready to faint.

[*Exeunt Isabella and Lucy.*]

### SCENE III

SUBTLE.

Do you know, my ever-honoured master, that you talk in a very unaccountable manner? And then, your looks carry such despair in them, that they terrify every one; and me more than the rest. Give me leave to ask you one little question, and promise me you will not be angry.

CLERIMONT.

I promise thee I will not.

SUBTLE.

Well then, under correction, are you going mad?

CLERIMONT. [*Sighing.*]

Wretch that I am! Dost thou remember what Isabella told me

concerning my father? I am no longer worthy to live.

SUBTLE. [*Kissing his hand.*]

My dear, dear master!

CLERIMONT.

Be comforted, Subtle; I shall not forget thy faithful services.

SUBTLE. [*Crying.*]

Lord bless me, sir! what would you be at? Forget them, forget them; so you do but live. Mercy on us! you talk as if you was going to make your will.

CLERIMONT. [*With a resolute air.*]

No! I am not to be moved. I charge thee, Subtle, not to afflict thyself: if thou dost, it will be the worse for thee, I can assure you.

SUBTLE.

Zounds! what does he mean? [*Aside.*] I, sir! I afflict myself? not I indeed. I never had so great an inclination to laugh in all my life.

CLERIMONT.

To laugh? Execrable villain! are my misfortunes to be laugh at?

SUBTLE.

Oh, Lord, no sir! No, no. I—I—I neither laugh, nor cry, sir.

CLERIMONT.

That is as I would have it——Here, take this letter.



SUBTLE. [*Staring and trembling.*]

This letter, sir! Yes, sir.

CLERIMONT.

Carry it, this instant, to that Jew, that Turk, that cut-throat, Solomon, that lives just by——

SUBTLE.

Ay, this is something like.

CLERIMONT.

And be sure you bring me an answer. If he should refuse to comply with what I desire of him in that letter, fly into a rage against him; threaten, abuse him; and, to frighten him still more, tell him he may expect the most dreadful consequences from my rage and resentment.

SUBTLE.

Let me alone to manage him, sir. I'll give him a sweat, I warrant him.

CLERIMONT.

I shall wait for your return, in order to give you another commission.

SUBTLE.

May I take the liberty to ask what it may be?

CLERIMONT.

Why, I would have you take my cloaths, and sell them for what you can get, and bring me the money.

SUBTLE. [*Crying.*]

Sir!—dear sir!

CLERIMONT. [*Offering to strike him.*]

Rascal! are you crying again?

SUBTLE.

I, sir?—Lord, I am sure I would be very merry if I durst; but I am neither the one nor the other. I will go and execute your commands.

CLERIMONT.

And I will retire to my chamber till you come back; for my father may, perhaps, come into this room, and he has forbidden me to appear in his presence.

SUBTLE.

Here comes mr. Truman.

CLERIMONT.

I dread the sight of him, even more than that of my father.

[*Exit.*]

#### SCENE IV.

*Enter* TRUMAN.

TRUMAN.

Hey day! What's the matter, Subtle? you seem strangely disordered.

SUBTLE.

Truly, I have reason enough. Do you know, that my poor master's wits are gone a wool-gathering?

TRUMAN.

What dost mean?

SUBTLE.

What do I mean? why, he falls into such unaccountable fits, that he frightens me out of my senses. And I have dreadful apprehensions, lest the rage he is possessed with should drive him to commit some desperate act upon——

TRUMAN.

Upon whom?

SUBTLE.

Upon himself. Do you know, sir, that I have strong reasons to believe he has a design to blow out his own brains?

TRUMAN. [*Sneeringly.*]

The devil he has!

SUBTLE.

I surpris'd him, just now, charging his pistols, and trying postures before a glass. His brain is turned, take my word for it.

TRUMAN. [*Smiling.*]

Seriously?

SUBTLE.

Seriously. And I should not wonder in the least to find him dead when I come back.

TRUMAN.

A very moving affair, indeed!

SUBTLE.

Icod, sir, you may make a jest of it, if you please; but, let me tell you, it is a serious matter.

TRUMAN.

Well, as I hope to live, the fellow puts so melancholly a face upon the story, that it might impose upon any one who did not know him. Your master has given you a mighty pretty part in this farce; and to do you justice, you perform it to the life.

SUBTLE.

If I was in a humour for laughing now, I could divert myself very heartily at your pretended cunning: but, by my soul, it is no joking matter. Do you think, pray, if he did not look upon himself as a dead man already, that he would go and sell all his cloaths? You will have a proof in a minute of the truth of what I say to you; for I myself, d'ye see, am charged with that business; and am to set about it as soon as I have delivered this letter, and brought an answer.

TRUMAN.

Will you trust me with a sight of it?

SUBTLE.

Most readily; besides, it is not sealed; and I am as curious to know the contents of it as yourself, for I have not yet had time to read it.

TRUMAN.

Well, your curiosity will now be satisfied; that is to say, if you are really ignorant of the contents.

SUBTLE.

Why, do you take me for a liar, sir?

TRUMAN.

I shall not absolutely say that; but this I know for certain, my good mr. Subtle, that you are very apt to substitute the fertile inventions of your own brain in the room of truth.

SUBTLE.

And you, sir, out of your great care not to be imposed upon, become the dupe of your own sagacity.

TRUMAN.

May be so: however, let us read your master's letter to Solomon [*Looking at it.*] Upon my word the superscription is in an original stile. [*Reads.*] "To the arch usurer, Solomon." A very pretty title he has complimented him with! "You old scoundrel!"——

SUBTLE.

A very pompous beginning!

TRUMAN. [*Reads.*]

"If you do not immediately, on the receipt of this letter, deliver to the bearer the jewels which I pledged with you for an hundred guineas, of which I never received more than fifty, I swear by all that is most sacred to a man of honour, that I will beat thee to death the first moment I have the unhappiness to see thee. You know I am a person of my word. Think upon this, but be speedy in thy resolves; and, if they should be not to comply with what I here desire, send for a lawyer, and make thy will out of hand. However, I promise to pay thee the hundred pieces thou had fleec'd me of, as soon as I am in cash. Thus much to the greatest of all rascals; the most execrable of usurers; and the betrayer and fleecer of your's,

"Clerimont."

SUBTLE.

In troth this is a curious piece to keep by one.

TRUMAN.

In good earnest, my dear Subtle, this same epistle shews the writer's brain to be a little turned.

SUBTLE.

Well, you see now if I was jesting with you.

TRUMAN.

Upon my word I begin to believe what you say.

SUBTLE.

Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for your condescension.

TRUMAN.

Excuse my distrust, Subtle; you know you have taken me in sometimes.

SUBTLE.

Why, sir, when you prided yourself upon your great discernment, I must own I took a pleasure in trying my skill upon you; but put your confidence in me, and if ever I impose upon you in the least particular, hang me up for the greatest villain breathing.

TRUMAN.

Will you promise this seriously?

SUBTLE.

Upon my faith and honour. Only trust me, and I will sooner die than deceive you.

TRUMAN.

Well, then, here it rests, let us act in concert; and endeavour to save your master, if possible, from the dreadful precipice on which his follies have brought him; but he must be led back by degrees, and without consulting his father, whose too great tenderness would overthrow our whole scheme, and compleat the ruin of his son. Will you assist me in this laudable design?

SUBTLE.

With all my heart. You know I have some talents.

TRUMAN.

Yes, yes; when you have a mind to it, no one more.

SUBTLE.

Well, they are all at your service.

TRUMAN.

I take you at your word. Let us begin by this business of the jewels: and, in the first place, let me tell you that you will not be quite safe in being the bearer of this peremptory demand.

SUBTLE.

I am very sensible of that.

TRUMAN.

I'll take the business upon myself.

SUBTLE.

Faith you'll oblige me greatly. I am not very fond of meddling to my own detriment.

TRUMAN.

I'll go to this usurer, redeem the jewels, and give them to you to carry to your master, with whom you shall make your court, by telling him that you bully'd the old fellow out of them. I leave you alone to dress up a narrative of this dangerous and hazardous exploit.

SUBTLE.

You may; and if I fail, my name's not Subtle.

TRUMAN.

One thing I must observe to you, which is, that there is an absolute necessity for his being kept in ignorance, at least for some time, of the endeavours which are used to save him; and I think you have too great a regard for your master to betray me.



SUBTLE.

You say true, sir; I love him as dear as I do my own soul; and in betraying you, I should betray him.

TRUMAN.

Spoke like a lad of understanding and integrity; henceforward I shall repose an entire confidence in thee.

SUBTLE.

And let the use I make of it speak for me.

TRUMAN.

Fare thee well, I must now to Solomon's.

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE V.

SUBTLE. [*Solus.*]

Well, I certainly must have one of the best hearts in the world, to renounce the pleasure of cheating this old fellow: While he distrusted me, I glory'd in making him sensible of the superiority of my genius, and revenging myself on him for his suspicions: but now I am determined to serve him faithfully, and sacrifice my talents and fame to the interest of my dear master. As to his father, it is different; I will at least receive to myself a power of vexing him for my amusement. And here he comes very

opportunely.

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* WEALTHY.

WEALTHY.

Well, Subtle, what is my son doing?

SUBTLE.

What he should not do.

WEALTHY.

How! in my house?

SUBTLE.

Lord, where is the house in which this is not done?

WEALTHY.

Why, as you say——But what new follies has my son committed?

SUBTLE.

Oh! they are out of number. I shall therefore confine myself to his last and greatest; that which surpasses all his former ones, and will strike you with amazement.

WEALTHY.

Good God! what can it be?

SUBTLE.

He is in love.

WEALTHY.

The devil take the fellow! I thought some dreadful accident had befallen him. Is this all? Go, go; I know my son too well to suppose him capable of being in love.

SUBTLE.

May be so; but I can assure you he is, and over head and ears too.

WEALTHY.

Indeed! and with whom?

SUBTLE.

The very lady you was wishing him to have for a wife.

WEALTHY.

Isabella?

SUBTLE.

The same.

WEALTHY.

I can never believe it.

SUBTLE.

And yet it is as true, as that I am in love with her maid Lucy. Do you believe it now?

WEALTHY.

What have I to do with your amours, mr. rascal! but as to my son——

SUBTLE.

Here she comes in propriâ personâ; ask her yourself if your son is not in love with her mistress.

## SCENE VII.

*Enter LUCY.*

LUCY. [*Curt'sying low to Wealthy.*]

Sir, your most obedient servant.

WEALTHY.

Is it you, mrs. Lucy?

LUCY.

I believe so, sir.

WEALTHY.

Where is your mistress?

LUCY.

In her chamber, sir; very busy in receiving money.

WEALTHY.

In receiving money?

LUCY.

Yes, sir; your lawyer has just brought her five hundred pounds, and very civilly told us, that as he thought we were both very pretty, he would do our business for us out of hand. He came just as you went out to seek him. I assure you he is very much of a gentleman, for a lawyer.

WEALTHY.

I shall thank him for his civility. But to come to another point: tell me Lucy, is it true, that my son is in love with Isabella?

LUCY.

Here is mr. Subtle, sir; he knows those matters better than I.

SUBTLE.

You know, madam, what my master said to your mistress; you was present at all that passed.

LUCY.

It is very true, sir; but I looked upon it as a mere piece of gallantry; a joke, and nothing more.

SUBTLE.

May be so, madam; but permit me to assure you, that my master is neither a man of gallantry, nor a joker; and that his declaration was pure, simple, and sincere, as was that of your humble servant.

LUCY. [*Curt'sying to Subtle.*]

Sir, you are pleased to flatter me.

SUBTLE. [*Bows to Lucy.*]

Madam, you will be pleased to believe me?

LUCY.

But, sir!——

SUBTLE.

But madam!——

WEALTHY. [*In a Passion.*]

Zounds! what a to-do is here with sir and madam, and madam and sir! Truce with your compliments, if you please: do you think I have nothing to do but to stand and listen to your impertinences?

SUBTLE.

Impertinences, sir! this lady is a stranger to any thing of the kind, sir.

LUCY.

And so is mr. Subtle too, I assure you, sir; impertinences, indeed!

WEALTHY.

'Sdeath, are you at it again; no more of this stuff, I tell you, but let us come to the point. Do you hear, mrs. Abigail?

SUBTLE.

Zounds! Abigail!

WEALTHY.

Will you hold your tongue, mr. jackanapes.

LUCY.

Jackanapes!

WEALTHY.

'Od's blood! I'll give a hearty box of the ear to the first of you that dare speak, without I ask you a question. [*To Lucy.*] Tell me, I say, has my son made a declaration of love to your mistress?

LUCY.

In form.

SUBTLE.

Very true, indeed, sir; formaliter, as the Latin expresses it.

WEALTHY.

Hark'e, sir; if you speak Latin, or any other language, till you are spoken to, I'll break your bones.

SUBTLE.

Do you speak then, madam; I shall have my turn it is to be hoped.

WEALTHY. [*To Lucy.*]

Answer me truly to what I have to ask you; and in as few words as possible. What does your mistress say to this declaration?

LUCY.

Nothing.

WEALTHY.

Has not she told you her sentiments upon that head?

LUCY.

No.

WEALTHY.

Is this the first time my son has declared his passion?

LUCY.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

Do you tell me the truth?

LUCY.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

Yes and no, no and yes. What, can you answer only by monosyllables?

LUCY.

It is my way of answering, when I am afraid of over-talking people.

SUBTLE. [*Laughing aside.*]

A fine wench! she's worth her weight in gold.

WEALTHY.

What are you saying?

SUBTLE.

Nothing.



WEALTHY.

You are making a jest of me, I think.

SUBTLE.

No.

WEALTHY.

Do you remember what I promised you just now?

SUBTLE.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

I shall make you laugh on the wrong side of your mouth.

SUBTLE.

Indeed!

WEALTHY. [*Going to strike him, he avoids the blow.*]

What, you are the ape of this baggage?

SUBTLE.

I am no ape, sir; thank heaven I have the gift of originality.

WEALTHY.

Well then, mr. original, answer me seriously, and without that impudent grin upon your face, or I'll twist your head behind you, what is your opinion of this declaration of your master's? Am I to believe for a truth that he is in love? Speak without any fancy jesting or affectation of monosyllables; or——

SUBTLE. [*Drawing out his words.*]

Since you will have me speak, sir;—and give you a ca-te-go-ri-cal answer,—I must confess, that after the most mature con-si-de-ra-ti-on, de-li-be-ra-ti-on, and men-ti-ver-sa-tion, on the unhappy si-tu-a-tion of mr. Cle-ri-mont Wealthy, your ho-nour's son, and my dear ho-nour-ed and re-ve-ren-ced master, I——

WEALTHY.

Speak a little faster, mr. rascal, if you please; or I shall quicken the pace of that impudent tongue of your's. I had rather be stunned with your volubility than plagued with this hesitation.

SUBTLE.

Why,—sir,—as you seem to have a great an-ti-pa-thy to bre-vi-ty, I thought a little cir-cum-lo-cu-ti-on——

WEALTHY.

Lucy, fetch me a stick.

SUBTLE.

A stick! oh! this is not to be borne with any longer; you shall give me satisfaction for this insult, say I told you so. [*Runs off.*]

WEALTHY. [*Running after him.*]

Satisfaction! an abominable! insolent!—Come hither, rascal; come hither.

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter WEALTHY.*

WEALTHY.

Was ever such a villain! he has put me into a sweat from head to foot—Lucy!—

LUCY.

You had better recover your breath a little: sir pray take your own time, I am in no hurry.

WEALTHY.

What, are you going to begin again?

LUCY.

Not I, indeed;—but you put me in an ill humour.

WEALTHY.

Because I would have chastised that scoundrel, I suppose.

LUCY.

To be sure.

WEALTHY.

I would advise you to take care how you put me in a passion, or I shall send you out of doors.

LUCY.

What do I care; I am going to pass the rest of my days in a convent.

WEALTHY.

A convent! You don't seem to have a great deal of nun's flesh

about you.

LUCY.

Be that as it may, my mistress and I must comfort each other as well as we can.

WEALTHY.

Your mistress and you! Is your mistress going into a convent too?

LUCY.

Yes, needs must when the devil drives; and so I go to keep her company. She has just received her portion; and she intends to dispose of her jewels to raise money to pay my entrance.

WEALTHY.

I'll have none of these doings; I have other things in view for her. I propose that she shall assist me to reclaim my son from his extravagances.

LUCY.

That would be a difficult task.

WEALTHY.

Quite the contrary, if he is truly in love.

LUCY.

One would think he was; for he was going to kill himself, to convince her of his passion.

WEALTHY.

To kill himself! Was he in earnest?

LUCY.

If not he is a great hypocrite; for I am sure he frightened us both out of our wits.

WEALTHY.

Oh! I'll answer for him he is no hypocrite.

LUCY.

Well, then, look carefully after him; for he told us very seriously, that he had not four and twenty hours to live.

WEALTHY.

Good God! what do I hear? That cursed fellow, Truman, has always kept me from explaining myself; his cruel prudence will drive me mad. You will see that he will be the cause of my losing my son, a son I love to distraction, and never dared to tell him so, for fear of offending that old fool. I'll go this moment and find out the poor child, and do every thing that he would have me.

LUCY.

Sir, I am but a giddy young girl; yet I must confess I would act more prudently if I was in your place. Here you pass in the world for a person of great understanding; and yet——

WEALTHY.

Well!

LUCY.

I dare not proceed, sir; but you may guess what I was going to say.

WEALTHY.

You was going to say, I suppose, that, with all my boasted knowledge, I have not common sense. Well, speak freely, I give you leave.

LUCY.

Indeed you have guessed at my meaning.

WEALTHY.

And you are in the right; my love to my son has blinded my reason.

LUCY.

If you would trust to me, I could extricate you out of this difficulty.

WEALTHY.

By what means?

LUCY.

By means of my mistress; for you must know she is entirely governed by me——

WEALTHY.

So much the worse.

LUCY.

Rather say so much the better. I am determined that she shall oblige Clerimont to return to reason. Love shall produce this miracle.

WEALTHY.

It will be a new one.

LUCY.

But not the less real I assure you. Leave me to manage your bark, and my life for it I will bring you safe into port.

WEALTHY.

And if you succeed, I'll give you a handsome portion.

LUCY.

Where are you to get it? are you not entirely ruined, beggared, as we may say?

WEALTHY.

Never trouble thyself about that. Between you and I, but be sure you are discreet, I am still rich enough, child, to make your fortune.—But do you think your mistress has any inclination for my son?

LUCY.

I can say nothing to that as yet; but whether she has or not, you may be assured that she has an heart susceptible of gratitude; and so love may be put out of the question.

WEALTHY.

My dear Lucy, you make me a happy man. I am resolved to continue to disguise my sentiments with regard to my son, till I find how your scheme succeeds.

LUCY.

You shall soon hear from me; and if I bring you good news, remember my portion.

WEALTHY.

To maintain you in a convent?

LUCY.

Hum! a spice of matrimony would not be amiss with it. But I must take my leave, I hear my mistress ring.

WEALTHY.

Success attend thee.

*[Exeunt severally.]*

END of the SECOND ACT.



### ACT III. SCENE I.

*Enter* SUBTLE, *looking about in a fright.*

SUBTLE.

Lord have mercy on us, what can have become of him! I have been seeking him all over the house, but he is no where to be found: Sure he can never have ventured out. Oh lord! oh lord! my dear master, where shall I look for you? Perhaps you are in jail.



## SCENE II.

*Enter CLERIMONT hastily in his night gown.*

CLERIMONT.

Not so bad as that yet you see.

SUBTLE.

Good God! in your night gown! where the devil do you come from?

CLERIMONT.

Out of my closet, where I had locked myself in. Why did you not knock at the door?

SUBTLE.

I thought you had given me the slip, for you never used to shut yourself in. What was you doing alone?

CLERIMONT.

I was settling my affairs.

SUBTLE.

Pshaw! stuff!

CLERIMONT.

When I had done, I packed up all my cloaths, except what you see me now wear.

SUBTLE.

Why, I thought you had only undressed yourself to be more at your ease.

CLERIMONT.

No, Subtle, I did it through necessity.

SUBTLE.

What do you say! Have you packed up the cloaths you wore to-day as well as the rest?

CLERIMONT.

I have, as knowing I should have no further occasion for them.

SUBTLE.

Lord! how you talk! But what have you done with your things?

CLERIMONT.

I have sold them.

SUBTLE.

Sold them! what, are they gone out of the house?

CLERIMONT.

Not yet, but I expect La Fleur to fetch them every minute.

SUBTLE.

La Fleur! Why, has he bought them?

CLERIMONT.

No; it is a cousin of his whom he recommended to me on this occasion.

SUBTLE.

Why, are you mad, to trust your cloaths to such a rascal as that! a fellow whose father was hang'd, and who is every day making interest for the gallows himself.

CLERIMONT.

You only abuse the fellow because you are jealous of him for having made a better bargain than you could have done.

SUBTLE.

Troth, my good master, you have been a dupe all your life, and a dupe you will continue.

CLERIMONT.

Truce with your compliments, if you please; you know they are such as I do not like.

SUBTLE.

Well; but pray tell me, what could induce you to strip yourself in this manner?

CLERIMONT.

To raise all the money I could, and punish myself for my folly. I am determin'd to convince my father, that however extravagant I may have been, I still retain a true sense of honour. Have you carried my letter to the old Jew?

SUBTLE.

What a question!

CLERIMONT.

Well, and what success? but I need not ask, there could be no

hopes of any.

SUBTLE.

No hopes! There is reality however.

CLERIMONT.

Indeed!

SUBTLE.

Ecce signum. [*Shewing the jewels.*]

CLERIMONT.

You amaze me! if I was capable of tasting satisfaction in my present wretched condition, this would overjoy me, but pry'thee tell me, for I long to know, how did you manage matters?

SUBTLE. [*Aside.*]

Now, good invention stand by me.—Why sir, the instant I entered his office, he turn'd pale, and his knees knocked together, for you must know when I am in a passion, there is something dreadful in my looks.

CLERIMONT.

Troth, I never observed that.

SUBTLE.

May be so, because I restrain myself before you.

CLERIMONT.

It is very prudently done; but proceed.

SUBTLE.

When I saw him so frighten'd and confounded, I stept fiercely up to him, and with a loud and angry tone of voice. Here said I, mr. What-dy'callum, put on your spectacles, and read this letter, and d'ye hear, consider well of the contents, they are very plain and need no interpretation.

CLERIMONT.

Bravo!

SUBTLE.

Upon this he took the letter, which he read twice over without saying a word, trembling all the while like a leaf. At length, in a very humble tone of voice, he entreated me to return you his most respectful compliments, and that he would certainly answer your letter to-morrow.

CLERIMONT.

Is this all?

SUBTLE.

Lord you are so hasty! All? no, nor the one half. Your answer this instant said I, raising my voice, I shall not leave you till I have it. My dear mr. Subtle, don't put yourself in a passion; I am going to write to your master——My master wants none of your writing, said I; comply immediately with what he orders there, and no more words. Zounds, sir! I am not to be trifled with, nor my master neither, so make haste said I, shaking my stick—The jewels, the jewels, quick! He attempted to call out for assistance; but I took him by the throat, and swore bloodily I would strangle him if he attempted to stir. In short, my prodigious valour terrified him to such a degree, that he went to

his strong box, and gave me out the jewels; and, as he was putting them into my hand, he says, with a pitiful whine, but, my dear mr. Subtle, I hope I am not to lose the hundred guineas I lent your master upon them? No, you old rascal, said I; you shall be no loser by my master, I give you my word for it. Oh, Lord! said the old fellow, that's enough for me, my dear sir; mr. Subtle's word is as good as the bank: I look upon my money as safe as if it was in my pocket. Upon this, turning my back upon him with an air of contempt, I flung out of the room; and here I am.

CLERIMONT.

I declare I never suspected you had so much courage, Subtle.

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir, you don't know me! However, you may see how valuable the servant is, whose valour is equal to his fidelity.

CLERIMONT.

Well, I shall not forget your services; I will reward them as far as is in my power. But why have you always concealed this valour of your's from me?

SUBTLE. [*Taking snuff, and bowing in an affected manner.*]  
Humph!—Why!—The truly brave are always modest.

CLERIMONT.

True; I did not think of that. But whom have we here?

### SCENE III.

*Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.*

LUCY. [*Aside to Isabella, entering.*]

Do not let us seem to be seeking him, but only as if we met him by chance.

ISABELLA.

Come with me, Lucy; I shall soon be back. Have you ordered a coach?

LUCY.

Yes, madam, there is one at the door——Gentlemen, your servant. This is a lucky meeting.

ISABELLA. [*To Clerimont.*]

Your servant, sir——Lord bless us! what a dress you are in?

CLERIMONT.

I am ashamed, madam, to appear before you in this manner——With your permission I'll retire, and——

ISABELLA.

No, no, pray stay; I shall dispense with ceremony.

LUCY. [*To Subtle.*]

Was your master going to bed?

SUBTLE.

Yes; he found himself tired, and so——

LUCY.

He was going to bed at this time of day?

SUBTLE.

When one is not well, you know, one never minds the hour.

ISABELLA.

Pray what may his disorder be?

SUBTLE.

It lies in his head, madam.

CLERIMONT. [*Aside to Subtle.*]

Hold your tongue, or——

LUCY.

Really the gentleman seems strangely altered.

ISABELLA.

You should take the air a little.

SUBTLE.

Oh, Lord! by no means, madam. My master cannot bear the air—His chamber is the most proper place for him.

LUCY.

Mr. Subtle, I find, is your physician, sir?

SUBTLE.

Oh yes; I sometimes purge him of his ill humours.

CLERIMONT. [*To Subtle, angrily.*]



Rascal! if the lady was not here——

LUCY.

Why, has this lady any power over you, sir?

CLERIMONT.

Ah, Lucy, she is mistress of my heart and soul.

ISABELLA.

Nothing but experience can convince me of that.

CLERIMONT.

How, madam! did you not a while ago assure me you did not doubt my passion for you?

ISABELLA.

I might so; but such violent protestations, and coming from such a person as you, stand in need of strong confirmation.

CLERIMONT. [*Wildly.*]

'Tis well, madam! If nothing but my death will convince you of the truth of my declaration, I am ready——

ISABELLA.

Oh! no more of that, I beseech you: I assure you, sir, these are proofs that I have an aversion to. Besides, to deal plainly with you, I cannot bear this affected desperation; it is insufferable.

CLERIMONT.

By all that's sacred it is not affected.

ISABELLA.

Well, be it affected or real, it is my aversion. Good God! what should a young woman like me do with a whining, melancholly lover? You are fit only to give one the vapours. Is this a way of pleasing? I declare if you continue in this melancholly mood, I would prefer a convent a thousand times over to living with such a man. No, no, if you would have me believe you really love me, you must wear quite a different countenance, and let me see you gay and serene; I must absolutely have you dress your face in smiles.

SUBTLE. [*Taking his master by the hand, and singing and dancing.*]

Come, sir, pluck up your spirits! Tol, lol, tol, derol.

CLERIMONT. [*Seizing him by the collar.*]

You dog! I know not what prevents me from——

ISABELLA.

Oh, I see the great power I have over you. Your servant, sir. This is the last time you shall ever see my face, I assure you. [*Going.*]

CLERIMONT.

Dearest Isabella, excuse my rashness; you shall find me henceforward a different person.—Subtle, dear Subtle, intercede for me.

SUBTLE. [*To Lucy, with an air of authority.*]

Lucy, I command you, by your love to me, not to let your mistress depart.

LUCY.

Come, madam, let us be gone.

SUBTLE. [ *Holding her.* ]

Ah, tygress!

CLERIMONT. [ *To Isabella.* ]

If you leave the room, I will not survive your absence an instant.

ISABELLA.

What, threatening again!

CLERIMONT.

It is the last time, upon my honour.

ISABELLA.

Remember the oath you have now taken, and promise me to comply, without hesitation, with whatever I shall require of you.

CLERIMONT.

'Tis done; command, and I will obey.

ISABELLA.

Then listen to me attentively; from some expressions which dropt from you in our last conversation, both Lucy and myself have a suspicion that you meditated some fatal and cruel design upon your own life; and that—

CLERIMONT.

What reason had you to suppose such a thing?

ISABELLA.

No interruption—I come now to the point. You say you are desirous to convince me of the sincerity of your passion; now, I require two proofs of it, without which all your protestations will go for nothing with me.

CLERIMONT.

Oh! name them! name them! and if man—

ISABELLA.

Soft! no high flights, I beseech you! In the first place, you must give me your word and honour that you will get the better of your present despair (the reasons of which I will not inquire into too minutely) and lay aside every fatal design against your life.

CLERIMONT.

But, supposing I entertained such a design as you speak of; why should you wish me to live?

ISABELLA.

To love me.

CLERIMONT.

And is this absolutely your will?

ISABELLA.

Most absolutely.

CLERIMONT.

Then, I swear, by all that is sacred, to obey you.

ISABELLA.

'Tis well; but this is not all. I require, moreover, that you deliver me up all your arms, to remain with me so long as I shall think fit to keep them; and that you likewise give me your word of honour, that you will not stir out of the house till I give you leave.

CLERIMONT.

My word of honour! Well—I give it you—Will this satisfy you?

ISABELLA.

No, not till you deliver me up your arms.

CLERIMONT.

Here, Subtle, take the key of my closet, and bring out all the arms you find there, and lay them at the feet of the lovely Isabella.

SUBTLE.

I'll empty the arsenal, I warrant me. [*Going, returns.*] But, hold; is there no private hoard?

CLERIMONT.

None, upon my honour.

LUCY.

But have not you a little reserve of arsenic, or some such pretty cordial for melancholly?

CLERIMONT.

I declare to you I never thought of any such thing.

SUBTLE.

Well, then, I am gone, and will return in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exit.*

#### SCENE IV.

CLERIMONT.

Well, charming Isabella, are you not now convinced, that you have an unbounded empire over my heart?

ISABELLA.

To confess the truth, I do begin to believe you.

CLERIMONT.

Ah! could I but hope to be beloved by you, nothing would equal my happiness. May I? dare I entertain that pleasing hope?

ISABELLA.

The care I have taken of your life, may speak for me more than the warmest expressions.

CLERIMONT.

Subtle! make haste. How slow is that fellow in executing your orders! I'll go and hasten him.

LUCY.

I am pleased to see this impatience; but, stay, here he is.

## SCENE V.

*Enter* SUBTLE. [*With a fowling-piece, a pair of pistols, a powder-horn, a bag of shot, a dagger, and a sword. He throws them all down at Isabella's feet.*]

SUBTLE. [*In a tragedy tone.*]

Thus, at your fair feet, Oh divine lady! I lay this sword, this dagger, these fire-arms, and all our warlike implements.

ISABELLA.

Are these all?

CLERIMONT.

If there is one thing wanting, load me with your hatred and contempt.

ISABELLA.

I am satisfy'd.

SUBTLE. [*Going up to Isabella, sings affectedly.*]

Triumph, triumph, queen of beauty!

CLERIMONT. [*Pushing him away.*]

Away, you insolent rascal!

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir, you have no taste for music.

LUCY.

Come, now it is my turn—Subtle, deliver me your sword.

CLERIMONT.

Oh, it is a harmless weapon.

LUCY.

In his hands it may; but it is too near for your's.

SUBTLE.

There, my adorable mistress, I deliver you a weapon, the terror of its foes.

LUCY.

Come, give it me.

SUBTLE.

On condition that you will promise to love me. This is the sine qua non.

LUCY.

The sine qua non! what language is that?

SUBTLE.

The language of love, my dear. [*Seeing Isabella going to take up the pistols.*] Stay, madam, to prevent any accidents, I will discharge them. Don't be frightened. [*He fires off the two pistols.*] There.



## SCENE VI.

*Enter WEALTHY. [Running in frightened. Clerimont, seeing him, retires.]*

WEALTHY.

Good God! what noise is that I hear? Where is my son? Where is Clerimont? Two women with pistols in their hands! What is all this? Have you murdered my son among you?

LUCY.

Do not frighten yourself, sir; our weapons are not fatal ones.

WEALTHY.

But who was it fired the pistols?

SUBTLE.

Without vanity, I may say it was me.

WEALTHY.

And what the devil was it for?

SUBTLE.

Only rejoicings for a peace.

WEALTHY.

For a peace?

SUBTLE.

Yes, sir. A treaty of peace has just been concluded between this lady and your son. These two were mediatrixes, and love was guarantee. Do you understand me now?

WEALTHY.

Oh, perfectly. Inexorable Truman! Oh, my dearest Isabella, how much am I obliged to you?

LUCY.

And have you nothing to say to me?

WEALTHY.

Yes, Lucy, I will remember the portion I promised thee.

ISABELLA.

You have nothing more to apprehend on your son's account, mr. Wealthy. He has given me his word of honour, he will make no attempt against his life.

WEALTHY.

You revive me. I was in an horrible fright.

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* TRUMAN.

TRUMAN.

What is the matter, my dear friend? You seem strangely confus'd.

WEALTHY.

Oh, mr. Truman! if it had not been for this lady, I had lost my boy for ever.

TRUMAN.

Poor man! How can you be so alarmed at the rhodomontade of a young rake?

ISABELLA.

Upon my word, sir, the affair was very serious; and it would not be safe to drive him to despair again: and so, I'll leave you to consult together how to manage matters.

*[Exeunt Isabella and Lucy,  
carrying the arms with them.]*

### SCENE VIII.

WEALTHY. *[To Truman.]*

What would you advise me to do?

TRUMAN.

To continue resolute. If you should make any untimely concessions, your son is lost beyond redemption.

WEALTHY.

Hush! See who stands there.

SUBTLE.

What! do you distrust me? Nay, then, fare you well. *[Going.]*

WEALTHY.

Away with you.

TRUMAN.

No, no. Come back, Subtle—You injure him, mr. Wealthy. I would trust him as soon as myself.

SUBTLE.

You are quite in the right: if you did not, I would shew you a trick yet. But, whom have we here?

### SCENE IX.

*Enter La FLEUR. [With a large trunk, followed by two men, carrying each another.]*

SUBTLE. [*To La Fleur.*]

Where are you carrying these trunks, pray, mr. La Fleur?

LA FLEUR.

Why, my master told me, that he wanted to dispose of his wardrobe; and so, I promised him a hundred guineas on them, in the name of my cousin Remnant, who is a salesman, and one of the most responsible and fair-dealing men in his profession. My master was pleased with the bargain; and so I am going to carry the cloaths to my said cousin.

SUBTLE.

To your said cousin, ha! Come, come, gentry, discharge your shoulders of those trunks, if you please. To my said cousin! This catchpole rascal thinks he is serving a writ, I suppose, with his law-terms.

WEALTHY.

Ay ay, come, unburthen; or I will have you all three taken up for house-breakers.

*[The two men throw down the trunks and run off; La Fleur remains.]*

TRUMAN.

With your permission, honest mr. La Fleur, may I presume to ask, if your master has received the said hundred guineas?

LA FLEUR.

Not yet, sir. I promised to bring him the money as soon as I had delivered the goods.

TRUMAN. *[To Wealthy.]*

Your son is not very mistrustful, you see. Mr. La Fleur, you must give me leave to tell you, that you are a very great rascal, mr. La Fleur.

SUBTLE.

And the more so, as he knows the things he has bought to be worth ten times the money he was to give for them.

WEALTHY.

Lay hold of the villain.

TRUMAN.

No, no; satisfy yourself with turning him out of doors.

WEALTHY. [*Pushing out La Fleur.*]

Away, rascal; and get yourself hang'd elsewhere.

### SCENE X.

TRUMAN.

Now, Subtle, my good lad, you must tell your master a few more lies for us.

WEALTHY.

Oh, they cost him nothing, let them be ever so many, or so great.

SUBTLE.

Mr. Wealthy must always have a fling at me.

TRUMAN.

Never mind it; 'tis only the remains of an old humour.

WEALTHY.

But what could induce my son to part with his cloaths?

SUBTLE.

He did it in a fit of despair. He had a mind to raise a sum of money upon them and his jewels, which said sum, as La Fleur says, he intended to bequeath by will——

WEALTHY.

Was the poor creature going to make his will? [*Wiping his eyes.*]

TRUMAN.

For heav'n's sake do not make yourself uneasy about such ridiculous stuff. You shall tell him, Subtle, that you have detain'd his trunks, having found a person, who will give twice the money for the cloaths that the former purchaser offered. His father shall give you the money, and keep the things. You see the confidence we put in you.

SUBTLE.

Hey day! One of the trunks is open—Let us see what is here. My God! was ever such heedlessness?

TRUMAN.

What is it?

SUBTLE.

He has left his pocket-book in the trunk.

TRUMAN. [*Snatching the pocket-book out of his hand.*]

Let me see it.

SUBTLE.

For heav'n's sake do not open it; it is a magazine of follies.

TRUMAN.

They will serve to amuse us——But, now to the point. I tell you, my honest Subtle, that your master's debts are all paid. This has been done so privately, that he has not the least suspicion of

it. Now, instead of putting him out of his pain, by acquainting him with this circumstance (as his too fond father here would rashly do) I am determin'd to make him believe he is more closely beset than ever. I have made half a dozen bailiffs pass before his windows, five or six times, on purpose that he might have a sight of them. This will prevent him from stirring out for a week at least.

SUBTLE.

Well! if it is so, I strike to you; and confess you outdo me in invention; for, i'faith, I was imposed upon as well as him. However, I am overjoy'd at what I hear.

WEALTHY. [*To Subtle.*]

Now, do not you go and upset all that has been done.

SUBTLE.

If I upset any thing, hang me up. You shall find I will second all your endeavours most heartily; and divert myself, for a while, at the expence of this darling son of your's.

TRUMAN.

Come then, let us in and consult upon our operations.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the THIRD ACT.





## ACT IV. SCENE I.

TRUMAN *and* WEALTHY, *meeting* SUBTLE.

TRUMAN.

Well, Subtle, what news?

SUBTLE.

Very serious news, I assure you. My poor master is so furiously in love, that not a creature can make him hearken to reason but myself.

TRUMAN.

So much the better.

SUBTLE.

Well now, with all your discernment and sagacity, I would wager, you could not, for the soul of you, tell which was the most mad, my master or me. You might have heard our sighs all the house over.

TRUMAN.

How, Subtle! do you sigh too?

SUBTLE.

Oh Lord, sir, enough to choak me sometimes. [*Fetching a deep sigh.*]

TRUMAN.

Well, for heaven's sake, make haste and have done; unless you

would kill me with laughing.

SUBTLE.

The greatest men have their weaknesses. The coquetry of that slut Lucy has almost turned my brain.

TRUMAN.

Very moving indeed! But what hast thou got in thy hand?

SUBTLE.

Notes for a thousand pound.

WEALTHY.

What the devil! Does my son owe so much still?

SUBTLE.

On the contrary, so much is due to him.

TRUMAN.

To him?

SUBTLE.

Yes, sir. For, when he has cash, he keeps open purse. He makes no scruple of begging himself to support others; and, when he is in want, he borrows to support himself.

WEALTHY.

Generous soul!

SUBTLE.

Egregious dupe, you may rather say; but do not let us blame him for every thing. This money is what he won some time ago at

play, upon credit; and debts of honour, you know, are always paid.

WEALTHY.

Well, I am glad to hear he has got a supply, however.

TRUMAN.

Come, this is a pretty considerable sum; and, together with the money that he will receive for his cloaths and jewels, which are worth, at least, eight hundred pounds, he will have near two thousand. Now, let us see what use he will make of such an unexpected supply: this is the great test I am waiting for.

WEALTHY.

And that I dread. If this rascal, now, should betray us.

SUBTLE.

Rascal again! What, still mistrustful of me? If this is the case, do your business yourself; I wash my hands of you.

TRUMAN.

Be pacify'd, Subtle, and overlook an old habit.

SUBTLE.

Well; but let him alter it, or I shall take up my old habits too.

TRUMAN.

Heav'ns forbid! for that would defeat all our measures.

SUBTLE.

But let me return to what we were about——

TRUMAN.

Thus, then, the affair stands. You must carefully conceal from Clerimont that I have taken up his notes. Next, it is absolutely necessary that he should suppose the money he is about to receive is unknown to us: for, if he was to imagine, that either his father or I were acquainted with his receiving such a sum, he would not dare dispose of it at his own pleasure.

WEALTHY.

An excellent thought! Subtle, my dear boy, you must help us out in this ticklish affair.

SUBTLE.

Oh ho! 'tis my dear Subtle, and my dear boy, now you stand in need of my assistance.

TRUMAN.

No heartburnings, Subtle. Remember, that in serving us, you the better serve your master.

SUBTLE.

Well, I am really ashamed of my good nature; but it is the weakness of all generous minds.

WEALTHY. [*Aside.*]

Impudent rascal!

SUBTLE. [*To Truman.*]

One word more of explanation. If you are desirous that he should be entirely ignorant of what you do for him, I must take all the merit upon myself.

TRUMAN.

Undoubtedly. Take all the merit of this affair, as thou didst that of the jewels, which was an admirable story. I'll go and get the money ready, and then we'll consider of the proper time to produce it. Consider only, that thou wilt gain more by continuing to impose upon your master, than by betraying us to him. And, indeed, that it will be rather serving than deceiving him.

WEALTHY.

Be but true to us, and I promise thee a reward for thy fidelity.

SUBTLE.

Well, it must cost me some few lies: but what will not one undergo for one's friend?

WEALTHY. [*Pulling off his hat, and making him a low bow.*]

Dear sir, you do me prodigious honour!

TRUMAN.

What other papers are those you have there?

SUBTLE.

These are letters of credit, by which I am empowered to receive and pay money in my master's name.

TRUMAN.

You may as well leave them with me. But here comes Lucy: we'll leave you together.

[*Exeunt Truman and Wealthy.*]

### SCENE III.

*Enter LUCY.*

SUBTLE.

What a bewitching eye she has! and then, such a shape! Odso, I believe this baggage will turn my brain.

LUCY.

Your servant, mr. Subtle. What! meditating alone?

SUBTLE.

Yes, madam, I was meditating on your charms, which I die with impatience to possess. Come, my dear Lucy, let us e'en conclude this matter: When shall we be marry'd, hey?

LUCY.

A very pretty beginning for a polite lover, indeed!

SUBTLE.

Why, what greater compliment can be paid a pretty young girl, than to shew an earnest desire of being join'd to her for life?

LUCY.

Psha! you blockhead! do not you know I am going into a convent? I am resolved never to leave my mistress. I will share her fate.

SUBTLE.

So you persist in that resolution, both of you, hey?

LUCY.

Hum!—I believe we do.

SUBTLE.

Restore our arms then, cruel as thou art!

LUCY.

Your arms! for what?

SUBTLE.

That we may kill ourselves in earnest.

LUCY.

Nay, if you are resolved, I'll step in and fetch you your sword.

SUBTLE.

No, you may as well keep it. I might miss my heart, perhaps, for my hand is very unsteady. I think it will be better to dispatch myself with a pistol; it is the surest way.

LUCY.

Well, then, I'll lend you your master's, rather than you should want.

SUBTLE.

The offer is kind and passionate, and you smile when you make it. However, say what you will, I'm sure you love me. Come, I'll answer for thee, to save thee the pain of a declaration. Lay your hand upon your heart and tell me if I lye.

LUCY.

Pr'ythee be quiet, and let me go about my lady's business.

SUBTLE.

Whither, in such haste, pray?

LUCY.

To your master.

SUBTLE.

To my master, and from your mistress! pretty forward, that! And, pray, what may your message be?

LUCY.

That, I have orders to deliver only to himself.

SUBTLE.

Indeed! But he is in his night-gown still. Do you think you can venture yourself with him, without hurting your modesty?

LUCY. [*Smiling.*]

My modesty? Why, you are jealous, Subtle.

SUBTLE.

Jealous of decency; as for the rest, I am secure.

LUCY.

And you are in the right. Your master is so mopish, that there is not the least danger of him.

SUBTLE.

Igad I would not care to trust him too far; for that roguish look of



thine is capable of bringing about strange revolutions.

LUCY.

But, here he comes, just in the nick of time.

SUBTLE. [*Scratching his head.*]

Shall I retire?

LUCY.

I think he looks more gay than usual; there is more fire in his eyes. What say you, Subtle?

SUBTLE.

Say? Why, I say, that to oblige you, I'll e'en stay where I am.

#### SCENE IV.

CLERIMONT [*At the side of the stage.*]

CLERIMONT.

Subtle!

SUBTLE.

Sir.

CLERIMONT.

Is my father here?

SUBTLE.

No, all's safe, he is in his chamber with mr. Truman; come forward, here is a person has something to say to you.

CLERIMONT.

Lucy! is it you? What procures me the pleasure of this visit?

LUCY.

Sir, I am sent by my mistress.

CLERIMONT.

Sent by your mistress! to me?

LUCY.

Most certainly, sir, it is not from myself.

CLERIMONT.

Well, and tell me, my dear girl, what are her commands?

LUCY.

In the first place, she desires to know how your melancholly does.

CLERIMONT. [*Smiling.*]

My melancholly. Oh, it loses ground hourly; I feel its force diminish every moment.

LUCY.

Good news! I am glad to hear it.

SUBTLE. [*Aside to Lucy.*]

You see I was in the right to stay here.

CLERIMONT.

What are you saying to her?

SUBTLE.

Only a word or two about our own affairs.

CLERIMONT.

You take your time very prettily. [*To Lucy.*] Have you any thing to say to me in private, Lucy?

SUBTLE.

Oh Lord, sir, no! I may stay: Have you any thing you would conceal from me?

CLERIMONT. [*Smiling.*]

Ah, ha! I understand you, mr. Subtle!

SUBTLE.

What! you think I am inquisitive?

CLERIMONT.

Inquisitive; yes, yes, I know what you mean. Well, Lucy.

LUCY.

Well, sir, since you begin to smooth your brow a little, I shall go, and acquaint my mistress how I find matters. And now a word to you. My mistress acquaints you by me, that a female relation of hers is just arrived from Antwerp, who is one of the most ridiculous country dowdeys that ever set foot in Paris.

CLERIMONT.

I do not see how this can concern me.

LUCY.

More than you imagine. You must know, this same country lady, who has never seen any thing in her life, is dying with impatience to go to an opera; which the poor soul imagines to be the eighth wonder of the world.

CLERIMONT.

She'll find herself greatly deceiv'd. But proceed, for this can be nothing to me neither.

LUCY.

I beg your pardon, it can, and it is.

CLERIMONT. [*Impatiently.*]

As how?

LUCY.

You'll see. My mistress, who never goes to public places, is very much embarrassed by the curiosity of her cousin, who insists that she shall take her to this same opera.

CLERIMONT.

Why, your mistress has it in her power to refuse.

LUCY.

And so she did at first, but mr. Wealthy desires she will comply, and then, you know, there can be no denial.

CLERIMONT.

That's true.

LUCY.

And what adds to the dilemma is, that she happens to be as little acquainted with the opera beings as her cousin, and shall not know how to behave, unless she has some one to keep her in countenance. She has desired your father to accompany her, but he has refused; she then asked mr. Truman, who excused himself, and desired her to apply to you.

SUBTLE. [*Aside.*]

What a malicious old devil!

CLERIMONT.

To me? Apply to me to accompany her to the opera?

LUCY.

Yes, and she desires as a favour that you will be ready in a couple of hours at farthest; so it is high time you began to dress yourself. You seem thoughtful.

SUBTLE.

My master is only thinking of what suit he shall put on; he has so many, that he is puzzled in his choice.

CLERIMONT. [*Aside to Subtle.*]

Hang dog, you know the contrary.

LUCY.

Sir, will you not give me an answer?

CLERIMONT.

I am thinking of one.—That cursed fellow Truman!

LUCY.

Well, your servant, sir.—I shall let my mistress know that you did not think it worth your while to return any answer.

CLERIMONT.

For heaven's sake, Lucy, what do you mean? I am at present——in a great dilemma——not knowing how——which——what cloaths I shall wear——for——to tell you the truth. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall go mad!

SUBTLE.

You may return back to your lady, mrs. Lucy, I will fix his resolution: and so you may e'en tell her without hesitation, that my master will wait on her at the time appointed.

LUCY.

Enough. Oh how delighted shall I be to see an opera! It is what I have longed for this many a-day!

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE V.

CLERIMONT.

'Sdeath, rascal, what promise is this you have made for me?

SUBTLE.

Why, it was necessary for me to make some answer, as you

would not return any.

CLERIMONT.

But you know very well I am in no condition to go out.

SUBTLE.

That is no fault of mine. Why was you in such a hurry to sell your cloaths?

CLERIMONT.

What shall I do? I am in as much despair as ever!

SUBTLE.

But seriously speaking, my dear sir, are you really so passionately in love with mrs. Isabella, as you pretend to be?

CLERIMONT.

In love with her! 'Sdeath, villain, I love her dearer than life; nor is it a passion of to-day: no, I have long burned in secret for her, but thought myself unworthy not only of attempting to gain her heart, but even to declare myself. Virtue, Subtle, commands respect, even from the greatest libertines; and must I now behold myself reduced to the necessity of refusing an act of common civility to the person for whom I have the greatest esteem! No, no, I can never support this disgrace.

SUBTLE.

Come, do not despair; as I knew La Fleur to be a great rascal, I prevented him from carrying away your trunks.

CLERIMONT.

Then I am saved once more.

SUBTLE.

And I have sold them to an honest dealer, who will give you double the sum La Fleur offered for them; and you will receive the money this very afternoon.

CLERIMONT.

But have you delivered them to him?

SUBTLE.

I could not do otherwise, my dear sir.

CLERIMONT.

Then I am ruin'd.

SUBTLE.

Not at all; I'll engage the money shall be forthcoming.

CLERIMONT.

But that will not procure me a suit time enough to go to the opera.

SUBTLE.

'Odso! I never thought of that.

CLERIMONT.

Wilt thou be for ever blundering, and I the occasion of it? Oh! there is nothing left, but death!

SUBTLE.

Lord! do not be in such a violent hurry about dying; I'll go and get fifty guineas of the money, and that will more than purchase a suit, and put money in your pocket for your expences.



CLERIMONT.

But if I had my pockets full of money, and all my cloaths, how could I venture to stir out? The house is beset with bailiffs. I should take a pleasure in braving those rascals, that is certain, and should not doubt laying half a dozen of them at my feet; but that would not do, for I might be overpowered by numbers, and obliged to yield at last. [*Pausing.*] Subtle, run to Daredevil, and Jack Ramble, they are my friends, and two honest fellows, tell them I shall be glad if they would accompany me.

SUBTLE.

Lord! you will not want them.

CLERIMONT.

What do you mean?

SUBTLE.

I mean as I say. Shall not I be with you? or do you reckon me for no-body?

CLERIMONT.

Troth not much better.

SUBTLE.

How, sir, have you forgot the intrepid valour I displayed in the recovery of the jewels?

CLERIMONT.

That was something, indeed, but not an exploit great enough for me to rely upon your assistance in such an attempt as this.

SUBTLE. [*Setting his arms a-kimbo, and strutting up and*

*down the stage.]*

Very well, sir! mighty well! You shall see; that's all; you shall see whether I will not escort you safe to the opera, and back again. I'll engage to dispatch six bailiffs to my own share. Six and six I think are twelve; add to these the wounded, and those that will run away, and then I think we shall have the field to ourselves.

CLERIMONT.

Come on then; I am determined; but I must own you surprise me greatly.

SUBTLE.

And that surprise is offensive to my valour. Though I have the heart of a lion, yet I always consider, that a prudent man will never have recourse to force, till every other milder method fails. I have a notion of paying a visit to the four creditors, who have writs out against you, and endeavour to bring them to an agreement; and I flatter myself I shall be able to persuade the rascals to give you liberty to walk abroad for this one day at least.

CLERIMONT.

That would be a glorious feat indeed, but it appears to me almost impracticable.

SUBTLE.

I'll set about it, however, and be with you again in a little time.

CLERIMONT.

If you succeed, there is nothing that I will not do for thee.

SUBTLE.

Well, pacify yourself, I am as good at negotiating as at fighting.

CLERIMONT.

Run then, my good lad! run!

SUBTLE.

On the bats' wings will I fly.

*[Exit singing.]*

CLERIMONT.

I never knew the merit of this fellow 'till now; I have had a thousand proofs of his zeal and affection for me, but that he should have courage enough to share danger with me, is what I could never have suspected.

## SCENE VI.

*Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.*

ISABELLA.

Quick, Lucy, quick, my cousin is waiting for me, and I must go and bring her hither.

LUCY.

Bless me! there is your lover stealing away.

ISABELLA. [*To Clerimont, who is stealing off.*]

Mr. Clerimont, mr. Clerimont, a word with you, if you please.

CLERIMONT. [*Half behind the scenes.*]

Permit me to retire, madam, I am quite ashamed to appear before you in this dishabille.

ISABELLA.

Truly I think you have reason. Is it thus you prepare to accompany me?

CLERIMONT. [*Returning.*]

I shall be drest in half an hour at most, and we have two hours good yet.

ISABELLA.

But why so long in your night gown?

CLERIMONT.

Why, madam——because——I——Oh, I have my reasons for that.

ISABELLA.

And what may they be, pray? Are you ill?

CLERIMONT.

Oh no! I am infinitely better than I was——but——

ISABELLA.

But what?

CLERIMONT.

I have been writing all the morning—besides, I wait for Subtle's return, whom I have sent with a message.

ISABELLA.

Cannot you dress yourself without him?

CLERIMONT.

Oh! no, impossible.

LUCY.

But you may be getting your hair drest, sir, and that will save some time; for my lady is in a great hurry.

CLERIMONT.

'Odso! that's right. Madam will you permit me to retire and——

ISABELLA.

Yes, yes, pray do, and make haste, I desire you.

CLERIMONT.

Your commands cannot be too speedily executed.

*[Runs off.]*

## SCENE VII.

LUCY.

Well, madam, what say you? Methinks mr. Clerimont does not

look amiss in an undress: his night-gown really becomes him.

ISABELLA.

True Lucy; but there is a certain melancholly hangs about him still that makes me very uneasy.

LUCY.

Makes you uneasy, you say?

ISABELLA.

Yes, I must confess it raises my pity.

LUCY.

Uneasiness and pity! well, love is not far off then.

ISABELLA.

Peace, mad cap; here is the old gentleman.

### SCENE VIII.

*Enter* WEALTHY.

WEALTHY.

Well, my dear Isabella, have you found a gentleman to gallant you to the opera?

LUCY.

Yes, sir; we have provided one who will be very agreeable

company.

WEALTHY.

But it is necessary I should know who he is.

ISABELLA.

A very agreeable gentleman, I assure you, sir.

LUCY.

And one we like very much, I assure you, sir.

ISABELLA.

Silence, Lucy.

WEALTHY.

And pray what may be the name of this very agreeable and very much liked gentleman?

ISABELLA.

It will be sufficient, I fancy, to tell you, sir, that he is the son of the man in the world to whom I owe the greatest gratitude and respect.

LUCY.

Nay, now, mr. Wealthy will never be able to guess.

WEALTHY.

Has my son engaged to accompany you?

ISABELLA.

At least he has promised Lucy as much, whom I sent to him with my request.

WEALTHY. [*Aside.*]

That rascal, Subtle, has betray'd us; I knew it would be so. But pray tell me, Lucy, did he not make some hesitation in complying?

LUCY.

Oh! yes; he would even have sent me away without an answer, had not his man Subtle undertaken to answer for him.

WEALTHY. [*Aside.*]

Subtle is an honest fellow; I was mistaken.

LUCY.

I never saw a man so embarrassed in my life.

WEALTHY.

Indeed! I am heartily glad of it.

ISABELLA.

How, sir! glad of it? Why so, pray?

WEALTHY.

Oh! I have my reasons.

ISABELLA.

Bless me! what do I hear? Nay, then, I am resolved he shall not go with me. Lucy, run and tell mr. Clerimont that I will not go to the opera.—You laugh, sir!

WEALTHY.

But you do not, I think; your eyes seem to sparkle with rage.



ISABELLA.

I must confess I expected a little more civility from your son.

LUCY.

I imagined his behaviour would cause your resentment, and therefore concealed it from you.

WEALTHY.

For fear you should not go to the opera, I suppose.

LUCY.

It was so, indeed.

WEALTHY.

A mighty pretty amusement for people who are going into a convent! Hark'e, Isabella, I desire you will moderate your resentment; my son is not guilty of the least want of respect to you; and I could excuse this behaviour of his from very sufficient reasons.

ISABELLA.

I should be glad to know them, sir; and I could readily forgive him.

WEALTHY. [*Smiling.*]

I fancy you could. However, I will explain myself more at large another time; at present, I shall content myself with assuring you, that you condemned him unjustly.

ISABELLA.

You assure me of that?

WEALTHY.

I do very seriously.

ISABELLA.

I believe you, sir; and am as seriously pleased at it.

LUCY.

I will lay a wager I can guess at the reasons mr. Wealthy mentions. I have heard mr. Truman say, that mr. Clerimont is over head and ears in debt, and persecuted by his creditors. Now to me the poor young gentleman has all the appearance of being afflicted with a malady called confinement per force.

WEALTHY.

Troth, Lucy has guest the reason; he dare not stir out of doors for fear of being arrested.

ISABELLA.

And can you, sir, know this, and not take pity on him? How can you suffer him to remain in so cruel a situation?

WEALTHY.

He deserves nothing better from me.

ISABELLA.

Alas! he has smarted but too deeply for his errors; your cruelty drove him to despair; and permit me to say that, but for me, you would not now have had a son. I have seen into the bottom of his soul; he was weary of life only because he had lost your affection. Tho' he may have incurred your just resentment by his conduct, yet the sincerity of his repentance as surely merits your

forgiveness. You are too tender a parent, and he too good a son, for you to continue long inexorable. Let me therefore on my knees implore you to take him again into favour. I ask it because I am satisfied he is worthy of it; and that very thing concurs to favour my petition.

WEALTHY. [*Wiping his eyes.*]

Rise, my dear Isabella, would Truman were here!

ISABELLA.

Alas! can you not indulge a father's tenderness without his permission?

WEALTHY.

No, I cannot; that devil of a man is master of all my sentiments: besides, I have entered into certain measures with him, which I cannot break without imprudence.

ISABELLA.

Ah, sir!——

WEALTHY.

Do not take advantage of my weakness, good girl! let us drop this subject.—You think then, that my son has a passion for you?

ISABELLA.

I should be very blameable to doubt it, after the sacrifice he has made me.

WEALTHY.

Come, Isabella, open your whole heart to me.

LUCY.

Do, dear madam! courage!

WEALTHY.

Do you love him in return?

ISABELLA.

Sir——

LUCY.

I'll take upon me to answer for my mistress.——Yes——

WEALTHY.

You blush, Isabella, and are silent! This is the very reply I could wish. But are you really sufficiently persuaded of his repentance to venture upon him for a husband?

ISABELLA.

If I was worthy to be mr. Clerimont's wife, sir, I should not make the least hesitation.

LUCY.

Nor I neither, by my faith.

ISABELLA.

But alas! fortune has treated me so ill, that——

WEALTHY.

Come, come, despair of nothing; I flatter myself that the world will in you see an example, that heaven, sooner or later, always rewards prudence and virtue.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.



**ACT V. SCENE I.**

Truman *and* SUBTLE.

SUBTLE.

Well, sir; you have had above an hour's private conversation with my master; are you not now fully convinced of my discretion and fidelity?

TRUMAN.

I am perfectly convinced, Subtle, that thou art a lad of honour; and that so far from having betray'd any of our schemes to thy master, he has not the least suspicion of the means his father and I have used to snatch him from the precipice to which his irregularities had hurry'd him. I am perfectly acquainted with his heart, I find it is incapable of dissimulation or restraint: and, I may venture to say, that I have too much discernment to let him impose upon me, had he attempted it. He is in such a dreadful uncertainty, so distracted between remorse, shame, and apprehension, that I must confess my heart bleeds for him, as I

am certain that of my good old friend's will likewise. In short, I think, it is high time to deliver poor Clerimont from his present unhappy situation; and put it in his power to give us undiluted proofs of the sincerity of his repentance, and his return to wisdom and prudence.

SUBTLE.

To say the truth, I would not swear for him yet; I am now preparing a sharp trial for him; and poor young man he is very prone to fall. If unhappily he should take another flight, and ever come to the knowledge of my having acted, in concert with you and his father, to put this trick upon him, he would most certainly put me to death.

TRUMAN.

Make yourself easy, Subtle, and depend upon my honour that you shall come to no harm. But how do you propose to begin your plan of operations?

SUBTLE.

By presenting him the letter of licence from his four persecuting creditors, which I have just got them to sign: and as he is very well acquainted with their hands, he will readily believe himself in safety for this day.

TRUMAN.

But where is this letter of licence?

SUBTLE.

Here it is, and I believe according to form; for I drew it up myself.

TRUMAN.

Give it me. [*Reading to himself, and smiles.*] It is a droll piece, and entirely suitable to the genius of the composer.

SUBTLE.

Do you approve of it?

TRUMAN.

I think it a little upon the ridiculous; but the stile is so easy and natural, that your master, who is far from being of a distrustful temper, will easily believe it authentic.

SUBTLE.

Yes, yes, I am pretty safe in that respect; therefore as soon as he thinks himself at liberty to go out, be you ready to second me.

TRUMAN.

That I can easily do; for we can overhear every thing that passes between him and you, provided you converse in this room.

SUBTLE.

Oh! the scene shall pass here I promise you; I'll draw him this way without appearing to intend it.

TRUMAN.

Right; then mr. Wealthy and I, and perhaps Isabella too (For I think it is proper she should be of the party) will hide ourselves behind the screen in the next room; so that we shall not lose a word of what passes, and be ready to shew ourselves at a proper time.

SUBTLE.

Nothing can be better concerted. Have you the monies ready?

TRUMAN.

Ready to produce whenever you think proper.

SUBTLE.

Tell the porter to come in at the great door as soon as he hears me sneeze, that shall be the signal.

TRUMAN.

Very well, I'll take care to give him his cue.

SUBTLE.

And Tom is to bring the cloaths whenever you think it necessary.

TRUMAN.

Let me alone to manage, my boy! all shall go right.

SUBTLE.

Well then, the play will open immediately and it will be a very interesting one for mrs. Isabella. Be sure to have her so placed that she may not lose a single word.

TRUMAN.

I will; and do you, on your part, take care to manage matters so with thy master, that he may unbosom his whole soul.

SUBTLE.

Rely upon my skill, you shall see his heart as plain as if it was before you.

TRUMAN.



Heaven send us success! But retire, lest he should come unawares and surprise us together.

SUBTLE.

I'll vanish; but now I think of it, have you put his pocket-book into the coat which is to be brought him?

TRUMAN.

I have, and he will find the contents very different from those he left in it. How great will be his surprise!

SUBTLE.

That will be the unravelling of the piece which is to decide every thing.

TRUMAN.

And I assure you I, as well as his father, wait for it with the greatest impatience. As to thee, my honest Subtle, rest assured that we will put thee in a condition to make Lucy thy wife.

SUBTLE.

Ah! Sir; after so generous a promise I would cheat myself to do you a service. But I hear a noise! [*Looking out.*] As I live it is my master coming this way.—Decamp from hence this moment, and go and place yourselves ready, I'll answer for it you shall have diversion enough.

TRUMAN.

Well, I am gone; but be sure you remember, Subtle, that on the conducting of this interview depends——

SUBTLE.

Good Lord! do you think I do not know what I am about? Away with you, I say. [*Pushing out Truman.*]

## SCENE II.

SUBTLE. [*Solus.*]

Well, friend Subtle, now it is your time to display the whole of that art for which you are so justly famed, in order to amuse the auditors. But faith, the nearer the catastrophe approaches, the greater apprehensions I am under. If my hair-brain'd master, when he finds himself at liberty, and wallowing in gold and silver, should break loose again, in good faith I may have reason to repent of having engaged in this scheme: but then, on the other hand, if I should be the means of reclaiming him, what joy will it give his father! and what honour will it gain me! Encouraged by this hope, I'll set to work heartily, and——But here comes our young spark. Now heaven send us well over it!

## SCENE III.

*Enter* CLERIMONT.

CLERIMONT.

Subtle, where have you been? Why did you leave me so long alone?

SUBTLE.

Why, I had a mind to stretch my legs a little in this room; it is larger, and more airy than your chamber; let us walk and talk here.

CLERIMONT.

But are you sure that my father will not come in upon us?

SUBTLE.

No, no; he's gone out with mr. Truman, and they will not return till night, so that we may have our full swing.

CLERIMONT.

Shall I be able to go to the opera, think you?

SUBTLE.

Make yourself easy upon that head.

CLERIMONT.

But my cloaths are not come.

SUBTLE.

You'll have them, you may depend upon it; besides, you have time enough before you.

CLERIMONT.

True; but if I was drest I would go to Isabella's apartment.

SUBTLE.

Lord help you, my dear sir, if you was dress'd like a prince, I'll answer for her she would not receive you; consider you are too agreeable and too rakish to be admitted like an indifferent person.

CLERIMONT.

And yet I should wish to stand in that light with Isabella, for I respect her as much as I love her.

SUBTLE.

Egad she'd shut the door in your face: you know what sort of a temper her's is; and I can assure you her maid Lucy is not a whit more complaisant than her mistress; faith they are just fit for each other.

CLERIMONT.

I fancy, Subtle, if ever Lucy is thine, she must take great care of her behaviour, for you would be plaguy mistrustful.

SUBTLE.

Well, well, sir; we shall see how you will manage with a wife.

CLERIMONT.

Troth, Subtle, she will be an excellent one I believe; for I do not think I shall ever be marry'd.

SUBTLE.

Never be marry'd! Why, are not you always declaring that you adore Isabella?

CLERIMONT.

And for that very reason I would not marry her.

SUBTLE.

A very extraordinary proof of your love, indeed!

CLERIMONT.

The most noble I can give her. What! shall I have the inhumanity to render her miserable only for the sake of gratifying my own passion? I love her to distraction, I must confess; but then it is with an honourable love. What a lot must be her's if she had me for a husband? I am worse than a beggar; she without any fortune, or even the most distant hopes of having one. Good God! what must become of us both? Would the warmth of my passion make her amends for the ruin I should bring upon her? No; let me rather suffer a thousand deaths than be the author of her unhappiness. I swear to thee, Subtle, that I would rather see her shut up in a convent for life than make her the scorn or pity of the world. But alas! have I not already ruined the best of fathers by my fatal extravagance? A father that doated on me to excess? Dreadful thought! a parent ruined, and by my folly! Oh I cannot support the reflection!

SUBTLE.

Lord have mercy on us! you weep.

CLERIMONT.

Yes, Subtle, I at once weep and blush.

SUBTLE.

Well, you surprise me, [*Coughs three times.*] huh! huh! huh!

CLERIMONT.

My tears are the tears of rage and grief: grief to think of what my

father has suffered, and rage against myself. By all that's sacred, if it was not for the love I bear to Isabella, I would not support life another day!

SUBTLE. [*Coughing again.*]

This is a good opening.

CLERIMONT.

What is a good opening?

SUBTLE.

Your present contrition.

CLERIMONT.

What avails contrition when it comes too late? My errors have been too numerous ever to be repaired.

SUBTLE.

Come, sir, take courage; perhaps the old gentleman is not so obdurate as he would make you believe.

CLERIMONT.

Oh! Subtle, I know him better than you do; notwithstanding the reasons he has to be irritated against me; notwithstanding I have rendered myself so unworthy of his tenderness, yet I am certain that if it was in his power, he would still exert himself to the utmost for my relief. I have repeatedly experienced his bounties, and have as repeatedly abused them. Come hither, Subtle, listen to what I am now about to say to thee. My only wish is, to be able to repair my father's shattered fortune, and that moment to put an end to my being.

SUBTLE. [*Coughing louder than before.*]

Mark that!

CLERIMONT.

What do you mean?

SUBTLE.

Why, I was saying to myself that your words deserve to be written in letters of gold. Upon my soul, sir, you draw tears from my eyes too. Well, let the world say what they please, you have certainly a good heart. Permit me to embrace you, my dear master! never did man better deserve to have his liberty.

CLERIMONT.

Have you any hopes then of succeeding in your negotiation?

SUBTLE.

Ay, more than hope; I am certain of it.

CLERIMONT.

What do you tell me? May I then flatter myself?

SUBTLE. [*Pulling out a paper.*]

Read, judge, and rejoice!

CLERIMONT.

What paper is that?

SUBTLE.

It is a letter of licence from your four creditors, who had actions against you. I have read them such a lecture, that they have agreed to all we have desired of them.

CLERIMONT.

Let me see it. [*Reading.*]

SUBTLE.

Well, what say you now?

CLERIMONT.

There is no trusting to this; it has all the air of a joke.

SUBTLE.

A joke? good that! Do not you know the hand-writing of those who have signed it?

CLERIMONT.

Yes, yes, I know their writing; but the style——

SUBTLE.

Oh! it was drawn up by Mr. Selvedge, who, I assure you, looked upon it as a masterly piece; and, as well as the others, signed it without any reserve or subterfuge whatever. Do you imagine that I would expose you to danger for the sake of diverting myself? You doubt me, I find, sir; I would sooner hazard my own life for your safety.

CLERIMONT.

I did not think of that; but notwithstanding this licence, we must find some means of satisfying the officers.

SUBTLE.

Oh, I have taken care to furnish them with duplicates of it.

CLERIMONT.



My dear lad, let me embrace thee, thou art the nonpareil of serving men.

SUBTLE.

Why, without vanity, I think I may say you do me no more than justice: I always love people should save me the pain of speaking my own praises.

CLERIMONT.

But are you very sure this is not designed as a trap to get me out of the house, and shew—

SUBTLE.

Why do you think me such an ass, to be imposed upon in that manner? No, no, I'll answer for them with my life; at the worst, you know you have me for your friend. 'Egad I am almost sorry they came to this agreement, as it has prevented me taking my revenge on those rascally bailiffs.

CLERIMONT.

Methinks your courage goes even to rashness, Subtle! Why did I not know thee better before? We should have achiev'd some glorious feats together.

SUBTLE.

That we should, I promise you.

*[Coughs three times.]*

CLERIMONT.

What is the matter with thee?

SUBTLE.

I have got a devilish cold in running about for you.

[*Sneezes two or three times.*]

CLERIMONT.

'Zounds! your cold has come on very suddenly!

SUBTLE.

It is with over-heating myself in search of money. [*Sneezes again.*]

CLERIMONT.

Nay, for heaven's sake give over all this coughing and freezing.

SUBTLE. [*Raising his voice.*]

Oh I shall never give over till I see the money. 'Egad here it is.

#### SCENE IV.

*Enter a Porter with several Bags.*

PORTER.

A curse upon the fellow that loaded me in this manner like a pack-horse! I believe I have been half Paris over, before I could find out this plaguy house too. Gentlemen, be so obliging to ease me a little of my load, for I am not able to carry it any longer.

CLERIMONT.

What have you got there, friend?

PORTER.

Money, I think they say; but o' my conscience it is as heavy as lead.

CLERIMONT.

Is it for me?

PORTER.

To be sure it is. You are young mr. Wealthy, an't you?

CLERIMONT.

The same.

PORTER.

I am glad I have found you.

CLERIMONT.

And so am I too, I assure you. But who sent you with this?

PORTER.

A devil of a fellow that lives at one end of the world, and has sent me to the other. Is not this a direction to you?

CLERIMONT.

It is, you are quite right. Pray do you know the very civil gentleman who sent you on this message to me?

SUBTLE.

It is an acquaintance of mine, whom I happened to meet with in

my way, and as I had your notes about me, which you had received for gaming debts, I e'en shewed them to him, and asked him if he could raise me a little money upon them. Hum! says he, putting on his spectacles, and looking on them, do you know the parties? Are you willing to endorse them? With all my heart, reply'd I. Mighty well, said he, your name to it is as good as government security; I'll get the money for you immediately. As this man is honesty itself, I very readily accepted of his offer; and finding him in a humour to serve me, I e'en proposed to him the purchasing of your cloaths, and—

CLERIMONT.

Oh, ho, so then this is the same man that you was speaking to me of?

SUBTLE.

The same; and as a proof of his integrity, he offered me upon the spot twice the money for the cloaths, that the other rascal did to whom you would have sold them.

CLERIMONT.

What a happy chance! Sure this is a friend not to be paralleled.

SUBTLE.

Not in this wicked world, indeed. I positively do not know his equal, unless it is myself.

CLERIMONT.

Well observ'd, honest Subtle. How shall I ever be able to repay the services thou hast done me?

PORTER.

Faith, gentlemen, you talk here very much at your ease, and never think that I am ready to drop under my burthen.

SUBTLE.

'Odso! let us ease this poor devil of his load.

CLERIMONT.

With all my heart.—Here, my lad, is something for thee to drink.

PORTER.

Gentlemen, I return you many thanks, I am now as light as a feather, and can jump like a grasshopper.

[*Exit* Porter.]

## SCENE V.

SUBTLE.

Come now let us reckon the bags. One, two, three, four, five, and six: an hundred pounds each; these contain the money for your cloaths. Now for the rest: Here are twelve more of an hundred and fifty each, and a small one of fifty; this is the money for your notes.

CLERIMONT.

Good God, what a sum of ready money is here all on a sudden!

Well, I hope fortune is at length weary of persecuting me, and here is enough to indulge myself to the height of my wishes, if I was so disposed.

SUBTLE.

Bravo! my dear master, Bravo! Let us indulge ourselves. Sing old Rose and burn the Bellows. We may now take our swing of pleasure, to repay us for all our past sufferings. A little ready money for the present, will stop your creditors' mouths, and we may enjoy the rest. What says my Cresus, my emperor of a master!

CLERIMONT.

And is this the advice you give me?

SUBTLE.

Is it not what you like?

CLERIMONT.

Like? infamous wretch! Know that my misfortunes have taught me wisdom; they have restored me to my reason, and I thank heaven I can now at once detest my past follies, and thy poisonous councils.

SUBTLE.

My God! are you in earnest?

CLERIMONT.

In earnest! I know not what prevents me from giving thee a convincing proof of it; and was it not for the remembrance of some services thou hast done me, I would drive thee from my

presence this instant.

SUBTLE. [*Coughing vehemently.*]

Ay, here is my cursed cough come again!—Well, sir, since you are so greatly reformed, I am very willing to follow your example: we will henceforward live the lives of hermits; however in the mean time I'll take these bags up into your chamber, that you may dispose of them in the most moral manner you may think proper.

CLERIMONT.

Take these bags, and carry them to my father's room, that he may find them there at his return; it is the least restitution I can make him for the immense trouble and expence I have cost him. This supply, small as it is, may perhaps minister to his present wants.

SUBTLE.

Mighty well—but pray how are you and I to live?

CLERIMONT.

By the crumbs that fall from his table, if he should not think me worthy of a place there.

SUBTLE.

But again, how will you satisfy those four creditors of your's, who have each an action against you? You will not be able to stir over the threshold.

CLERIMONT.

Well, then I will keep my chamber, and amuse myself with books: reading is the cordial of the wretched.

SUBTLE.

Very true, but let us read romances then. I protest you amaze me.

*[Here he sneezes very loud.]*

CLERIMONT.

What, at it again?

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir, your moralizing has got up into my head.

CLERIMONT.

I hear some one coming; see who it is. It may be my father.

*[Going.]*

SUBTLE.

No, no, come back, it is only Tom.

## SCENE VI.

*Enter a FOOTMAN.*

SUBTLE.

Well, Tom, what have you got there?

TOM.

A suit of cloaths for mr. Clerimont.



CLERIMONT.

Whence had you them?

TOM.

They were given me sir, to deliver to you.

CLERIMONT.

By whom?

TOM.

By one mr.—mr.—upon my soul I have forgot his name now.

SUBTLE.

Lord bless me, it is my friend that I was speaking of to you, sir!—This is a piece of gallantry of his.

CLERIMONT.

For which I am obliged to you, I dare say.

SUBTLE.

And for much more, than you know. Come, come dress yourself quick.

CLERIMONT.

Now I shall be compleatly happy.

SUBTLE.

You say truer than you imagine. You may go, Tom.

[*Exit* Footman.]

## SCENE VII.

CLERIMONT. [*Putting on the cloaths.*]

Now, my dear Isabella, I shall be able to obey your charming summons——blest chance!——But what is this in the pocket?

SUBTLE. [*Smiling.*]

Nay, look at it.

CLERIMONT.

By all that's good, my pocket-book! How the devil came it here?

SUBTLE.

You put it there yourself, I suppose.

CLERIMONT.

I did so, I remember it now.——Well, faith I am a very heedless fellow.

SUBTLE.

An oracle could not speak more true. If any one has opened it, they will have found some very edifying anecdotes.

CLERIMONT. [*Opening his pocket-book.*]

I must burn all these papers.

SUBTLE.

That would be a pity——however, before you condemn them to

the flames, read them once more over.

CLERIMONT. [*Examining the Papers.*]

Good God, what do I see! These are not letters.—Hum—A discharge from Tinsel! Ditto, from Ragout! Ditto, from Selvedge, and ditto from Fashion. Can I believe my eyes! By all that's good here are others too from every one of my creditors without exception. Is this a dream, or is it reality? My dear Subtle, tell me whether am I waking or sleeping?

SUBTLE.

Faith if you are asleep, I am so too, for I see the same things as you do.

CLERIMONT.

But to whom in the name of fortune, am I obliged for so astonishing a——

SUBTLE.

To the same person who paid for your cloaths.

CLERIMONT.

Tell me who it is this moment, that I may run and throw myself at his feet.

SUBTLE.

His name is——

CLERIMONT.

What?

SUBTLE.

Mr.——

CLERIMONT.

Mr. who?——

SUBTLE.

Why do you know a certain gentleman, they call——

CLERIMONT.

Call what?

SUBTLE.

Mr. Wealthy.

CLERIMONT.

My father?

SUBTLE. [*Singing and dancing.*]

'Tis he! 'Tis he! 'Tis he!

CLERIMONT.

I know it now!——what surprise!——what joy!——what confusion!——Support me, Subtle!—I am unable to bear this conflict of tumultuous passions: Oh! [*Faints.*]

SUBTLE.

Mercy on us! he is in a swoon I believe. Help there, for heaven's sake, leave your lurking-holes, gentlemen, and come to my assistance.

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter WEALTHY and TRUMAN, running in.*

WEALTHY.

Good heavens what do I see! my son in this condition.

SUBTLE.

Alas! we have killed him, in endeavouring to save him.

TRUMAN.

Clerimont look up, your father is here, who loves you dearer than ever.

CLERIMONT. [*Opening his eyes.*]

Oh! Father! The sight of you distracts me.

WEALTHY.

Say not so, my boy! say not so, I am still ready to shew myself a tender parent.

CLERIMONT. [*Throwing himself on his knees to his father.*]

Oh, sir, I am unworthy of your goodness.

WEALTHY.

You are no longer so; rise, Clerimont, rise, and come to my arms! [*Lifting him up.*]

CLERIMONT.

This excess of goodness overwhelms me with confusion: you,

sir, may pardon me, but I can never forgive myself.

WEALTHY.

Let what has passed be for ever bury'd in oblivion, and let us only think of the future happiness we shall enjoy.

SUBTLE.

Well, gentlemen, have I discharged my trust, think you?

TRUMAN.

Thy zeal and address cannot be too much rewarded.

CLERIMONT.

Excellent rogue! in thus deceiving me, thou hast conferred the greatest of obligations on me; for I can no longer doubt that you acted in concert with my father and mr. Truman.

SUBTLE.

Nay, sir, do not lavish too many encomiums on me. This gentleman was my sole director. [*Pointing to Truman.*]

CLERIMONT.

I shall not attempt to express my gratitude to you, sir, for no words can speak the feelings of my heart.

TRUMAN. [*Embracing him.*]

I am overpaid by the joy your happy change gives me. I founded my hopes on the goodness of your heart, and I have not been deceived.

WEALTHY.

In mr. Truman, Clerimont, you behold the pattern of a true

friend. Both you and I are indebted to him for the happiness of our lives. But, my dear boy, if you would crown my felicity, it must be by entering into the married state. I have made choice of a person, who, I am persuaded, is every way a suitable match for you; and, in this choice, your own heart will, I am persuaded, concur.

CLERIMONT.

Ah, sir! have I not ruined you? Isabella, you know, is as destitute of a fortune as myself; and, in making her my wife, I shall only make her miserable.

TRUMAN.

You say right; I have thought of this matter myself, and have found a wife for you, who will bring a fortune with her equal to your rank and merit.

WEALTHY.

And I expect you will give her your hand without hesitation.

CLERIMONT.

Sir, you shall be obey'd; but your son can never survive this sacrifice of his inclinations. I cannot live without the possession of Isabella.

WEALTHY.

Why, that is the very person we intend for you.

CLERIMONT.

Intend Isabella for me! and with a fortune!

TRUMAN.

Yes, yes; I will take upon me to provide her a portion. She shall bring you five thousand pounds.

CLERIMONT.

What amazing generosity!

SUBTLE.

In good faith, this is going further than I expected.

WEALTHY.

I have the like sum in the bank; and both together, will make you a very handsome fortune.

CLERIMONT.

This happy reverse is too much to bear! Oh father! Oh, mr. Truman! [*Leaning upon Subtle's shoulder.*]

WEALTHY.

Behave as my son, Clerimont, and bear your fortune like a man.

SUBTLE.

Courage, my dear master! we need no longer be in fear of bailiffs or their followers; you know you have a letter of licence.

WEALTHY *and* TRUMAN *laughing.*

Ha, ha, ha, ha.

CLERIMONT.

Traitor! what a trick have you play'd me! I no longer wonder at your mighty courage.



SUBTLE.

Oh, sir, it always shews itself where there is no danger.

CLERIMONT.

Well, well; but you topt your part with mr. Solomon?

TRUMAN.

Not a syllable of what he told you of that affair was truth. I redeemed the jewels out of his hands.

CLERIMONT.

Well, I must confess I have been a great dupe.

SUBTLE.

However, I hope you will allow that I have a fertile imagination.

CLERIMONT.

Sirrah! sirrah! if I was not so happy as I am, I could find in my heart to strangle thee.

### **SCENE the Last.**

*Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.*

WEALTHY.

Isabella, come forward.

CLERIMONT.

How! Has she too been a witness to all that has passed?

LUCY.

Yes, yes; we have heard all, I assure you; and are far from repenting of our curiosity.

TRUMAN.

I had given them their stations.

CLERIMONT.

How happy am I not to have suffered any folly to escape me!

WEALTHY.

Now, Isabella, you are convinc'd that my son loves you. You have been so generous to own, that you have no dislike to him. Take him, then, without hesitation, for he is truly worthy of you. Come, my dear children, give me your hands, that I may join them. Isabella, here is your husband; and, may all-gracious Providence make you as happy as a fond parent can wish you!

CLERIMONT. [*To Isabella.*]

And do you really accept my hand without repugnance?

ISABELLA. [*Smiling.*]

I think I shew no great backwardness.

WEALTHY.

And, as for Lucy——

SUBTLE.

Now for it——

WEALTHY.

I think she ought not to be dissuaded from her call.

SUBTLE.

For a husband, I presume, you mean, sir?

WEALTHY.

What say you, Lucy?

LUCY.

Sir—it is not fit for me to speak before my betters.

WEALTHY.

Well, I understand you; and therefore I will bestow a brace of hundreds on thee for a portion.

TRUMAN.

And give me leave to add the like sum, if Lucy will accept of it.

LUCY.

Oh, sir, most willingly.

SUBTLE.

Lucy, make a handsome compliment, now, for you and me.

LUCY.

Nay, pr'ythee, take that upon thyself; my imagination is not so very fruitful.

WEALTHY.

There is no need of thanks. I am sufficiently happy, in having found a long lost son returned, and worthy of my

tenderness.—Let us in, and celebrate the happy occasion.—

## END of the REFORMED RAKE.

### TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

The implication from the context is that it is a play by Marivaux. However, closer inspection shows that in fact, it is a translation of *Le jeune homme à l'épreuve* by Philippe Néricault Destouches (1680-1754). Comparison with the original shows that Act IV Scene 1 was omitted from the translation. This resulted in the scenes in Act IV being wrongly counted: the count goes from IV, 1 to IV, 3. Additionally, one minor speaking role (TOM) is unlisted.

Contemporary spellings have been retained, even where not consistent (e.g. surprise / surprize, pr'ythee / pry'thee). This includes use of lower case for titles such as Mr., Miss, Mrs., etc. Missing punctuation has been added, including the occasional apostrophe. In a couple of instances, the same word appears twice, once at the end of a line, and then again at the beginning of the next. These doubles have been deleted without comment. In a very few instances, obvious misspellings have been corrected, e.g. "bark" for "bartk".

The following substantive changes have been made and can be identified in the body of the text by a grey dotted underline:

but your words carry an air of truth that  
**convince** me;

And, indeed, that **is** will be rather serving  
than deceiving him.

[*Exeunt* Truman and **Worthy**

Right; then mr. Wealthy and I, and  
perhaps Isabella too (For I think it is

but your words carry an air of truth that  
**convinces** me;

And, indeed, that **it** will be rather serving  
than deceiving him.

[*Exeunt* Truman and **Wealthy**

Right; then mr. Wealthy and I, and perhaps  
Isabella too (For I think it is proper **she**

proper **he** should be of the party)

should be of the party)

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[The end of *The Generous Artifice, or, The Reformed Rake* by  
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