**OLAM LIT**

**Plot summary of The Country Wife by William Wycherley**

**Summary of act 1.**

* Horner and The Quack are in a conversation. Its observed that Horner has paid the quack to spread a rumor that a treatment for a venereal disease has left him impotent. He hopes to use this ruse to seduce fashionable ladies of London.
* Sir Jasper Fidget, lady Fidget, Dainty Fidget enter.
* Sir jasper introduces his wife and sister to horner but he shows less concern about them which makes Jasper confirm the rumors about him. The ladies too show disgust with Horner’s behavior and its worse when they are told that he’s a eunuch.
* Jasper leaves but invites Horner to his house to play cards and dine with his wife.
* **the ladies too leave angrily**
* The quack and Horner continue talking about the subject and according to Horner the scheme is successful.
* The Quack exits as Dorilant and Frank Harcout enter. The two show sympathy towards Horner and encourage him to join them at the theater. They observe a change in Horner’s attitude towards women.
* Sparkish enters and immediately teases Horner about his impotence calling him ‘sign of a man’. He asks the other three where they are to dine from but they ignore him. He finally leaves to find his mistress whom he will go to the play with.
* As Sparkish exits, Jack Pinchwife enters. Horner welcomes him and congratulates him upon being married. Pinchwife is surprised and angry at the same time, for he had planned to keep this fact from the notorious rake’Horner’
* Pinchwife mentions that he has come back from the country to see his sister married to Sparkish.
* Horner the prods Pinchwife about the new bride and why he chose a country wife. Pinchwife replies that she is rich,ugly and silly and therefore will commit adultery.
* Horner mentions having seen pinchwife at the play the previous day with a pretty woman and that he was in love with her.
* Pinchwife vows never to take his wife to a play again and excuses himself before telling Horner that he will never be near her

**ACT 2**

**Setting; pinchwife’s lodging**

List of charactersMargery Pinchwife, Alethea, Pinchwife, Sparkish, Harcourt, Lady fidget, Mistress Squeamish, Dainty fidget, Sir.Jusper, Horner, Dorilant .;

**Scene 1**

* Margery talks to Alethea wondering why Pinchwife confines her in doors to which she replies that he due to jealous. The two also talk about the play Margery attended the previous day and Margery appreciates the actors.
* Margery requests alethea to ask for permission on her behalf to go abroad.
* Pinchwife enters insults Margery and accuses Alethea of influencing Margery and pleads with her to keep Margery ignorant.
* Pinchwife tells Margery never to ask again to go to the theatre and when margery asks why he says that he doesn’t want her to mix with men.
* Margery wonders if a homely country girl like her can be admired.
* Pinchwife reveals that one of the lewdest fellows who saw her was in love with her.
* She gets excited as pinchwife promises to keep her away from her.
* Sparkish and Harcout enter. Pinchwife hides his wife and locks the door.
* Sparkish has come to show Harcourt his mistress.
* Harcourt admits Alethea’s beauty and expresses admiration.
* Sparkish encourages these attentions and invites Harcourt to go with Alethea in the corner and try if she has wit.
* Pinchwife scolds sparkish for letting men talk to his wife in privacy.
* In the corner Harcourt declares love to Alethea but she rejects. He argues that sparkish’s lack of jealousy shows that he doesn’t love her but alethea disagrees.
* When Harcourt starts calling sparkish names, alethea calls sparkish and reports to him that Harcourt was making advances towards her. Sparkish laughs it off as the usual London men wit.
* When alethea reports that he called him a common bubble, senseless coward, he becomes angry and invites pinchwife to join him and they kill Harcourt.
* Alethea intervenes on Harcourt’s behalf and sparkish backs down.
* He then invites Alethea and Harcourt to depart with him to the play.
* Pinchwife stays cursing sparkish and his behavior.
* Lady fidget, squeamish and Dainty enter and demand to see Margery with the intention to go with her to the new play.
* Pinchwife put up excuses but finding that the ladies are not deterred, he just leaves.
* The ladies conclude that pinchwife is jealous.
* The ladies start a discussion over adultery and honour.
* Sir jasper, Horner and Dorilant enter.
* Jasper informs the ladies that he has business at Whitehall and will not join then to the play and would have them go with horner. Lady fidget is disgusted by the idea.
* Jasper takes lady fidget aside and convinces her to allow Horner’s company. She agrees.
* Horner and lady Fidget move aside and Horner tells her his secret.
* Lady fidget is very excited to hear the news.
* When sir jasper finds that the two have agreed, he leaves for business.

**Act 3**

**Scene 1 (afternoon) Pinchwife’s lodging**

* Margery and Alethea discuss margery’s exclusion from the fashionable life of London.
* Jack pinchwife enters and accuses Alethea of putting thetown pleasures in her head but Alethea disputes this accusation and pins pinchwife for his wife’s earnestness.
* Margery tells pinchwife that she doesn’t want to go back to the country and has not been well since he told her that there was a gallant in love with her.
* She then asks to go a play or at least move out.
* Pinchwife gives in and allows Margery to go to the play but on condition that she has to dress like a man. She’s therefore dressed in a suit.

**Scene 11 ( on the street after the play**)

* In the new exchange Horner, Mr. Dorilant, and Frank Harcourt discuss Horner’s continuous engagement with women yet he claims to hate them. He replies that he does so in order to make them angry.
* Harcourt confesses being in love with sparkish’s mistress and asks Horner for advice on how to steal her.
* Sparkish enters and Horner tells Harcourt to use Sparkish to reach Alethea
* Sparkish accuses Harcourt of making fierce love to Alethea during the play but says he has forgiven him.
* Pinchwife enters with Alethea, lucy and Margery disguised as a man.
* sparkish asks Harcourt to hide him because he doesn’t want Alethea to see him
* Horner greets pinchwife but he ignores him. Pinchwife calls on his wife to hurry and they move off.
* Horner asks who the handsome youth is and sparkish says that he must pinchwife’s in law.
* Horner says he has seen that face before and asks Dorilant that that they follow them.
* Harcourt remains and begs sparkish to reconcile him to Alethea claiming that he wants to keep a good friendship with the two and sparkish agrees.
* Pinchwife enters with Margery and the latter wonders about the signs (bull’s head ram’s and stag’s). pinchwife says all men are presented by the signs as they symbolize cuckolds.
* When they exit, sparkish, Harcourt re-enter with Alethae and lucy.
* Sparkish tells alethea to reconcile to Harcourt. Alethea refuses saying that he is sparkish’s enemy since he intends to steal her from him. Sparkish says that harcourt’s move on Alethea is her fault because she is admirable and Harcourt can’t help it.
* Harcout mocks sparkish and expresses love for Alethea in an interesting witty way which sparkish cannot see. Alethea gets annoyed and offers to go. Sparkish detains her till she hears the kind of love Harcourt has for her. When Harcourt says that it’s the truest love, sparkish concludes its not matrimony love and invites Harcourt to kiss her.
* Pinchwife enters with Margery and scolds sparkish for inviting friends to kiss his wife.
* Sparkish defends himself that he is not jealous. He then bids them farewell and reminds alethea that he will come the following day with a priest to wed them.
* Harcourt asks Alethea if she allow him to visit her with a priest first.
* Pinchwife intervenes and tries to get off with the ladies. Before he does, Horner and Dorilant enter.
* Horner accuses pinchwife of being unsocial but pinchwife claims to have business to attend to and excuses himself.
* The three wits tell him to leave the ladies behind.
* Horner asks pinchwife who the young man(Margery ) is.
* Pinchwife tells him not to overlook at him because he is shy and adds that he’s his brother in law.
* Horner tells him that he resembles the lady he said he was in love with.
* Pinchwife claims leave because his wife is waiting on them to have supper.
* Horner then request Pinchwife that they should together at his house to sup with him.
* Pinchwife says that his wife must be already asleep.
* Finally pinchwife offers to go. Horner asks margery’s brother to carry kisses to her sister and kisses (him) in front of Pinchwife and invites Harcourt and Dorilant to kiss (him) too.
* Horner,Dorilant and Harcourt depart.
* Pinchwife goes off to fetch a coach.
* The three wits return and Horner hauls Margery away to the next walk.
* Pinchwife returns only to learn that Margery has gone with Horner.
* When she returns, she has China oranges and dried fruit as Horner follows behind.
* Sir.fidget then enters and reminds Horner to visit lady Fidget. Horner leaves with sir Jasper
* Harcourt and Dorilant say bye to Alethea and Lucy
* Margery offers pinchwife and he thrusts it away and regrets bringing his wife out.

**Act 4**

**Scene one (pinchwife’s lodging in the morning**)

* Lucy has dressed and prepared Alethea for her marriage to sparkish.
* The two ladies compare sparkish and Harcourt. They agree that Harcourt has more wit than Sparkish but Alethea says cannot injure sparkish.
* Their conversation ends when sparkish enters with Harcourt who is disguised as a parson. He claims to be Ned, (harcourt’s twin brother)
* Alethea sees through this disguise and strives to prove to sparkish that Ned is actually Harcourt who intends to prevent their valid marriage but sparkish does not listen and therefore marches her off to be married followed by Harcourt and lucy.

**Scene2 (pinchwife’s lodging**)

* Jack pinchwife interrogates his wife regarding what happened when he was with Horner. It’s observed that it’s not the first time he was asking her.
* Margery explains that she was taken to a shop where Horner kissed her and gave her gifts.
* Pinchwife worries that Margery is steadfastly getting attracted to Horner and therefore plots to end this developing romance.
* Pinchwife orders to write a letter to horner at his dictation in which she renounces all the connection she has with him.
* When Margery hesitates, mr pinchwife threatens to curve the word whore on her face using a knife.
* Margery writes and the letter is complete, pinchwife goes to fetch wax and candle to seal it.
* Left alone, Margery comes up with her own idea. She quickly writes a letter of her own in which she expresses how she is attracted to Horner and how the husband wants to frustrate their relationship.
* When pinchwife returns, Margery hides the last letter she wrote and gives pinchwife the first letter. Satisfied that it’s the letter he wants to send, pinchwife sets himself to seal it.
* However before he seals it, Margery snatches it from him and says she wants to seal it. She then substitutes it with her own without pinchwife noticing.
* Pinchwife heads to Horner’s lodging to deliver the letter.

**Scene 3( Horner’s lodging)**

* Horner speaks to The Quack with pride how the scheme has succeeded.
* Lady fidget enters and Quack hides to confirm if what Horner tells him is true.
* Horner tells her to withdraw to the next room where they are to have fun from.
* Before she withdraws, she expresses concern that horner would reveal his secret to other women and the truth will come out. Pinchwife assures her that the secret is safe with her alone.
* She then embraces him and as she’s hugging him sir.Jasper fidget enters unexpectedly.
* Seeing that she has been caught, lady Fidget says she was trying out if Horner is ticklish and invites jusper to tickle him too. Jasper objects and reminds her that she was supposed to be shopping china.
* Lady fidget claims that Horner has a collection of China and is dertermined to see it.
* She then exits to the next room and locks it.
* Horner then claims that lady fidget will triffle his things and exits at another door.
* Mistress squeamish enters inquiring where Horner is. When jasper tells her that he is in the next room with lady fidget, she demands entry but finding the door closed, she exits to find another way in.
* Old lady squeamish then enters looking for mistress squeamish. She doesn’t find her but in her conversation with sir jasper she learns that the man(horner) who lodges ‘here’ is a eunuch and therefore calms down.
* Mistress squeamish enters just in time as lady fidget returns with china in her hand. Lady Squeamish demands that she also gets some china but Horner tells her that he is left with none.
* Old lady squeamish suggests to Horner that he kisses mistress squeamish to calm her down which Horner does.
* Pinchwife enters as the ladies and Jasper exit.
* Pinchwife presents a letter to horner. He reads it in front of him. He realizes that pinchwife doesn’t know the content in the letter.
* Pinchwife then exits after warning pinchwife that there will be danger in making him a cuckold.
* The quack comes out of hiding and discusses with Horner the contents of the letter.
* Sparkish enters pulling mr.pinchwife.
* Sparkish asks mr pinchwife about his bride and pinchwife says that she denies the marriage because of a fake parson.
* When Horner wonders which stale maid was marrying Sparkish, pinchwife concludes that it seems he is concerned about the match and therefore wants her.
* Pinchwife exits. Sparkish invites Horner to dine with him and mr.pinchwife but Horner tells him that he can only come if Margery would be there.
* Sparkish agrees to come along with her.

**Scene 4( pinchwife’s house**)

* Mrs pinchwife is alone. She says she is sick of her husband and is in love with Horner. She decides to write a letter to him in which she is begging him to free her from the unfortunate match with pinchwife .
* As she writes, pinchwife enters and snatches the letter from her.
* Pinchwife reads it aloud and draws his sword just in time as Sparkish enters.
* Pinchwife backs down. Sparkish invites them to dinner and then pinchwife locks her away before they move out.

**Act 5**.

**Scene 1 (pincwife’s house)**

* Jack pinchwife orders Margery to complete she was writing in Act 4. She concludes it Alethea’s name and claims that it’s Alethea that instructed her to write the letter on her behalf.
* Remembering Horner’s reaction on hearing that sparkish was marrying sparkish, he believes the story.
* Pinchwife resolves to talk to Alethea about the matter but Alethea requests she talks to her first since it was their secret.
* When she returns, she tells him that Alethea has resolved to marry Horner but is too ashamed to meet mr. pinchwife . she also reports that she has requested to go to Horner’s lodging to discuss the matter with him but she wishes to wear a mask because of the shame.
* Pinchwife agrees to all conditions. Margery exits and comes back later in Alethea’s clothes. when pinchwife calls Margery to lock her in, she gives him her hand but when he lets her go, she steals softly on the other side of him and he locks the door thinking Margery inside.
* Mr.pinchwife leads his wife to Horner’s lodging.

**Scene 2( horner’s lodging**)

* Horner is talking to the Quack when pinchwife enters with disguised Margery.
* Horner requests to see her face but mrs pinchwife whispers in Horner’s ear and Horner tells pinchwife that she requested to see him in privacy.
* Pinchwife is elated and so exits to fetch a parson to marry “alethea” and Horner.
* A boy announces the coming of Jasper fidget and Horner tells Margery to move to the next room.
* Jasper has come to inform Horner that his wife and the whole of the virtuous gang are coming to his lodging and are already dressed.
* When jasper exits, Horner bids farewell to Quack as he is going to a private feast.

**Scene 3(piazza of covent garden)**

* Sparkish with a letter in his hand reacts to the news that Alethea intend to dissolve their marriage.
* Pinchwife tells him that Harcourt deceived him into a fake marriage and informs her that he has left Althea at Horner’s lodging.
* When pinchwife exits, sparkish spots alethea and goes to talk to her.
* Alethea is surprised to hear the accusation sparkish is making of her being unfaithful and her intention to marry Horner.
* Sparrkish then accuses her of conniving with Harcourt to make a sham wedding and then tells her that he actually never love her passionately but was only attracted to her fortune and he exits.
* Alethea is left wondering how she was deceived in Sparkish.

**Scene 4(Horner’s lodging)**

* Horner complains in an aside that the gang has arrived he has sent Margery away and wants to lock her inside before they see her but lady fidget doesn’t allow him.
* The ladies start drinking and singing loudly. They also make Horner drink.
* The ladies then start confessing to the extent that lady fidget confesses that Horner is her gallant. The other ladies also say that Horner is their lover.
* Lady fidget calls for cooperation from the other ladies to keep Horner’s secret so that they all keep enjoying.
* Sir jasper comes with old lady squeamish and the two inquire from the ladies if they came straight to Horner’s place as it’s the only trusted lodging. They say yes.
* A boy enters and announces the coming of two gentlemen and a lady.
* Horner asks the rest to go into the next room as he send away the announced visitors.
* Horner fetches Margery and convices her to go home before pinchwife returns but Margery refuses saying that she wants to marry Horner.
* Hearing the new visitors coming, horner sends Margery to another room.
* Pinchwife enters with Alethea, Harcourt , sparkish and lucy and a parsion.
* Pinchwife wants horner to confess that he brought Alethea to his lodging.
* Horner hesitates at first but after says it’s true.
* They start arguing as pinchwife says that Horner must marry Alethea but Harcourt says he will marry her instead.
* Pnchwife and sparkish are confused but Horner says he is willing to give up alethea to Harcort.
* Pinchwife sees this as an insult Alethea’s honor and goes to draw his sword.
* Seeing this, Margery rushes out to defend Horner. Alethea points out that Margery is in her clothes.
* Pinchwife draws his sword on his wife but Harcourt stops him.
* Jasper pinchwife, Dainty, lady Fidget, old lady squeamish and mistress squeamish enter.
* Pinchwife tells jasper that his wife has been sleeping with Horner and perhaps his wife has been doing so. Jasper laughs at him but later asks Horner if he slept with pinchwife’s wife.
* Lucy then intervenes saying that she is the source of confusion and planned all this to break up sparkish and Alethea.
* Margery objects this saying that he loves Horner. Pinchwife threatens her again as Dorilant and the Quack enter.
* Seeing the confusing he asks what’s happening and Horner whispers to him to confess to the rest that he is impotent.
* The quack whispers to sir Jasper that Horner is impotent and gives him his word as a physician.
* Jasper apologizes to his wife for doubting her virtue.
* The quack informs Pinchwife that Horner is a eunuch and wonders if the report is true but Dorilant backs up the Quacks story and all the rest confirm it is true although Margery protests.
* Margery realizes that she cannot escape pinchwife .
* Lucy tells pinchwife that Margery only came out of the house to witness sparkish and Alethea’s wedding and her confessions of love for Horner is the usual revenge on jealous husband.
* Margery confirms the lies.
* Pinchwife reluctantantly accepts.
* There is a dance of cuckolds.