



# The Rivals

*A Comedy*

Richard Brinsley Sheridan

John Wilkie

1775

## Acts

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Act 1	1
Act 2	2

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# CHARACTERS

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**Sir Anthony Absolute**, a rich nobleman  
**Faulkland**, a friend of Sir Anthony's son Jack  
**Lucius O'Trigger**, an Irish nobleman  
**Lydia Languish**, a teenage heiress  
**Mrs Malaprop**, Lydia's guardian

**Scene:** Bath. **Time of action:** Within one day.

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## PREFACE, NOTES, WHATEVER

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The preface to a play seems generally to be considered as a kind of closet-prologue in which the author solicits that indulgence from the reader which he had before experienced from the audience.

I need scarcely add that the circumstance alluded to was the withdrawing of the piece to remove those imperfections which were too obvious to escape reprehension.

With regard to some particular passages which seemed generally disliked, I confess that if I felt any emotion of surprise at the disapprobation, it was not that they were disapproved of, but that I had not before perceived that they deserved it.

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# ACT 1

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## ***SCENE 1***

*A street in Bath. Coachman crosses the stage. Enter Fag, looking after him.*

**FAG** *(calls)* What! Thomas! *(aside)* Sure 'tis he! *(calls)* What! Thomas! Thomas!

**THOMAS** Hey! Od's life! Mr Fag! Give me your hand, my old fellow-servant!

**FAG** Excuse my glove, Thomas.

**THOMAS** Sure, and the postillion be all come!

## ***SCENE 2***

**LYDIA** Heigh-ho! Did you inquire for *The Delicate Distress*?

**LUCY** Or *The Memoirs of Lady Woodford*? Yes indeed, ma'am. I asked everywhere for it; and I might have brought it from Mr Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so spoiled and dog's-eared it, it wa'n't fit for a Christian to read.

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## ACT 2

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### *SCENE 1*

*Absolute's lodgings.*

**FAG** Sir, while I was there, Sir Anthony came in. I told him you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

**ABSOLUTE** And what did he say on hearing I was at Bath?

**FAG** Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished!

### *SCENE 2*

*The North Parade.*

**LUCY** So, I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list, Captain Absolute.

**SIR LUCIUS** Hah! My little embassadress!

**LUCY** (*speaking simply*) O gemini! And I have been waiting for your worship here on the North.