

THE MERRY MASQUERADERS
Or THE HUMOROUS CUCKOLD
Penelope Aubin

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MEN

Mr. Megrim: A rich, covetous, old, jealous, whimsical Citizen, and a Justice of the Peace

Major Archpole: A fine young Gentleman, who with this Friend plays the Spright in *Megrim's* House, whose Wife he loves.

Capt. Sprightly: His Friend, a younger Brother, and *Clarinda's* Lover

'Squire Clumsey: An aukward Country 'Squire, Nephew to *Megrim*, and Suitor to *Clarinda* a rich Heiress, to whom Justice *Megrim* is Guardian

Diligence: *Megrim's* Steward and Favourite.

Drivewell: The Coachman.

Tom Subtle: Foot-Boy to the Justice, and Accomplice with the Spright.

Slender: The Cook.

WOMEN

Mrs. Megrim: A wanton, gay, handsome, young, witty Woman, the Justice's Wife, and *Archpole's* Mistress, to whom she was engaged before her Marriage.

Clarinda: A young Heiress left to *Megrim's* Care, in love with *Sprightly*.

Miranda: A fine rich young Widow, *Archpole's* Mistress for a Wife.

Mrs. Frible: *Megrim's* House-Keeper, a Puritanical old Hypocrite.

Mrs. Susan: *Clarinda's* Maid.

Mrs. Cicely: *Mrs. Megrim's* Maid.

Mrs. Finick: *Miranda's* Woman.

Other Servants, Watch and Constable

The SCENE a Country-Seat near Enfield

THE
MERRY MASQUERADERS:
Or
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ACT I. SCENE I.

Archpole's Lodging. Masquerading-Habits lying on the Table; Archpole sitting alone with a Book in his Hand; he rises, lays down the Book – and says –

Archipole

How tedious do the Minutes seem to an expecting Lover? Farewell, good *Seneca*, I'll study thy grave unfashionable Morals when my Mistress grows old or false, and no new one can be found; or when I'm grown old and impotent myself, and can no longer relish Pleasure. *Megrim's* charming Wife, my first Love, and my young rich Widow, shall now employ each Thought; the dear, the lovely darling Fair, that was torn from me by her cruel Parents, 'cause I was then a younger Brother, and sacrificed to *Megrim*, tho' bound in matrimonial Fetters; and kept by the jealous Dotard like a wretched Slave, shall bless my eager Arms each Night in spite of all his Care. What a glorious Night was the last, when, frighen'd [sic] from his Bed, he left me in Possession of her, though but for a few Minutes, in which I was at liberty to fold her in my longing Arms, and rifle Kisses from her trembling Lips; but could no more, the Clamours the Fiend made making me dread to stay, lest I should cause her Ruin.

Enter SPRIGHTLY.

Welcome, my Friend, why did you stay so long?

Spr. I was engag'd at Supper with some leading Members, who fell out about the Sinking Fund; till they all deafen'd one another with the Noise, and parted in hot Blood, but left me ne'er the wiser: But, tell me, Friend, do you resolve to tempt your Fate a second time? Must we again turn Sprights, and haunt poor *Megrim's* House? Pry'thee forbear.

Arch. Not tho' *Lucifer*, and the Cuckold, that shall be, kept the Chamber Door; I'll horn him, or vex him into the other World. But, tell me, has *Clarinda* given you her Consent at last, and fix'd the happy Hour? Or, Is your Passion cool'd?

Spr. I love her to Excess, and have her Promise to be happy To-morrow-Morning, if she can but find an Opportunity to steal out with me. Our Scheme is laid, and all things ready; and then, my Friend, we'll tye the lasting Knot: But why do you delay to wed *Miranda*, and run such Risques for one, that is by Law another's?

Arch. *Megrim's* Wife was my first Love, and has my Heart. *Miranda* is, I own, a very agreeable woman; and has a Fortune, which makes her well worth following: but, altho' I can be civil and kind to her as a Wife; yet I can never love her with such Ardour as I do my mistress. Marriage, *Charles*, you know, damps our Flames; and a Wife is so imperious a Creature, that she soon grows insupportable, and appears a *Juno* rather than a *Venus*; but no more of this unpleasant subject; tell me, my dear Friend, did not we manage it rarely last Night at *Megrim's*? I approach'd the Bed with long Strides, glared in his Face, lay cross his Stomach till he was almost breathless: Doubtless, the old Usurer thought *Lucifer* was going to strangle him with his own Bags of lucre: then turning the dark side of my Lanthorn, I gently withdrew to one Corner of the Room, whilst he sprung out of Bed, and fled the Chamber, as if the Fiend had indeed pursu'd him, Fear magnifying all he saw; but then bawl'd so loud, he forced me to retire to prevent Discovery: let us therefore gag him this Night. Come, let us dress; for it will not be long e're the Boy comes to give us the Watch-Word; he is an [...]. I am impatient to be with my dear *Melissa*.

Spr. The false Keys he has given us gives us Entrance at all Hours, and Midnight is our sporting time, let's in and shift.

The watchful Husband vainly tries
To guard the Fair with jealous Eyes:
If Love and Nature prompts her to be kind,
The Man, and Opportunity, she'll surely find.
[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in Megrim's House, he and DILIGENCE talking, MEGRIM sitting in his Night-Gown and three or four Night-Caps.

Enter MEGRIM and DILIGENCE.

Meg. *Dilligence*, fetch me a Dram of Citron-Water, my Supper sits heavy on my weak Stomach; bring some Orange-Chips too, they are good for the Wind.

Dil. Yes, Sir, so they are, in Truth, as Experience teacheth.
[*Goes and fetches them.*]

Meg. What's this behind me? Ods so! I thought something touch'd my Chair. Alas! alas! how dismally did I pass the last Night! how my Spirits are sunk. Well, *Dilligence*, I will lye above To-night, tell your Mistress. No, no, now I think of it, I will lye below once more. This is not Brandy that you have brought me, what do you mean? Where's the Maccaroons? Why, sure you have lost your Senses.

Dil. Brandy Sir, you asked for Citron Water, and Orange Chips.

Meg. Well, Mr. *Spendall*, what do you mean to do? I expect my Interest To-morrow, and if you must have a hundred Pounds more, I will have Twenty Guineas Premium, and the Interest of the last Hundred.

Dil. Lord, Sir, what do you mean? Pray go to Bed, your Understanding is surely disorder'd.

Meg. Say you so, *Diligence*, indeed so it is, I protest I thought Mr. *Spendall* was here: but now I think of it, are my new Cloaths air'd for To-morrow? how often have you turn'd them? I warrant the Fire has been let out twenty times.

Dil. Truly Sir, the Fire in the Red Room has been kept burning these fourteen Days and Nights, I have turn'd your Worship's Cloaths One hundred and seventy-five times; they are as dry as Tinder.

Meg. So you told me by my Camlet Cloat, which gave me the last Ague. Get me some Chocolate, and take away the Dram; 'tis five Hours since I eat. [*Diligence going.*] Do you hear? Come back, and give me a little more Rum first, and let the Bed above be warm'd.

Dil. Did you not resolve to lye below, Sir, just now?

Meg. I think you are in the right; well, so I will. But harkye, what do [you] think of the Apparition which you saw last Night?

Dil. Think, Sir; Mercy on us, why, I believe that you were oppress'd, and so dream'd; nothing else I hope.

Meg. Ah! No, no; it was surely more than a Dream. Well, I'll lye with my Wife this one Night more in that Room, and be satisfy'd. I'll go and look over some of my Bonds that are near being due, to give Orders to my Attorney to put them in Suit when the Time's expir'd, say my Prayers, and to Rest. A Curse on the late Act in favour of Insolent Debtors, it has freed above a hundred Miscreants whom I laid in Prison, and been the loss of some Thousands to me, and now the Interest of Money is so low, that I must be ruin'd were it not for the frequent Premiums I receive for lending small Sums to needy Heirs, and Traders. 'Tis true, my Wife's ten Thousand Pounds has help'd me greatly with ready Money, but she has plagued me more than enough. But here comes the Hypocrite.

Enter Mrs. MEGRIM

Mrs. Meg. My Dear, come to bed; indeed 'tis late: remember, Sir Numpey, you frightened me sadly last Night, and run away from me, that you did. Poz, you were very naughty to leave me so, to be haunted by the Devil or one of his Emissaries, as you fancied. Ha, ha, ha! Poz, I have a good mind to shut you out to-night, that I have.

Meg. No, we will lye above to-night; for tho' you make a Jest of it, yet I am certain that I both felt and saw something very dreadful: but Women seldom fear the Devil, or his Works.

Mrs. Meg. Ay, do; lye above, and catch Cold, do: the Room is as damp as a Vault, the other is as warm again. [*Aside.*] My Love will be at a loss, if he carries me thither.

Meg. Well, *Diligence*, 'tis cold, as my Wife says; go, set my Sack-Whey, and Conserve of Roses, and Turpentine Pills, by the Bed-side, and Spirits of Clary. See how I tremble now; alas, alas!

[Is going out of the wrong Door.]

Dil. Dear, Sir, you mistake the Door, and are going into the Garden.

Meg. Alas! *Diligence*, I did so; give me the Candle.

[He takes up a Wine-Glass, instead of the Candlestick, and goes in, follow'd by Diligence.]

Mrs. *Meg*. Well, if any thing can excuse a Failing in a Wife, it is such a Husband. Why did my cruel Parents sell me for a great Jointure to such a miserable Wretch? Curse on his Wealth, his Breath poisons me; I freeze at his Touch, and loath his Embraces; his Stomach is a Druggist's Shop, his Skin smells like a Charnel-House; and his Head is a Chymist's Laboratory.

Forgive me, Heaven, if these Vows I break;
My Tongue, against my Heart, was forc'd to speak.
[Exit.

SCENE III.

ARCHPOLE *and* SPRIGHTLY.

Enter Archpole and Sprightly, with a Key in disguise as Spirits, with dark Lanthorns. A Table with a large Carpet.

Arch. All's safe, now do you place yourself out of sight, whilst I go in and drive him out of Bed; then do you hold him in play; I'll to the other Door, whilst you keep Centinel.
[He goes out by a Side-Door.

Spr. Let me alone, I'll manage him rarely; and then to *Clarinda*. Oh, Love! Thou mighty Passion which subdues Mankind, and makes even Monarchs stoop to the proud Female they adore, what Dangers do we run to gratify our wild Desires? My Friend, robb'd of his Right the fair *Melissa*, does now attempt lawlessly to possess her, and risks his Life, and her fair Fame, for a few Moments of Delight, which will doubtless cost them both many sad Hours in the End. But, sweet virtuous *Clarinda*, none shares thy Heart with me; there I am sole Master, and our Enjoyments won't be damp'd by any racking stings of Guilt: but hold, the Door opens, no more Reflections; but for Action.

[He retires, and Megrim comes out in his Night-Gown as frighten'd out of Bed.

Meg. Oh! Oh! I am kill'd, annihilated, disjointed, destroy'd; Heav'n defend me.

[Sprightly bolts out upon him; mean time Archpole fastens the Door behind, and Megrim roaring falls over the Table, and Sprightly throws the Carpet over him, and rows him fast up in it, so goes in; the Scene shuts.

SCENE IV.

CLARINDA'S Chamber.

Enter CLARINDA and SUSAN.

Cla. I hear somebody tread; open the Door. A cruel Guardian, to reduce me to use such Stratagems to get my Liberty, and the Man I love; I tremble like a guilty Statesman at the Apprehension of a free Parliament.

Enter SPRIGHTLY.

Spr. My Charmer! see the glad Spirit that again comes to pay a Midnight Visit to you; I have partly revenged you on your Guardian, whom I have left in a woeful Plight, swaddled in that Turkey-work'd Carpet, like an Egyptian Mummy, whilst my Friend banquets at his Cost.

Cla. I blame, yet pity *Melissa*, and wish her more Virtue or her Freedom, and long to leave them, *Megrim's* a vile, jealous, old Fool, and she is worthy Compassion.

Spr. To-morrow's rising Sun, I hope, shall smile upon us, and give me a just Title to you. Oh! *Clarinda*, your Virtue secures my Peace and yours; and Marriage, which undoes half the World, shall make us mutually happy.

[He embraces her.]

Cla. Begone, I hear a Noise, and dread lest all's discover'd.

Spri. Adieu, I'll wait at home the happy Hour.

Cla. I'll not fail; a Woman seldom fails an Assignment.

[Exit Sprightly.]

SCENE V

Changes to the Hall.

MEGRIM puts his Head out of the Carpet.

Meg. I am e'en suffocated, and doubtless near my End. Oh! For some Air, and Cordial-Water; I am all dissolved in Sweat. This is surely a Plot of my Wife's to get rid of me, or else Lucifer is come for my Accounts. Methinks now I could repent, were it not for refunding. Oh! oh! What's that I hear! Now I do not dare cry out for fear of worse Treatment.

Enter ARCHPOLE and SPRIGHTLY, and slip off together.

Meg. Help! Help! Methinks I am carry'd in the Air, pounded in a Mortar, my Bones rattle, the Fiends are making a Poultice of me. Oh! *Dilligence*, Wife, are you living, and will not come to my Aid. I perceive these Hobgoblins are Men, and either come to steal my Honour, or my Gold, which is much the dearest to me, but now the Fiends are gone, I'll venture to make a Noise. Here, Wife, *Fribble, Diligence.*

Enter Mrs. MEGRIM and Servants, by several Doors.

Mrs. Meg. Duck, come let me help you up. Ah! Do; But see how my Hair stares, and what a disorder I am in: alas! the Spirit seem'd to ransack all the Chamber, and then threw itself cross my Stomach with such a weight, I could scarce breathe; nay, at last I almost fainted: methought its Eyes shone like two Fire-brands; it had Horns an Ell long at least, and grasp'd me in its Claws like a Lion; then I fell to Prayers, on which it rattled its Chains, for it seem'd to drag Chains about it, and vanish'd in a Flame. Defend us! 'tis a terrible thing to be thus haunted, as I am now satisfy'd this Noise is. Doubtless, some Treasures are hidden in ths [sic] Place. [*Aside.*] I want to get back to *London*, there are Hackney-Coaches and Masquerades, and a thousand Conveniencies for Lovers.

Meg. Were it Spirits that walk'd here I could endure it, but I fear 'tis more. Alas! *Diligence* and *Fribble*, what did you hear and see nothing? Go fetch me some Toast and Wine, and do you hear? bring some Drops of Spirit of Castor and Saffron from my Study. *Mrs. Fribble*, step into my Closet for some Cyprus-Wine I left there, and let some Napkins be air'd to rub me; I shall never be myself again, I fear.

[*Fribble returns frightened*]

Frib. Oh! Sir, the Devil has surely set his foot in the Chamber, the Table's overthrown, and all your Caudles [sic], Cordials, Bolus's, Pills and Electuaries, are floating and combating on the Floor; the Glasses and Gallipots are running about as i[f] they were full of Quick-silver: this Night, doubtless, all the Fiends are broke loose from the lowest Regions, and come to visit us; for my part, tho' I laid the Practice of Piety under my Head, yet I was rock'd and roll'd about all Night in my Bed like a Mustard Bowl. Pray, Sir, return to *London*; for this House is haunted for certain.

Meg. I believe so, *Fribble*, so is my *London* House; for Cuckoldom, the worst of Devils waits me there; and sportive Fiends welcome me hither: Miserable Wretch, that I am, Sickness, Want of Appetite and Health, attend me every-where. Wealth can't relieve me, and a young handsome Wife is my continual Plague and Curse. I have Suspicions, which I won't as yet declare. Why, are you all so negligent? Sure, the Night-Mare rides you all, or you might watch my Turns, and prevent these Disorders. Go, blow up the Fire in the Bed-Chamber above-Stairs, I will lye there the remainder of the Night.

[*Exit Diligence.*]

Mrs. Meg. Ay! Do my Dear, and I will venture catching Cold with you, to get a little Rest; tho, you deserve all you suffer for your wicked Jealousy of me who never deserved to be ill thought of by my Conduct: but indeed, Numpey, you are very wicked; and I believe you married me for my Money, not Love. Come kiss, and be wiser.

[*she kisses him.*]

Meg. There's Magick in her Lips; she's all Delusion. Now could I believe her, were I not this Night convinced of her Falshood. A Statesman's Honesty, a Courtier's Promise, a Parson's Charity, a Lawyer's Integrity, and a fine Woman's Virtue, who is wedded to Age and Infirmities, are like to be trusted to. [*Aside.*]

Enter DILIGENCE.

Dil. Sir, the Chamber's as hot as a Bagnio, and all's ready; your Table and fresh Cordials, Broth and Electuaries, are placed: so, pray go to Rest; and we'll watch 'till Morning.

Meg. Thankye good *Diligence*, so I will, follow me, Syren.
[Exit Coughing.]

Mrs. Meg. Go, Fool, in thy loath'd Arms confin'd in vain
You hold me, and my Wishes would restrain:
I'll dram, and sleeping, meet my Love again.
[Exit.]

SCENE VI.

The Servants watching.

Enter FRIBBLE, DRIVEWELL, SLENDER, TOM.

Fribble

Well, for my Part, I am not able to live in the House, for I am almost afraid of my own Shadow; every Thing is bewitch'd, I think; Yesterday I spilt half my Master's Calves foot Broth in carrying it into his Closet; then I went to sit down because my Master was at his Devotions, and the Chair broke under me; and so I fell backwards over my Master's Portmanteau, and overset the Close-stool. Oh! I was in a wretched pickle. Poor Man, he saved me; for he caught me up, or I had been lost; then in the Night, being faint, with the fright of the Sprights: they being gone, I rose to get a little Cordial-Water which stood in my Closet, and mistaking the Bottle, swallow'd half a Pint of Ink at least; which throwing up again a-ed, has spoiled all the Sheets: Well, the Evil one has surely took Possession of this Place before, or else some great Sinners are amongst us, and Judgments are at hand.

Drive. Indeed Madam, the Horses are grown so ungovernable and out of order since we came here, that I know not what to think; I mist above half my Oats last Night, and my Candle went out in the Lanthorn at least ten times in the Stable; and when I went into the Coach-house I saw a great Cat as big as a Galloway-hound run betwixt my Legs like a Squirrel, threw me all along and vanish'd. [Aside.] This will be a rare Pretence to cheat my Master of the Provender.

Slen. Truly I am fallen away above three Quarters in the Belly since we came to this devilish House, the Fires burn blue, the Meat is burnt on one side and raw on the other; the Pyes and Custards are burn'd at top, and raw within-side: besides, I am always a-dry or a-hungry. My Master suspects my Mistress's Honesty, and I fear he wrongs her; and therefore nothing thrives: I heard strange Noises last Night, and running down into the Kitchen found every thing in disorder, and the Powdering-Tub standing over the Fire instead of the Pottage-Pot.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Now must I relate some monstrous Stories to carry on the Plot, and [d]eserve the Masqueraders Bounty. Alas! All this is nothing to what I saw this very Night; I met a Thing upon the Stairs as tall as the Ceiling, with two Heads, four Horns, and two Bodies join'd at the Waist, with one Paunch big enough to have held the Wheels of a State-Lottery, or four of the greatest Ministers of State in Europe; it had cloven Feet, four Wings, and two Mouths like the Furnaces of a Glass-house, and smelt as rank of Fire and Brimstone as a Pit of Sulphur; it roar'd like Thunder, and then sunk down lower and lower, till I tumbling over it, by falling down Stairs, lost sight of it: let me therefore advise you all to get into your Beds, and cover your selves over Head and Ears till Day-light, for, if you disturb the Devil this in his Night-Rambles, he will, doubtless, run away with some of you. Hark! I hear a Noise again. Mercy on us! [*They all rise in a fright.*]

Frib. Come, let's go; let who will watch and venture to engage with the Sprights, I'll go to Bed, and pray that I may never see such a fright of mortal Things. I an't afraid, but Spectres I do strangely dread. [*Exit all but Tom.*]

Tom. Go, Coward-Fools, go sleep, and Shadows fear;
'Twas only modish Cuckoldom was here.
My Lady does my jealous Master justly fit,
And more endears her Lover by her subtile Wit.
[*Exit.*]

End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Miranda's Lodging.

Enter MIRANDA and FINICK dressing of her.

Miranda

Does *Archpole* go out a-nights with *Sprightly*, do you say? I'll find his Haunts, ungrateful Man! have I not suffer'd him to speak his Passion? smil'd upon him, and preferr'd his Company before a Crowd of Lovers, who with despairing Looks are all retired? Am I not fair and young? Have I not Wealth enough to make me charming, if I was deform'd and old, and does he slight me, and think I can take up with half his Heart? No, I will drive him from my Soul, and scorn him.

Fin. Madam, I learn'd what I have told you from the Widow's Chamber-maid where they lodge, and I suspect that they are the Sprights that haunt Justice *Megrim's* House.

Miran. I have heard something of his loving *Melissa*, and shall be glad to find 'tis she he follows, because she's another[']s, and their Converse is Criminal; it surely will end with Shame on her Side, and Contempt on his. Make it your Business to discover the Secret: but see he comes! the dissembling Wretch!

Enter ARCHPOLE, he runs and catches her in his Arms.

Arch. So *Venus* look'd when just risen from the Sea, and with such Transport the God of War flew from the Field to her Embraces.

Mir. So false *Aeneas* dissembled with the poor believing Queen whilst he contriv'd her Ruin, and resolved to leave her. *[Puts him from her.]*

Arch. This is very poetick, but very unkind, *Miranda*, what do you mean? My Charmer, why did you turn away that Angel's Face, and frown upon me? What have I done to merit that killing Look?

Miran. Are you true to me? Are you sincere, and do you love no other? Why do you blush and tremble?

Arch. How can I chuse but shew you this Disorder and Concern when you're displeas'd? I love you beyond Imagination, why should you make a doubt of it? [S]ome malicious Rival defames me, or else *Miranda* you are false to yourself, and want a Pretext to break with me; if so, 'tis very well, very well, Madam, I did not expect such a Treatment: I own, I thought you above the little Artifices of your inconstant Sex; 'twas not your Beauty, or Fortune which I valued, in Comparison of your good Sense, and I believ'd your Soul so noble and sincere, that, had you been poor, old and ugly, I should still have ador'd and doated on you.

Miran. I likewise believed you to be a Man of Honour and Integrity, and therefore preferr'd you above the rest of your faithless and deceitful Sex; not that I love you, don't be vain, and mistake me: but since you have Intrigues, and follow others, as I am well inform'd you do: know that I despise you; and if 'tis possible, I'll hate you.
[He embraces her.]

Arch. No, *Miranda*; now I am sure 'tis impossible for you to hate me, or for me to be so ungrateful as to do any thing to deserve it; for now I am convinc'd you love me. Oh! charming tell-tale Jealousy, now blest be the Tongue that bely'd me, and caused you to make this happy Discovery: come, my dear Widow, dissemble no longer; but take off the Mask, and prevent me from rambling, by making me your own; and bind me yet faster, by making you my Wife: believe me, *Miranda*, Matrimony is as great a Venture in our sex as yours.

Miran. Alas! that is the ready way to make you my Slave become my Master; how few Wives can call their Husbands their own? they are rather every body's else, always gay and gallant abroad; but soon grow surly and ill natur'd, or perfect Strangers at home: no, I'll try you a little longer as a Lover, and if I find as I suspect, that you are inclined to change, and be inconstant, I'll get handsomely rid of you, without running the risque of a sad Repentance for Life.

Arch. You'll punish yourself as well as me, by deferring our Felicity; but, who are you going to visit this Morning? I must turn the Discourse. [*Aside.*

Miran. Why, I am going to Breakfast at Justice *Megrim's* with *Clarinda* and *Melissa*, to whose charms I fear you are no Stranger; they sent to invite me last Night.

Arch. May I beg Leave to wait on you thither?

Miran. I know you too well to believe that you will not take that Liberty, bring my Cloak and my Hood, finish; 'tis a cold Morning. I hear, Major, the House is haunted.

Arch. So the whimsical Justice fancies; but I believe it is rather a Plot of his own Servants to drive him back to Town out of that melancholly Retreat. [*Aside.*] Now Hipocrisy assist me, how shall I smile to hear the Story of my own Knight-Errantry last Night, which I fear *Miranda* suspects something of.

Miran. Come, Major, I'm ready.

Arch. [*Trembling.*] I take your Hand, and feel a Pleasure, which Words can't reveal.
[*Exeunt Omnes.*

SCENE II.

MEGRIM's House, a Parlour, Tea-Table, and Chairs.

Enter MEGRIM, Mrs. MEGRIM, CLARINDA, DILIGENCE, FRIBLE, and Footboy. Ladies drinking Tea.

Megrim. *Diligence*, bring my Cinamon-colour'd Coat with gold Buttons, and my Flower'd-Damasc Waistcoat, and white Silk-Stockings; and, do you hear? bring my Wig too.
[*Exit Diligence.*

Frible, here take away this Tea, I don't like it, give me some Wine, and a piece of Cake.

Enter DILIGENCE.

Oh dear! what have you brought me there, *Diligence*? I meant my light-colour'd Drugget-Suit, go fetch them. *Frible*, where is your Bills of last Week's Expences?

Frib. I gave them to Your Worship Yesterday, and you found fault that there was too much Cheese eat, and Wine drank.

Meg. 'Tis true, *Frible*, alas! my Memory decays; there was three Pint-Bottles of Claret, which was out of twenty Dozen which young *Rakely* the Templer sent me for a Present, for getting him out of the King's-Bench before his Father arrived in Town; and then I call to mind that you sent half a Cheese of those *Cheshire* Cheeses which I took out of poor

Meanwell's Shop when I seized his Goods, and turned his Wife and seven Children out of Doors, was eaten in five Days, alas! my Expences run high; I hop'd to have sav'd a great deal by coming into the Country: I don't know where I have put your Bills. Bid *Diligence* look in my Pockets. What Cloaths did I wear Yesterday, Wife? I have forgot.

Mrs. *Meg*. Why, Duck, you had your Blue Camblet-Surtout over your grey Cloth in the Morning; then at Noon you put on your Copper-colour with Gold Lace; and in the Afternoon you call'd for your fad-colour'd Velvet.

Meg. Did I? Well, let them search all my Pockets of that Day.

Enter ARCHPOLE and MIRANDA.

Mir. Ladies, a good Morning to you. Mr. *Megrim*, you look poorly to-day. Madam, you don't nurse the Justice enough I fear.

Arch. No, indeed, for he wants a great deal of nursing, I believe.

Mrs. *Meg*. Poor Numpy! so he does; but indeed he has it: but he is so disturb'd a-nights.

Meg. Yes, ever since I was marry'd. [*Aside*.

Clar. Madam, the Major and you look so gay this Morning, that one would suspect that you had seen the Inside of a Church; may we wish you Joy? Come, Widow, though your Weeds ben't off, you are not the first that has been marry'd in black Bays and Crape.

Arch. Tell them it is so, Madam; never mince it.

Mir. Our looking gay is rather a sign that I have not been there; for then he would look very insolent, and I very foolish.

Meg. Pray, Friends, tell me, did you ever hear from any of the Inhabitants of this Place that this House was ever haunted before; for I and my Family have been so frightened and disturb'd these two Nights past, that I can't continue here, if it be not remedy'd?

Mir. Surprizing! I can scarce credit it.

Arch. I have heard something of it since my Friend and I came here to the lodge; and I do not think it altogether impossible.

Enter CLUMSY and two Servants.

Clum. Servant, Uncle; Servant, Aunt; by your Leave, Mrs. [*kisses Clarinda*.] Why, Uncle, how do you do? the Folks at your *London*-House told me that you were beside your Wits since you were marry'd; and the Folks in the Country say that you are all mad at

London. Why since the South-Seas a number of People have gone wild, and hang'd, and made away with themselves; and Folks of the highest Rank, as a Man may say: and some Folks wish that some others would follow so good an Example. But I had a mind to see you ask you about it, a-dod; but they tell me the Devil dances here a-nights. Nunky, Fags! I would be glad to see the Fiend, that is, in a civil way; he! he! he! for I an't afraid.

Meg. Nephew, you are welcome; you are well grown. *Clarinda*, what do you think of him? is he not a proper Spark? this is my Nephew whom I have sent for to marry you. Speak to her, *Ned*; come don't be bashful.

Clum. He! he! he! no, no; never fear, Uncle: I can touze and rumple a Girl as well as any Man, so she han't a confounded Hoop on and Silks, for they discover all: for if one goes to kiss 'em for a little Fun, their Coats rustle, or their Hoops fly over their Heads, and make one asham'd; I can't lye and flatter, but no matter: Look'y, Mistress, I am the best Man in the Town I live in, and Lord of a Mannor; and I have as good Hounds, and a Mare, by *Judas Iscariot*, she'll outrun the Devil. Nay, don't look scornful, you are not so handsome; I'll warrant I'll have as good as you; and if you don't like me, why say so, and there's no Harm done.
[knocks his Heels, and whistles.]

Clar. Not unlikely; you may marry your Mare, she's fittest for you; for she'll neigh when you whistle, and your Dogs may join in the Concert. Marry thee! thou art only fit to make a Cuckold of, and save a Woman's Reputation.

Meg. Fie, Nephew, you want Breeding; pray ask my Ward's Pardon: Ladies must be treated after another manner.

Clum. A Minx, I don't care this for her; [snaps his Fingers.] let her eat Chalk and Oatmeal, as they say, I won't follow and whine; a Flirt, what does she mean to abuse a Man the first time she sees him? My Mare *Dido* is a Queen to her. [halloos as if a hunting.]
[They all laugh but Megrim.]

Arch. Come, 'Squire, we'll make all up; you and I, with your Uncle's Leave, will go and drink a Glass of Wine together.

Clum. Hang Wine, nasty Stuff; give me some *October* and a Toast, or Sack-Wine and Cake, such as my Grandmother and I us'd to eat for Breakfast; by *Dido*, we often stuff'd till we star'd again a many a good time. She was a rare Woman in her Days, she could spin, and sing *Chivy-Chace* it would have ravish'd a Bed-staff; my Dog *Jumper* used to howl in Concert with her like a Bear: she bred me up, rest her Soul, and never let me go to *France*, to be a modish Baboon with a Pig-tail Wig, or get you know what, Uncle. The Parson of the Parish was my Tutor; we were drunk together five times a Week at least, for he lov'd *October*.
[Exit Clarinda.]

Arch. Is your Grandmother dead, Sir?

Clum. Dead! Ay, ay, Sir, she's as dead as Old Noll, to my Sorrow; I was her Bedfellow one and twenty Years, till I got my Mistress's Daughter with Child, and then she put me to lye in the Truckle-Bed in her Chamber. Alas! I cry'd more for my poor Grandmother than ever I did for any thing in all my Life, except a Setting-Bitch which I lost about ten Days ago: I can't think of them but it breaks my Heart.

[*Cries.*

Meg. Monstrous Fool! but if I match *Clarinda* to him, I shan't be made accompt for her Fortune during her Nonage. [*Aside.*] Nephew, you had better forget your Setting-Bitch, and think of learning good Manners, and courting *Clarinda*; Major *Archpole* will make you better acquainted with the World.

Clum. Better acquainted! why sure, Uncle, you take me for a Fool; truly, I know the World enough: the young Woman looks well, but your Londoners are plaguy deceitful; and do you see, if she don't know when she has a good Proffer, I do; so there's an End of the Story.

[*Whistles.*

Meg. Well, Nephew; I hope now you will stay some time with us, and the Major shall shew you the Court, the Ridotto's, Masquerades and Plays.

Clum. Yes, to make me a Rake, and corrupt my Honesty: No, Uncle; let me see the Lions, and the Tombs, and the Bear-Garden: Fags, I love Cock-fighting and Bear-baiting as dearly as Beef and Pudding; and, if I was a King, Bears, Wolves, Monkeys, Asses, and Dromedaries, should be my Favourites; and Bull-Dogs, I forgot Bull-Dogs: but I forget, pray Nunkey, let me see the Devil.

Mrs. Meg. Yes, Nephew, that is but Reason, if he comes here: Come, let us go in and chat whilst I dress *Miranda*.

Mir. Madam, I wait of you; I'll look *Clarinda*, who has given us the slip, I perceive, being tired of the 'Squire's Company. [*Exit Mrs. Megrim and Miranda.*

Arch. Mr. *Megrim*, the 'Squire and I will take a Turn in your Garden; for I am very desirous of his Acquaintance: he's a very facetious Gentleman.

Clum. He! he! he! More Folks think so in the World. Sir, you are a very civil Gentleman; and I'll honour you with my Company.

[*Exit Clumsy and Archpole.*

Meg. Diligence, bid *Drivewell* put the Horses to the Coach, I'll go abroad; or let the Horses be saddled, I'll ride: but the Coach may meet me as I come back. [*Exit Diligence.*] I must to Town to give my Attorney Instructions, and see how Stock goes. Come *Fribble*, come in, and bring the Cordial-Bottle with you, and look my Papers.

Enter TOM.

Tom. Oh! dear Sir, the Fiends have been in the Stables to-night for certain; your Nag and the Coach-Horses were found in the Close, and the Stable-Doors left open: the Horses are so scared, and appear so tir'd, that the Devil has surely rid them. The Farrier must be sent for to new-shoe them, and they must have Rest.

Meg. Oh, what will become of me! what can all this mean? I shall be obliged to remove hence, and that will be a great Expence. I will find out the Cause of this Disorder, let it cost what it will. O Marriage! thou Bane of all Men's Pleasures; I must be marry'd at these Years: I have been that tame Monster a Husband but six Months, and have never known three happy Hours: the Ten Thousand Pounds was the Bait, and I would now give Twelve to be rid of my Wife again; tho' I would not part with a Shilling on any other Score, tho' it were to save a Life. I am too well convinc'd that Age and Youth can never agree. Well, I forget; I must to Town. O dear, O dear, where am I going?

[Mistakes, and is going into a Closet. Exit Coughing.]

SCENE III.

Sprightly's Lodging.

SPRIGHTLY Alone.

It has struck Eleven, and she's not come; I fear it will be past the Canonical Hour: But why am I thus impatient? Because I have not yet enjoy'd her. She has Beauty, Wit, Money, Youth, and what's above all these, Virtue, and I love her; and therefore, 'tis no Wonder I am thus in Pain for her Coming, and uneasy at her Absence: But when we are marry'd, and the Blessing's secur'd to me, I shall, perhaps, like the rest of my Sex, prove ungrateful, and provoke her to grow indifferent; and so both of us grow fond of being asunder, like the rest of the World and yet, sure, if I know myself and her, that's next to an impossibility.

Enter CLARINDA masqued.

Clar. Am I not good now? Believe me, I tremble like a Bird just escap'd from his Cage.

Spr. My Charmer, I have counted every tedious-Minute since we parted, and thought them Ages: Nay, I was almost distracted at your Stay. Come, all's ready, I have a Parson ready to say Grace.

Clar. And so you will be treated at my Cost, and the first Thing I must sacrifice to oblige you, must be that darling Treasure Liberty.

Spr. No, *Clarinda*; you will only bind me faster: make me your Slave for Life. Man vainly boasts of Right and lordly Power,
'Tis you who reign, and we, your Slaves, obey.

[Exeunt omnes.]

The End of the Second ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Megrim's Hall.

Enter Mrs. MEGRIM, MIRANDA, CLARINDA, ARCHPOLE and CLUMSEY.

Mrs. MEGRIM.

Dear Widow, how happy are we now that my jealous Goaler [sic] is absent; for, tho' I dare not stir from home, yet I can enjoy my Friends' Company without Constraint, would you believe it? Some Ladies of the Court, with whom I had the Honour to be acquainted before my Marriage, came to visit me in my old Man's Absence; and were so good as to take me with them to the Play, and from thence to the Masquerade: but Heavens! when I came home in a Chair at Four in the Morning, he was like a Fiend, and swore he would keep me in the Country the rest of my Life. The ill-natur'd Brute said a thousand scandalous Things of the Court, and abused all the innocent Pleasures and Liberties that are allow'd of by our Betters: I could almost have wish'd for some Informer to have over-heard him, had he not been my Husband. Alas! *Miranda*, he calls a Masquerade the Temple of *Venus*, and the ingenious *Heidegger* is the High-Priest; he believes the Air infectious at that End of the Town.

Enter FRIBLE.

Frib. Madam, there are some of the Country-People, and some Dancers, come to divert your ladyship this Evening, now my Master's abroad, shall I admit them?

Mrs. Meg. Yes, let them come in. Come, *Miranda*, and Major, let us see a little of their Country-Sports; it will divert us.

Clum. O *Cremini*, do Aunt; come, *Mrs. Clarinda*, don't you love Dancing? By *Dido's* Garters I do, and I'll shew you how all how I can dance.

[Enter the Dancers with Musick, then a Dance, during which Clumsey snaps his Fingers, whistles, stamps; and at last runs in amongst them, and puts them all in Disorder. Then Megrim enters with a Whip in his Hand, and falls upon the Dancers. Clumsey throws a Glass of Wine in his Face, and the Ladies Laugh.]

Meg. So, here's fine Doings; what is Hell broke loose, and Cuckoldom in a thousand Shapes? What, Masquerading both Day and Night? Sure, these Sports were invented by some noted Cuckold of Distinction, who was resolved to procure that Honour for all the rest of Mankind, and encourage Whoredom in Disguise. Out of my House.

Dan. Indeed, Mr. Justice, we meant no Harm; [*One of the Dancers.*] We are your Neighbours, and come in good Will to divert your Lady.

Meg. Yes, and drink up my Strong Beer, or convey Love Letters to my Wife.

Dan. You have nothing in your Cellar or Pantry but what's under Lock and Key, as is reported. You live on the Spoils of others, you are no Credit to your Country, nor your Commission, Mr. Justice, let me tell you. Od's Heart, don't strike me I shall-----

Clum. Well done, *Hobnail*; bear up boldly to the old Snarler.

Meg. Vagabonds! [*Strikes. Clumsey throws the Snuff in his Face. Ladies and Archpole throw Money to the Dancers, who go off laughing at Megrim; Mrs. Megrim runs to help him.*]

Meg. Ah! *Ned, Ned*; this was ill-done.

Mrs. Meg. Indeed, my Love, so it was, to blind poor Numpy, and put out his poor Nyes: Indeed, Squire, we'll put you out of our Will.

Clum. Plague! Uncle, you are surely horn-mad, as a Man may say; why a Devil did you spoil our Dancing? I'll swear you lunatick; by *Dido*, you han't been *compos mentis* this six Months: Because you are a fusty old Skeleton yourself, and good for nothing, we must have no Recreation. If my Aunt don't dance Jigs with somebody else, by *Dido*, she deserves the Treatment you give her.

Arch. Really, Mr. *Megrim*, this is a little uncivil before us.

Mir. If I had such a Husband, I should not be so good as your Lady is to you.

Meg. Madam, you may make the Major a fashionable Monster, if you please; my Wife wants no such Tutors.

Clum. But, faith, Uncle, you want a Tutor; by *Vulcan's* Forge, you are an Antidote against Matrimony, in my mind, and fit only to be you know what, Uncle.

Arch. Come, let's go.

Meg. Come, Wife, let's to our Chamber, I am giddy; the Fool grows insupportable. *Clarinda*, do you entertain the Widow. Oh Dear! My Head. [*Exit, led by Mrs. Megrim.*]

Mir. *Clarinda*, we'll take you and the Squire along with us to Supper.

Clar. I must not stay long with you. Well, Major, what Encouragement is this to Matrimony?

Arch. Age and Youth thus match'd must be a preposterous Union, and prove ruinous to both Sides: Nature and Reason are against it, but where Years and Humours suit 'tis sweet. And with you, *Miranda*, I'll venture to make a Contract without any Scruple; you never wrong'd even an old Man, your Virtue has stood that Test.

Mir. Don't be jealous, then.
For he who a Wife's Virtue does distrust,
Provokes her to Revenge, 'cause injur'd first.
[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

SCENE II.
A Chamber.

Enter Mrs. FRIBLE and DILIGENCE

Diligence
Come, dear Mrs. *Frible*, let us enjoy ourselves a little whilst the Family are retired to go to Bed; here's a Bottle of good Canary, a few Olives, and a Pound of excellent Maccaroons, which I have brought you [*Pulls all from under his Coat.*] to solace ourselves withal to repair our decay'd Strength, and help Nature; alas! want of Rest is a great Enemy to Health.

Frib. Ay, indeed, good Mr. *Diligence*, so it is, as you say; and we have a sad Time of it since we came to this disturb'd Habitation. But pray tell me what do you think of this Matter? In Truth, I believe it some ungodly Sinners who do visit our Mistress.

Dil. Rightly guess'd, my Beloved, rightly judged, for, though we are forbidden, as Mr. *Timothy Puzzle-Text* saith, to traduce or defame our Neighbour; yet it is permitted to the Saints to judge of others: and our Mistress is a vain lascivious young Woman, as I may say to you who are my Bosom-Friend, and the Loadstone of my carnal Affections.
[*He kisses her, and they drink.*]

Frib. I doubt it not, good Mr. *Diligence*; my Affections incline much to you, and I find much Comfort and Delectation in your pious Conversation.

Dil. Ah! when shall the good Man do the friendly Office, and make of us two but one?

Frib. How gladly should I yield to they Request, did I not fear my Master's Displeasure; but that would break all our Measures, and he would be so wickedly jealous of our being too intimate, and joining to enrich ourselves, in order to our Establishment in the World; that he would surely dismiss one of us: but now he suspects nothing of our Intimacy, and we can both with ease make good Advantage of the Confidence he reposes in us.

Dil. My Beloved, thou art wise and prudent: indeed so we do; for his Forgetfulness, and want of Confidence in our Mistress, doth procure me many Opportunities of converting small Sums which he doth lay aside in Holes and Corners, and my penetrating Eyes doth discover; nor do I think it any Sin to take of his Abundance to provide for our Necessities in time to come; for he is an Usurer, and a Man of no tender Conscience, who doth oppress and grind the Poor; and, like other Stewards, I will enrich myself.

Frib. I did consult good Mr. *Scruple* about this Matter, when I paid him is last Quarteridge at the Meeting; and he did assure me, that it was lawful and right to take from the Wicked to assist the Saints.

Dil. Let me embrace thee tenderly, and then we will retire to Rest, lest the evil ones should come who haunt this Place, and discover our Secrets; give me an Earnest of thy warm Lips. [*Bell rings.*] Hark! I must be gone, Joy and Rest attend thee; and, to conclude, let's finish the Bottle. [*They drink the Wine off.*]

Frib. Indeed, it has revived my heart; if thou shouldst find the way, I should not shut the Door of my Chamber against thee.

Dil. There is a small Present for thee of Gold.
[*Gives her a Purse. Exit.*]

Scene III.
[*Continues*]

Enter ARCHPOLE and SPRIGHTLY in their Masquerade-Dresses with Dark-Lanthorns.

Arch. Now, my Friend, let us first secure *Megrim*, and then bind all the Servants in their Beds, to confirm them in their Fears, and secure them, that we may be at liberty to enjoy the fair ones; and thus we may revel all the Night, you in your charming Bride's Arms, and I in my dear *Melissa's*, at least till break of Day, and not fear to be interrupted in our pleasures. But, above all, let us bind the Country-Squire fast; who will be, doubtless, more clamorous than the rest as being most cowardly.

Spr. Never fear, I'll do my Part, and with a Bridegroom's Haste: but first, let's bind *Megrim*.
[*They go in.*]

Enter CLUMSEY with a Candle, as out of Bed.

Clum. By *Dido*, I can't sleep a Wink in this damn'd House, I am so afraid of the Sprights; I am sure I heard some Doors open and shut: Now would I give Five Pounds to be at home. Hark, I hear a Noise; by *Jupiter Ammon*, I'll creep down into the Cellar, and hide myself: my Hair stands upright, and my Knees knock together like Peas in a Bladder. O Lord! what shall I do, if the Devil should have a fancy to make Mummy of me or a Notimy?
[*Exit.*]

MEGRIM *discover'd bound in a Chair, a Dark-Lanthorn on the Table.*

Meg. Now I am too well convinc'd these are not Sprights but Men, Villains who, no doubt, pollute my Bed, as well as break my Rest. Methinks, I am no longer old or weak; Rage fires my Soul, and that tormenting Thought! And I could rave like a mad Hero; but alas! Prudence and Age forbid. I'll try to discover who they are, that my Resentments may find where to hit with Justice; the Law shall do me Right: Pray, Heaven, the Villains prove but rich, and then I'll smile at the Strumpet's Failing. Now, if I can but open the Side-Door softly, I shall have a shocking Proof of my Misfortune; I doubt not, [*Is going out at the wrong Door.*] Alas! what do I do? I mistake the Door. Oh! my Head, my Head. [*He goes to the Side-Door, and returns.*] All's dark, I only heard a Noise, as if the Table was thrown down, and then soft Whispers: Sure, I shall grow mad, to think what a Monster I am made. Now, were I young and rash, I should sheathe my Sword in their Breast, and dispatch them into the other World; but alas! These are ungodly Deeds, which my weak Arm is quite unable to perform, old and unarm'd; I dare not so much as speak a loud Word, or enter the Room, for fear of being strangled, or at least bastinado'd; I have no Remedy to fly to but the Law. I will be divorc'd, recover Damages, and like my Betters, be a Cuckold upon Record; and so be amply revenged on the Strumpet and her Paramour. -----Let me think, who can it be that wrongs me thus?

Enter CLUMSEY [and DILIGENCE]

Clum. Oh, Fiends! I am quite jaded; my Eyes are out. Oh, Uncle help! Wild-fire and Brimstone burn me; dear Lucifer, take my Aunt, or my body else: by *Dido*, I am tired of your Company. Ah, Lard!

Enter Mrs. MEGRIM, CLARINDA and SUSAN.

Mrs. Meg. What is the Matter?

[*Megrim gets up raving.*]

Meg. Oh, Wife, cruel Wife, you can unfold this hellish Plot, this diabolical Mystery; avoid me, be gone from my House and Bed: I exclude you for ever, thou, Strumpet, Syren, thou Devil in human Shape, Woman, Woman, Woman! Oh, my Brain runs round, my Peace is ruin'd. Oh, Heaven, help me.

Mrs. Meg. Really, Husband, I am sorry to see you thus; you are certainly going stark-mad, and must shortly be confin'd, to add to my Afflictions, which are great enough already, Heaven knows. Is it not Plague sufficient for us to be thus tormented with Spectres, and robb'd of Sleep, but you must conceive such abominable scandalous Conceits of me? truly, my Patience is quite worn out: tell me, base Man, what Visions have appear'd to your deluded Fancy?

Clar. Indeed, Sir, you give too much way to Fancy; I am visited with much such Noises, and disturb'd much after the same manner as you and *Mrs. Megrim* are: and yet I

am not conscious that I ever injured any body; and so conclude, that the Spirits will not hurt me.

Meg. I am not obliged, Madam, to reveal my Thoughts of this strange Visitation; Time will clear all: I have seen enough to my Sorrow; but speak, Nephew, what have you seen this distracting Night?

Clum. Seen, Uncle! why, fags, I believe all Lucifer's Court has been keeping the Carnabal, as a Man may say, in your House to-night: I was no sooner a-bed, but I fancy'd that I heard a club-footed Devil a stumping about the Chamber; and peeping out of the Curtains, I fancy'd a great brindled Cat with great fiery Eyes star'd me in the Face; then methought, I heard a great Noise on the Stairs: I started out of Bed, hurry'd my Cloaths on, and crept down in a confounded Sweat: By *Dido*, I soon got to the Cellar; but was so afraid I could not stay; so I crawl'd very softly up to Mr. *Diligence*, whom I found, good Man, bound in Cords by the Devil: so I loos'd him, and we went strait to Mrs. *Frible*, who was in the same Condition, and in a Fit; so I left him to comfort her, and coming down again, I saw a Fiend at least ten Foot high crossing the Gallery from *Clarinda's* Chamber, I was frighten'd that I stumbled, and fell down; and he threw some Devil's Powder into my Eyes, I believe, on which I roar'd, and he run. By *Judas Iscariot*, Uncle, you have murther'd somebody, or are bewitch'd, for the Noise begins in your Chamber; and, if I stay here a Night longer, the Fiends shall run me down for a Stag, and you shall make Pyes of my Humbles, by *Dido*.

Meg. I will discover the bottom of all this, tho' it costs me a Thousand Pounds; and when I know the Authors of my injuries, by *Jove*, I'll do myself Right. *Diligence*, follow me I'll lye above, and you shall watch till Day breaks; then I'll to *London*: and for you, my good, virtuous, injur'd Wife, I'll let you know my Mind soon. Bid *Frible* bring me some Cordials, and some Wine, to revive my distracted Spirits. Oh, subtil, subtil Woman.

Woman's a Master-piece in Evil,
And will outwit the very Devil. [Exit coughing.]

Clar. I wish he may go to London; and then I doubt not but we shall sleep in Quiet.

Mrs. Meg. Well, I'll e'en now to Bed, and *Cicely* shall now be my Bedfellow; and let the Sprights do their worst, I warrant, when he is gone the House won't be haunted.

A Youthful Form no Lady fears,
We dread no Spright but what's in Years.
[Exeunt Omnes.]

SCENE IV.

The Outside of MEGRIM's House.

Enter ARCHPOLE and SPRIGHTLY in their Disguises as going home.

Spr. Curse upon old *Megrim* and *Clumsey*, they prevented me from enjoying my Bride: sure, the Devil was ill natur'd and resolv'd to punish us for assuming his Shape any-

where but at his grand Rendezvous in the Hay-Market. Hark! stand close, here comes the Watch; they are going their Rounds.

Enter CONSTABLE and WATCH.

Con. Stand! who goes there? Stand, in his Majesty's Name. Seize them: Ay, Neighbours, Justice *Megrim's* House has been haunted, they say. Mercy on us! here's strange Dresses! Speak, what are ye, mortal Men or Spirits. Sure, these are some of the Court-Masqueraders. Speak, what are you?

Arch. Devils! you Cuckolds, stand off; or we'll split your Weasens.

[They draw, and scuffle; the Watch draws back.]

Con. Lay on, Boys; resist the Devil, and he will fly you: lay on boldly.

1st Man. Nay, Mr. *Constable*, I an't much affear'd; but I don't like their Physiognomies: Do you interpose your Authority, and speak to them. You are his Majesty's Representment, and 'tis your Place to lay hold of Defenders. I don't care to meddle, to get a broken Pate.

2^d Man. And that's wisely said, Neighbour. Put up your Stick-Frogs, good Mr. Devils, an't please Your Worships, and let us converse civilly; we are honest, well-meaning Men, and love Peace better than War, as well as our Betters.

Spr. Look ye, Mr. *Constable*, and Gentlemen of the Watch, we are out upon and innocent Frolick; we are Gentlemen: Here's a Crown for ye all to drink; and let us go home without more Questions.

Con. Hum! why, as you say you say, it may be a Frolick, and no Harm; e'en go, it is not our Business to keep People from giong home: e'en go.

Arch. Good-night then. We are well off. *[Aside.]*

[Exit Sprightly and Archpole.]

Con. Come, my Lads, they were bold Fellows; ad's Heart! I am glad we are rid of them, they look'd oddly; tho' I have more Courage than to be afraid of them.

1st Man. Ay, they look'd featly; sure, they are Outlandish-Folks: what strange Head-Geer and Coats they had on! Well, I wish that I may be metamorphosed into a Hedg-hog, if I don't tremble every Joint of me; my Heart has a Palpitation, and my Guts wamble as if I had swallow'd *Belzebub* and half a score Fiends: Let us e'en to the Red Lion, and get some Burnt-Brandy, Mr. *Constable*.

Con. Agreed, agreed; come, Neighbour, let's go and worm [sic] ourselves, and then go home to our Wives.

Let Villains walk, and lead disorder'd Lives;
All honest Men go home, and love their Wives,

Tho' guilty Statesmen get no Ease or Rest;
And the rich Knave's with Fear in Dreams oppress,
The Poor and Honest with sweet Sleep are blest.

The End of the Third ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Hall in MEGRIM's House.

Enter CLUMSEY, and SUSAN with a Bottle of Sack in her Hand, as drunk.

Clumsey

Well, Mrs. *Susan*, you say you are of a good Descent; come, let me buss you; we have pass'd the Night together, and will pass the Day; ay, and every Day and Night together, by *Dido*. My Uncle is an old Usurer, an old Fool, as you say, and a Knave, (that is under the Rose,) to go to match me to his Trollop of a Ward *Clarinda*, He! he! he! they shan't make a Cloak of me; a Monster, as my Uncle says: what do I care for Money? She that loves me I'll love her; buss me, ye little Pig'snies, do: I'll make you a Squireess, Hussy, I will; drink to me, you Jade, you, we'll be marry'd presently.

Sus. Shall I indeed, Sir? Truly, I am asham'd to make such Advances; but you are such a fine Man, and a Person of such great Parts, that I cannot hold out against you.

Clum. No, my Girl; I am out of all Patience: come, 'tis Five o'Clock, let's to the Parson's; why, I'll knock him up from his Wife, and make old Paunch rise, and tye us together as fast as Matrimony and Repentance, or my Dogs *Whitefoot* and *Ranger*. Let us go, here I have Money to pay him; and a Parson will do anything for Money: By *Dido*, it shall be done, or I'll beat him till he forgets all his Texts and his Tythes, and then I must beat his Brains out; for, a Parson never forgets Tythes and Injuries. This Sack makes makes [sic] me talk like an Orator. Come, Hussy, let's go: don't hang back.

Sus. Sweet Mr. *Clumsey*, let us stay till somebody's up to shut the Doors after us.

Clum. Let the Doors shut themselves, or the Sprights look after them: come along, for I never was in the mind before; and now I am set upon it I will be marry'd. By *Dido*, I'll make thee Lady of the Mannor; and our Sons shall be all Free-Thinkers, South-Sea Directors, Members of Parliament, and have good Posts and large Pensions; but one shall be a Projector: and our Daughters shall be Countesses, Maids of Honour, great Wits, Kept-Mistresses and the Devil and all. By *Dido*, I love Wit. Come along, Wife, that is to be.

Sus. Now must I wed this Fool for his Estate, and be obliged to sin with some Man of Merit to mend the Breed, and furnish a witty Heir to inherit his Fortune, and do him Honour: 'tis the Duty of all Wives, who marry Fools or Doatards.

[Exeunt Omnes.]

SCENE II.

A Parlour in MEGRIM's House.

Enter MEGRIM attended by FRIBBLE and DILIGENCE. He is dressing, and puts on one thing for another.

Megrim

O dear! O dear! my Head! my Head! Oh! *Diligence*, you have been a faithful Servant to me; can you guess nothing of this Matter, who these Fiends are, and why they visit us?

Dil. No indeed, Sir; I believe it is some of the wicked ones whom Your Whrship [sic] has been severe upon. I remember that it is not long since that you committed *Timothy Thumpit* to the Compter for Fornication with his Maid; and a Bastard-Child by *Prudence Formal* that keeps the Conventicle: and I conceive, that the haunting of Your Worship's House may be some evil Design of those wicked ones.

Frib. Here is your Tea, Sir, and some Cake: indeed, you will destroy your Life, if you stay here; Lord! how pale you look! Mr. *Diligence*, pray take care of my poor Master; I do all I can to preserve him, Heaven knows.

Dil. Sir, there is three Bonds due to Day, you bid me remind you, then Mr. *Spendthrift*, and the Widow *Luckless's* Notes are to be renew'd, and a Premium pay'd, she begs hard that you will abate something.

Meg. Bate Something, no not a Mite, there's a Dog that owed me fifty Pounds dead in the *Marshalsea*, I have nothing but Losses, and Crosses; go *Fribble*, call *Clarinda*, there's another vexatious Affair to get over. [*Exit Fribble.*] *Diligence*, I have always trusted you in my Affairs, and you know how the Accompt stands between my Ward *Clarinda* and me; and, if she does not marry my Nephew or young *Spendthrift*, I shall be obliged to accompt for five hundred a-year, which I have receiv'd from her Estate ever since she was four Years old: a cruel Article, besides much Money rais'd by Fines, renewing of Leases, and such like; which I can sink into my own Pocket, if either the Fool or the Rake has her: I am now going therefore to try all Persuasions, and Means to accomplish this Design. I suppose that my Nephew is not yet stirring; but when I have talk'd with her, you shall call him.

Enter FRIBBLE.

Frib. Sir! Madam *Clarinda*.

Enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Your Pleasure, Sir.

Meg. Sit down, my dear Child, I have, you know been a Father to you, since the Death of your Father, my good Friend Mr. *Dealwell*, as honest a Merchant as ever traded to *Spain* your Fortune, which he left in my Hands, has been carefully improved and managed, and now being in Years, and full of Troubles, I desire to see you placed in the World Child; and, I have pitched upon my Nephew for a Husband for you, being a Man of Fortune, tho' not altogether bred free from the Vices of the Age.

Clar. Sir, as for Vices, I know no difference betwixt a Courtier and a Clown, but that the first wenches and drinks genteely with some good Manners and Modesty, refining his Pleasures, and concealing his Debaucheries, whilst the Clown sins brutishly, and publicly, acting more like a Beast than a Rational; so you proposed that wild thoughtless Rake *Spendthrift* to me: and to answer both Proposals in a few Words, I am resolved not to change my present Condition at this Time, nor admit of any farther Proposals of Marriage; so I return you Thanks for your good Intentions: and, as for your Nephew, let him espouse his Mare *Dido*, he's fit Company for none but Dogs and Horses; and whenever I marry, my Husband shall accompt with you for my Fortune; and so a good Morning to you.

[Exit Clarinda.]

Meg. A smart Girl, *Diligence*, I fear I shall be baffled at last; but I'll make her Husband spend one half of her Fortune e're he gets the other: nay, I'll fly to *Holland* before I'll pay it. But, now I will tell you something that concerns me yet more nearly; I am convinced my Wife cuckolds me, but want the Means to convict her of it; in order to which, I have resolved that you shall this Day go to *London*, and borrow me a Devil's Habit at *White's* like those the Persons ware who haunt my House: this you must bring home privately, and lodge in my Chamber above, where I will pretend to lye this Night; then so soon as the Family's a-bed, I'll dress, and go into my Wife's Chamber, and you must not stir to make any Noise till I call: and thus I shall, no doubt, discover all; then do you enter with those I appoint to assist you.

Dil. It is an admirable Design, and I will execute my Part in it faithfully and dexterously.

Meg. Go in with me, and I'll give you Money; then order the Coach to be ready: my Absence will colour our Design the better. Alas, what's there? I thought something touch'd me behind: Oh dear! Oh dear!

[Exeunt Omnes.]

SCENE III.

MIRANDA's Lodging.

Enter MIRANDA, and FINICK dressing her.

Mir. I am strangely uneasy about *Archpole*, he's a great Dissembler. I was Married so young to my old deceased Husband *Fondle*, that I never knew the Pains and Pleasures of loving. But *Archpole* has bound the way to please; I love him, and could I be assured that he lov'd me sincerely, I would purchase my Satisfaction with sacrificing my Person and

Fortune to him; but, alas! I have too much reason to suspect his Affection and *Melissa's* Virtue.

Fin. Really, Madam, so you have; for he certainly has some Intrigue upon his Hands, some Mist whom he nightly visits; and I have heard that he loved her long since.

Enter ARCHPOLE.

Arch. How fares my Goddess this sweet Morning? Give me a taste of Ambrosia from those Coral Lips. [*Embraces.*] Come, when shall we be married? Fix the happy Hour.

Mir. Marry'd! Why do you with so much Confidence promise yourself that I will marry you, when I never told you I would have you, did I?

Arch. No, not in downright Terms: But I am sure that you have no Aversion to me, and that you never swore you would not; and I'll lay my Life that you won't say that you will not marry me.

Mir. I am obliged to you, however, for thinking that I am so cautious in what I say; for 'tis a sign that I value my Word: And that's more than you do; for I am positive that you have some other Mistress, who at least shares your Affection with me. Come, confess the Truth, and merit a Pardon; I may, perhaps, be very merciful.

Arch. You wrong me greatly, *Miranda*, I swear you do; 'Tis cruel and unkind. Tell me what Devil whispers such Falsehoods in your Ear? Some happy Rival has supplanted me in your Esteem; but let me tell you, Madam. I won't be fool'd, and tamely pocket up the Wrong. My Sword shall speak my Resentment, and do me Right; he shall not sleep securely in your Arms.

Mir. Did I e'er promise you my Hand? Falsehood! how dare you brand me with a thing so base! What tho' I suffer'd you to tell your Passion, and treated you civilly, yet I promised nothing, How strangely insolent you're grown! You're like to make a wond'rous patient Husband. Major, whene'er I marry, I will not be hector'd into it, be assur'd.

Arch. Gods! how she uses me! Am I that tame Slave to bear all this? Thrown from my Hopes, and told, that 'twas only bare Civility that made you to admit my Visits. Oh fickle artful Sex! *Miranda's* but a very Woman. Madam, I go, and when you send me word I shall be welcome, I'll return. I'll master my unruly Passion, or die.

[*Exit.*]

Mir. Finick, what have I done? Go, call him back. No, stay; this Night shall cure my Love, and procure my future Peace. Go and provide some strange Disguises for us, some Masquerading-Habits against Night, like those the Servant shew'd you at *Archpole's* Lodging, which he and *Sprightly* go out in a-nights; for I am resolved to watch their Lodging this Night with you so disguised, and follow them, by which I shall certainly discover his Falsehood, and perhaps shame him into a generous Confession of his Fault, and bring him

to Repentance; and so, by granting a Pardon, I shall oblige him to make Reparation, or else cure my sick Soul of the fond Passion that breaks my Rest.

If he repents, I am sure I shall forgive;

If he persists, I'll hate him whilst I live.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

A Country-Town

Enter CLUMSEY drunk, hailing his Bride SUSAN along with Fidlers, and the Mob after him.

Clums. Do, do, play away, Scrapers; hold, my Spouse and I will dance the *Cheshire-Rounds*. Come, my crooked Rib, begin, put the best Foot forward: Play the *Cheshire-Rounds*, ye Dogs, play away.

Sus. Lord! Squire, my Dear, I mean, go home, and don't tire me so: Why you have drag'd me through all the Town almost, pray go home.

Mob. No, Master, don't; give us some more good Bub to drink your Honour's Health, and we'll dance and ring the Bells for you, as if it were a State-Holiday. Fags, we love Weddings, and the young Gentlewoman looks bewitchingly. Troth, Sir, it is enough to make my Chaps water. Noble Squire, let's drink your Health and your Lady's in Bumpers.

Clum. Ay, Friend, so you shall, by *Judas Iscariot*: she's a Squiress, I assure you, for I have ignify'd and dignify'd her; we are wedded and bedded. Come, play away the *Cheshire-Rounds* and let us dance merrily, my Lads.

[He dances, and some of the Mob joyn in a Country- Dance.]

Mob. Rarely done, noble Squire; od's Hearts! You dance like a Prince, and the Lady trips like a Fairy-Queen.

Sus. Oh dear! I am quite tired; for Heaven's sake let us go home.

Clum. Well, Spouse, I'll call at this one House more, and we'll go: never spoil Company, let me treat these honest Men with some Bumpers.

[Kisses her, and then knocks at an Alehouse-door.]

Here House, House; come Friends, and follow me; I'll treat ye all, by *Dido*.

Sus. Just wed, already I repent, and curse my Fate
To rid me of the Fool, I'd give all his Estate.

[Exeunt Omnes.]

The End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SCENE Night.

Enter MEGRIM in his Hall with a Dark-Lanthorn in his Hand dress'd like ARCHPOLE of Masquerade.

Megrim.

Now will I steal into my Wife's Chamber, and were I young, I might, perhaps, be my own Cuckold maker, and get a lawful Heir in a seeming unlawful way, and so be before-hand with my vigorous Rival; but such an Attempt would be the way to discover all: my Flannel-Waistcoat and Cough will certainly betray me, if I approach'd the Strumpet too near: my way must be to whisper some tender Speeches, and then pretend to retire on hearing some Noise. All my Aim is but to draw the Secret of my Rival's Name from her, that my Resentment may know where to fall, and my Revenge be glutted with exposing her, and ruining him. Oh! how transported would my Soul be, if I could but finger some Thousand Pounds of the Rake's; I doubt not but I shall find her waking: Lust and Fear will keep her so. Now I'll to the fatal Door where Infamy has, doubtless, often enter'd: her Imagination may be so fill'd with the Idea of her Lover, that she may not discover me; I'll fasten both Doors within-side, and if my Rival-Devils come, they shall wait my Leisure e're they enter; Heaven preserve me, for I am in a strange Disorder; Revenge inflames my Courage [*starts*] Ha! what's that? no matter, I will venture. [*Goes in.*]

SCENE II.

Changes to the Garden

Enter ARCHPOLE and SPRIGHTLY with Dark Lanhorns, follw'd by MIRANDA and FINICK at Some distance in the same disguises, and with Dark-Lanhorns also. Archpole opens the House - Door, and goes in with Sprightly, shutting it after them. Miranda and Finick left without.

Miranda

'Tis as we thought, 'tis *Megrim's* Wife and *Clarinda*, doubtless, whom they visit: but now what shall we do to get in and see the Sport, and spoil it?

Fin. Faith, I can't tell; let me see, we'll get in some way or other, never fear. [*She looks about.*] Yonder's a Ladder, let's set it to this Balcony, and scale it; we can but wander softly about the House till we get sight of them: and if they are already lodg'd, we shall discover where, and see them at their coming out of the Chamber.

Mir. Excellent! Fetch it quickly, I'd mount it if it were higher than the Monument: Love and Jealousy makes Cowards Heroes: and Women even outvie Mankind in hardy Exploits, and dare to do any thing; and they have made me even forget that I'm a Woman.

SCENE III.

The Hall.

Enter ARCHPOLE and SPRIGHTLY.

Arch. Now Friend, the Coast being clear, since *Megrim's* lodg'd above, we have nothing left to fear; I'll to the expecting Fair, and you shall pay yourself for last Night's Disappointment in *Clarinda's* Arms. Bound to the golden Coast of Love we cannot fail of Pleasure and Success. This is the first happy Night that I can promise myself with *Melissa*; for the two last her old Dragon prevented me from being happy: but now I'll make her and myself Amends, and be blest for some Hours, in spite of the jealous Wretch.

Spr. And I will feast on Virgin-sweets, unsully'd Charms; for, if there is any true Felicity on Earth, it must consist in the Enjoyment of a virtuous Maid who loves one, and is lawfully one's own: All this I am confident that I have gotten in my *Clarinda*. I pass'd the last Night so ill, that I would not wish to live such another; therefore, I'll fly to her Arms, and snatch the Blessing, lest some unlucky Accident again prevent me. Friend, farewell; may *Mercury* stand Pimp, and *Venus* guide us, and *Pluto* take him that disturbs us.

[Exeunt Omnes.]

Enter MEGRIM coming out of his Wife's Chamber, shuts the Door after him, sets down his Dark-Lanthorn, and stands before the Door.

Megrim

I heard a Noise at the Door, and thence conclude that the Sprights are come: my hellish Wife received me with open Arms, and Transport she ne'er had before; she chid me for staying so long; call'd me her Life, her Dear, her Soul; but call'd me by no Name: I whisper'd the softest Things I could invent, but fearing Discovery, pretended that I heard a Noise, and would have withdrawn; but she grasp'd me so fast about the Neck, that I really thought she would have strangled me. Surely, the deluding Syren knew on which she reproach'd me with Coldness, and want of Love: so I hasted to retire, and stumbling have broke both my Shins; confound her. Ah! What a besotted Fool was I to marry at these Years; Curse on my dull Pate: I must get a Divorce to divorce her from me. But alas! I want Proof, and must therefore in the end, wink at her Crimes, and conceal my Disgrace. But hold! Here comes somebody; I wish that I were safe in my Bed now.

Enter ARCHPOLE, and starts at seeing MEGRIM.

Arch. Ha! Friend, what are we both prevented? why, the Door's lock'd within-side, and I have knock'd, but cannot make *Melissa* hear: Is *Clarinda* deaf too? Or are they dead asleep? What can this mean?

Meg. Now what must I say? I find *Clarinda's* engaged in the Spright's Conspiracy.
[*Aside.*

Arch. Why don't you speak, *Charles*? Are you dumb? What shall we do?

Meg. Let us wait a little.

Arch. Wait! Plague, I won't wait; I'll knock at the Door till she lets me in.

Meg. No, hold, perhaps you'll wake *Megrim*.

Arch. No, never fear that; the old Cuckold sleeps profoundly, I warrant you: we have plagued him so much these two Nights past, that he'll be glad of Rest to-night; the old Fumbler is, perhaps, gone to-bed to *Melissa*: if so, I will drive him out, and fright the ill-natur'd Fool into better Manners. Shall he deprive me of the Woman I love? No; though the Law has given him a Right to her in publick, her Person and Affections shall be mine in private.

Meg. Oh! Patience, what a Villain's this! and what a Wretch am I! Oh cursed Matrimony! here's a Dog! [*Aside.*

Arch. Come, Friend, stand by; and I'll go in, tho' I break down the Door.

Meg. Indeed you must not.

Arch. Must not! I will; what do you mean? This Language from my Friend is most surprising: Come, don't vex me. [*Goes to put him by.*

Meg. You shall not go into that Chamber this Night, by Heaven.

Arch. Come, come, no fooling, *Charles*; take Care that you play me no false Play.

Meg. I'll see thy Face, tho' it were Death but to attempt it.
[*Goes to tear his Masque off.*

Arch. Hell and Furies! who are you? Not my Friend; [*Strikes him.*] I'll chastise thy Insolence amply. Here take that, that, and that.
[*Kicks, beats, and throws him over and over, so drives him off the stage.*

SCENE IV.

Clarinda's Chamber

Enter CLARINDA and CICELY.

Cla. He Stays long, pray Heaven nothing happens to prevent or discover them; sure the Squire has spirited *Susan* away, that wee hear nothing of them.

Cic. Ah! Dear Madam, the Town has rung of their Wedding this Morning. Hark! I hear a Noise.

Enter MIRANDA and FINICK in their Disguises, they stand surprised.

Cla. Bless me, what do my Eyes see? Who are these? Speak, who are you?
[*They make Signs to one another.*]

Enter SPRIGHTLY in a Passion.

Spr. Faithless *Clarinda*, you, doubtless, know who they are; they left your Chamber, as I, wing'd with Desire, was hastening to your Arms. To deceive me, have I a Brace of Rivals? Or, is one the Pimp to guard the Door whilst the other wrongs me? I will have Justice. Unmasque, Villains, or I'll send your Souls to the dark Realms below. [*Goes to lay hold of them, Miranda and Finick shriek, and run away, Sprightly follows.*]

Cla. Oh! What can this mean? Curse on *Melissa*, has she a Crowd of Lovers? And must I be ruin'd for her? Come, *Cicely*, let us follow them; I will be justify'd, or die by his Hand.

Cic. For Heaven's Sake, Madam, don't discover all, and ruin Mrs. *Megrim*, who was ever kind to you.

Clar. Tell me not of *Melissa*, my Peace is ruin'd; I have lost my Husband's Love and good Opinion: and I would sacrifice the whole World to retrieve it. Oh! I am ruin'd and undone.
[*Goes out wringing her Hands.*]

Cic. She's cruelly vex'd, having been twice disappointed, a Bride, and still a Maid; and that's enough to enrage her.

For Woman disappointed does a Fury grow;
No Priest of Tythes bereft wou'd less Compassion shew.
[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

The Hall.

Mrs. MEGRIM peeping at the Door of her Chamber overhears all.

Enter ARCHPOLE, who drags in MEGRIM.

Arch. You shan't escape me, I'll beat you to a Pumice but I'll make you tell me what you are, who you are, and how you came by this Disguise, and for what End? Tho' I know 'tis *Megrim*: [*Aside.*] but I want a further Pretext to thrash him soundly, that he may fear to plague me another time.

Meg. O Lord! O Lord! give me a little time to fetch my Breath; you have certainly murther'd me, I shall never recover, or be myself again.

Enter SPRIGHTLY with MIRANDA and FINICK, who seeing Archpole and Megrim, stand all amaz'd and silent; at last Megrim unmasques.

Meg. See then, vile Wretch, whoe'er you be, the Wretched Man whom you have so basely wrong'd dishonour'd my Bed, debauch'd my faithless Wife, and now beat me inhumanly, to compleat my Injuries and your Guilt; but I will have Justice.

[*Archpole, Sprightly, Finick and Miranda, all laugh; and Archpole Steps to Sprightly, and whispers.*

Arch. But, *Charles*, tell me who are these new Devils?

Spr. Fiends like us come hither, doubtless, on the fashionable Business of Cuckoldom, to make me of the good Justice's forked Order. I find they know us.

Enter CLARINDA and CICELY. She seeing three alike is confounded.

Cla. Why do you fly me my dear Husband, and not hear me justify myself? Discover your Face, here are the Persons you suspect, Strangers to me, I swear; now make them unmasque, and declare their Business here.

Spr. Come, Friends, what are you, and your Business here? How got you in? Speak, or I'll force the Secret from you.

Mir. Love and Jealousy brought me here, curious to know who wrong'd me and was false; and being now satisfy'd, I desire to be no farther question'd: As for *Clarinda*, she is wholly innocent.

Spr. This shan't serve your Turn, Sir. Friend, help me to hold them; for I will see their Faces, though they were Basilisks, and could look me dead.

[*Archpole siezes [sic] Finick, and Sprightly Miranda; she whispers.*

Mir. Now shall I be expos'd; curs'd Accident! Sir, pray let me speak to Mr. *Archpole*; if you are not he, I am a Woman, don't expose me.

Spr. Here, Friend, take you this Prisoner, he will make some Discoveries to you.

Arch. To me, by Heaven it's some Female: now for a new Intrigue, and that's always welcome to a Man of my Years; 'tis a Woman's Voice. [*Aside.*

Mir. Let us withdraw a moment, I must speak to you in private. [*Aside.*
[*They step out of the Room, Finick would follow, but is stopp'd by Sprightly.*

Spr. No, Stripling, you must not go; so tell me who you are?

Fin. Poco, oco, quando, quomodo, mi, hi, si, rererumque, voca, poca, Signora.

Spr. Come, come, unmasque, Gibberish shall not serve your Turn.

ARCHPOLE and MIRANDA come in still masqued, he laughing whispers to SPRIGHTLY.

Arch. Come, Friend, let us go; harkye 'twas *Miranda* follow'd me; we are reconciled, and have agreed to be marry'd to-morrow: I must see her home. The Cuckold has not yet discover'd who we are, whisper *Clarinda* to follow us, and we'll get off; for we'll haunt this Place no more, I am cured. [*Sprightly whispers to Clarinda.*

Arch. Good-night good Justice, we'll be gone
This Night our Devils-Sports are done;
Cuckold yourself, for we'll no more return.

Enter MEGRIM with Servants arm'd with Pistols, and surround them; they all stand amaz'd.

Meg. No, Friends, ye shall not stir from this Place till I know every Face.

Enter Mrs. MEGRIM.

Mrs. Meg. What occasions all this Uproar?

Meg. You Sorceress, Syren, Crocodile, tell me who is that Devil that makes me and you Monsters? Speak, or old as I am, this Hand shall sacrifice you this minute.

Mrs. Meg. Sure, Husband, you are stark-mad; what, you visited me yourself like a Devil, and thought that I did not know you: Well, now I will confess all the Truth; you have been jealous of me long, and Heaven knows without a Cause: and I was now, at last, resolved to punish you; in order to which *Clarinda* and I contrived a Plot, and mutually obliged each other; she loving Mr. *Sprightly* engaged him in our Design, and he his Friend the Major; and they provided Disguises, and engaged *Miranda* in the Design.

Fin. This is incomparable, now must I help her out [*Aside.*] and I, Sir, took your Place, lay cross your Stomach, [*unmasques.*] and drove you out of Bed, whilst the Major and

the Captain ranged the House, bound your Servants, and frighted your Nephew, and made Noises to continue and increase your Fears; it was only a merry Frolick, and nothing of moment has ensued but only a Wedding betwixt Captain *Sprightly* and Madam *Clarinda*, and a Promise of one between my Lady and the Major.

[They all unmasque.]

Arch. No, Justice; indeed your Lady is very honest: and, as it was but a Frolick, I hope you will pardon the Freedom I took in drubbing of you a little; which I had not done had you not provok'd me. First, we all know your Lady's Virtue, and her Wrongs, and you certainly merited Punishment. I hope this will work a Cure upon you.

Meg. Thankye Sir, I am much indebted to you; I hope Lucifer will be your Pay-master.

Spr. Come, my Charmer, for your Sake, provided the Justice will be good-natur'd for the future, I'll be very reasonable, as to all the Advantages which he has made of the Management of your Fortune. Come, Sir, dismiss your Guard, and let's hear what you say.

Mrs. Meg. Come, Numpy, I hope you won't suspect your own dear Wife any more; come, let us kiss, and be Friends: indeed, it was nothing but a very innocent Frolick to cure your Jealousy, Numps.

Meg. A painful Cure; but may I believe you? or, is it not wisest for me so to do? let me consider, *[Ruminates.]* to be a Cuckold, cudgel'd, and laugh'd at, is very hard; but what Remedy is to be had when no Fact can be prov'd sufficient to gain a Divorce? Nothing remains but Separation by mutual Consent, the consequence of which is, that the Wife has what she wants, Liberty; and the Man is pointed at, and contemn'd: but then, must a Man father Children of other Folks getting? What then? they bear his Name, and he has the Credit of getting them; which is the same thing as if he did. Who can be certain the Children his Wife brings him are his own? If the true Fathers were to own every Man in the Nation, what strange Disorders would it occasion both in Church and State? And how many Gentlemen would be obliged to drive the Coaches they now ride in, and wear Liveries for Bread? Why then should I trouble myself any further? I will, to punish her, credit her Tale, and conceal my own Disgrace, and wisely wear my Horns in my Pocket, like many of my Betters in the City, and keep her with empty Pockets, and if she sins, oblige her to be private in it, by good Usage: And now, since I can have no lawful Heirs, I'll enjoy what I have, and give up my Bonds and Notes for the principal Sums, with lawful Interest, in hopes of Pardon for my past Crimes. *[To her.]* Wife, come here; I pardon you this innocent odd Frolick, as you term it, upon Condition that is shall be the last. And for you, Gentlemen, I wish ye much Joy, and that your Wives may be as good and chaste as mine; and from henceforth my Doors shall be open to receive such good Company by Day: but he that comes by Night shall be treated like a Villain and Robber. Hark! Sure something extraordinary is the Matter; go see.

[Great knocking at the Gate.]

Arch. Madam, you are well off. We'll intrigue no more. [*Aside to Mrs Megrim.*]

Enter a Servant with CLUMSEY drunk, and SUSAN led by him.

Clum. What a Plague, Uncle, a Man may stand till his Heels freeze at your Gate before he can get into your House. Hey day! What's here, Lucifer's Court met? what, are the Major, Captain, and all turn'd Devils? Nay, and my old Uncle, by *Dido*.

Meg. Only a Frolick, Nephew; but what have you been doing with *Susan*?

Clum. Why, by *Dido*, Nunky, I have wedded and bedded her; and she's now your Niece, and my Lady, and we have been huge merry: for we have danced, eat and drank all Day; we have had Sack, Punch, Metheglim, Stout, Ale, Brandy; and drank till we star'd again.

Sus. Yes, and snor'd too; for he has drag'd me about ever since Morning that we were marry'd till he was so gone in his Senses that he could go no further: so he slept four Hours at an Ale-house, and then I perswaded him to come home.

Clar. Well, *Susan*, he has a good Estate, and a good Seat to carry you to; and when you get thither you'll have Servants to go abroad with him, and bring him home.

Clum. By *Dido*, so she shall: why, I keep the best Company in the Parish at home, and can drink down both the Parson and the Curate: nay, by *Dido*, I have sent them both home with the Sexton and Clark: but I am never in Drink myself. Come, Hussy, come to Bed, and to-morrow I'll carry you home; and there we'll eat Capons, drink October, and get a Race of young Squires and Squiresses, that shall keep up the Name of *Clumsey* as long as time endures.

Meg. Light my new Kinswoman and Nephew to Bed; and to-morrow we will treat you all at Dinner.

Clum. But first let us have a Dance; come, Fiends, adieu Black-guard very civil Gentlemen.

Arch. Mr. *Megrim*, my Bride and I invite ye all to dine with us to-morrow; next *Clarinda* and my Friend shall treat, then you, and then we'll all to *London*:

Where all Conveniencies for Love are found,
Where Jilts and Knaves, Cullies and Cheats abound;
Where ev'ry Man goes dress'd in Masquerade,
And is not what he seems, Cheating is Trade;
And Pimps and Knaves grow rich, whilst Wits grow poor:
Where Honesty's a Jest, and Bawd and Whore
Thrive best, and 'tis the Gallant's Fashion
To kiss Men's Wives for Recreation,
And keep a Miss, the Mode of all the Nation.
Yet even there the Good may live secure,

The virtuous Mind all Trials will endure.
Virtue in every Place is still the same,
'Tis the Wife's Mind secures the Husband's Fame.
Vainly the jealous Fool himself does teaze,
For Woman will deceive him, if she please:
Love and Revenge the Way will quickly shew;
Tho' in a Dungeon lock'd, she'll cuckold you.
Then let us boldly trust the Darling-Fair;
Gain but her Heart, and none can ruin her:
Tho' gay and wanton, and to Change inclin'd,
By Love you'll set a Padlock on her Mind.

FINIS.