

# Wilkins Folly: A Philosophical Farce

A One-Act Play by a Very Amused Scribe

Performed in the Year of Our Lord, 1668, or Maybe 2025

## Dramatis Personae

- **John Wilkins**, Philosopher of the Cosmos, clad in robes that scream Im smarter than you.
- **King Charles II**, weary monarch, prefers hounds to hieroglyphs.
- **Lady Margaret**, sharp-tongued lady-in-waiting, allergic to nonsense.
- **Duke of York**, perpetually confused noble, coughs at bad ideas.
- **>Jester**, snarky fool, says what everyones thinking.
- **Advisor**, nervous lackey, doomed to speak gibberish.
- **Bishop**, pious and paranoid, sees heresy everywhere.
- **Page Boy**, sleepy teenager, dreams of escape.

## Setting

A lavish court, 1668. Candlelight glints off goblets and powdered wigs. A throne looms center stage, surrounded by nobles whispering and snickering. A massive scroll, Wilkins Universal Language, awaits its doomed debut.

## Act I: The Folly Unveiled

*[Curtain rises. WILKINS struts in, robes billowing, clutching a scroll that looks like a librarians fever dream. The COURT murmurs, expecting a telescope or a poem. KING CHARLES II slouches on his throne, bored but curious.]*

**WILKINS:** (booming) Behold, Your Majesty! The Universal Language! A code to banish Babel, unite mankind, and catalog creations soul! (unfurls scroll with a flourish)

*[The scroll is a chaotic grid of glyphspart alphabet, part demonic doodle. NOBLES lean forward, then recoil.]*

**LADY MARGARET:** (whispering) Is he summoning a demon?

**JESTER:** (aside) Or a headache.

**WILKINS:** (pointing to a squiggle) Zita! Beast, Rapacious, Dog. Zeto! Beast, Rapacious, Wolf. Clarity incarnate!

*[DUKE OF YORK coughs violently. PAGE BOY yawns, slumping against a tapestry.]*

**KING:** (dryly) And how does one say king in this tongue?

**WILKINS:** (flipping through scroll, sweating) Ah! Zi for Person, Gad for Great Zigad! (beams)

*[The COURT gasps. A goblet clatters.]*

**JESTER:** (muttering) Sounds like a spice rack.

**BISHOP:** (clutching rosary) Heresy! He names our lord a condiment!

**WILKINS:** (oblivious) Behold the genera! Forty categories to cage reality! Elements! Beasts! Vices! (points to Zil) Deceit!

*[BISHOP crosses himself. LADY MARGARET rolls her eyes.]*

**LADY MARGARET:** (to DUKE) Hes cataloged his own madness.

**WILKINS:** (ramping up) De for Element, Deb for Fire, Debo for Flame! Saln for Gunpowder! A merchant in Peking, a shepherd in somewhere pastoraltheyll trade badgers with precision!

**KING:** (flatly) My last badger was a regrettable hunt. Continue.

*[PAGE BOY snores softly. DUKE nudges him awake.]*

**WILKINS:** (desperate) A demonstration! (hands cheat sheet to ADVISOR) Good sir, say The dog runs!

**ADVISOR:** (squinting, trembling) Zita mov eta?

**WILKINS:** (clapping) Perfect! The world shall know the dogs haste!

**KING:** (deadpan) My hounds run faster than your language.

*[COURT snickers. JESTER mimes a dog outpacing a scroll.]*

**LADY MARGARET:** (loudly) Enough! This is a labyrinth, not a language. My maid speaks clearer with a broom.

**WILKINS:** (bowing, clutching scroll) Your Majesty, this is but the seed of unity!

**KING:** (smiling thinly) A seed best planted elsewhere. (takes scroll, eyes fireplace)

*[WILKINS exits, dreaming of Zita. COURT erupts in whispers of mad philosophers and cursed runes. Curtain falls.]*

## Epilogue

Years later, a clerk finds the scroll in a dusty archive, labeled Wilkins Folly. He reads Zeto, quits, and becomes a baker. The Universal Language, meant to conquer Babel, conquered only the kings patience.