

THE  
**Amorous Prince;**  
OR, THE  
**Curious Husband.**  
A  
**COMEDY,**

As it is Acted at His Royal Highness the  
Duke of York's Theatre.

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Written by M<sup>rs</sup> A. BEHN.

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LONDON,

Printed by J. M. for Thomas Dring, at the White Lyon, next  
Chancery-Lane-End, in Fleet Street. 1671.

This modernised text was produced by Elaine Hobby from her edition for Volume I of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Aphra Behn*, for the Canterbury Players for their production in 2024, and used by the Canterbury Commemoration Society as the basis for a script Stewart Ross made for a public reading in St Peter's Anglican Church, Canterbury. In modernising it, Elaine largely updated spelling and punctuation, but also occasionally substituted modern words for 1671 ones. As long as this origin is acknowledged, anyone is welcome to use this script for any purpose, but a 1671 copy must be checked if accuracy is essential.

## PROLOGUE

Well! You expect a prologue to the play,  
And you expect it, too, petition-way \*;                   \* in the form of a petition  
With *chapeau bas*\*, beseeching you to excuse                   \* a flashy low bow  
A damned intrigue of an unpractised muse;  
Tell you, its fortune waits upon your smiles,  
And when you frown, Lord, how you kill the whiles!  
Or else, to rally up the sins of the age,  
And bring each fop\* in Town upon the stage;                   \* foolishly vain man  
And in one prologue, run more vices o'er  
Than either court or City knew before.  
And that's a wonder which will please you too.  
But my commission's not to please you now.  
          First, then, for you grave dons\* who love no play                   \* important men  
But what is regular, great Jonson's way;<sup>1</sup>  
Who hate the monsieur with the farce and droll,  
But are for things well said with spirit and soul.  
'Tis you I mean, whose judgments will admit  
No interludes of fooling with your wit;  
You're here defeated, and anon will cry  
'Sdeath! Would twere treason to write comedy!  
          So! There's a party lost. Now for the rest,  
Who swear they'd rather hear a smutty jest  
Spoken by Nokes or Angel,<sup>2</sup> than a scene  
Of the admired and well-penned *Catiline*\*;                   \* a tragedy by Jonson  
Who love the comic hat, the jig and dance,  
Things that are fitted to their ignorance.  
You, too, are quite undone, for here's no farce.  
'Damn me!' you'll cry, 'This play will be mine A---'.  
Not serious, nor yet comic; what is it then?

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<sup>1</sup> **great Jonson's way:** Ben Jonson was a famous playwright who died about 20 years after Shakespeare. His comedies always seek to teach people a lesson, with 'appropriate' punishments being handed out at the end to those who break the rules. In Behn's period he was much admired.

<sup>2</sup> **Nokes or Angel:** James Nokes and Edward Angel, famous comic actors. In this play, probably Nokes played the rustic fool Guiliam, and Angel played the ridiculous, conceited courtier Lorenzo.

The imperfect issue\* of a lukewarm brain.  
'Twas born before its time, and such a whelp  
As all the after-lickings could not help.<sup>3</sup>  
Bait it, then, as ye please. We'll not defend it.  
But he that disapproves it, let him mend it.

\* offspring

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<sup>3</sup> **imperfect issue ... whelp ... lickings:** The image is that of a newborn bear-cub being licked by the mother bear. It was commonly believed that the mother bear literally 'licked the cub into shape' – that it was rather shapeless when first born. (Similarly, the swaddling-bands commonly used for newborns were thought to help ensure that a baby grew straight.) Behn is applying this idea to her having had to lick her baby play into shape.

## Characters' Names

Frederick	son to the Duke of Florence, and so a prince.
Curtius	his friend; in love with Laura; brother to Cloris
Lorenzo	a rich extravagant Lord, a kind of favourite to Frederick; Laura's brother.
Antonio	a nobleman of Florence.
Alberto	his dear friend, a nobleman also.
Salvator	Lorenzo and Laura's father.
Pietro	servant to Curtius.
Galliard	servant to Prince Frederick.
Guilliam	servant to Cloris, a country-fellow.
Valet	to Antonio.
Clarina	wife to Antonio.
Ismena	sister to Antonio, in love with Alberto.
Laura	sister to Lorenzo, in love with Curtius.
Cloris	sister to Curtius, disguised like a country girl, in love with Frederick.
Isabella	woman to Clarina.
Lucia	maidservant to Cloris.

Pages and musicians.

The scene is set in the Court of Florence.

THE  
**Amorous Prince.**

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**ACT I, scene 1**

*Cloris's chamber.*

*Enter Cloris, dressed in her night attire, with Frederick dressing himself.*

CLORIS       And will you leave me now to fears  
Which love itself can hardly satisfy?  
But those and that together, sure will kill me  
If you stay long away.

FREDERICK   My dear, 'tis almost day, and we must part.  
Should those rude eyes, 'mongst whom thou dwelst, perceive us,  
'Twould prove unhappy both to thee and me.

CLORIS       And will you, sir, be constant to your vows?

FREDERICK   Ah Cloris! Do not question what I've sworn.  
If thou wouldst have it once again repeated,  
I'll do it. By all that's good, I'll marry thee;  
By that most holy altar, before which we kneeled  
When first I saw the brightest saint that e'er adored it,  
I'll marry none but thee, my dearest Cloris.

CLORIS       Sir, you have said enough to gain a credit  
With any maid\*, though she had been deceived       \* virgin  
By some such flatteries as these before.  
I never knew the pains of fear till now;               (Sighs.  
And you must needs forgive the faults you make;  
For had I still remained in innocence,  
I would have still believed you.

FREDERICK   Why, dost thou not, my love?

CLORIS       Some doubts I have, but when I look on you,

Though I must blush to do so, they all vanish.

But I prepare me for your absence, sir.

FREDERICK Make no provision, Cloris, but of hope.

Prepare thyself against\* a wedding day \* for

When thou shalt be a little deity on Earth.

CLORIS I know not what it is to dwell in courts,

But sure, it must be fine, since you are there.

Yet I could wish you were a humble shepherd

And knew no other palace than this cottage;

Where I would weave you crowns of pinks and daisies,

And you would be a monarch every May.

FREDERICK And, Cloris, I could be content to sit

With thee upon some shady river's bank,

To hear thee sing, and tell a tale of love.

For thee, alas! I could do anything.

A sheep-hook I could prize above a sword;

An army I would quit to lead a flock,

And more esteem that chaplet\* wreathed by thee

\* garland

Than the victorious bays.

All this I could. But, dear, I have a father,

Whom, for thy sake, to make thee great and glorious,

I would not lose my interest with.

But Cloris, see, the unkind day approaches,

And we must kiss and part.

CLORIS Unkind it is indeed. May it prove so

To all that wish its presence, and pass as soon away,

That welcome night may reassume its place,

And bring you quickly back.

FREDERICK With great impatience I'll expect that hour

That shall conduct me in its shades to thee;

Farewell.

CLORIS Farewell, sir, if you must be gone.

*(Sighs.*

FREDERICK One kiss, and then indeed I will be gone.

*(Kisses her.*

A new-blown rose, kissed by the morning dew,  
Has not more natural sweetness.  
Ah Cloris! Can you doubt that heart  
To whom such blessings you impart?  
Unjustly you suspect that prize,  
Won by such touches, and such eyes.  
My fairest, turn that face away  
Unless I could for ever stay.  
Turn; but a little while I go.

CLORIS Sir, I must see the last of you.

FREDERICK I dare not disobey; adieu till evening. *(Exit Frederick.)*

*Enter Lucia.*

CLORIS How now, Lucia. Is my father up?

LUCIA No, not a mouse stirs yet. I have kept a true watch all this night, for I was cruelly afraid lest we should have been surprised ... Is the prince gone? But why do I ask, that may read it in your sad looks?

CLORIS Yes, he is gone, and with him too has taken ... *(Sighs.)*

LUCIA What has he taken? I'll swear you frighten me.

CLORIS My heart, Lucia.

LUCIA Your heart. I am glad 'tis no worse.

CLORIS Why, what dost think he should have taken?

LUCIA A thing more hard to have been recovered again.

CLORIS What thing, prithee?

LUCIA Your maidenhead.

CLORIS What's that?

LUCIA A thing young gallants long extremely for. And when they have it, too, they say they care not a daisy for the giver.

CLORIS How comest thou so wise, Lucia?

LUCIA Oh, the fine gentleman that comes a-nights with the prince told me so much, and bid me be sure never to part with it for fine words. For men would lie as often as they swore; and so he bade me tell you too.

CLORIS Oh Lucia!

LUCIA Why do you sigh?

CLORIS To think, if princes were like common men,  
How I should be undone.

Since I have given him all I had to give;  
And who that looks on him can blame my faith?

LUCIA Indeed, he surpasses Damon, far. But I'd  
Forgot myself. You are the prince's wife.  
He said you should be kneeled to and adored,  
And never looked on but on holy days.  
That many maids would wait upon your call,  
And strew fine flowers for you to tread upon.  
Music and love should daily fill your ears,  
And all your other senses should be ravished  
With wonders of each kind, great as your beauty.

CLORIS Lucia, methinks you have learnt to speak fine things.

LUCIA I have a thousand more I've heard him say.  
Oh, I could listen a whole night to hear  
Him talk. But hark, I hear a noise. The house  
Is up, and must not find us here.

CLORIS Lock up this box of jewels for me.

LUCIA Oh rare!  
What, did these come tonight?

CLORIS Yes, yes. Away! *(Exeunt.)*

**Act I, scene 2. A Grove.**

*Enter Curtius and Pietro.*

CURTIUS I wonder the prince stays so long. I do not like these night-works.  
Were I not confident of Cloris's virtue ... which shall no more be tempted. I  
hear someone coming, and hope 'tis he ... Pietro, are the horses ready?

PIETRO Yes, my lord. *(Exit Pietro.)*



*Enter Frederick.*

CURTIUS      Sir, you are welcome from Cloris's arms.

FREDERICK    With much ado I'm got loose from those fair fetters; but not from those  
of her beauty. By these, she still inflames me, in spite of all my humours\* of  
inconstancy. \* moods

So soft and young, so fair and innocent,  
So full of air, and yet of languishment.  
So much of Nature in her heart and eyes,  
So timorous and so kind without disguise.  
Such untaught sweets in every part do move  
As, against my reason, does compel my love.  
Such artless smiles look so unordered, too,  
Gains more than all the charms of courts can do.  
From head to foot a spotless statue seems  
As art, not Nature, had composed her limbs;  
So white, and so unblemished. Oh, Curtius!  
I'm ravished beyond sense when I but think on't. How much more must my  
surprise be when I behold these wonders?

CURTIUS      And have you seen her, sir, in all this beauty?

*(Aside)* Oh Hell!

FREDERICK    Curtius, I will not hide my soul from thee.

I have seen all the marvels of that maid.

CURTIUS *(Aside)*      My soul learn now the art of being disguised.

*(To Frederick)* 'Tis much, my lord, that one

Bred in such simple innocence

Should learn so soon so much of confidence.

Pray, sir, what arts and cunning do you use?

FREDERICK    Faith, time and importunity refuse nobody.

CURTIUS      Is that the way? Had you no other aids?

Made you no promise to her, sir, of marriage?

FREDERICK    Oh, yes, in abundance, that's your best bait.

And though they cannot hope we will perform it,

Yet it secures their honour and my pleasure.

CURTIUS Then, sir, you have enjoyed her?

FREDERICK Oh yes, and gathered sweets

Would make an anchorite\* neglect his vow,  
And think he had mistook his way to future bliss,  
Which only can be found in such embraces.  
'Twas hard to gain, but, Curtius, when once victor,  
Oh, how the joys of conquest did enslave me!

\* hermit

CURTIUS But, sir, methinks 'tis much that she would yield  
With only a bare promise that you'd marry her.

FREDERICK Yes, there was something more ... but ...

CURTIUS But what, sir? You are not married?

FREDERICK Faith yes, I've made a vow. And that,  
You know, would go as far with any other man.

CURTIUS But she, it seems, forgot you were the prince?

FREDERICK No, she urged that too,  
And left no arguments unused  
Might make me sensible\* of what I did.  
But I was fixed\*, and overcame them all,  
Repeating still my vows and passions for her,  
Till, in the presence of her maid and heaven,  
We made our solemn vows.

\* conscious

\* determined

CURTIUS But, sir, by your permission, was it right?

FREDERICK What wouldst thou have him do  
That's all on fire, and dies for an enjoyment?

CURTIUS But having gained it, do you love her still?

FREDERICK Yes, yet extremely,  
And would be constant to the vows I've made,  
Were I a man who could choose for himself.  
But with the aids of counsels I must choose,  
And what my soul adores, I must refuse.

CURTIUS This passion, sir, possession will destroy,  
And you'll love less, the more you do enjoy.

FREDERICK That's all my hope of cure. I'll ply that game,  
And slacken by degrees th' unworthy flame.

CURTIUS Methinks, my lord, it had more generous been

To've checked that flame when first it did begin.

Ere\* you the slighted victory had won,

\* Before

And a poor harmless virgin quite undone.

And what is worse, you've made her love you, too.

FREDERICK Faith, that's the greater mischief of the two.

I know to such nice virtuous souls as thine

My juster inclination is a crime.

But I love pleasures which thou canst not prize,

Beyond dull gazing on thy mistress' eyes.

The lovely object which enslaves my heart

Must yet more certain cures than smiles impart.

... And you on Laura have the same design.

CURTIUS Yes, sir, when justified by laws divine.

FREDERICK Divine, a pleasant warrant for your sin,

Which being not made, we ne'er had guilty been.

But now we speak of Laura,

Prithee, when is't that I shall see that beauty?

CURTIUS (*Aside*) Never I hope. (*To Frederick*) I know not, sir.

Her father still is cruel, and denies me

What she and I have long made suit in vain for.

But, sir, your interest might prevail with him.

When he shall know I'm one whom you esteem,

He will allow my flame, and my address\*. \* request to marry Laura

He whom you favour cannot doubt success.

FREDERICK This day I will begin to serve thee in it.

CURTIUS Sir, 'twill be difficult to get access to her.

Her father is a humorous\* old man,

\* moody

And has his fits of pride and kindness too.

FREDERICK Well, after dinner I will try my power,

And will not quit his lodgings till I've won him.

CURTIUS I humbly thank you, sir.

FREDERICK Come, let us haste. The day comes on apace.

CURTIUS I'll wait upon you, sir.

(*Exit Frederick*)

Oh, Cloris, thou'rt undone, false amorous girl.  
Was it for this I bred thee in obscurity,  
Without permitting thee to know what courts meant,  
Lest their too powerful temptation  
Might have betrayed thy soul?  
Not suffering thee to know thy name or parents,  
Thinking a humble life  
Might have secured thy virtue?  
And yet I should not hate thee for this sin.  
Since thou art bred in so much innocence,  
Thou couldst not dream of falsity in men.  
Oh, that it were permitted me to kill this prince,  
This false, perfidious prince.  
And yet he knows not that he has abused me.  
When did I know a man of so much virtue  
That would refuse so sweet and soft a maid?  
No, he is just and good, only too much misled  
By youth and flattery;  
And one to whom my soul is tied by friendship.  
Yet what's a friend, a name above a sister?  
Is not her honour mine?  
And shall not I revenge the loss of it?  
It is but common justice.  
But first I'll try all gentle means I may,  
And let him know that Cloris is my sister.  
And if he then continue in his crime,  
I'll lay my interest and my duty by  
And punish him, or with my honour die. (Exit.

**Act I, scene 3, *The Apartment of Antonio.***

*Enter Lorenzo, pulling in Isabella.*

LORENZO Nay, nay, Isabella, there's no avoiding me now. You and I must come to a parley. Pray, what's the reason you took no notice of me? When I came with so civil an address, too.

ISABELLA Can you ever think to thrive in an affair when you take notice of your mistress, or any of her servants, in public, and when she's a married woman, too?

LORENZO Good Isabella, the loser may have leave to speak. I am sure it has been a plaguy dear amour to me.

ISABELLA Let me hear you name that again and you shall miss of my assistance.

LORENZO Nay, do but hear me a little. I vow 'tis the strangest thing in the world: a man must part from so much money as I have done, and be consigned to signs and grimaces only to declare his mind in. If a man has a tongue, let him exercise it, I say, as long as he pays for speaking.

ISABELLA Again with your paying for it. I see you are not to be reclaimed.  
Farewell ...

LORENZO Stay, good Isabella, stay, and thou shalt hear not one word of that more, though I am soundly urged to it.

ISABELLA Yes, yes, pray count them, do. I know you long to be at it, and I am sure you will find you are in debt to me.

LORENZO Say you so? I am not of that opinion, but well, ... Let me see ... here 'tis, here 'tis ... *(Draws out his notebook and reads.)* My bill of charge for courting Clarina.

ISABELLA And here's mine for the returns that have been made you. Begin,  
begin. *(Pulls out her notebook.*

LORENZO Item, 200 crowns to Isabella for undertaking.\* \*taking the job

ISABELLA Item, I have promised Lorenzo to serve him in his amour, with all  
fidelity.

LORENZO Well, I admit that debt paid, if you keep your word. ...Out with it, then ...  
*(He crosses that out.*

Item, 2000 crowns on a bracelet for Clarina. What say you to that, now,  
Isabella?

ISABELLA Item, the day after it was presented, she greeted you with a smile at  
the chapel.

LORENZO And dost thou think it was not dearly bought?

ISABELLA No man in Florence would have had it a souse\* cheaper. \* penny

LORENZO Say you so, Isabella? Out with it, then. *(Crosses it out.*

Item, one hundred more to thee for presenting the bracelet to her.

ISABELLA Which I did, with six lies in your commendation, worth ten pistoles apiece for the exactness of a lie. Write there, indebted to me ...

LORENZO Nay, then, thou dost deserve it. *(Writes)* Rest due to Isabella.

Item, innumerable serenades, night-walks, affronts and fears; and lastly, to the poets for songs and the like.

ISABELLA All which was recompensed in the excessive laughing on you that day you pranced under our window on horseback, when you made such a deal of capriole and curvet.\* \* leaping and rearing

LORENZO Yes, where I ventured my neck to show my activity, and therefore may be well accounted amongst my losses.

ISABELLA Then, she received your presents, suffered your serenades without sending her footmen to break your pate\* with the fiddles. \* head

LORENZO Indeed, that was one of the best signs. For I have been a great sufferer in that kind in the past. But dost thou think, in conscience, that this should satisfy?

ISABELLA Yes, any reasonable man in the world for the first month, at least. And yet you still go on about your expenses, as if a lady of her quality were to be gained without them ... Let me hear of your expenses more, and I'll ...

LORENZO Oh, sweet Isabella! Upon my knees, I beg thou wilt take no fatal resolution. For I protest, as I am a man of honour, and adore thy sex, thou shalt only see, not hear, of my expenses more. And for a small testimony of it, here, take this. There's twenty pistoles upon reputation. *(Gives her money.*

ISABELLA Fie, fie. 'Tis not brave nor generous to name the sum. You should have slid it into my coat without saying what you had done.

LORENZO What signifies that, mun, as long as 'tis current, and you have it, sure?

ISABELLA Well, leave the management of your affairs to me. What shall we do? Here's Alberto.

*Enter Alberto.*

LORENZO *(To Isabella)* Well, who can help it? I cannot walk invisible.

ALBERTO      Lorenzo. What, making love to Isabella?

LORENZO      She'll serve, my lord, for want of a better.

ISABELLA      That's but a coarse compliment.

LORENZO (*Aside to her*)      'Twill serve to disguise a truth, however.      (*Exit Isabella*  
*To Alberto*) Faith, I'll tell you, sir, 'twas such another damsel as this that  
saved me £500 once upon a time. And I have loved the whole tribe of waiting-  
women the better, ever since.

ALBERTO      You have reason. How was it?

LORENZO      Why, look you, sir. I had made love a long time to a lady; but she shall  
be nameless, since she was of a quality not to be gained at less than the  
aforesaid sum. Well, I brought it, came powdered and perfumed, and high in  
expectation.

ALBERTO      Well, sir.

LORENZO      And she had a very pretty wench, who was to conduct me, and in the  
dark, too. And on my conscience, I just fell aboard of her, and was as well  
accommodated for my five, as five hundred pounds.<sup>4</sup> And so returned.

ALBERTO      A great defeat to the lady the while, o' my word.

LORENZO      Aye, she smelt the plot, and made a vow to follow the Italian mode for  
the future, and be served in affairs of that kind by none but an old woman.

ALBERTO      'Twas wittily resolved.

LORENZO      Are you for the presence\* this morning?      \* attending at court

ALBERTO      No, I have business here with Antonio.

LORENZO      Your servant, my lord.      (*Exit Lorenzo.*)

ALBERTO      I do not like this fellow's being here,  
The most notorious pimp and rascal in Italy.  
'Tis a vile shame that such as he should live,  
Who have the form and sense of man about them,  
And in their action, beast.  
And that he thrives by, too ...

*Enter Isabella.*

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<sup>4</sup> **wench ... £500:** Lorenzo had expected to have to pay £500 for sexual access to a lady, but managed instead to have sex with the lady's maid, which cost him only £5.

Isabella, is Antonio stirring?

ISABELLA He is. Please your lordship to walk in.

ALBERTO You may tell him I wait here ...

*(Aside)* For I would avoid all opportunity of seeing Clarina.

ISABELLA My lord, you need not stand upon ceremonies. *(Exit Alberto.)*

*Enter Clarina and Ismena, dressed like one another in everything,  
laughing and beholding one another.*

Dressed already! Now, on my conscience, I know not which is which. Pray God, Antonio be not mistaken at night, for I'll be sworn I am by daylight.

ISMENA *(To Isabella)* Dost think I may pass, thus, for Clarina?

ISABELLA Madam, you are the same to a hair. May I never stir if I can do anything but wonder.

CLARINA But, hark, Isabella, if thou shouldst have heard amiss, and that thy information should not be good, thou hast defeated us of a design wherein we promise ourselves no little pleasure.

ISMENA Yes, I vow, all the jest is lost if it be so.

ISABELLA *(Aside)* I doubt 'twill be a true jest on your side.

*(Aloud)* I warrant you, madam, my information is good. And to assure you of what I have said, I dare undertake you shall hear the same over again. For just now, Alberto is come to visit my lord, who, I am sure, will entertain him with no other stories but those of his jealousy, and to persuade him to court you.

CLARINA 'Tis strange, since he set him that task so long ago, he would not begin before.

ISMENA Nay, pray God he begin now. Sister, he has hitherto took me for thee, and sometimes his eyes give me hope of a secret fire within, but 'twill not out. And I am so impatient till he declares himself, that if he do not do it soon, I shall just tell him who I am. For perhaps, the 'wife' takes off the appetite which would sharpen upon knowledge of the virgin.

CLARINA *(Aside)* What then, you'll have all the sport to yourself ...



(*Aloud*) But, Ismena, remember my little revenge on Antonio must accompany your love to Alberto.

ISABELLA (*To Clarina*) But why this resemblance? For, madam, since he never saw you, and takes Ismena to be you, might you not still pass so without this likeness?

CLARINA Didst thou not say Antonio left the court and city on purpose to give Alberto the more freedom to court me? Whilst he was away, I needed but retire, and Ismena appear, and 'twould suffice. But now he is returned, he may chance to see them together, *en passant*, or so, and this dress will deceive him, as well as Alberto. For without that, this plot of ours signifies little.

ISMENA Aye, truly. For my part, I have no other design than doing my sister a service.

ISABELLA The plot is very likely to thrive, I see, since you are so good at dissembling.

ISMENA Fie, Isabella! What an ill opinion you have of me. But, sister, 'tis much, Alberto being so intimate with Antonio, should never see you all this whole six months of your being married.

CLARINA Had you been bred anywhere but in a monastery, you would have known 'tis not the custom, here, for men to expose their wives to the view of any.

ISABELLA I hear them coming. Let's away. And pray, listen to the truths I have already told you. (*Exeunt.*)

#### **Act I, scene 4**

*Enter Antonio and Alberto. (Clarina and Ismena listen.)*

ALBERTO Once more, Antonio, welcome back to court.

ANTONIO Oh, my dear friend, I longed for thy embraces.

How goes the game I left with thee to play?

What says my wife, my beautiful Clarina?

ALBERTO Clarina ...

ANTONIO Yes, Clarina. Have you not seen her yet?

I left the court on purpose, for 'twas not handsome  
For me to introduce you,  
Lest she had looked upon it as some design.

ALBERTO     Seen her ... yes ...

ANTONIO     And I conjured her, too, to give you freedoms  
Even equal to Antonio.

As far as I durst press with modesty,

And with pretence of friendship.

And have you not attempted her?

ALBERTO     Yes ... but 'tis in vain.

ANTONIO (*Aside*)     Oh, villainous dissembler.

ALBERTO     She's cruel, strangely cruel,

And I'm resolved to give the courtship o'er.

ANTONIO     Sure, friend, thou hast not used thy usual power.

ALBERTO     Yes, all that I know I'm master of, I used.

ANTONIO     But didst thou urge it home? Did she not see

Thy words and actions did not well agree?

Canst thou dissemble well? Didst cry, and melt,

As if the pain you but expressed, you felt?

Didst kneel, and swear, and urge thy quality,

Heightening it, too, with some disgrace on me?

And didst thou, too, assail her feeble side?

For the best bait to woman is her pride,

Which some miscall her guard.

Didst thou present her with the set of jewels?

For women naturally are more inclined

To avarice than men. Pray tell me, friend ...

Vile woman, did she take them? ...

ALBERTO     I never offered that.

CLARINA (*Aside*)     Poor Antonio, how I pity him.

ANTONIO     No!

ALBERTO     No. I've done enough to satisfy thy jealousy.

Here, take your set of jewels back again.

(*Gives Antonio a box.*)

Upon my life, Clarina is all chastity.

ANTONIO I'd be the happiest man on earth were this but true.  
But what are simple courtships? ... Give her these,  
Which will assist thy tongue to win her heart.  
And that once got, the other soon will follow.  
There's far more women won by gold than industry.  
Try that, my dear Alberto,  
And save thy eyes the trouble of dissembling.

ALBERTO Content thee here, and do not tempt thy fate.  
I have regard unto thy honour, friend,  
And should she yield, as women are no gods,  
Where were thy future joys?  
What is it could make thee happy, or restore  
That true contentment which thou hadst before?  
Alas, thou temptst me too, for I am frail,  
And love, above my friendship, may prevail.

ANTONIO This will not do.  
No, as thou art my friend, and lovest my honour,  
Pursue Clarina further.  
Rally afresh, and load her with this present.  
Disturb her every night with serenades;  
Make love-songs to her, and then sing them too;  
Thou hast a voice enough alone to conquer.

ALBERTO (*Aside*) Fool, Antonio.

ANTONIO Come, wilt thou undertake it once again?

ALBERTO I'd rather not.

ANTONIO I am resolved to get this trial made,  
And if thou dost refuse thy amity,  
I'll try a friend more willing, though less faithful.  
With thee my wife and honour, too, are safe.  
For should she yield, and I by that were lost,  
'Twere yet some ease  
That none but thou wert witness to it.

ALBERTO Well, if it must be done, I'd rather do it,  
Than you should be exposed to the scorn of others.

ANTONIO Spoke like my noble friend.  
Come, dine with her today, for I must leave you,  
And give you all the opportunity  
A real lover wishes with a mistress.

ISMENA (*Aside to Clarina*) So, we have heard enough.

*(Exeunt Clarina and Ismena.)*

ANTONIO Oh, were Clarina chaste – as, on my soul,  
I cannot doubt, more than that I believe  
All womankind may be seduced from virtue –  
I'd be the man of all the world most blessed  
In such a wife, and such a friend as thou.

ALBERTO But what if I prevail, Antonio?

ANTONIO Then I'll renounce my faith in womankind,  
And place my satisfaction in thy friendship.  
But see, she comes. I'll leave you to your task.

*Enter Ismena and Isabella.*

ISMENA (*Aside*) Antonio not yet gone ...

This must secure me.

*(Pulls down her veil.)*

ANTONIO Clarina, why thus clouded?

ISABELLA (*Aside*) I see he has most happily mistaken.

ISMENA I was going, sir, to visit Laura ...

ANTONIO You must not go. I've business to the Duke,  
And you must entertain my friend till my return.  
It is a freedom not usual here amongst ladies,  
But I will have it so.  
Whom I esteem, I'll have you do so too.

ISMENA Sir, I am all obedience.

*(Exit Antonio)*

*(Ismena pulls off her veil. Alberto greets her with seeming-lowness.)*

ALBERTO (*Aside*) Oh, how my soul's divided between  
My adoration and my amity!  
Friendship, thou sacred band, hold fast thy interest.  
For yonder beauty has a subtle power,

And can undo that knot which other arts  
Could ne'er invent a way for.

*Enter Antonio, and listens at the door.*

ANTONIO (*Aside*) I'll see a little how he behaves himself.

ALBERTO (*Aside*) But she's Antonio's wife; my friend Antonio,  
A youth that made an interest in my soul  
When I had language scarce to express my sense of it.

ANTONIO (*Aside*) Death, he speaks not to her.

ALBERTO (*Aside*) So grew we up to man, and still more fixed.  
And shall a gaudy beauty,  
A thing which t' other day, I never saw,  
Deprive my heart of that kind heat,  
And place a new and unknown fire within?  
Clarina, 'tis unjust.

ISMENA Sir, did you speak to me?

ALBERTO (*Aside*) I have betrayed myself ...  
(*Aloud*) Madam, I was saying how unjust it was Antonio should leave me  
alone with a lady, being certainly the worst to entertain them in the world.

ANTONIO (*Aside*) His face assures me he speaks of no love to her now.

ISMENA (*Aside*) Alas, he speaks not to me.  
Sure, Isabella was mistaken,  
Who told me that he loved me.  
Alberto, if thou art obliged to me  
For what I have not yet observed in thee,  
Oh, do not say my heart was easily won,  
But blame your eyes, whose forces none can shun.

ANTONIO (*Aside*) Not a word. What can he mean by this?

ISMENA Sir, will you please to sit a while?

ISABELLA Madam, the inner chamber is much better, for there he may repose  
upon the cushions till my lord's return. I see he is not well ...  
(*Aside*) And you are both sick of one disease.

ALBERTO I thank you, here's more air.

(*Aside*) And that I need, for I am all on fire,  
And every look adds fuel to my flame.  
I must avoid those eyes whose light misguides me.

(*Aloud*) Madam, I have some business calls me hence  
And cannot wait my friend's return.

ISMENA        Antonio, sir, will think 'tis my neglect  
                  That drove you hence. Pray stay a little longer.

ALBERTO        You shall command me, if you can put up  
                  With so dull company.

ISABELLA        I can with anything Antonio loves.

ALBERTO        Madam, it is a virtue that becomes you.  
                  For though your husband would not merit this,  
                  Your goodness is not less to be admired.  
                  But he's a man so truly worth your kindness,  
                  That 'twere a sin to fear  
                  Your passion for him were not justly paid.

ISMENA        Sir, I believe you. And I hope he thinks  
                  That my opinion of him equals yours.

(*Aside*) 'Tis plain he loves me not.  
Perhaps his virtue, thinking me Clarina,  
May hide the real passion of his soul.  
Oh love, what dangerous paths thou makest us tread!

ANTONIO (*Aside*)        Cold, cold as devotion. Oh, inhuman friendship!

ALBERTO (*Aside*)        What shall I do next? I must either be rude and say nothing, or  
                  speak of love to her.

And then, my friend, thou'rt lost, should I prevail,  
And I'm undone should she not hear my tale,  
Which, for the world I would not have her hear.  
And yet, I fear my eyes too much declare.

ISMENA (*To Isabella*) Since he's in so ill a humour, let's leave him. I'm satisfied, now,  
                  that thou wert mistaken.                                (*Exeunt Ismena and Isabella unseen.*)

ALBERTO        But they shall gaze no more on hers,

Nor stray beyond the limits of a just salute.\*

\* greeting

I will my honour to my love prefer,

And my Antonio shall out-rival her. *(Looks about and misses the women.*

Ah, am I left alone? How frail is man.

That which last moment I resolved upon

I find my heart already disapprove,

And grieve her loss. Can this be aught but love?

My soul's dissatisfied now she is gone,

And yet, but now, I wished to be alone.

Inform me, love, who shares the better part,

Friendship, or thee, in my divided heart? *(Offers to go.*

*Enter Antonio, and prevents him.*

ANTONIO Whither in such haste? Thou lookst just as sad as a lover repulsed.

I fear that fate's not thine.

ALBERTO *(Aside)* Now for a lie to satisfy him.

*(To Antonio)* Prithee, discharge me of this toil of dissembling,

Of which I grow as weary as she's of hearing it.

ANTONIO Indeed.

ALBERTO Sure, thou hast a design to make her hate me?

ANTONIO Do you think so in earnest? Why was she angry?

ALBERTO Oh! Hadst thou seen her pretty blushing scorn,

Which she would fain have hid,

Thou wouldst have pitied what I made her suffer.

ANTONIO Is it possible?

And didst present her with the box of jewels?

ALBERTO Yes.

ANTONIO And kneel, and cry, and swear, and ...

ALBERTO All, all.

ANTONIO I hardly gave thee time for so much courtship ...

But you are sure she was displeased with it?

ALBERTO Extremely.

ANTONIO Enough, Alberto. Adieu to thee and friendship.

ALBERTO      What mean you?

ANTONIO      Ask your own guilt. It will inform thee best.

ALBERTO      Thou canst not think Clarina has abused thee?

ANTONIO      I do not think she has. Nor have you tried her.

In that, you have not only disoblighd me,  
But now you would impose upon my weakness.  
Did I not see how unconcerned you were,  
And hardly paying her a due respect?  
And when she even invited thee to speak,  
Most rudely thou wert silent.

ALBERTO      Be calm, Antonio. I confess my error,  
And hate that virtue taught me to deceive thee.  
Here, take my hand ...  
I'll serve thee in good earnest.

ANTONIO      And now I do believe thee, go. Thou shalt lose no time. I must away.  
My soul's in torment till I am confirmed  
Of my Clarina's virtue.  
I do believe thou hast a generous shame  
For what thou'st said and done to me, thy friend.  
For could I doubt thy love, oh, how ridiculous  
This act of mine would seem!  
But 'tis to thee, as to my soul, I come,  
Disputing every petty crime and doubt.

ALBERTO      Antonio, if there need an oath between us ...

ANTONIO      No, I credit thee. Go in,  
And, prithee, dress thy eyes in all their charms.  
For this uncertainty disturbs me more  
Than if I knew Clarina were a ... whore ...      *(Exeunt in opposite directions.)*



**ACT 2, scene 1** *The Apartment of Frederick.*

*Enter Frederick with a letter, and Galliard.*

FREDERICK Not allow me to speak to her, say ye? 'Tis strange. Didst say it was the prince that sent thee?

GALLIARD My lord, I did. But he says he cares not for a thousand princes.

FREDERICK I am resolved, I will see this woman. Harkey, go back again, and say ...  
*(Whispers to Galliard)*

*Enter Lorenzo, drunk.*

LORENZO Hah, the prince! He must not see me in this pickle. For I would not lose my reputation of wenching for this of drinking, and I am sure I cannot be excellent at both. They are inconsistent.

GALLIARD *(To Frederick)* I shall, my lord. *(Exit Galliard.)*

LORENZO *(To Frederick)* Your Highness's humble servant.

FREDERICK Ha, ha, what, Lorenzo in debauch?

LORENZO *(Aside)* Now my tongue will betray me.

*(To Frederick)* Faith, my lord, I have fought six, but am come briskly off. By this hand, my lord, I am crowing over five. Stout rogues, too, I can tell you, at this sport.

FREDERICK I did not think thou hadst had that virtue.

LORENZO I'll tell you, sir, 'tis necessary those of my office and quality should have more virtues than one to recommend them. But to tell you truth, for now I am most apt for that, I was drunk in appropriate malice today.

FREDERICK Malice? Against whom, prithee?

LORENZO Why, why, sir, the moody old fellow my father. He will not hear reason from me when I am sober.

FREDERICK Why, what's the matter between you?

LORENZO My lord, you know Curtius is an honest fellow, and one of us, too? My sister, Laura, is a good, pretty wench. He loves her, and she likes him. And because this testy old blade has done himself, do you think I can bring

him to consider? No, not for my life he won't consider, sir. And now am I got drunk to see how that will edify him.

FREDERICK What? Is Laura, the mistress of Curtius, your sister?

LORENZO Yes, marry, is she, sir. At least, by the mother's side. And to tell you truth, we are too good-natured to believe Salvator our father.

FREDERICK Thy sister, and daughter to Salvator?

LORENZO So said my mother. But she was handsome, and, on my conscience, lived in just such another debauched world as 'tis now. Let them say what they will of their 'primitive virtue'.

FREDERICK May not I see this sister of thine, Lorenzo?

LORENZO Yes, by Venus, shall you, sir, even if she were my mother.

FREDERICK But art sure thy father will permit us?

LORENZO My father permit us! He may do what he will when I am sober, but being thus fortified with potent wine, he must yield obedience to my will. Why, my lord, I'll tell you: I'll make him ask me blessing when I am in this almighty power.

FREDERICK And is thy sister so very fine?

LORENZO The girl is well, and if she were not my sister, I would give you a more certain proof of my opinion of her. She has excellent good hair, fine teeth, and good hands, and is the best-natured fool. Come, come, sir, I'll bring you to her, and then I'll leave you. For I have a small affair of love to dispatch.

FREDERICK This is a freedom that suits not with the nature of an Italian.<sup>5</sup>

LORENZO No, faith, my lord. I believe my mother played foul play with some Englishman, I am so willing to help you to my sister. And if, by her humour, you become of that opinion too, I shall hope to render myself more acceptable to you by that access.

*Enter Galliard and whispers to Frederick.*

FREDERICK (*To Galliard*) Thou knowst my grateful temper. No matter. Here, carry this letter to Cloris, and make some excuse for my not coming this evening.

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<sup>5</sup> **the nature of an Italian:** the English believed that Italians were passionate and hot-blooded. Lorenzo responds by suggesting that perhaps his real father was an Englishman, thereby making him more willing to go along with Frederick's plan.

*(Gives him a letter, and goes out with Lorenzo)*

GALLIARD     So, poor lass. 'Tis a hundred to one if she be not lain with by now, and Laura must succeed her. Well, even Frederick, I see, is but a man; but his youth and quality will excuse him. And 'twill be called gallantry in him, when in one of us, 'tis ill nature and inconstancy.

## **Act II, scene 2**

*Enter Ismena and Isabella.*

ISABELLA     Nay, madam. 'Tis in vain to deny it. Do you think I have lived to these years, and cannot interpret cross arms, imperfect replies, your sudden weepings, your often sighing, your melancholy walks, and making verses too? And yet I must not say that this is love.

ISMENA       Art thou so notable a judge of it?

ISABELLA     I should be, or I am a very dull scholar. For I have lost that foolish boy Cupid as many darts as any woman of my age in Florence.

ISMENA       Thou hast paid dear for thy knowledge, then.

ISABELLA     No. The hurts one did, the other still made good, with very little pain on either side.

ISMENA       I must confess, I think it is not so hard to get wounds, as 'tis to get them cured again.

ISABELLA     I am not of your opinion, nor ever saw that man that had not faults to cure, as well as charms to kill.

ISMENA       Since thou'rt so good a judge of men, prithee, tell me how thou likest Alberto.

ISABELLA *(Aside)*    I knew 'twould come to this ... Why, well, madam.

ISMENA       No more than so?

ISABELLA     Yes, wondrous well, since I am sure he loves you, and that, indeed, raises a man's value.

ISMENA       Thou art deceived. I do not think he loves me.

ISABELLA     Madam, you cannot but see a thousand marks of it.

ISMENA        Thou hast more skill than I. But prithee, why does he not tell me so himself?

ISABELLA      Oh madam! Whilst he takes you for Clarina, it would show his disrespect to tell his love. But when he knows Ismena is the object, he'll tire you with the wished-for story.

ISMENA        Ah, thou art a pleasing flatterer.

*Enter a page.*

PAGE        Madam, Alberto is outside.

ISMENA        Tell him I'm indisposed, and cannot see him now.

ISABELLA      Nay, good madam. See him now, by all means, for I am sure my lord Antonio is absent on purpose. Bid him come in, boy.        *(Exit the page.*

*Enter Alberto.*

ISMENA        Antonio, sir, is not returned.

ALBERTO      Madam, this visit was not meant to him.

But by a cause more pressing I am brought,  
Such as my passion, not my friendship taught.  
A passion which my sighs have only shown,  
And now beg leave my bashful tongue may own.\*  
The knowledge, madam, will not much surprise,  
Which you have gained already from mine eyes.  
My timorous heart that way my tongue would spare,  
And tells you of the flames you've kindled there.  
'Tis long I've suffered under this constraint,  
Have always suffered, but ne'er made complaint.  
And now, against my will, I must reveal  
What love, and my respect, would fain conceal.

\* admit to

ISMENA        What mean you, sir? What have you seen in me  
That should encourage this temerity?

ALBERTO      A world of beauties, and a world of charms,

And every smile and frown begets new harms.  
 In vain I strove my passion to subdue,  
 Which still increased, the more I looked on you.  
 Nor will my heart permit me to retire,  
 But makes my eyes the convoys to my fire,  
 And not one glance you send is cast away.

ISMENA        Enough, my lord. Have you nought else to say?                                 *(Smiles.*

The plot's betrayed, and can no further go.  
 The stratagem's discovered to the foe.  
 I find Antonio has more love than wit,  
 And I'll endeavour, too, to merit it.

ALBERTO      What you have said, I do confess is true.

Antonio begged I would make love to you.  
 But, madam, whilst my heart was unconfined,  
 A thousand ways the treachery I declined.  
 But now, Clarina, by my life, I swear  
 It is my own concern that brings me here.  
 Had he been just to you, I had suppressed  
 The flame your eyes have kindled in my breast.  
 But his suspicion raised my passion more,  
 And his injustice taught me to adore.  
 But 'tis a passion which you may allow,  
 Since its effects shall never injure you.

ISMENA        You have obliged me, sir, by your confession,  
 And I shall own\* it, too, at such a rate, †                                 \*acknowledge                 † value

As both becomes my duty to Antonio,  
 And my respect to you. But I must beg  
 You'll never name your passion to me more.  
 That guilty language, sir, I must not hear ...  
*(Aside)* And yet your silence kills me.

ISABELLA *(Aside)*      Very well dissembled.                                 .

ALBERTO      I can obey you, madam, though I cannot live

Whilst you command me silence.

For 'tis a flame that dares not look elsewhere

To seek for pity from another's eyes.

ISMENA (*Aside*)      How he moves me. If this were real, now,

Or that he knew to whom he made this courtship ...

ALBERTO      Oh, do not turn away as if displeased.

ISMENA      No more. You've discomposed my thoughts.

Be gone, and never let me see thy face again.

ALBERTO      Madam, I go, and will no more offend you ...

But I will look my last ... farewell.

(*Offers to go.*)

ISABELLA      Pray, madam, call him back. He may be desperate.

My lord, return ...

ISMENA      Alberto, tell me what you'd have me do.

ALBERTO      Ah, madam, do not put me to my choice,

For lovers are unreasonable.

If I might name it, I would have you love me.

ISMENA      Love you? And what would be the end of that?

ALBERTO      I cannot tell, but wish you were inclined

To make a trial, madam.

I have no thought, or wish, beyond that blessing.

And that once gained, sure, I would ask no more.

ISMENA      Were I inclined to this, have you considered

The fatal consequences which attend

The breach of vows and friendship?

ALBERTO      Madam, Antonio first was false to you.

And not to punish that were such a virtue

As he would never thank you for.

By all that's good, till he proved so to you,

He had my soul in keeping. But this act

Makes me resolve to recompense his folly.

ISMENA      You've found the easiest passage to my heart:

You've took it on the weakest side.

But I must beg you will aspire no further.

ALBERTO      Divine Clarina, let me pay my thanks

In this submissive posture, and never rise *(Kneels.*

Till I can gain so much upon your credit,  
As to believe my passion tends no farther  
Than to adore you thus ... and thus possess you ...

*(Kisses her hand and bows.*

ISMENA *(Aside to Isabella)* Have not I dissembled finely, Isabella?

ISABELLA *(Aside to Ismena)* Yes, if you could make me believe 'tis so.

ISMENA Rise, sir, and leave me, that I may blush alone

For what I've parted with so easily.

Pray, do not visit me again too soon ...

But use your own discretion, and be secret.

ALBERTO Madam, the blessed secret here is lodged,

Which time shall ne'er reveal to human knowledge. *(Exit Alberto.*

ISMENA I'm glad he's gone before Antonio returned.

*Enter Laura, weeping.*

What, Laura all in tears? The reason, pray!

LAURA Madam, the prince, conducted by my brother,

About an hour since made me a visit.

The man of all the world I would have shunned,

Knowing his amorous and inconstant temper.

At his approach he blushed, and started back,

And I, with great amazement, did the like.

With fear I lost all power of going from him,

As he had done of making his address.

He gazed, and wondered, and I gazed on him,

And from his silence, I became amazed\*. stunned or alarmed

My brother stood confounded at our postures,

And only by the motion of his head

*(Which now he turned to me, then on the prince)*

We knew that he had life.

ISMENA Well, how recovered ye?

LAURA The prince then kneeled, but could approach no nearer.

And then, as if he'd taken me for some deity,  
He made a long, disordered, amorous speech,  
Which brought me back to sense again.  
But Lorenzo told him that I was a mortal,  
And brought him nearer to me,  
Where he began to make such vows of love ...

ISMENA           What then?

LAURA                       Then, I am ruined ...

To all I said, he found a contradiction,  
And my denials did but more inflame him.  
I told him of the vows I'd made to Curtius,  
But he replied that Curtius was a subject.  
But sure, at last, I'd have won upon his goodness  
Had not my father entered,  
To whom the prince addressed himself.  
And, with his moving tale, so won upon him,  
Or rather, by his quality,  
That he has gained his leave to visit me,  
And quite forbids me ever to speak to Curtius.

ISMENA           Alas the day! Is this all?

LAURA                               All?  
Can there be more to make me miserable?

ISMENA           I see no reason thou hast to complain.  
Come, wipe your eyes, and take good heart, for I'll  
Tell thee a story of my own that will  
Let thee see I have much more cause to weep.  
And yet I have a thousand little stratagems in my head, which give me as  
many hopes. This unlucky restraint upon our sex makes us all cunning, and  
that shall assist thee now with my help, I warrant thee. Come in with me, and  
know the rest. *(Exeunt.*

ISABELLA       So, so, disguise it how you will, I know you are a real lover. And that  
secret shall advance my love-design.

Yes, madam, now I will be served by you,  
Or you shall fail to find a friend of me.

*(Exit Isabella)*



### Act II, scene 3

*Enter Lorenzo, drunk, with a page, and musicians, as in the dark.*<sup>6</sup>

LORENZO     Here's the door. Begin, and play your best, but let them be soft, low notes, do you hear? *(They play.)*

*Enter Antonio.*

ANTONIO *(Aside)*     Music at my lodgings? It is Alberto. Oh, how I love him for it ... If Clarina withstand his courtship, I am made. I languish between hope and fear.

LORENZO *(To musicians)*     Wait, friends, I hear somebody. *(Music ceases.)*

PAGE     'Tis nobody, sir.

*Enter Isabella.*

ISABELLA *(Aside)*     'Tis Lorenzo, and my plot's ripe.

*(Lorenzo meanwhile moves a little further away)*

'Twill not, sure, be hard to get him, under pretence that he will see Clarina, into my chamber. And then I'll order him at my pleasure. Ismena is on my side, for I know all her secrets, and she must wink at mine, therefore.

*(She moves away.)*

LORENZO *(To the page)*     Thou art in the right, boy. I think, indeed, 'twas nothing.

*(Musicians play again.)*

*Enter Alberto.*

ALBERTO     She yields, bad woman! Why so easily won?

By me, too, who am thy husband's friend.

Oh, dangerous boldness! Unconsidering woman.

I loved thee whilst I thought thou couldst not yield,

---

<sup>6</sup> **as in the dark:** the Restoration theatre could not be fully darkened. Actors might carry candles or lanterns to indicate darkness, and move with overt care, perhaps groping a bit to signal the darkness.

But now that easiness has undone thy interest in my heart,  
I'll back, and tell thee that it was to test thee.

LORENZO (*To the musicians*) No, no, 'twas my fears. On with the song. I'll take it  
on your word that 'tis fit for my purpose.

MUSICIAN I guarantee it, my lord.

### **SONG.**

In vain I have laboured the victor to prove  
Of a heart that can ne'er give attendance to love.  
So hard to be done,  
That nothing so young  
Could e'er have resisted a passion so long.

Yet nothing I left unattempted or said  
That might soften the heart of this pitiless maid.  
But still she was shy  
And would blushing deny,  
Whilst her willinger eyes gave her language the lie.

Since, Phillis, my passion you vow to despise,  
Withdraw the false hopes from your flattering eyes.  
For whilst they inspire  
A resistless vain fire.

We shall grow to abhor what we now do admire. (*Exit musicians*)

ALBERTO What's this? And at Clarina's lodgings, too?  
Sure, 'tis Antonio, impatient of delay,  
Gives her a serenade as if from me.

*Enter Isabella.*

ISABELLA (*Aside*) 'Tis Lorenzo, the fool ... (*Calls*) My lord, where are you?

ALBERTO (*Aside*) What? A woman's voice! 'Tis dark. I'll advance.

LORENZO (*To the page*) Thou simpleton. I told thee there was somebody.

PAGE Lord, sir. 'Tis only Isabella that calls you.

LORENZO Away, sirrah. I find, by my fears, 'tis no woman ...

*(Goes out with the page.)*

ISABELLA Why don't you come? Here's nobody.

ALBERTO Here I am.

ISABELLA Where?

ALBERTO Here.

*(Gives her his hand.)*

ISABELLA My lord, you may venture. Clarina will be alone within this hour, where you shall entertain her at your freedom. But you must stay a while in my chamber till my Lord's a-bed, for none but I must know of the favour she designs you.

ALBERTO Oh gods! What language do I hear? ...

False and perfidious woman. I might have thought,

Since thou wert gained so easily by me,

Thou wouldst with equal haste yield to another.

ISABELLA *(Aside)* It is not Lorenzo. What shall I do?

*(She steals in.)*

*Enter Lorenzo and the page.*

LORENZO A pox of all damned cowardly fear. Now did I think I had drunk nature up to resolution. I have heard of those that could have dared in their drink, but, I find, drunk or sober, 'tis all one in me.

ALBERTO The traitor's here, whom I will kill whoever he be.

LORENZO *(To the page)* Boy, go see for Isabella.

PAGE *(Aside)* I see a man should not be a coward and a lover at once.

*(Calls)* Isabella, Isabella. *(To Lorenzo)* She's gone, sir.

ALBERTO Yes villain, she's gone, and in her place is one that will chastise thy boldness.

LORENZO That's a proud word, though, whoever thou be. But how I shall avoid it is past my understanding.

ALBERTO Where art thou, slave?

*(Alberto gropes for Lorenzo, who avoids him.)*

PAGE Take heart, sir. Here's company, which I will get to assist you ...

*Enter Antonio*

Sir, as you are a gentleman, assist a stranger set upon by thieves.

*(They fight, Antonio against Alberto. Alberto falls wounded.*

*(Meanwhile, Lorenzo runs away.*

ALBERTO      Whoever thou be'st that takes the traitor's part,  
                  Commend me to the wronged Antonio.

ANTONIO      Alberto! Dear Alberto, is it thee?

ALBERTO      Antonio!

ANTONIO      I am ashamed to say I am Antonio.

                  Oh gods, why would you suffer this mistake?

ALBERTO      I am not wounded much.

                  My greatest pain is my concern for thee.

                  Friend, thou art wronged, falsely and basely wronged.

                  Clarina, whom you loved and feared,

                  Has now betrayed thy honour with her own.

ANTONIO      Without that sad addition to my grief,

                  I should not long have borne the weight of life,

                  Having destroyed thine by a dire mistake.

ALBERTO      Thou art deceived.

ANTONIO      Alas, why was it not permitted me

                  To lose my friend, or wife? Had one survived,

                  I might have died in silence for the other.

                  Oh, my Alberto! Oh, Clarina, too ...

*(Weeps.*

ALBERTO      Come, do not grieve for me. I shall be well.

                  I yet find strength enough to get away.

                  And then I'll let thee know my fate and thine.

*(Exeunt.*

**Act II, scene 4**

*Enter Clarina, Ismena, and Isabella weeping.*

ISABELLA      For heaven's sake, madam, pardon me.

CLARINA      Be dumb for ever, false and treacherous woman.

Was there no way but this to mask your cheat?

A lie which has undone us all.

ISABELLA Alas, 'twas in the dark. How could I know it was Alberto, not Lorenzo?

Pray forgive it me, and try my future service.

CLARINA I never will forgive thee, naughty girl.

Alberto, now incensed, will tell Antonio all.

ISABELLA What need you care, madam? You are secure enough.

CLARINA Thou salv'st\* an error with a greater still. \* are trying to salvage

Dost thou not know, Antonio's jealousy,

Which yet is moderate, raised to a higher pitch

May ruin me, Ismena, and thyself?

ISMENA Sister, there cannot be much harm in this.

'Tis an ill chance, 'tis true, for by it we've lost

The pleasure of an innocent revenge

Upon Antonio. But if understood,

We've only missed that end.

CLARINA Oh, Ismena!

This jealousy is an unapprehensive madness,

A nonsense which does still\* abandon reason. \* always

ISABELLA Madam, early in the morning I'll go to Alberto's lodgings, and tell him that Lorenzo was visiting me.

CLARINA 'Twill be too late,

ISMENA Sister, what think you if I go myself?

CLARINA You should not be so daring.

Besides, I blush to think what strange opinion

He'll entertain of me the while.

ISMENA Do not let that afflict you. Fetch my veil,

And if Antonio chance to ask for me, *(Exit Isabella.*

Tell him I'm gone to Laura.

Believe me, I will set all straight again.

*Enter Isabella with the veil.*

CLARINA Thou hast more courage, girl, than I.

ISMENA What need is there of much of that  
To encounter a gay young lover,  
Where I am sure there cannot be much danger?

CLARINA Well, take your chance. I wish you luck, sister,  
For I am just as much bent upon revenge  
As thou art upon marriage.

ISMENA Come, my veil. This and the night  
Will enough secure me. *(Puts on the veil and goes out.*  
*(Exeunt Clarina and Isabella.*

## Act II, scene 5

*Discovers Alberto and Antonio.*

ALBERTO Nay, thou shalt see it before thou dost revenge it.  
In such a case, thyself should be the witness.  
She knows not what has passed tonight between us,  
Nor should she, if thou couldst contain thy rage.  
And that, Antonio, you shall promise me.  
Tomorrow, place thyself behind the arras,  
And from thy eyes thy own misfortunes know.  
*(Aside)* What will not disobligèd passion do?

ANTONIO I'll hide my anger in a seeming calm,  
And what I have to do, consult the while,  
And mask my vengeance underneath a smile. *(Exit Antonio.*

PAGE My lord, there is outside a lady desires to speak with you.

ALBERTO Who is it?

PAGE I know not, sir. She's veiled.

ALBERTO Conduct her in.

*Enter Ismena, weeping.*

ISMENA Oh Alberto, Isabella has undone us all!

ALBERTO (*Aside*) She weeps, and looks as innocent!

(*Aloud*) What mean you, false, dissembling Clarina?

What, have you borrowed from deceit new charms

And thinkst to fool me to a new belief?

ISMENA What, sir? Can you, too, be unkind?

Nay then, 'tis time to die.

Alas, there wanted but your believing

This mistake to make me truly miserable.

ALBERTO What credit? What mistake? Oh, undeceive me,

For I have done thee injuries past forgiveness

If thou be'st truly innocent.

ISMENA Isabella, under pretence of courting me

For Lorenzo – on whom she has designs to

Make a husband –

Has given him freedoms will undo my honour,

If not prevented soon.

ALBERTO May I credit this? And, that it was not by thy

Command she did it?

ISMENA Be witness, heaven, my innocence in this.

Which if you will believe, I'm safe again.

ALBERTO I do believe thee, but thou art not safe.

Here, take this poniard, and revenge thy wrongs,

Wrongs which I dare not beg a pardon for.

(*He gives her a dagger.*)

ISMENA Why, sir, what have you done? Have you

Deceived me, and do you not, indeed, love me?

ALBERTO Oh, Clarina! Do not ask that question.

Too much of that has made me ruin thee.

It made me jealous, drunk with jealousy,

And then I did unravel all my secrets.

ISMENA What secrets, sir? You have, then, seen Antonio?

ALBERTO Yes.

ISMENA Hah. (*Aside*) Now, wit, if ever thou didst possess

A woman, assist her at her need.

*(Aloud)* Well, sir, rise, and tell me all ...

ALBERTO I will not rise till you have pardoned me,  
Or punished my misfortune.

ISMENA Be what it will, I do forgive it thee.

ALBERTO Antonio, madam, knows my happiness.  
For, in my rage, I told him that you loved me.  
What shall I do?

ISMENA I cannot blame you, though it was unkind.

ALBERTO This I could help, but I have promised him  
That he shall be a witness of this truth.  
What say you, madam? Do I not merit death?  
Oh, speak, and let me know my doom, whate'er it be.

ISMENA Make good your word.

ALBERTO What mean you?

ISMENA What you have promised him, perform as you intended.

ALBERTO What then?

ISMENA Then come, as you designed, to visit me.

ALBERTO But let me know what 'tis you mean to do,  
That I may act accordingly.

ISMENA No. Answer me to every question asked,  
And I, perhaps, may set all straight again.  
'Tis now late, and I must not be missing.  
But if you love me, be no more jealous of me.  
Farewell.

ALBERTO Must I be ignorant, then, of your design?

ISMENA Yes, Alberto.

And you shall see what love will make a woman do.

*(He escorts her out and returns.)*

ALBERTO Now am I caught again, inconstant Nature.  
I wish she had less of beauty or of wit,  
Or that Antonio did but less deserve her.  
Or that she were not married.  
Or I'd less virtue, for 'tis that which awes me,



That tender sense of nothing,  
And makes the other reasons seem as bugbears ...  
I love Clarina more than he can do;  
And yet this virtue doth oppose that love,  
Tells me there lurks a treason there  
Against Antonio's and Clarina's virtue. ...  
'Tis but too true indeed, and I'm not safe  
Whilst I conceal the criminal within ...  
I must reveal it, for whilst I hide the traitor,  
I seem to love the treason too. ...  
I will resign it, then, since 'tis less blame,  
To perish by my pain than live with shame.

*(Exit.)*

### **ACT III, scene 1**

*Enter Frederick and Laura.*

FREDERICK Laura, consider well my quality,  
And be not angry with your father's confidence,  
Who left us here alone.

LAURA He will repent that freedom when he knows  
What use you've made of it, sir.

FREDERICK Fie, fie, Laura! A lady bred at court, and  
Yet want complaisance enough to entertain  
A gallant in private? This coy fancy  
Is not *à-la-mode*.  
Be not so peevish with a heart that dies for you.

LAURA Pray tell me, sir, what is it in me that can  
Encourage this?

FREDERICK That which is in all lovely women, Laura.  
A thousand blushes play about your cheeks,  
Which shows the briskness of the blood that warms them. ...  
If I but tell you how I do adore you,

You straight decline your eyes;  
Which does declare you understand my meaning.  
And every smile or frown betrays your thoughts,  
And yet you cry, you do not give me cause!

*Enter a maid-servant.*

MAID Curtius, madam, is here.

FREDERICK I do not like his haste.

Tell him he cannot be admitted now.

LAURA Sir, he is one that merits better treatment from you.

How can you injure thus the man you love?

FREDERICK Oh, madam, ask your eyes,

Those powerful attracts,

And do not call their forces so in question

As to believe they kindle feeble fires,

Such as a friendship can surmount. No, Laura,

They've done far greater miracles.

LAURA Sir, 'tis in vain you tell me of their power,

Unless they could have made a nobler conquest

Than hearts that yield to every petty victor.

Look on me well.

Can nothing here inform you of my soul,

And how it scorns to treat\* on these conditions? \*negotiate

*(She looks on him. He gazes with a half-smile.)*

FREDERICK Faith, no, Laura.

I see nothing there but wondrous beauty,

And a deal of needless pride and scorn.

And such as may be humbled.

LAURA Sir, you mistake. That never can abate.

But yet I know your power may do me injuries.

But I believe you're guilty of no sin,

Save your inconstancy, which is sufficient.

And, sir, I beg I may not be the first *(She kneels and weeps.)*

May find new crimes about you.

FREDERICK Rise, Laura, thou hast but too many beauties,  
Which, pray, be careful that you keep concealed. *(She offers to go.*

LAURA I humbly thank you, sir.

FREDERICK But why should this interposing virtue check me?  
Stay, Laura, tell me: must you marry Curtius?

LAURA Yes, sir, I must.

FREDERICK Laura, you must not.

LAURA What, sir!

FREDERICK I say you shall not marry him,  
Unless you offer up a victim that may  
Appease the anger you have raised in me.

LAURA I'll offer up a thousand prayers and tears.

FREDERICK That will not do.  
Since thou'st denied my just pretensions to thee,  
No less than what I told you of shall satisfy me.

LAURA Oh, where is all your honour, and your virtue?

FREDERICK Just where it was. There's no such real thing.  
I know that thou wert made to be possessed,  
And he that does refuse it, loves thee least.  
There's danger in my love, and your delay,  
And you are most secure whilst you obey. *(He pulls her gently.*

LAURA Then this shall be my safety. Hold off, *(She draws a dagger.*  
Or I'll forget you are my prince. *(He laughs.*

FREDERICK Pretty virago, how you raise my love.  
I have a dagger too. What will you do? *(He shows her a dagger.*

*Enter Curtius.*

CURTIUS What! The prince! Armed against Laura, too! *(Draws.*

FREDERICK Traitor, dost draw upon thy prince?

CURTIUS Your pardon, sir, I meant it on a ravisher. *(Bows.*

A foul misguided villain.

One that scarce merits the brave name of man.

One that betrays his friend, forsakes his wife,  
And would commit a rape upon my sweetheart.

FREDERICK Her presence is thy safety. Be gone, and leave me.

CURTIUS By no means, sir. The villain may return,  
To which fair Laura should not be exposed.

FREDERICK Slave, darest thou disobey? *(Offers to fight.*

CURTIUS Hold, sir, and do not make me guilty of a sin  
Greater than that of yours.

*Enter Salvator.*

SALVATOR Gods pity me. Here's fine doings. ... Why, how came this roistering  
youngster into my house? *(To Curtius)* Sir, who sent for you? Hah?

CURTIUS Love.

SALVATOR Love, with a witness to whom? My daughter? No, sir, she's otherwise  
disposed of, I can assure you. Be gone, and leave my house, and that quickly,  
too. And thank me that I do not secure thee for a traitor.

CURTIUS Will you not hear me speak?

SALVATOR Not a word, sir. Go. Be gone.

*(To Frederick)* Unless Your Highness will have him apprehended?

FREDERICK No, sir, no need.

Curtius, look to hear from me. *(Comes up to him and tells him so in a  
menacing tone, and go out separately.*

SALVATOR Go, Mistress Minx, get you in. *(Exeunt Salvator and Laura.*

### **Act III, scene 2**

*Enter Frederick. Passing in anger over the stage, he meets Lorenzo.*

LORENZO Oh, sir, I'm glad I've found you; for I have the rarest news for you.

FREDERICK What news?

LORENZO *(Aside)* Oh the devil, he's angry. *(Aloud)* Why, sir, the prettiest young ...

FREDERICK There's for your information. *(Strikes him and goes out.*

LORENZO        So, very well. How mortal is the favour of princes! These be turns of state now; what the Devil ails him, trow? Sure he could not be offended with the news I have brought him? If he be, he's strangely out of tune. And, sure, he has too much wit to grow virtuous at these years? No, no, he has had some repulse from a lady. And that's a wonder, for he has a tongue and a purse that seldom fails. If youth and vigour would stretch as far, he were the wonder of the age.

*Enter Curtius.*

CURTIUS        Lorenzo, didst thou see the prince?  
LORENZO        Marry, did I. And feel him, too.  
CURTIUS        Why, did he strike you?  
LORENZO        I'm no true subject if he did not; and that only for doing that service which once was most acceptable to him. Prithee, what's the matter with him, hah?  
CURTIUS        I know not. Leave me.  
LORENZO        Leave thee? What, art thou out of humour, too? Let me but know who 'tis has disobliged thee, and I'll ...  
CURTIUS        What wilt thou?  
LORENZO        Never see his face more, if a man.  
CURTIUS        And what if a woman?  
LORENZO        Then she's an idle, peevish slut, I'll warrant her.  
CURTIUS        Conclude it so, and leave me.  
LORENZO        Nay, now thou hast said the only thing that could keep me with thee. Thou mayst be desperate. I'll tell you, Curtius, these female mischiefs make men take dangerous resolutions sometimes.

*Enter Alberto.*

ALBERTO        Curtius, I've something to deliver to your ear.                    *(Whispers.)*  
CURTIUS        Anything from Alberto is welcome.

LORENZO Well, I will be hanged if there be not some mischief in agitation. It cannot be wenching; they look all too dull and sober for that. And besides, then, I should have been a party concerned.

CURTIUS (*To Alberto*) The place and time?

ALBERTO An hour hence, in the grove by the riverside.

CURTIUS Alone, thou sayst?

ALBERTO Alone. The prince will have it so.

CURTIUS I will not fail a moment. (*Exit Alberto.*)

So, this has eased my heart of half its load.

LORENZO (*Aside*) I'll sneak away, for this is some fighting business, and I may perhaps be invited to be a second, a position I care not for. (*Offers to go.*)

CURTIUS Lorenzo, a word with you.

LORENZO (*Aside*) 'Tis so. What shall I do now?

CURTIUS Stay.

LORENZO I am a little in haste, my lord.

CURTIUS I shall soon dispatch you.

LORENZO (*Aside*) I believe so, for I am half dead already with fear.

(*To Curtius*) Sir, I have promised to make a visit to a lady, and ...

CURTIUS What I've to say shall not detain you long.

LORENZO (*Aside*) What a dog was I, I went not when he first desired me to go? Oh impertinency, thou art justly rewarded!

CURTIUS Lorenzo, may I believe you love me?

LORENZO (*Aside*) Now what shall I say, aye or no? The devil take me if I know.

CURTIUS Will you do me a favour?

LORENZO (*Aside*) There 'tis again.

CURTIUS I know I may trust thee with a secret.

LORENZO Truly, Curtius, I cannot tell. In some cases I am not very retentive.

CURTIUS I am going about a business that perhaps

May take up all the time I have to live,

And I may never see thy sister more.

Will you oblige me in a message to her?

LORENZO You know you may command me. (*Aside*) I'm glad 'tis no worse.

CURTIUS Come, go with me into my study,

And there I'll write to Laura.  
And prithee, if thou hearest that I am dead,  
Tell her I fell a sacrifice to her,  
And that's enough. She understands the rest.

LORENZO But harkee, Curtius. By your favour, this is but a scurvy tale to carry to your mistress. I hope you are not in earnest?

CURTIUS Yes.

LORENZO Yes? Why, what a foolish idle humour's this in you? I vow 'twill go near to break the poor girl's heart. Come, be advised, man.

CURTIUS Perhaps I may consider on it for that reason.

LORENZO There are few that go about such businesses, but have one thing or other to consider in favour of life. I find that even in the most magnanimous. Prithee who is it with?

CURTIUS That's secret. And pray let this, too, which I have told you, be a secret, for 'twill concern your life.

LORENZO Good Curtius, take it back again, then. For a hundred to one but my over-care of keeping it will betray it.

CURTIUS Thou lovest thyself better.

LORENZO Well, that's a comfort yet. (Exeunt.)

### **Act III, scene 3. A Wood.**

*Enter Cloris, dressed like a country boy, followed by Guillian, a yokel.*

*Cloris comes reading a letter.*

CLOTIS (*reads*) 'Cloris, beware of men; for though I myself be one, yet I have the frailties of my sex, and can dissemble, too. Trust none of us, for if thou dost, thou art undone. We make vows to all alike we see. And even the best of men, the prince, is not to be credited in an affair of love.'

Oh Curtius, thy advice was very kind,

Had it arrived before I'd been undone!

... Can Frederick, too, be false?

A prince, and be unjust to her that loves him, too?

... Surely it is impossible ...

Perhaps thou lovest me too, and this may be *(Pointing to the letter.*

Some plot of thine to try my constancy.

Howe'er it be, since he could fail last night

Of seeing me, I have at least a cause to justify

This shameful change. And sure, in this disguise, *(Looks at herself.*

I shall not soon be known. *(To Guilliam)* Dost think I shall?

GUILLIAM Why, forsooth, what do you intend to pass for: a girl, or a boy?

CLORIS Why, what I seem to be. Will it not do?

GUILLIAM Yes, yes, it may do, but I know not what. I wish love would transmogrify me to a girl now. We should be the prettiest couple! Don't you remember when you dressed me up the last carnival? Was not I the woundiest handsome lass a body could see in a summer's day? There was Claud the shepherd as freakish after me, I'll warrant you. And simpered and tripped it like anything.

CLORIS Aye, but they say 'tis dangerous for young maids to live at court.

GUILLIAM Nay, then, I should be loath to give temptation. ... Pray, forsooth, what's that you read so often there?

CLORIS An advice to young maids that are in love.

GUILLIAM Aye, aye, that same love is a very vengeance thing. I wish I were in love too. I see it makes a body valiant. One neither feels hunger nor cold that is possessed with it.

CLORIS Thou art in the right. It can do miracles.

GUILLIAM So it seems. For, without a miracle, you and I could never have rambled about these woods all night without either bottle or wallet. I could just cry for hunger now.

CLORIS *(Aside)* What a dull soul this fellow hath!

Sure, it can never feel the generous pains

Of love, as mine does now? Oh, how I glory

To find my heart above the common rate.

Were not my prince inconstant, I would

Not envy what the blessed do above.

But he is false, good heaven!

*(She weeps. Guilliam howls.*

What? Dost thou feel that thou shouldst weep with me?



GUILLIAM      Nothing but hunger, sharp hunger, madam.

CLORIS        Leave calling me, forsooth. It will betray us.

GUILLIAM      What shall I call you, then?

CLORIS        Call me Philibert, or anything, and be familiar with me. Put on thy hat,  
lest anyone come and see us.

GUILLIAM      'Tis a hard name, but I'll learn it by heart. ...  
Well, Philibert ... What shall we do when we come to court (*He puts on his  
hat*) besides eating and drinking? Which I shall do in abundance.

CLORIS        We must get each of us a service. ... But thou art such a clown.

GUILLIAM      Nay, say not so, honest Phillibert. For look ye: I am much the properer  
fellow of the two. *(Walks.*

CLORIS        Well, try thy fortune. But be sure you never reveal me, whatever  
questions may chance to be asked thee.

GUILLIAM      I guarantee it, honest lad. I am true and trusty. But, I must be very  
familiar with you, you say?

CLORIS        Yes, in company.

GUILLIAM      Pray, let me begin and practise a little now, an't\* please you,      \* if it  
for fear I should not be saucy enough when we arrive at court.

CLORIS        I'll guarantee, you'll soon learn there.

GUILLIAM      Oh, Lord Phillibert! Phillibert! I see a man a-coming, most deadly fine.  
Let's run away!

CLORIS        Thus thou hast served me all this night. There's not  
A bush we come at, but thou startest thus.

GUILLIAM      'Tis true you are a lover and may stay the danger on't. But I'll make  
sure, for one.

CLORIS        It is the prince! Oh gods, what does he here?  
With looks disordered, too. This place is fit  
For death and sad despair. The melancholy spring  
A sleepy murmur makes, a proper consort  
For departing souls when mixed with dying groans.  
And the thick boughs compose a dismal roof,  
Dark as the gloomy shades of death or graves.  
He comes this way. I'll hide myself a while. *(Goes behind a bush.*

*Enter Frederick.*

FREDERICK But yet, not this, nor my despite to\* Laura, \* anger at  
Shall make me out of love with life  
Whilst I have youthful fires about my heart.  
... Yet I must fight with Curtius,  
And so, chastise the pride of that fond girl,  
Whose saucy virtue dared control my flame. ...  
And yet I love her not as I do Cloris.  
But gladly I'd have overcome that chastity  
Of which the foolish beauty boasts so.

CLORIS (*Aside*) Curtius, I thank thee. Now I do believe thee.

*(The prince walks.*

Guilliam, if thou seest any fighting anon,\* \* in a minute  
Be sure you run out and call somebody.

GUILLIAM You need not bid me run away when I once see them go to that.

*Enter Curtius.*

CURTIUS Sir, I am come, as you commanded me.

FREDERICK When you consider what you've lately done,  
You will not wonder why I sent for you.  
And when I mean to fight, I do not usually parley.  
Come, draw.

CURTIUS Show me my enemy, and then, if I am slow ...

FREDERICK I am he. Needst thou one more powerful?

CURTIUS You, sir? What have I done to make you so?

FREDERICK If yet thou wantst a further proof of it,  
Know I'll fight for my claim to Laura.

CURTIUS That must not be with me, sir. God forbid  
That I should raise my arm against my prince.  
... If Laura have so little faith and virtue,

To render up the right that belongs to me,  
With all my heart I yield her to any, but\* to you.      \* except for  
And, sir, for your own sake, you must not have her.

FREDERICK    Your reason?

CURTIUS      Sir, you're already married.

FREDERICK    Thou liest, and seekst excuses for thy cowardice.

CURTIUS      I wish you would recall that hasty injury.

Yet this I'll bear from you, who know 'tis false.

FREDERICK    Will nothing move thee?

CURTIUS      You would believe so, sir, if I should tell you

That besides all this, I have a juster cause.

FREDERICK    Juster than that of Laura? Call it up, then,

And let it save thee from a further shame.

CURTIUS      Yes, so I will. 'Tis that of Cloris,

Who needs my aids much more.

Do you remember such a virgin, sir?

For so she was, till she knew Frederick.

The sweetest innocent that ever Nature made.

FREDERICK    Not thy own honour, nor thy love to Laura

Would make thee draw. And now at Cloris' name

Thou art incensed, thy eyes all red with rage.

... Oh, thou hast roused my soul.

Nor would I justify my wrongs to her,

Unless it were to satisfy my jealousy,

Which thou hast raised in me by this concern.

... Draw, or I'll kill thee.

CURTIUS      Wait, sir, and hear me out.

FREDERICK    I will not wait. Now I reflect on all thy

Former kindness to her ...

CURTIUS      I will not fight, but I'll defend myself.      *(They fight.*

*(Guilliam runs bawling out. They are both wounded.*

FREDERICK    We are betrayed ...

CURTIUS      Yes, sir, and you are wounded.

CLORIS        Oh, heaven defend the prince.      *(She peeps out.*

FREDERICK I hear some coming. Go, be gone,  
And save thyself by flight. *(Frederick stands leaning on his sword.)*

CURTIUS Sir, give me leave to stay. My flight will look like guilt.

FREDERICK By no means, Curtius, wilt thou be taken here.  
And thou shalt never charge me with that crime of betraying thee. When we  
meet next, we'll finish our fight.

CURTIUS I must obey you, then. *(Exit Curtius)*

*Enter Cloris (disguised as Phillibert)*

CLORIS *(To Frederick)* Sir, has the villain hurt you? *(She supports him.)*

*(Aside)* Pray heaven my sorrows do not betray me now.

For since he's false, I fain would die concealed.

*(To Frederick)* Show me your wound, and I will tie it up.

Alas, you bleed extremely ...

FREDERICK Kind youth, thy succours are in vain, though welcome.

For though I bleed, I am not wounded much.

CLORIS No? Why did you let him pass unpunished, then,  
Who would have hurt you more?

*Enter Guillian with Galliard, Prince Frederick's servant.*

GALLIARD Where was it?

GUILLIAM Look ye, sir, there. Don't you see them?

GALLIARD *(To Frederick)* How does Your Highness? This fellow told me of a  
quarrel here, which made me haste.

FREDERICK Be silent, and carry me to my own apartment.

GALLIARD Alas, sir. Is it you that fought?

FREDERICK No more questions. ...

*(To Cloris)* Kind boy, pray leave me not till I have found

A way to recompense thy pretty care of me.

CLORIS I will wait on you, sir. *(Exeunt all but Guillian.)*

*Enter Lorenzo, peeping out before entering fully.*

LORENZO     What's the matter here? The prince is wounded, too. Oh, what a dog was I to know of some such thing, and not secure them all?

*(Lorenzo stands gazing at Guilliam. Guilliam stands drumming on his hat and screwing his face.*

--- What's here? Hah, hah, hah. This is the pleasantest fellow that ever I saw in my life. Prithee, friend, what's thy name?

GUILLIAM     My name, an't shall like ye, my name is, is Guilliam.

LORENZO     From whence comest thou?

GUILLIAM     From a village a great huge way off.

LORENZO     And what's thy business here, hah?

GUILLIAM     Truly, sir, not to tell a lie, I come to get a service here at court.

LORENZO     A service at court? Hah, hah, that's a pleasant humour, i'faith. Why, fellow, what canst thou do?

GUILLIAM     Do, sir? I can do anything.

LORENZO     Why, what canst thou do? Canst thou dress well? ... Set a wig to advantage, tie a cravat and cuffs, put on a belt with dexterity, hah? These be the talents that must recommend you.

GUILLIAM     I know not what you mean, but I am sure I can do them all.

LORENZO     Thou art confident, it seems. And I can tell you, sirrah, that's a great step to promotion. ... But, well, go on then. Canst ride the great horse?

GUILLIAM     The biggest in all our town, I have rid a thousand times.

LORENZO     That's well. Canst fence?

GUILLIAM     Fence, sir? What's that?

LORENZO     A term we use for the art and skill of handling a weapon.

GUILLIAM     I can thrash, sir.

LORENZO     What's that, man?

GUILLIAM     Why, sir, it is ... it is ... thrashing.

LORENZO     An artist, I vow. Canst play music?

GUILLIAM     Oh most roguically, sir. I have a bagpipe that every breath sets the whole village a-dancing.

LORENZO     Better still. And thou canst dance, I'll warrant?

GUILLIAM     Dance? He, he, he. I vow you've lit on my masterpiece, y'fegs.

LORENZO     And I'll try thee. *(To the page)* Boy, go fetch some of the musicians  
hither which I keep in pay. *(Exit boy.*  
*(To Guilliam)* But hark you, friend, though I love dancing very well, and that  
may recommend thee in a great degree; yet 'tis wholly necessary that you  
should be valiant, too. We great ones ought to be served by men of valour, for  
we are very liable to be affronted by many here to our faces, which we would  
gladly have beaten behind our backs. ... But, pox on't, thou hast not the huff  
and grimace of a man of prowess.

GUILLIAM     As for fighting, though I do not care for it, yet I can do it if anybody  
angers me, or so.

LORENZO     But I must have you learn to do't when anybody angers me, too.

GUILLIAM     Sir, they told me I should have no need on't here; but I shall learn.

LORENZO     Why, you fool, that's not a thing to be learned ... That's a brave  
inclination born with man, a brave undaunted something, a thing that ... that,  
comes from, from ... I know not what, for I was born without it.

*Enter the page and musicians.*

*(To the musicians)* Oh, are you come? *(To Guilliam)* Let's see, sirrah, your  
activity. For I must tell you, that's another step to preferment.

*(Guilliam dances a jig en paisant.*

'Tis well performed. Well, hadst thou but wit, valour, *bon mien*, good garb, a  
wig, conduct and secrecy in love affairs, and half-a-dozen more good  
qualities, thou wert fit for something. But I will try thee. *(To the page)* Boy, let  
him have better clothes. As for his documents, I'll give him those myself.

GUILLIAM *(Aside)*     Hah, I don't like that word. It sounds terribly.

*(Exit the page and Guilliam.*

LORENZO     This fellow may be of use to me; being doubtless very honest because  
he is so very simple. For to say truth, we men of parts are sometimes over-  
wise. Witness my last night's retreat from but a supposed danger, and  
returning to fall into a real one. Well, I'll now to Isabella, and know her final  
resolution. If Clarina will be kind, so. If not, there be those that will.  
And though I cannot any conquest boast  
For all the time and money I have lost,

At least on Isabel I'll be revenged,  
And have the flattering baggage soundly swung.\*           \* beaten up  
And rather than she shall escape my anger,  
Myself will be the hero that shall bang her.               (Exit.

### ACT IV, scene 1

*Enter Ismena and Isabella, with Antonio partly concealed.*

ISABELLA (*Aside to Ismena*) Madam, turn your back to that side, for there Antonio is hid. He must not see your face. Now, raise your voice, that he may hear what 'tis you say.

ISMENA (*Aside to Isabella*) I'll guarantee it. (*Aloud*) Isabella,  
Was ever wretched woman's fate like mine?  
Forced to obey the rigid laws of parents,  
And marry with a man I did not love?               (*Antonio peeps out.*

ANTONIO (*Aside*) Oh, there's my cause of fear.

ISMENA Though, since I had him, thou knowst I have  
Endeavoured to make his will my law.  
Till, by degrees and custom, which makes things natural,  
I found this heart, which ne'er had been engaged  
To any other, grow more soft to him.  
And still, the more he loved, the more I was obliged,  
And made returns still kinder. Till I became  
Not only to allow, but to repay his tenderness.

ISABELLA (*Aside*) She counterfeits rarely. (*Aloud*) Madam, indeed I have observed this truth.               (*Someone knocks.*

ISMENA See who 'tis knocks.

ANTONIO (*Aside*) What will this come to?

ISABELLA Madam, 'tis Alberto.

*Enter Alberto, and bows.*

ISMENA        My lord, you've often told me that you loved me,  
Which I, with women's usual pride, believed.  
And now, encouraged by my hope-filled promises,  
You look for some returns. Sir, is it so?

ALBERTO (*Aside*)    What means she? Pray heaven I answer right.  
(*Aloud*) Madam, if I have erred in that belief,  
To know I do so is sufficient punishment.  
Lovers, madam, though they have no returns,  
Like sinking men, still catch at all they meet with.  
And whilst they live, though in the midst of storms,  
Because they wish, they also hope for calms.

ISMENA        And did you, sir, consider who I was?

ALBERTO       Yes, madam. Wife unto my friend Antonio,  
The only man that has an interest here.        (*Puts his hand on his chest*)  
But, madam, that must still submit to love.

ISMENA        Canst thou at once be true to him and me?

ALBERTO       Madam, I know not that.  
But since I must lose one,  
My friendship I can better lay aside.

ISMENA        Hast thou forgot how dear thou art to him?

ALBERTO       No. I do believe I am, and that he'd think  
His life a worthless trifle, if I needed it.  
Yet, madam, you are dearer to him still  
Than his Alberto. And 'tis so with me:  
Him I esteem, but you I do adore;  
And he whose soul's insensible of love  
Can never grateful\* to his friendship prove.        \* pleasing

ISMENA        By your example, sir, I'll still retain  
My love for him. And what I had for you,  
Which was but friendship, I'll abandon, too.

ANTONIO (*Aside*)    Happy Antonio.

ISMENA        Pray, what have you Antonio does not have?  
Has he not equal beauty, if not exceeding, thine?  
Has he not equal vigour, wit, and valour?



And all that even raises men to gods,  
Were it not for poor mortality?  
Vain man, couldst thou believe  
That I would quit my duty to this husband,  
And sacrifice his right to thee? ...  
Couldst thou believe me, yesterday,  
When, from thy importunity and impudence,  
To send thee from me,  
I promised thee to love thee? ...  
Nay, rather, treacherous man,  
Couldst thou believe I did not hate thee then,  
Who basely would betray thy friend and me?

ALBERTO (*Aside*) Sure, this is earnest.

ANTONIO (*Aside*) Oh, brave Clarina!

ISMENA Speak, traitor to my fame and honour.  
Was there no woman but Antonio's wife  
With whom thou couldst commit so foul a crime?  
And none but he, to bring to public shame?  
A man who trusted thee, and loved thee, too?  
... Speak ... And if yet thou hast a sense of virtue,  
Call to the saints for pardon, or thou diest.

*(She draws a dagger, and runs at him.)*

*(He steps back to avoid it.)*

ALBERTO Hold, Clarina! ... I am amazed.

ISMENA But wait,  
Thou sayst my beauty forced thee to this wickedness,  
And that's the cause you have abused Antonio. ...  
Nor is it all the power I have with him  
Can make him credit what I tell him of thee.  
And should I live, I still must be pursued by thee,  
And unbelieved by him. ...  
Alberto, thou shalt never be guilty more,  
Whilst this ... and this ... may meet.

*(Offering to wound herself, she is stopped by Alberto and Isabella. They set Ismena in a chair. Alberto kneels, weeping.*

ALBERTO     Hold, my divine Clarina. ...

ANTONIO *(Aside)*     Shall I reveal myself, or steal away,

And, all ashamed of life, after this action,

Go where the sun or day may ever find me?

Oh, what virtue I've abused! ...

Curse on my little faith.

And all the curses madness can invent

Light on my groundless jealousy.

*(Exit Antonio.*

ALBERTO     Clarina, why so cruel to my heart?

'Tis true, I love you, but with as chaste an ardour

As souls departing pay the deities,

When, with incessant sighs, they haste away,

And leave humanity behind. Oh! So did I

Abandon all the lesser joy of life,

For that of being permitted but to adore ye.

Alas, if 'twere displeasing to you,

Why did yourself encourage it?

I might have languished as I did before,

And hid those crimes which make you hate me now.

Oh, I am lost! Antonio, thou'st undone me.

*(He rises in rage.*

Hear me, ingrate. I swear by all that's good,

I'll wash away my mischief with thy blood.

ISABELLA     Antonio hears you not, sir, for he's departed.

ISMENA     Is Antonio gone?     *(She looks pertly up, who before lay half dead.*

ALBERTO     What's this? *(Aside)* Has she but feigned?

ISMENA     No, it was but feigned. I hope this proof

Of what I've promised you does not displease you?

ALBERTO     Am I thus fortunate, thus strangely happy?

ISMENA     Time will confirm it to you. ... Go. Do not now thank me for it, but seek Antonio out. Perhaps he may have too great a sense of the mischiefs his jealousies had like to have caused. But conjure him to take no notice of what's passed to me.

This easy sleight of mine secures our fears,  
And serves to make Antonio confident,  
Who now will unbelieve his eyes and ears.  
And since, before, when I was innocent,  
He could suspect my love and duty too,  
I'll try what my dissembling it will do.  
Go, haste.

ALBERTO Madam, I go, surprised with love and wonder. *(Exit Alberto.)*

ISMENA *(Aside)* You'll be more surprised when you know  
That you are cheated too, as well as Antonio. *(Exeunt.)*

## Act IV, scene 2

*Enter Curtius, disguised in a black wig and beard, with Pietro disguised also.*

CURTIUS Well, what hast thou learned?

PIETRO News enough, sir, but none good: that the prince's wounds are small,  
so that he intends to take the air this evening. That he solicits Laura, hard.  
And, sir, that you are proclaimed a traitor.

CURTIUS So. What says the messenger you sent to Cloris?

PIETRO Sir, he brings sad tidings back.

CURTIUS What tidings? Is she dead?

That would revive my soul, and fortify  
My easy nature with some wicked notions,  
As deep as those this flattering prince made use of  
When he betrayed my sister. Pretty Cloris.  
Come, speak it boldly, for nothing else  
Will make me do her justice.

PIETRO No, sir, she is not dead, but fled, and none knows whither. Only  
Guilliam attends her.

CURTIUS Worse and worse. But what of Laura?

PIETRO She, sir, is kept a prisoner by her father, and speaks with none but  
those that come from Frederick.

CURTIUS      Laura confined, too. 'Tis time to hasten, then,  
With my, till now, almost disarmed revenge.  
Thus\* I may pass unknown the streets of Florence,      \*indicating his disguise  
And find an opportunity to reach this prince's heart.  
... Oh vengeance! Luxurious vengeance,  
Thy pleasures turn a rival to my love,  
And make the mightier conquest o'er my heart.  
... Cloris ... I will revenge thy tears and sufferings.  
And to secure the doom of him that wronged thee,  
I'll call on injured Laura, too.

*(To Pietro)* Here, take these pictures *(Gives him boxes)* and where thou seest  
a knot of gallants, open one or two, as if by stealth, to gaze upon the beauties,  
and then straight close them. ... But stay, here comes the only man I could  
have wished for. He'll proclaim my business better than a picture or a trumpet.

*(They step to one side. Curtius takes back the pictures.)*

*Enter Lorenzo and Guilliam dressed in fine-ish clothes,  
and wearing identical, high-crowned hats.*

LORENZO      Did ... ha, ha, ha. Did ... ha, ha. Did ever any mortal man behold such a  
figure as thou art now? Well, I see 'tis a damnable thing not to be born a  
gentleman. The devil himself can never make thee truly jaunty now. ... Come,  
come, come forward. These clothes become thee as a saddle does a sow.  
Why comest thou not? ... Why *(Guilliam advances sourly, looking)* ... Ha, ha. I  
hope thou hast not christened thy new breeches. Thou lookst so filthily at  
them.

GUILLIAM      No, sir. I hope I have more manners than so. But if I should, 'tis not my  
fault. For the necessary facilities are hard to be met with here at court.

LORENZO      Very well, sirrah. You begin already to be witty with the court. But I can  
tell you, it has as many necessary facilities in it, as any court in Christendom  
... But what a hat thou hast!

GUILLIAM      Why, sir, though I say't, this is accounted of in our village. But I had  
another but now, which blew off in a high wind. And I never missed it, till I had  
an occasion to pluck it off, to a young squire they call a lackey. And, fegs, I

had none at all. And because I would not lose my leg for want of a hat,<sup>7</sup> I fetched this. And I can tell you, sir, it has a fashionable brim.

LORENZO A fool's head of your own, has it not? The boys will hoot at us as we pass ... Hah! Who be these? Who be these?

*(He goes towards Curtius and Pietro.)*

CURTIUS *(To Pietro, as he gives him pictures)* Here. This, to Don Alonzo. This, to the English count. And this you may show to the young German prince. And this .... I will reserve for higher prices.

PIETRO Will you show none to the courtiers, sir?

CURTIUS Away, you fool. I deal in no such trash.

LORENZO *(To Curtius)* What, sir? What was that? Pray, how came we to gain your disfavour?

CURTIUS I cry you mercy, sir. Pray, what are you?

LORENZO A courtier, sir, I can assure you, and one of the best rank, too. I have the prince's ear, sir ... What have you there? Hah. ... Pictures. Let me see ... What, are they to be bought?<sup>8</sup>

CURTIUS Sir, they are pictures of most fair originals. Not to be bought, but hired.

LORENZO Say you so, friend? The price, the price!

CURTIUS Five thousand crowns a month, sir.

LORENZO The price is somewhat saucy.

CURTIUS Sir, they be particular pieces; were never blown upon. Have never been in courts, nor, hardly, cities.

LORENZO Upon my word, that's considerable! Friend, pray, where do you live?

CURTIUS In the piazza, near the palace.

LORENZO Well, put up your ware. Show not a face of them till I return. For I will bring you the best purchaser in all Florence, except the duke himself.

CURTIUS You must be speedy, then, for I, tomorrow, shall be going towards Rome.

LORENZO *(Aside)* A subtle rascal this. *(To Curtius)* Thou thinkst, I suppose, to make a better market amongst the cardinals? ... But take my word, not a

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<sup>7</sup> **would not lose my leg for want of a hat:** didn't want to fail to bow just because I didn't have a hat  
<sup>8</sup> **are they to be bought?:** Lorenzo thinks that the pictures are high-class prostitutes' advertising matter, and is checking that his assumption is right.

cardinal of them all comes near this man I mean to bring you, in matters of beauty --- *(Aside)* So, this will infallibly make my peace again.

*(Aloud)* Look ye, friend. Be ready, for 'tis the prince, the noble generous Frederick, that I design your customer. *(Goes out.*

CURTIUS Your servant, sir. ... *(To Pietro)* That is Guilliam. I cannot be mistaken in him. Go, call him back.

*(Pietro fetches Guilliam back, who puts on a surly face.*

*(To Guilliam)* Friend, what art thou?

GUILLIAM What am I? Why, what am I? Dost thou not see what I am? A courtier, friend.

CURTIUS But what's thy name?

GUILLIAM My name? I have not yet considered.

CURTIUS What was thy name?

GUILLIAM What was my name?

CURTIUS Yes, friend. Thou hadst one.

GUILLIAM Yes, friend, thou hadst one.

CURTIUS Dog, dost echo me? Dost thou repeat? *(Shakes him.*

I say again, what is thy name?

GUILLIAM Oh, horrible. Why, sir, it was Guilliam when I was a silly swain.

CURTIUS Guilliam. The same. Didst thou not know a virgin whose name was Cloris?

GUILLIAM Yes, there was such a virgin, but now she's none.

CURTIUS Was such a virgin ... but now she's none. ...

*(Aside)* The slave upbraids my griefs.

GUILLIAM Yes, sir. So I said.

CURTIUS So you said.

GUILLIAM Why, yes, sir. What, do you repeat?

CURTIUS What mean you, sirrah? Have you a mind to have your throat cut? Tell me where she is.

GUILLIAM I dare as well be hanged.

*(Aside)* Now must I devise a lie, or never look Cloris in the face more.

CURTIUS Here's gold for thee. I will be secret, too.

GUILLIAM Oh, sir! The poor girl you speak of is dead!

CURTIUS Dead! Where died she? And how?

GUILLIAM (*Aside*) Now am I put to my wits. This 'tis to begin in sin, as our curate said. I must go on.

(*To Curtius*) Why, sir, she came into the wood ... and hard by a riverside ... she sighed, and she wept full sore. And cried two or three times out upon Curtius ... And ... then ... (*He howls.*)

CURTIUS Poor Cloris. Thy fate was too severe.

GUILLIAM And then, as I was saying, sir, she leapt into the river, and swam up the stream. (*Curtius weeps.*)

PIETRO And why up the stream, friend?

GUILLIAM Because she was a woman ... and that's all.

CURTIUS Farewell. And thank thee. (*Exit Guillian*)

... Poor Cloris, dead. And I'm banished, too, from Laura.

Was ever wretched lover's fate like mine?

... And he who injures me, has power to do so.

... But why? Where lies this power about this man?

Is it his charms of beauty, or of wit?

Or that great name he has acquired in war?

Is it the majesty, that holy something,

That guards the person of this demi-god?

This awes not me. There must be something more.

For, always, when I call upon my wrongs,

Something within me pleads so kindly for him,

As would persuade me that he could not err.

... Ah, what is this? Where lies this power divine,

That can so easily make a slave of mine? (*Exeunt.*)

### Act IV, scene 3

*Enter Frederick and Cloris.*

*She is dressed in high-quality men's clothes.*

FREDERICK 'Tis much, methinks, a boy of so dejected,

Humble birth should have so much of sense  
And soul about him.

CLORIS I know not that. But if I have a thought  
Above that humble birth or education,  
It was inspired by love.

FREDERICK Still you raise my wonder greater.  
... Thou, a lover?

CLORIS Yes, my lord. Though I am young,  
I've felt the power of beauty.  
And should you look upon the object, sir,  
Your wonders soon would cease.  
Each look does even animate insensibles\*, \* those who are usually numb  
And strikes a reverend awe upon the soul.  
Nothing is found so lovely.

FREDERICK Thou speakst prettily. I think love, indeed, has inspired thee.

CLORIS These were the flatteries, sir, she used to me.  
Of her it was I learned to speak, and sigh,  
And look as oft, you say, I do on you.

FREDERICK Why, then, it seems she made returns?

CLORIS Ah! Sir, 'twas I that first was blessed,  
I first the happy object was beloved.  
For 'twas a person, sir, so much above me,  
It had been sin to've raised my eyes to her;  
Or by a glance, or sigh, betray my pain.  
But, oh! When, with a thousand soft expressions,  
She did encourage me to speak of love!  
... My God, how soon extravagant I grew,  
And told so oft the story of my passion  
That she grew weary of the repeated tale,  
And punished my presumption with a strange neglect. *(Weeps.*

FREDERICK What, my good Phillibert?

CLORIS Would suffer me to see her face no more.

FREDERICK That was pity; without a fault?

CLORIS Alas, sir, I was guilty of no crime,



But that of having told her how I loved her.  
For all I had, I sacrificed to her. ...  
Poor worthless treasures, to any but a lover ...  
And such, you know, accept the meanest things.  
Love and a true devotion do give presents.  
When she was present, I found a thousand ways  
To let her know how much I was her slave.  
And absent, still invented new ones,  
And quite neglected all my little business;  
Counting the tedious moments of the day  
By sighs and tears. Thought it an age till night,  
Whose darkness might secure our happy meeting.  
But we shall meet no more on these kind terms.

*(Sighs.*

FREDERICK Come, do not weep, sweet youth. Thou art too young  
To have thy blooming cheeks blasted with sorrow.  
Thou wilt outgrow this childish inclination,  
And shalt see beauties here, whose every glance  
Kindles new fires, and quite expel the old.

CLORIS Oh, never, sir.

FREDERICK When I was first in love, I thought so too,  
But now, with equal ardour,  
I dote upon each new and beauteous object.

CLORIS And quite forget the old?

FREDERICK Not so. But when I see them o'er again,  
I find I love them as I did before.

CLORIS Oh, God forbid I should be so inconstant.  
No, sir. Though she be false, she has my heart.  
And I can die, but not redeem the victim.

FREDERICK Away, you little fool. You make me sad  
By this resolve, but I'll instruct you better.

CLORIS I would not make you sad for all the world.  
Sir, I will sing, or dance, do anything  
That may divert you.

FREDERICK I thank thee, Phillibert, and will accept

Thy bounty. Perhaps it may allay thy griefs a while, too.

CLORIS I'll call the musicians, sir.

*(Cloris goes out.)*

FREDERICK This boy has strange attractions in him.

*Enter Cloris with the musicians. She bids them play, and dances a jig.*

This was wondrous kind, my pretty Phillibert.

*Enter a page.*

PAGE Lorenzo, my lord, begs admittance.

FREDERICK He may come in.

*Enter Lorenzo.*

Well, Lorenzo, what's the news with thee?

How goes the price of beauty, hah?

LORENZO My lord, that question is *a propos* to what I have to say. This paper will answer your question, sir ... *(Gives Frederick a paper; he reads it. (Lorenzo gazes on Phillibert) (Aside) Hah, I vow to gad, a lovely youth. But what's he doing here with Frederick? This stripling may chance to mar my market of women now ... 'Tis a fine lad. How plump and white he is. I wish I could meet him somewhere in the dark. I'd have a fling at him, and try whether I were right Florentine.*

FREDERICK Well, sir. Where be these beauties?

LORENZO I'll conduct you to them.

FREDERICK What's the fellow that brings them?

LORENZO A Grecian, I think, or something.

FREDERICK Beauties from Greece, man!

LORENZO Why, let them be from the Devil, so they be new, and fine. What need we care? ... But you must go tonight.

FREDERICK I am not in a very good condition to make visits of that kind.

LORENZO However, see them. And if you like them, you may oblige the fellow to a longer stay. For I know they are handsome.

FREDERICK (*Aside*) That's the only thing thou art judge of. ... (*To Lorenzo*) Well, go you, and prepare them. And, Phillibert, thou shalt along with me. I'll have thy judgment, too.

CLORIS (*Aside*) Good heaven, how false he is!

LORENZO What time will your highness come?

FREDERICK Two hours hence. (*Exit Frederick*)

LORENZO (*Aside*) So, then, I shall have time to have a bout with this jilting hussy Isabella. For my fingers itch to be at her. (*Exit Lorenzo.*)

CLORIS Not know me yet? Cannot this face inform him?

My sighs, nor eyes, my accent, nor my tale?

Had he one thought of me, he must have found me out.

... Yes, yes, 'tis certain I am miserable.

He's going now to see some fresher beauties,

And I, he says, must be a witness of it.

This gives me wounds painful as those of love.

Some women, now, would find a thousand plots

From so much grief as I have, but I'm dull.

Yet I'll to Laura, and confer with her,

Where I will tell her such a heavy tale

As shall oblige her to a kind concern.

... This may do. I'll tell her of this thought.

This is the first of art I ever thought on.

And if this prove a fruitless remedy,

The next, I need not study: how to die. (*Exit.*)

#### Act IV, scene 4

*Enter Lorenzo and meets Guilliam, who passes by him and takes no notice of him.*

LORENZO How now. Manners, a few?

GUILLIAM I cry you heartily, sir. I did not see you.

LORENZO Well, sirrah? The news?

GUILLIAM Sir, the gentlewoman whom you sent me to says that he'll meet you here.

LORENZO That's well. Thou mayst come to be a statesman in time, thou art a fellow of so quick dispatch. But harkee, sirrah, there are a few lessons I must learn you concerning tasks of this nature. But another time for that. But ...

*(Whispers.*

*Enter Isabella, and Antonio's valet.*

ISABELLA *(To the valet)* Here he is. And, prithee, when thou seest him in my chamber, go and tell my lord, under pretence of the care you have of the honour of his house.

VALET I guarantee, you can trust me with a tale. And a lie at the end of it which shall not overmuch incense him, nor yet make him neglect coming. *(Exit Valet.*

LORENZO *(To Isabella)* Oh, are you there, mistress? What have you now to say for your last night's roguery? Are not you a baggage? Confess.

ISABELLA You have a mind to lose your opportunity again, as you did last night, have ye not? Pray God your own shadow scare you not, as it did then. And you will possibly believe nobody meant you harm then, nor now.

LORENZO Art thou in earnest?

ISABELLA Are you in earnest?

LORENZO Yes, that I am. And that, Clarina shall find if I once come to her.

ISABELLA Come, leave your frippery jests and come in.

LORENZO Guillian, be sure you await me here. And whoever you see, say nothing. The best of it is, thou art not much known.

*(Isabella and Lorenzo go in.*

GUILLIAM Well, I see there is nothing but fouting<sup>9</sup> in this town. I wish our Lucia were here, too, for me. For all the maids I meet with are so gigglish and scornful, that a man, as I am, gets nothing but flouts and flings from them. Oh, for the little kind lass that lives under the hill, of whom the song was made. Which, because I have nothing else to do, I will sing over now. Hum, hum.

*(To some tune suitable for him.*

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<sup>9</sup> **fouting**: love-making (or fucking).

### **The Song for Guillian.**

In a cottage by the mountain  
Lives a very pretty maid,  
Who lay sleeping by a fountain  
Underneath a myrtle shade.  
Her petticoat, of wanton sarsenet,  
The amorous wind about did move,  
And quite unveiled,  
And quite unveiled the throne of love,  
And quite unveiled the throne of love.

'Tis a bit cold. I'll go take a nipperkin of wine.

*(Goes out.*

*Enter Isabella and Lorenzo above, as if frightened into the balcony.*

LORENZO This was some trick of thine. I will be hanged, else.

ISABELLA Oh, I'll be sworn you wrong me. Alas, I'm undone by it.

*(Antonio, on the main stage, at the door to the house, knocks.*

ANTONIO *(From offstage)* Open the door, thou wicked woman.

LORENZO *(Aside to Isabella)* Oh, oh! What shall I do? What shall I do?

ANTONIO *(From offstage)* Open the door, I say.

LORENZO *(Aside to Isabella)* Oh, 'tis a damnable leap out at this balcony.

ISABELLA *(Aside to Lorenzo)* And yet you are a dead man if you see him.

ANTONIO *(From offstage)* Impudence, will you open the door?

ISABELLA I will, sir, immediately.

LORENZO *(Aside to Isabella)* Devise some way to let me down, or I will throw thee out. No ladder of ropes? No device? *(Aside)* If a man that is in my condition would not forswear whoring for the future, I am no true gentleman.

ANTONIO *(From offstage)* Open, or I will break the door.

ISABELLA *(Aside to Lorenzo)* Hold the door, and swear lustily that you are my husband, and I will, in the meantime, provide for your safety. ... Though I can think of none but the sheets from the bed.



But 'tis not tears, and knees, that can confirm me.

No, I must be convinced by better argument.

... Deceit, if ever thou a guide wert made

To amorous hearts, assist a love-sick maid.

*Enter Alberto.*

ALBERTO Your pleasure, madam?

*(Aside)* Oh, that she would be brief,

And send me quickly from her.

For her eyes will overthrow my purpose.

ISMENA Alberto, do you love me?

ALBERTO No.

ISMENA No. Have you deceived me, then?

ALBERTO Neither, Clarina. When I told you so, by heaven 'twas perfect truth.

ISMENA And what have I done since should merit your disesteem?

ALBERTO Nothing but what has raised it.

ISMENA To raise your esteem, then, it seems, is to lessen your love. Or, as most gallants are, you're but pleased with what you have not, and love a mistress with great passion till you find yourself beloved again. And then you hate her.

ALBERTO You wrong my soul extremely.

'Tis not of that ungrateful nature.

To love me, is to me a greater charm

Than that of wit or beauty.

ISMENA I'm glad of it, sir. Then I have pleasant news for you.

I know a lady, and a virgin, too,

That loves you with such passion as has

Obliged me to become her advocate.

ALBERTO I am very much obliged to her,

If there be any such.

ISMENA Upon my life, there is. I am in earnest.

The lady is my sister, too.

ALBERTO      What, Clarina? This from you?

ISMENA        Nay, I have promised her that you shall love her too,  
                  Since both her birth and beauty merits you.

ALBERTO      Away, false woman! I, love your sister?  
                  No, I will hate ye both.

ISMENA        Why so angry?  
                  Alas, it is against my will I do it.

ALBERTO      Did you betray my faith, when 'twas so easy  
                  To give a credit to your tale of love?  
                  ... Oh woman, faithless woman!

ISMENA        Alberto, with a world of shame I own  
                  That I then loved you, and must do so still.  
                  But since that love must be accounted criminal,  
                  And that a world of danger does attend it,  
                  I am resolved, though I can never quit it,  
                  To change it into kind esteem for you;  
                  And would ally you, sir, as near to me  
                  As our unkind stars will permit me.

ALBERTO      I thank you, madam. Oh, what a shame it is  
                  To be outdone in virtue, as in love!

ISMENA        Another favour I must beg of you:  
                  That you will tell Antonio what is passed.

ALBERTO      What mean you, madam?

ISMENA        Why, that I love you, sir,  
                  And how I have deceived him into confidence.

ALBERTO      This is strange. You cannot mean it, sure?

ISMENA        When I intend to be extremely good,  
                  I would not have a secret sin within,  
                  Though old, and yet repented too. No, sir.  
                  Confession always goes with penitence.

ALBERTO      Do you repent you that you loved me, then?

ISMENA        Not so; but that I did abuse Antonio.

ALBERTO      And can you think that this will cure his jealousy?

ISMENA        Doubtless it will, when he knows how needless 'tis.





... Pray give me leave to visit it again.  
Your eyes, that gave, can only ease my pain.'  
I, only blushing, gave him my consent.  
He paid his thanks in sighs, and from me went.  
That night, alas, I took but little rest.  
The new and strange disorder in my breast  
Can, madam, only by yourself be guessed.

LAURA I'll not deny that I'm a lover too,  
And can imagine what was felt by you.

CLORIS No sooner did the welcome day appear,  
But Lucia brought me word the prince was there.  
His very name disordered me much more  
Than did his sight or touch the day before.  
So soon my rising love grew up to power.  
So soon he did become my conqueror.  
... How pale and trembling, when he did appear,  
I grew. He, too, had marks of love and fear. ...  
But I'll omit the many visits paid,  
The unvalued presents, and the oaths he made.  
My kind disputes on all his letters writ,  
How all my doubts were answered by his wit.  
How oft he vowed to marry me, whilst I  
Durst not believe the pleasing perjury. ...  
And only tell you, that one night, he came,  
Led by designs of an impatient flame.  
When all the house was silently asleep,  
Except myself, who love's sad watch did keep;  
Armed with his dagger, and his breast all bare;  
His face all pale with restless love and fear.  
So many wild and frantic things he said,  
And so much grief and passion, too, betrayed.  
So often vowed he'd finish, there, his life,  
If I refused him to become his wife,  
That I, half dying, said it should be so;

Which, though I feared, oh, how I wished it too!  
Both prostrate on the ground, in the face of heaven,  
His vows to me, and mine to him were given.

... And then, oh then, what did I not resign!

With the assurance that the prince was mine.

*(Weeps.*

LAURA Poor Cloris, how I pity thee!

Since fate has treated me with equal rigour.

... Curtius is banished, Frederick still pursues me,

And by a cruel father I'm confined,

And cannot go to serve myself or thee.

*(Someone knocks.*

LORENZO *(From offstage)* Sister! Laura! Sister!

LAURA It is my brother. Perhaps he will be kind

And set us free. He shall not see thee,

And I'll persuade him.

*As Laura puts Cloris into her closet, enter Lorenzo with a letter.*

LORENZO *(Aside)* Hah, locking her closet! Now, were I a right Italian, should I grow jealous, and enraged at I know not what. *(To Laura)* Hah, sister! What are you doing here? Open your closet and let me see it.

LAURA Sir, 'tis in disorder, and not worth your seeing now.

LORENZO 'Tis so, I care not for that. I'll see it.

LAURA Pray, do not, brother.

LORENZO Your denial makes me the more inquisitive.

LAURA *(Aside)* 'Tis but my saying he came from the prince, and he dares not take it ill. *(To Lorenzo)* Here, sir. *(Gives him the key.*

LORENZO And here's for you, too: a letter from Curtius, and therefore I did not open it. I took it up at the post-house. *(She reads, and seems pleased.*  
*(Aside)* Now, if this should prove some surly gallant of hers, and give me a slash over the face for peeping, I were but rightly served. And why the devil should I expect my sister should have more virtue than myself? She's the same flesh and blood. Or why, because she's the weaker vessel, should all the unreasonable burthen of the honour of our house, as they call it, be laid on

her shoulders, whilst we may commit a thousand villainies? But 'tis so ...

*(To Laura)* Here, open the door. I'll put her before me, however.

*(She opens the door and brings out Cloris.)*

LAURA Sir, 'tis Phillibert, from the prince.

LORENZO Why, how now, youngster. I see you intend to thrive by your many trades. So soon, so soon, i'faith. But, sirrah, this is my sister and your prince's mistress. Take notice of that.

CLORIS I know not what you mean.

LORENZO Sir, you cannot deceive me so. If you were right served, you would be made fit for nothing but the Great Turk's seraglio.<sup>11</sup>

CLORIS You mistake my business, sir.

LORENZO Your blushes give you the lie, sirrah. But for the prince's sake, and another reason I have, I will pardon you, for once.

LAURA He has not done a fault, and needs it not.

LORENZO Was he not alone with thee? And is not that enough? Well, I see I am no Italian in punctilios of honourable revenge. There is but one experiment left to prove myself, so. And if that fail, I'll even renounce my country.

*(To Cloris)* Boy, harkey. There is a certain kindness you may do me, and get your pardon for being found here.

CLORIS You shall command me anything.

LORENZO Prithee, how long hast thou been working the streets, hah?

CLORIS As how, sir?

LORENZO Poh, thou understandst me.

CLORIS Indeed I do not sir. What is't you mean?

LORENZO A smooth-faced boy and ask such a question? Fie, fie, this ignorance was ill-counterfeited to me that understand the world.

CLORIS Explain yourself, sir.

LORENZO Look, ten or twenty pistoles will do you no hurt, will it?

CLORIS Not any, sir.

LORENZO Why so; 'tis well anything will make thee apprehend.

CLORIS I shall be glad to serve you, sir, without that fee.

---

<sup>11</sup> **fit for nothing but the Great Turk's seraglio:** Lorenzo threatens to castrate Phillibert/Cloris, making him like the eunuchs who were the only men allowed into Turkish sultans' harems.

LORENZO That's kindly said ... *(Aside)* I see a man must not be too easy of belief. Had I been so, this boy would have been at 'What do ye mean, sir?' and 'Lord, I understand you not'. Well, Phillibert, here's earnest to bind the bargain. *(Lorenzo whispers to Laura.)* I am now in haste. When I see thee next, I'll tell thee more.

CLORIS This 'tis, to be a favourite now. I warrant you, I must do him some good office to the prince, which I'll be sure to do.

LORENZO Nay, it must be done, for she has used me basely. Oh, 'tis a baggage.

LAURA Leave it to me to revenge you on Isabella. Get me but from this imprisonment.

LORENZO I will. Whilst I hold the old man in a dispute, do you two get away. But be sure thou payest her home.

LAURA I warrant you, sir, this was happy. Now shall I see Curtius.

LORENZO Phillibert, I advise you to have a care of wenching: 'twill spoil a good face, and mar your better market of the two. *(Exit Lorenzo)*

LAURA Come, let us haste. And on the way I'll tell thee of a means that may make us all happy. *(Exeunt.)*

## Act V, scene 2

*Enter Alberto, melancholy.*

ALBERTO Antonio said he would be here.  
I'm impatient till he come. ...

*Enter Antonio.*

ANTONIO Alberto, I have such a project for thee!

ALBERTO Hah ... *(Gazes.)*

ANTONIO What ails thee? Art thou well?

ALBERTO No.

ANTONIO Where art thou sick?

ALBERTO At heart, Antonio. Poisoned by thy jealousy. ...

Oh, thou hast ruined me, undone my quiet,  
And from a man of reasonable virtue,  
Hast brought me to a wild, distracted lover.

ANTONIO Explain yourself.

ALBERTO Thou'st taught me, friend, to love Clarina.  
Not as I promised thee to feign, but so,  
That I, unless I do possess that object,  
I think must die; at best, be miserable.

ANTONIO What, sir? Have I done this?

ALBERTO Yes, Antonio, thou hast done this.

ANTONIO My dear Alberto. Said you that you loved her?

ALBERTO Yes, Antonio. Against my will, I do.  
As much against my will, as when I told her so,  
Urged by thy needless stratagem.

ANTONIO Name it no more. It was a foolish fault,  
Which I do so repent me,  
That if you find I should relapse again,  
Kill me, and let me perish with my weakness.  
And were that true you tell me of your passion,  
Sure, I would wish to die, to make you happy.

ALBERTO That's kindly said, and I submit to you,  
And am content to be outdone in friendship.

ANTONIO Yes, I'll resign my claims, and leave the world.  
Alberto, 'tis unkind to think I would  
Be happy by ways must ruin you. But, sure,  
You tell me this but only to afflict me.

ALBERTO 'Tis truth, Antonio. I do love Clarina.  
And what is yet far worse for thy repose,  
Believe myself so blessed to be beloved.

ANTONIO What, to be beloved by her!  
... Oh, dire effects of jealousy!

ALBERTO All that you saw today was only feigned  
To let you see that even your eyes and ears  
Might be imposed upon.

ANTONIO        Can it be possible?

ALBERTO        And now she thinks she is enough revenged,  
                  And lets you know, in her feigned scorn to me,  
                  That all your sleights and cunnings are but vain.  
                  She has deceived them all, and by that art  
                  Gives you a confidence, and me a heart.

ANTONIO        I must confess it is but just in her  
                  To punish thus the errors of my fear.  
                  I do forgive her. From my soul, I do.  
                  ... But, sir, what satisfaction's this to you?

ALBERTO        Clarina happy, I'll from court retire,  
                  And by that absence quench my hopeless fire.  
                  War I will make my mistress, who may be,  
                  Perhaps, more kind than she has been to me.  
                  Where, though I cannot conquer, 'twill allow  
                  That I may die. That's more than this will do.

ANTONIO        ... Why did you, sir, betray my weakness to her?  
                  Though 'twas but what I did deserve from you.

ALBERTO        By all that's good, she knew the plot before  
                  From Isabella, who, it seems overheard us  
                  When you once pressed me to it.  
                  And had we not had virtue, thou'dst been lost.

ANTONIO        I admit the crime.  
                  And first, I beg thy pardon,  
                  And after that, will get it from Clarina.  
                  Which done, I'll go with thee to war,  
                  And suffer one year's penance for this sin.  
                  Unless I could divert this resolution  
                  By a proposal Clarina bid me make you?

ALBERTO        What was it, sir?

ANTONIO        I have a sister, friend, a handsome virgin  
                  – Rich, witty, and I think she's virtuous too –  
                  Returned last week from St Teresa's monastery.

ALBERTO        Sure, anything that is to thee allied

Must find a more than bare respect from me.

But it is certain I ne'er shall love again,

And have resolved never to marry any

Where interest\*, and not love, must join our hands.

\*self-interest

ANTONIO      You cannot tell what power there lies in beauty.

Come, you shall see her. And if, after that,

You find you cannot love her,

We'll both to Candia,<sup>12</sup> where we both will prove

Rivals in honour, as we're now in love

... But I'd forgot to tell thee what I came for.

I must, this evening, beg your company,

Nay, and perhaps your sword. Come along with me,

And on the way I'll tell you the adventure.

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act V, scene 3** *The Lodgings of Curtius.*

*Enter Curtius and Pietro, disguised as before.*

CURTIUS      I wonder we hear no news, yet, of the prince. I hope he'll come. Pietro,  
are the hired thugs ready? And the courtesans?

PIETRO        My lord, they'll be here immediately. All well dressed, too.

CURTIUS      They be those bravos that did belong to me?

PIETRO        Yes, sir, the same. But Antonio is their patron.

CURTIUS      They be stout and secret; 'tis well. Is the music and all things ready?  
For I'll not be seen till my part is to be played. Pietro, what arms have they?

PIETRO        Pistols sir. Would you have other?

CURTIUS      No. I have not yet considered how to kill him,  
Nor scarce resolved to do so anyway.

What makes this strange irresolution in me?

... Sure, 'tis the force of sacred amity,

---

<sup>12</sup> **Candia:** Heraklion, on Crete, was ruled by Venice but under siege by the Ottoman Empire from 1648 to 1669. Young men often went off to fight on the European side.



Which but too strictly was observed by me.

... My prince and friend, my wife and sister too;

Shall not those last the powerful first outdo?

My honour and my love are there\* engaged,      \* i.e., to my wife and sister

And here\*, by ties of duty, I'm obliged.      \* i.e., to the prince

I satisfy but these, if he must bleed,

But ruin the whole dukedom in the deed:

The hopeful heir of all their noble spoils,

And joy and recompense of all their toils.

... Why, so was Cloris, Laura too, to me,

Which both were ravished from me, prince, by thee.      (*Knock within.*)

PIETRO      Sir, they be the bravos and courtesans.      (*Pietro goes out.*)

CURTIUS      'Tis well. I need not talk with them. They understand their work?

PIETRO      They do, my lord, and shall be ready at your stamp. They are all  
Neapolitans, you know, sir.

CURTIUS      Are they the better for that?

PIETRO      Much, sir. A Venetian will turn to your enemy if he will give him but a  
penny more than you have done. And your Milanese are fit for nothing but to  
rob the post or carrier. A Genovese, too, will sooner kill by usury than sword  
or pistol; a Roman, fit for nothing but a spy.

CURTIUS      Well, sir, you are pleasant with my countrymen.

PIETRO      I'll be so with my own, too, sir, and tell you that a Maltese, who  
pretends to so much honour and gravity, are fit only to rob their neighbours  
with pretence of piety. ... And a Sicilian so taken up with plots how to kill his  
viceroys that it keeps them from being rogues to a less degree. But I have  
done, sir, and beg your pardon.

CURTIUS      Didst leave the letter I commanded thee for Laura?

PIETRO      I did, my lord.

*Enter Lorenzo.*

LORENZO      Well, here's the prince just coming.

CURTIUS      Pray, sir, conduct him in. I'm ready for him.

*(Exeunt Curtius and Pietro)*

*Enter the prince, led by two women in masks and masquerade costume, with lights, the prince endeavouring to take off the women's masks.*

*(Exit the two women.)*

*The prince walks about while this song is singing:*

What is the recompense of war,  
But soft as wanton peace?  
What the best balsam to our scars,  
But that which Venus gave to Mars,  
When he was circled in a kind embrace?  
Behold, a prince who never yet  
Was vanquished in the field,  
A while his glories must forget,  
And lay his laurels at the feet  
Of some fair female power to whom he'll yield.

FREDERICK    What's this? The preparation?

LORENZO      Yes, so it should seem. But had you met with so many defeats as I  
have done tonight, you would willingly excuse this ceremony.

*Music for the dance.*

*Enter Antonio with Ismena, Alberto with Clarina, Laura and Cloris with two men more, all dressed in masquerade costumes with masks. They dance. The prince sits down. The dance being done, the dancers retire to one side.*

*Alberto comes and presents to the prince Clarina, and bows and retires.*

*She puts off her mask, and puts it on again, and retires.*

FREDERICK    She's wondrous fair.

                  Sure, in his whole cabal, he cannot show a fairer. ...

LORENZO      She resembles Clarina. I wish Your Highness would see further. And then, perhaps, this would fall to my lot, for I love her for likeness' sake.

*(Antonio presents Ismena, and retires as the other did.)*

FREDERICK This, I confess, outdoes the others.

An innocency dwells upon her face

That's strangely taking, is it not, Lorenzo?

LORENZO To say truth, she is very fine indeed. *(They present Laura.)*

FREDERICK Hah! I am amazed. See, Lorenzo,

Dost thou not know that face?

LORENZO By my conscience and soul, 'tis my own sister, Laura. Why, how now, mistress, do things go thus with you, i' faith?

*(She shakes her head as not understanding him.)*

ANTONIO Sir, she understands you not.

LORENZO Is it not Laura, then?

ANTONIO No, sir. It is a stranger.

FREDERICK Let her be what she will, I'll have her.

*(Frederick seems to talk, and she answers in grimaces.)*

LORENZO There have been examples in the world of the good offices done by a brother to a sister. But they are very rare here, and therefore will surely be the more acceptable. Well, sir, have you fixed, so that I may choose?

FREDERICK I have, and had he thousands more, *(Lorenzo goes to Clarina)*  
I would refuse them all for this fair creature.

*Enter Pietro.*

PIETRO *(To Frederick)* Sir, all things are ready as you desire, but my master must first speak with you alone.

FREDERICK About the price, I'll warrant you. Let him come in.

*All go out but Frederick. To him, Curtius.*

*(To Curtius)* Are you the Master of the Ceremony?

CURTIUS I am.

FREDERICK Be speedy then, and, by my impatience to be with that agreeable stranger, guess at my approbation of the ladies, and which I choose.

CURTIUS Your mighty heat, sir, will be soon allayed.

FREDERICK Shall it?

CURTIUS Yes, sir, it shall. For you must die.

FREDERICK Sure thou art mad to tell me so, whoe'er

Thou be'est, whilst I have this about me. *(Draws his sword.*

CURTIUS That, sir, you draw in vain. Stand off ... *(Points a pistol.*

FREDERICK What new-invented preparation's this?

CURTIUS Sir, when you know this face, it will inform you.

*(Curtius pulls off his false beard.*

FREDERICK Curtius! I am betrayed. Oh villain! *(Frederick offers to fight.*

CURTIUS Ho, within there! ...

*He calls, and all the masked men come out, and point pistols at Frederick.*

FREDERICK Hold! I am the Prince of Florence.

CURTIUS These, sir, are rogues, and have no sense of aught but mischief in their souls. Gold is their prince and god. *(To the bravos) Go, be gone.*

*(They withdraw.*

*(To Frederick) See, sir, I can command them.*

FREDERICK Curtius, why dost thou deal thus treacherously with me?

Did I not offer thee to fight thee fairly?

CURTIUS 'Tis like the injuries, sir, that you have done me.

Pardon me if my griefs make me too rude,

And in coarse terms lay all your sins before you.

... First, sir, you have debauched my lovely sister,

The only one I had.

The hope and care of all our noble family.

Thou, prince, didst ravish all her virtue from her,

And left her nothing but a desperate sense of shame,

Which only served to do herself that justice,

Which I had executed, had she not done it first.

FREDERICK In this, upon my soul, you do me wrong.

CURTIUS Next (oh how unlike a brave and generous man),

Without a cause, you cast me from your bosom;  
Withdrew the honour of your promised friendship,  
And made me partner in my sister's fate.  
Only with this difference: that she  
You left to act a murder on herself;  
And mine you would have been so kind to've done  
With your own hand, but my respect prevented it.  
... Next, sir, you ravished Laura from me,  
And under a pretence of sacred friendship,  
You proved yourself the worst of enemies.  
And that's a crime you dare not say was ignorance,  
As you, perhaps, will plead your sin to Cloris was.

FREDERICK Cloris? Why, what hast thou to do with Cloris?

CURTIUS She was my sister, Frederick.

FREDERICK Thy sister?

CURTIUS Yes. Think on it well.

A lady of as pure and noble blood  
As that of the great duke, thy father,  
Till you, bad man, infected it.  
... Say, should I murder you for this base action?  
Would you not call it a true sacrifice?  
And would not heaven and earth forgive it, too?

FREDERICK No. Had I known that she had been thy sister,  
I had received her as a gift from heaven,  
And so I would do still.

CURTIUS She must be sent, indeed, from heaven  
If you receive her now.

FREDERICK Is Cloris dead? Oh, how I was to blame! *(Weeps.*

... Here, thou mayst finish now the life thou threatenest.

CURTIUS Now, sir, you know my justice and my power.  
Yet since my prince can shed a tear for Cloris,  
I can forgive him. ... Here, sir, ... send me to Cloris.

*(Kneels and offers his sword.*

That mercy possibly will redeem the rest  
Of all the wrongs you've done me.  
And you shall find nothing but sorrow here,  
And a poor, broken heart that did adore you.

FREDERICK Rise, Curtius, and divide my dukedom with me.  
Do anything that may preserve thy life,  
And gain my pardon. Alas, thy honour's safe,  
Since yet none knows that Cloris was thy sister.  
Or if they do, I must proclaim this truth:  
She died thy prince's wife.

CURTIUS These tidings would be welcome to my sister,  
And I the fittest man to bear that news.

*Curtius offers to stab himself, and is held by Frederick, Laura and Clarina,  
who come in with Isabella dressed like Phillibert, and the rest.*

LAURA Stay, Curtius, and take me with thee on the way.

CURTIUS Laura, my dearest Laura! How came you hither?

LAURA Comanded by your letter. Have you forgot it?

FREDERICK Curtius, look here. Is not this Cloris's face?

CURTIUS The same. Oh, my sweet sister, is it thee?

*(Curtius goes to embrace Cloris. She steps back.*

FREDERICK Do not be shy, my soul. It is thy brother.

CURTIUS Yes, a brother who despised his life

When he believed yours lost or shamed.

But now the prince will take a care of it.

CLORIS May I believe my soul so truly blessed?

FREDERICK Yes, Cloris, and thus low I beg thy pardon *(He kneels.*

For all the fears that I have made thee suffer.

*Enter all the rest. First Antonio and Alberto without their masks.*

CLORIS Rise, sir. It is my duty and my glory.

ALBERTO *(To Frederick)* Sir, we have pardons, too, to beg of you.

FREDERICK Antonio and Alberto? What, turned bravos?

CURTIUS I am amazed.

ANTONIO You'll cease your wonder, sir, when you shall know ...

Those braves which formerly belonged to you  
Are now maintained by me. Which Pietro hired  
For this night's service. And from them we learnt  
What was to be done (though not on whom).  
But that we guessed, and thought it but our duty  
To put this cheat on Curtius.  
Which, had we seen he'd been resolved to kill you,  
Had been by us prevented.  
The ladies, too, would needs be courtesans  
To serve Your Highness.

FREDERICK I'm as much obliged to them, as you.

... Cloris, a while I'll leave thee with thy brother,  
Till I have reconciled thee to my father.

To marry me is what he long has wished for,

And will, I know, receive this news with joy. *(Exit Prince Frederick.*

LORENZO Here's fine doings. What am I like to come to if he turn honest now?

This is the worst piece of inconstancy he ever was guilty of. To change one's  
humour, or so, sometimes is nothing. But to change nature, to turn good on a  
sudden, and never give a man civil warning, is a defeat not to be endured. I'll  
see the end of it, though. *(Goes out.*

ALBERTO Here, Antonio. ... Imagine how I love thee,

Who make thee such a present.

*Alberto gives Antonio Clarina, who is dressed just as Ismena was.*

*Ismena is in masquerade costume.*

ANTONIO Clarina, can you pardon my offence, and bless me with that love you  
have but justly taken from me?

CLARINA You wrong me, sir. I ne'er withdrew my heart,

Though you, but too unkindly, did your confidence.

ANTONIO Do not upbraid me. That I was so to blame

Is shame enough. Pray, pardon and forget it.

CLARINA I do.

ANTONIO Alberto, to show my gratitude in what I may,  
I beg you would receive Ismena from me.

ALBERTO Who's this?

ANTONIO Ismena, whom I promised thee. *(Shows Ismena.)*

ALBERTO It is Clarina. Do you mock my pain?

ANTONIO By heaven, not I. This is Clarina, sir.

ALBERTO That, thy wife Clarina?

A beauty which till now I never saw.

ANTONIO Sure, thou art mad. Didst thou not give her me but now?  
And, hast not entertained her all this night?

ALBERTO Her costume and her vizard did deceive me.

I took her for this lady. ... Oh, blessed mistake!

ISMENA I see you're in the dark, but I'll unfold the riddle.

... Sir, in the passage from the monastery, attended only by my confessor, a gentleman, a passenger in the same boat, addressed himself to me, and made a many little courtships to me. I being veiled, he knew not who received them, nor what confusion they begot in me. At the first sight, I grew to great esteems of him, but when I heard him speak ... I'm not ashamed to say he was my conqueror.

ALBERTO Oh, madam. Was it you, who, by your conversation in that voyage, gave me disquiets which nothing but your eyes could reconcile again?

ISMENA 'Twas I whom you deceived with some such language.

... After my coming home, I grew more melancholy,  
And by my silence did increase my pain.  
And soon, Clarina found I was in love,  
Which I confessed at last, and named the object.  
She told me of your friendship with Antonio,  
And gave me hopes that I again should see you.  
... But Isabella overheard the plot,  
Which, sir, Antonio did contrive with you,  
To make a feignèd courtship to Clarina,  
And told us all the story.



ALBERTO Oh, how I'm ravished with my happiness!

ISMENA Clarina, sir, at first was much enraged,  
And vowed she would revenge her on Antonio.  
But I besought her to be pleased again,  
And said I would contrive a counter-plot  
Would satisfy her honour and revenge.  
Thus, sir, I got a garment like to hers,  
And to be courted, though but in jest, by you,  
I ran all hazards of my brother's anger,  
And your opinion of my lightness, too.

CLARINA (*To Antonio*) 'Twas a temptation, sir, I would not venture on,  
Lest from the reasons of a just revenge,  
And so much beauty as Alberto owned  
My virtue should not well secure your interest.

ANTONIO But why, Ismena, was that killing plot,  
When I was hid behind the arras? For now I confess all.

ISMENA To make Alberto confident of my love,  
And try his friendship to the utmost point.  
... Antonio, too, I found had some reserves\*, \*reservations  
Which I believed his amity to you.

ALBERTO Yes, madam. Whilst I took you for his wife,  
I thought it crime enough but to adore you.  
But, now I may, with honour, own my passion,  
I will, Ismena, confidently assure you  
That I will die unless you pity me.

ISMENA She that dared tell you, sir, how much she loved,  
When you believed it was a sin to do so,  
Will now make good that promise – with Antonio's leave.

ANTONIO With perfect joy, Ismena, I resign thee.

*(Antonio gives Ismena to Alberto.)*

ALBERTO (*To Antonio*) By double ties you now unite our souls.  
Though I can hardly credit what I see,  
The happiness so newly is arrived.

*Enter Prince, Lorenzo and Guillian, who comes up, scraping, to Cloris.*

FREDERICK My father is the kindest man on earth,  
And Cloris shall be welcome to his bosom,  
Who'll make him happy in my reformation.  
... Here, Curtius, take Laura, who, I find,  
Had rather be my sister than my mistress.  
The duke commands it so.

CURTIVS (*To Frederick*) Till you have pardoned me my late offences,  
I must deny myself so great a happiness. (*Curtius kneels.*)

FREDERICK Rise, you have it.

*Enter Salvator.*

SALVATOR Is here not a turncoat who belongs to me?

LAURA No, sir, my faith's entire,  
And Curtius has the keeping of it.

SALVATOR Who made him master of it, huh?

LAURA Heaven, my inclinations, and the prince.

SALVATOR Three powerful opposers.  
(*To Curtius*) Take her, since it must be so;  
And mayst thou be happy with her.

FREDERICK Alberto, I wish this court afforded a lady worthy thee.

ALBERTO Sir, I have already prospered, I humbly thank you.

LORENZO Prospered, quoth ye? Heaven defend me from such fortune.

FREDERICK Lorenzo, I had forgot thee. Thou shalt marry, too.

LORENZO You may command me anything but marrying.

ISABELLA What think you, then, of a smooth-faced boy?

LORENZO (*Aside*) A pox on him. Sure, he will not tell now, will he?

ISABELLA My lord, I beg your leave to challenge Lorenzo.

FREDERICK What, to a duel, Phillibert?

LORENZO Phillibert? Phillibert? Hold, do not ruin the reputation of a man that has  
acquired fame amongst the female sex. I protest I did but jest.

ISABELLA But, sir, I'm in earnest with you.

FREDERICK This is not Phillibert.

ISABELLA No, sir, but Isabella. (*Pointing to Cloris*) That was Phillibert.

CLORIS (*To Frederick*) Yes, sir. I was the happy boy to  
Be beloved when Cloris was forgotten.

FREDERICK Oh, how you raise my love and shame.  
But why did Isabella change her costume?

CLORIS Only to take my place, lest you should miss me,  
Who, being with Laura at the lodgings of Clarina,  
And comparing the words of her letter  
With what the bravos had confessed to Antonio,  
We found the plot which was laid for you,  
And joined, all, to prevent it.

FREDERICK 'Twas, sure, the work of heaven.

ISABELLA And now, sir, I come to claim a husband here.

FREDERICK Name him, and take him.

ISABELLA Lorenzo, sir.

LORENZO Of all cheats, commend me to a waiting-gentlewoman. I, her husband?

ANTONIO I am a witness to that truth.

FREDERICK 'Tis plain against you. Come, you must be honest.

LORENZO Will you compel me to it against my will? Oh, tyranny. Consider, I am a  
man of quality and fortune.

ISABELLA As for my qualities, you know I have sufficient. And fortune, thanks to  
your bounty, considerable too.

FREDERICK No matter. He has enough for both.

LORENZO Nay, sir, if you be against me, 'tis time to reform in my own defence.  
But 'tis a thing I never considered or thought of.

FREDERICK Marry first, and consider afterwards.

LORENZO That's the usual way, I confess. Come, Isabella, since the prince  
commands it. I do not love thee, but yet I'll not forswear it since a greater  
miracle than that is wrought, and that's my marrying thee. Well, 'tis well thou  
art none of the most beautiful. I should swear the prince had some designs on  
thee else.

CLORIS (*Aside to Guillian*) Yes, Guillian, since thou hast been so faithful, I dare assure thee, Lucia shall be thine. (*Guillian bows.*)

FREDERICK Come, my fair Cloris, and invest thyself  
In all the glories which I lately promised.  
... And, ladies, you'll attend her to the court,  
And share the welcomes which the duke provides her.  
Where all the sallies of my flattering youth  
Shall be no more remembered, but as past.  
Since 'tis a race that must by man be run,  
I'm happy in my youth it was begun.  
It serves my future manhood to improve,  
Which shall be sacrificed to war and love.

*Curtain falls.*

**Epilogue, spoken by Cloris.**

Ladies, the prince was kind at last,  
But all the danger is not passed.  
I cannot happy be, till you approve  
My hasty condescension to his love.  
'Twas want of art, not virtue was my crime,  
And that's, I vow, the author's fault, not mine.  
She might have made the women pitiless,  
But that had harder been to me than this.  
She might have made our lovers constant, too,  
A work which heaven itself can scarcely do.  
But simple Nature never taught the way  
To hide those passions which she must obey.  
Humble cottages and cells,  
Where innocence and virtue dwells,  
Than courts no more secure can be,  
From love and dangerous flattery.

Love in rural triumph reigns,  
As much a god amongst the swains  
As if the sacrifices paid  
Were wounded hearts by monarchs made.  
And this might well excuse my offence,  
If it be so to love a prince.  
But, ladies, 'tis your hands alone,  
And not his power, can raise me to a throne.  
Without that aid I cannot reign,  
But will return back to my flocks again.

*Guilliam advances.*

GUILLIAM      What, go from court? Nay, zay not zo,  
Hear me but speak before you go.  
Whoy zay the ladies should refuse ye,  
The bleads,<sup>13</sup> I'm sure, would better use ye ...  
So long as ye are kind and young,  
I know they'll clap ye, right or wrong.

*FINIS.*

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<sup>13</sup> **bleads**: in his country accent, Guilliam is saying 'blades' (blee-ades). Only men of the gentry were allowed to wear swords (blades), so Guilliam is addressing the well-off men in the audience (and making a bawdy joke about women using men's 'swords' for their pleasure).