

THE SECOND PART OF THE ROVER.

Written by *A. Behn*.

LONDON, 1681

This modernised text was produced by Elaine Hobby from the edition by Marcus Nevitt in progress for Volume III of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Aphra Behn*, 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 2023. In modernising it, Elaine largely updated spelling and punctuation, but also occasionally substituted modern words for 1681 ones. As long as this origin is acknowledged, anyone is welcome to use this script for any purpose, but a 1681 copy must be checked if accuracy is essential.

Prologue spoken by William Smith (Willmore)

In vain we labour to reform the stage.
Poets have caught, too, the disease of the age,
That pest, of not being quiet when they're well, }
That restless fever in the brethren zeal * } * Puritan beliefs
In public spirits called, 'Good of the commonweal'. }
Some for this faction cry, others for that,
The pious mobile* for they know not what. *mob
So, though by different ways the fever seize,
In all, 'tis one and the same mad disease.
Our author, too, as all new zealots do,
Full of conceit and contradiction too,
'Cause the first project* took, is now so vain, * i.e., *The Rover*
To attempt to play the old game o'er again.
The scene* is only changed, for who would lay * setting in Spain, not Naples
A plot, so hopeful, just the same dull way?
Poets, like statesmen, with a little change,
Pass off old politics for new and strange.
Though the few men of sense decry it aloud,
The cheat will pass with the unthinking crowd.
The rabble, 'tis, we court, those powerful things,
Whose voices can impose even laws on kings.
A pox of sense and reason, or dull rules,
Give us an audience that declares for fools.
Our play will then stand fair; we've monsters, too,
Which far exceed your City pope¹ for show.
Almighty rabble, 'tis to you this day
Our humble author dedicates the play,
From those who in our lofty tier* sit, } * upper gallery (the cheap seats)
Down to the dull state-cullies of the pit,² }
Who have much money, and but little wit; }
Whose useful purses, and whose empty skulls,
To private interest make ye public tools,
To work on projects which the wiser frame,
And of fine men of business get the name.
You, who have left caballing* here of late, * intriguing in politics
Employed in matters of a mightier weight,
To you, we make our humble application }
You'd spare some time from your dear, new vocation }
(Of drinking deep, then settling the nation) }
To countenance us, whom commonwealths of old
Did the most politic diversion hold.

¹ **City pope:** every 17 November, the anniversary of Elizabeth I's accession, effigies of the Pope were burnt in London processions.

² **state-cullies... pit:** politically duped simpletons sitting on the benches in front of the stage.

Plays were so useful thought to government
 That laws were made for their establishment.
 Howe'er in schools, differing opinions jar, }
 Yet all agree in the crowded theatre, }
 Which none forsook in any change, or war, }
 That, like their gods, unviolated stood,
 Equally needful to the public good.
 Throw, then, great sirs, some vacant hours away,
 And your petitioners shall humbly pray, etc.

Dramatis Personae

Willmore	the Rover, in love with La Nuche.	
Beaumont	the English ambassador's nephew, in love with La Nuche, engaged to Ariadne.	
Ned Blunt	an English country gentleman.	
Nicholas Fetherfool	an English esquire, Blunt's friend.	
Shift	an English lieutenant	}
Hunt	an ensign	} friends and officers to Willmore.
Harliquin	Willmore's man.	
An old Jew	guardian to the two monsters.	
Abevile	page to Beaumont.	
Don Carlo	an old grandee, in love with La Nuche.	
Ariadne	the English ambassador's step-daughter, in love with Willmore.	
Lucia	Ariadne's kinswoman, a girl.	
La Nuche	a Spanish courtesan, in love with the Rover.	
Petronella Elenora	La Nuche's bawd.	
Aurelia	La Nuche's woman servant.	
Sancho	La Nuche's hired guard/bully.	
A woman giant.		
A dwarf, the giant's sister.		
Scaramouche, servants, musicians, stagehands and spectators.		

Setting: Madrid.

The play is dedicated to James, Duke of York, the future James II, referring to 'the encouragement Your Royal Highness was pleased to give the Rover at his first appearance, and the concern you were pleased to have for his second'. Signed A. Behn.

Act I, scene 1.

Enter Willmore, Blunt, Fetherfool and Hunt, two more in military uniform, and Rag, the captain's boy.

WILLMORE Wait, this is the English ambassador's. I'll enquire if Beaumont be returned from Paris.

FETHERFOOL Prithee, dear captain, no more delays, unless thou thinkst he will invite us to dinner. For this fine, thin, sharp air of Madrid has a most notable faculty of provoking an appetite. Prithee, let's to the tavern.

WILLMORE I will not wait —

Willmore knocks; enter a porter.

— Friend, is the ambassador's nephew, Mr Beaumont, returned to Madrid yet? If he be, I would speak with him.

PORTER I'll let him know so much. *(Goes in, shuts the door.)*

BLUNT Whe, how now! What's the door shut upon us?

FETHERFOOL And with reason, Ned. 'Tis dinner time in the ambassador's kitchen, and should they let the savoury steam out, what a world of Castillians would there be at the door feeding upon it! — Oh, there's no living in Spain when the pot's uncover'd.

BLUNT Nay, 'tis a nation of the finest clean teeth —

FETHERFOOL Teeth, 'Gad! If they use their swords no oftener, a scabbard will last an age.

Enter Shift from the house.

WILLMORE Honest lieutenant —

SHIFT My noble captain — welcome to Madrid. What, Mr Blunt, and my honoured friend Nicholas Fetherfool, esquire!

FETHERFOOL Thy hand, honest Shift — *(Blunt and Fetherfool embrace him.)*

WILLMORE And how, lieutenant, how stand affairs in this unsanctified town? How does love's great artillery, the fair La Nuche, from whose bright eyes the little wanton god throws darts to wound mankind?

SHIFT Faith, she carries all before her still, undoes her fellow-traders in love's art. And amongst the number, old Carlo de Minalta Segosa pays high for two nights in a week.

WILLMORE Hah — Carlo! Death, what a greeting's here? Carlo, the happy man! A dog! A rascal, gain the bright La Nuche? Oh, Fortune! Cursed, blind, mistaken Fortune, eternal friend to fools! Fortune! that takes the noble rate from man, to place it on her idol, self-interest.

SHIFT Whe, faith, captain, I should think her heart might stand as fair for you as any, could you be less satirical — But, by this light, captain, you return her raillery a little too roughly.

WILLMORE Her raillery! By this hand, I had rather be handsomely abused, than dully flattered. But, when she touches on my poverty, my honourable poverty, she presses me too sensibly — For nothing is so sensitive as poverty — But, damn her, I'll think of her no more, for she's a devil, though her form be angel! Is Beaumont come from Paris yet?

SHIFT He is. I came with him. He's impatient of your return. I'll let him know you're here. *(Exit Shift.*

FETHERFOOL *(Aside to Blunt)* Whe, what a pox ails the captain o'th' sudden? He looks as sullenly as a routed general, or a lover after hard service.

BLUNT *(Aside to Fetherfool)* Oh — something the lieutenant has told him about a wench, and when Cupid's in his breeches, the devil's ever in his head — *(To Willmore)* How now! — What a pox is the matter with you? You look so scurvily now — What, is the gentlewoman otherwise provided? Has she cashiered ye for want of pay? Or what other dire mischance — Hah —

WILLMORE Do not trouble me —

BLUNT Ads hartlikins, but I will, and beat thee, too. But I'll know the cause. I heard Shift tell thee something about La Nuche, a damsel I have often heard thee fool enough to sigh for.

WILLMORE Confound the mercenary jilt!

BLUNT Nay, ads hartlikins, they are all so. Though I thought you had been whore-proof, 'tis enough for us fools, country gentlemen, esquires, and cullies to miscarry in their amorous adventures. You men of wit weather all storms, you.

WILLMORE Oh, sir, you're become a new man, wise and wary, and can no more be cozened.

BLUNT Not by womankind. And for man, I think my sword will secure me. Pox, I thought a two months' absence and a siege would have put such trifles out of thy head. You did not used to be such a miracle of constancy.

WILLMORE That absence makes me think of her so much; and all the passions thou findest about me, are to the sex alone! Give me a woman, Ned, a fine, young, amorous wanton who would allay this fire that makes me rave thus, and thou shouldst find me no longer particular, but cold as winter nights to this La Nuche. Yet, since I lost my little charming gypsy, nothing has gone so near my heart as this.

BLUNT Aye, there was a girl, the only she-thing that could reconcile me to the petticoats again after my Naples adventure, when the whore robbed and stripped me.

WILLMORE Oh, name not Hellena! She was a saint to be adored on holy days.

Enter Beaumont.

BEAUMOND Willmore! My careless, wild inconstant — How is't, my lucky Rover? *(Embracing Willmore)*

WILLMORE My life! My soul! How glad am I to find thee in my arms again — and well — When left you Paris? Paris, that city of pottage and crab-wine, swarming with lackeys and fellows whose government is carried on by most hands, not most voices — And, prithee, how does Belvile and his lady?

BEAUMOND I left 'em both in health at St Germain.

WILLMORE Faith, I have wished myself with ye at the old temple of Bacchus at St Cloud, to sacrifice a bottle and a damsel to his deity.

BEAUMOND My constant place of worship whilst there, though, for want of new saints, my zeal grew somewhat cold, which I was ever fain to supply with a bottle, the old remedy when Phillis* is sullen or absent. *i.e., a woman

WILLMORE Now thou talkst of Phillis, prithee, dear Harry, what women hast in store?

BEAUMOND I'll tell thee. But first, inform me who these two sparks are.

WILLMORE 'Egad, and so they are, child. Greet 'em — They are my friends — True blades, Hal, highly guilty of the royal crime, poor and brave, loyal fugitives.

BEAUMOND I love and honour 'em, sir, as such — *(Bowing to Blunt.*

BLUNT Sir, there's neither love nor honour lost.

FETHERFOOL Sir, I scorn to be behindhand in civilities.

BEAUMOND *(To Fetherfool)* At first sight, I find I am much yours, sir.

FETHERFOOL Sir, I love and honour any man that's a friend to Captain Willmore — and therefore, I am yours —

Enter Shift.

— Well, honest lieutenant, how does thy body? — When shall Ned and thou and I crack a biscuit o'er a glass of wine, have a slice of treason, and settle the nation, hah?

SHIFT You know, squire, I am devoted yours. *(They talk aside.*

BEAUMOND Prithee, who are these?

WILLMORE Whe, the first you saluted is the same Ned Blunt you have often heard Belvile and I speak of. The other is a rarity of another nature, one Squire Fetherfool of Croydon, a tame Justice of the Peace, who lived as innocently as ale and fool could keep him, till, for a mistaken kindness to one of the royal party, he lost his commission, and got the reputation of a sufferer. He's rich, but covetous as an alderman.

BEAUMOND What a pox dost keep 'em company for, who have neither wit enough to divert thee, nor good nature enough to serve thee?

WILLMORE Faith, Harry 'tis true. And if there were no more charity than profit in it, a man would sooner keep a cough of the lungs than be troubled with 'em. But the rascals have a blind side, as all conceited coxcombs have, which, when I've nothing else to do, I shall expose to advance our mirth. The rogues must be cozened, because they're so positive they never can be so — But I am now for softer joys, for woman, for woman in abundance — Dear Hal, inform me where I may safely unlade my heart.

BEAUMOND The same man still, wild and wanton!

WILLMORE And would not change to be the Catholic king.

BEAUMOND I perceive marriage has not tamed you, nor a wife who had all the charms of her sex.

WILLMORE Aye — *(with a sham sadness)* She was too good for mortals.

BEAUMOND I think thou hadst her but a month. Prithee, how died she?

WILLMORE Faith, just with a fit of kindness, poor soul — She would to sea with me, and in a storm — far from land — she gave up the ghost. 'Twas a loss, but I must bear it with a Christian fortitude.

BEAUMOND Short happinesses vanish like to dreams.

WILLMORE Aye, faith, and nothing remains with me but the sad remembrance — Not so much as the least part of her hundred thousand crowns. Brussels, that enchanted court, has eased me of that grief, where our heroes act Tantalus better than ever Ovid described him, condemned daily to see an apparition of meat, food in vision only.³ Faith, I had tenderness, was good-natured and borrowed upon the public faith as far as 'twould go — But come — let's leave this mortifying discourse, and tell me how the price of pleasure goes.

BEAUMOND At the old rates still. He that gives most is happiest. Some few there are for love!

WILLMORE Ah, one of the last, dear Beaumont, and if a heart or sword can purchase her, I'll bid as fair as the best. Damn it, I hate a whore that asks me money.

BEAUMOND Yet I have known thee venture all thy stock for a new woman.

WILLMORE Aye, such a fool I was in my dull days of constancy. But I am now for change (and should I pay as often, 'twould undo me) — For change, my dear, of place, clothes, wine, and women. Variety is the soul of pleasure, a good unknown if we lack faith to find it.

BEAUMOND Thou wouldst renounce that fond opinion, Willmore, didst thou but see a beauty here in town whose charms have power to fix inconstant Nature or Fortune were she tottering on her wheel.

WILLMORE Her name, my dear, her name!

BEAUMOND I would not breathe it even in my complaints
Lest amorous winds should bear it o'er the world,
And make mankind her slaves;
But that it is a name too cheaply known,
And she that owns it may be as cheaply purchased.

WILLMORE Hah! Cheaply purchased, too. I languish for her.

BEAUMOND Aye, there's the devil on't, She is — a whore —

WILLMORE Ah, what a charming sound that mighty word bears.

BEAUMOND Damn her, she'll be thine, or anybody's.

WILLMORE I die for her —

BEAUMOND Then for her qualities —

WILLMORE No more — Ye gods, I ask no more.

Be she but fair and much a whore —
Come, let's to her.

³ **Tantalus... only:** When Tantalus sacrificed his son Pelops and offered him up as a banquet to the gods, they punished him with eternal hunger and thirst. He was cast into the underworld and placed near water and fruit that receded whenever he tried to eat or drink.

BEAUMOND Perhaps tomorrow you may see this woman.

WILLMORE Death, 'tis an age.

FETHERFOOL Oh, captain, the strangest news, captain.

WILLMORE Prithee, what?

FETHERFOOL Whe, Lieutenant Shift here tells us of two monsters arrived from Mexico, Jews of vast fortunes, with an old Jew uncle their guardian. They are worth a hundred thousand pounds apiece. — Mercy upon us, whe, 'tis a sum able to purchase all Flanders again from his most Christian majesty.

WILLMORE Ha, ha, ha! Monsters!

BEAUMOND He tells you truth, Willmore.

BLUNT But hark ye, lieutenant, are you sure they are not married?

BEAUMOND Married? Who the devil would venture on such formidable ladies?

FETHERFOOL What, venture on 'em? By the Lord, Harry, and that would I, though I'm a Justice of the Peace, and they be Jews (which to a Christian is a thousand reasons).

BLUNT (*aside*) Is the devil in you to declare our design?

FETHERFOOL (*aside*) Shhh, as close as a Jesuit.

BEAUMOND I admire your courage, sir, but one of them is so little, and so deformed, 'tis thought she is not capable of marriage. And the other is so huge an overgrown giant, no man dares venture on her.

WILLMORE Prithee, let's go see 'em. What do they pay for going in?

FETHERFOOL Pay? — I'd have you to know they are monsters of quality.

SHIFT And not to be seen but by particular favour of their guardian, whom I am got acquainted with from the friendship I have with the merchant where they lay. The giant, sir, is in love with me; the dwarf, with ensign Hunt, and as we may manage matters, it may prove lucky.

BEAUMOND And didst thou see the show 'The Elephant and the Mouse'?

SHIFT Yes, and pleased 'em wondrously with news I brought 'em of a famous mountebank who is coming to Madrid. Here are his adverts — who, amongst other his marvellous cures, pretends to restore mistakes in Nature, to new-mould a face and body, though never so misshapen, to exact proportion and beauty. This news has made me gracious to the ladies, and I am to bring 'em word of the arrival of this famous empiric, and to negotiate the business of their reformation.

WILLMORE And do they think to be restored to moderate sizes?

SHIFT Much pleased with the hope, and are resolved to try, at any rate.

FETHERFOOL Shhh, lieutenant — Not too much of their transformation. We shall have the captain put in for a share, and the devil would not have him his rival. Ned and I are resolved to take a throw of the dice for 'em as they are — Hah, Ned. (*Willmore and Beaumont read the advert.*)

BLUNT Yes, if there were any hopes of your keeping a secret.

FETHERFOOL Nay, nay, Ned. The world knows I am a plaguy fellow at your secrets. That, and my share of the cost, shall be my part, for Shift says the guardian must be bribed for consent. Now, the other share of

the money and the speeches shall be thy part, for thou hast a pretty knack that way. Now, Shift shall bring matters neatly about, and we'll pay him by the day, or in gross, when we are married. — Hah, Shift.

SHIFT Sir, I shall be reasonable.

WILLMORE (*Aside*) I am sure Fetherfool and Blunt have some wise design upon these two monsters — It must be so — And this advert has put an extravagant thought into my head — Hark ye, Shift —
(Whispers to him.

BLUNT The devil's in it if this will not redeem my reputation with the captain, and give him to understand that all the wit does not lie in the family of the Willmores, but that this noddle of mine can be fruitful, too, upon occasion.

FETHERFOOL Aye, and Lord, how we'll domineer, Ned, hah — over Willmore and the rest of the renegado officers, when we have married these lady monsters. Hah, Ned!

BLUNT — Then to return back to Essex worth a million!

FETHERFOOL And I to Croydon —

BLUNT — Lolling in coach and six —

FETHERFOOL — Be dubbed Right Worshipful —

BLUNT And stand for Knight of the Shire.* * MP for the county

WILLMORE (*Aside to Shift*) Enough — I must have my share of this jest, and, for diverse and sundry reasons thereunto belonging, must be this very mountebank expected.

SHIFT Faith, sir, and that were no hard matter. For a day or two, the town will believe it the same they look for. And the stagehands and musicians are all ready.

WILLMORE Well enough. Add but a Harlequin and Scaramouch, and I shall mount *en cuerpo*.*

* just as I am, without a cloak (Spanish)

SHIFT Take no care for that, sir. Your man and ensign Hunt are excellent at those two. I saw 'em act 'em the other day to a wonder. They'll be glad of the employment. Myself will be a stagehand.

WILLMORE No more, get 'em ready, and give it out the man of art's arrived. Be diligent and secret, for these two politic asses must be cozened.

SHIFT I will about the business instantly. *(Exit Shift.*

BEAUMOND This fellow will do feats if he keep his word.

WILLMORE I'll give you mine he shall — But, dear Beaumont, where shall we meet anon?

BEAUMOND I thank ye for that — 'Gad, ye shall dine with me.

FETHERFOOL A good motion —

WILLMORE I beg your pardon now, dear Beaumont — I, having lately nothing else to do, took a command of horse from the general at the last siege. From which, I am just arrived, and my baggage is behind, which I must attend to.

FETHERFOOL (*Aside*) Pox on it, now there's a dinner lost. 'Twas ever an unlucky rascal.

BEAUMOND To tempt thee more, thou shalt see my wife that is to be.

WILLMORE Pox on it, I am the lewdest company in Christendom with your honest women — But — What, art thou to be noosed, then?

BEAUMOND 'Tis so designed by my uncle, if an old grandee, my rival, prevent it not. The wench is very pretty, young, and rich, and lives in the same house with me, for 'tis my aunt's daughter.

WILLMORE Much good may it do ye, Harry. I pity you, but 'tis the common grievance of you happy men of fortune. *(Goes towards the house door with Beaumont.)*

Enter La Nuche, Aurelia, Petronella, Sancho. Women veiled a little.

AURELIA *(Looking on Willmore)* Heavens, madam, is not that the English captain?

LA NUCHE 'Tis, and with him Don Henrick, the ambassador's nephew — How my heart pants and heaves at sight of him! Some fire of the old flame's remaining, which I must strive to extinguish. For I'll not bate a ducat of this price I've set upon myself, for all the pleasures youth or love can bring me — For see, Aurelia — the sad memento of a decayed, poor, old, forsaken whore in Petronella. Consider her, and then commend my prudence.

WILLMORE Hah, women! —

FETHERFOOL Egad, and fine ones too, I'll tell you that.

WILLMORE No matter. Kindness is better sauce to woman than beauty! By this hand, she looks at me! —
Why dost hold me? *(Fetherfool holds him.)*

FETHERFOOL Whe, what a devil, art mad?

WILLMORE Raging! As vigorous youth kept long from beauty.

Wild for the charming sex, eager for woman!

I long to give a loose to love and pleasure.

BLUNT These are not women, sir, for you to ruffle —

WILLMORE Have a care of your persons of quality, Ned! *(Goes to La Nuche.)*

— Those lovely eyes were never made to throw their darts in vain!

LA NUCHE The conquest would be hardly worth the pain —

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Hah, La Nuche! With what a proud disdain she flung away — *(Aloud)* Stay, I will not part so with you — *(Holds her.)*

Enter Ariadne and Lucia with footmen.

ARIADNE Who are these before us, Lucia?

LUCIA I know not, madam. But if you make not haste home, you'll be troubled with Carlo, your importunate lover, who is just behind us.

ARIADNE Hang me, a lovely man! What lady's that? Stay.

PETRONELLA What insolence is this? This villain will spoil all —

FETHERFOOL Whe, captain, are you quite mad? — Dost know where thou art? Prithee, be civil —

WILLMORE Go, proud and cruel!

(Turns her from him.)

Enter Carlo, and two or three Spanish servants following. Petronella goes to him.

CARLO Hah, affronted by a drunken islander, a saucy foreigner! —

(To his servants whilst he takes La Nuche) Draw — whilst I lead her off — *(To La Nuche)* Fear not, lady.

You have the honour of my sword to guard ye!

WILLMORE Hah, Carlo — Ye lie — It cannot guard the boasting fool that wears it — Be gone — and look not back upon this woman — *(Snatches her from him.)* One single glance destroys thee —

(They draw and fight; Carlo getting hindmost of his Spaniards, the English beat 'em off.)

The ladies run away, all but Ariadne and Lucia.

LUCIA Heavens, madam, why de ye stay?

ARIADNE To pray for that dear stranger! — And see, my prayers are heard, and he's returned in safety — This door shall shelter me to o'erhear the quarrel. *(Steps aside.)*

Enter Willmore, Blunt, Fetherfool. Fetherfool looking big and putting up his sword.

FETHERFOOL The noble captain be affronted by a starched ruff and beard, a coward *en cuerpo*, a walking bunch of garlic, a pickled pilchard! Abuse the noble captain, and bear it off in state! Boto a Christmas,⁴ sweetheart. These things must not be whilst Nicholas Fetherfool wears a sword.

BLUNT Pox o' these women. I thought no good would come of it. Besides, where's the jest in affronting honest women, if there be such a thing in the nation?

FETHERFOOL Hang it, 'twas the devil and all —

WILLMORE Ha, ha, ha! Why, good honest, homespun, country gentlemen, who do ye think those were?

FETHERFOOL Were! Whe, ladies of quality going to their devotion. Who should they be?

BLUNT Whe, faith, and so I thought, too.

WILLMORE Whe, that very one woman I spoke to is ten whores in Surrey.

FETHERFOOL Prithee, speak softly, man. 'S life, we shall be poniarded for keeping thee company.

WILLMORE Wise Mr Justice, give me your warrant, and if I do not prove 'em whores, whip me.

FETHERFOOL Prithee, hold thy scandalous, blasphemous tongue. As if I did not know whores from persons of quality.

WILLMORE Will you believe me when you lie with her? For thou art a rich ass, and mayst do it.

FETHERFOOL Whores — Ha, ha —

WILLMORE 'Tis strange logic now: because your bond is better than mine, I must not know a whore better than you.

BLUNT If this be a whore, as thou sayst, I understand nothing — By this light, such a wench would pass for a person of quality in London.

⁴ **Boto...Christmas:** 'boto a Christo' was a familiar Spanish oath.

FETHERFOOL Few ladies have I seen at a sheriff's feast have better faces, or worn so good clothes. And by the Lord, Harry, if these be of the gentle-craft, I'd not give a silver coin for an honest woman for my use.

WILLMORE Come, follow me into the church, for thither, I am sure, they're gone. And I will let you see what a wretched thing you had been, had you lived seven years longer in Surrey stewed in ale and beef-broth.

FETHERFOOL Oh, dear Willmore, name not those savoury things. There's no jesting with my stomach. It sleeps now, but if it wakes, woe be to your shares at the tavern.

BLUNT (*Aside*) I'll say that for Fetherfool: if his heart were but half so good as his stomach, he were a brave fellow. *(Exeunt.)*

ARIADNE I am resolved to follow — And learn, if possible, who 'tis has made this sudden conquest o'er me. *(All go off.)*

Act I, scene 2. *A church is revealed, with a great many people as at devotion; soft music playing.*

Enter La Nuche, Aurelia, Petronella and Sancho. To them, Willmore, Fetherfool, Blunt; then Ariadne, Lucia. Fetherfool bows to La Nuche and Petronella.

FETHERFOOL Now, as I hope to be saved, Blunt, she's a most melodious lady. I wish I were worthy to purchase a sin or so with her. Would not such a beauty reconcile thy quarrel to the sex?

BLUNT No, were she an angel in that shape.

FETHERFOOL Why, what a pox? Couldst not lie with her if she'd let thee? By the Lord, Harry, as arrant a dog as I am, I'd fain see any of Cupid's cook-maids put me out of countenance with such a shoulder of mutton.

ARIADNE (*Looking at Willmore*) See how he gazes on her — Lucia, go nearer and o'erhear 'em. *(Lucia listens.)*

WILLMORE (*Aside*) Death, how the charming hypocrite looks today, with such a soft devotion in her eyes. As if, even now, she were a praising heaven for all the advantages it has blessed her with.

BLUNT (*To Fetherfool*) Look how Willmore eyes her. The rogue's smitten heart-deep — Whores —

FETHERFOOL (*To Blunt*) Only a trick to keep her to himself — He thought the name of a Spanish harlot would fright us from attempting — I must divert him. — (*Aloud*) How is it, captain? — Prithee, mind this music — Is it not most seraphical?

WILLMORE Pox, let the fiddlers mind, and tune their pipes. I've higher pleasures now.

FETHERFOOL Oh, have ye so? What, with whores, captain? — (*Aside*) 'Tis a most delicious gentlewoman.

PETRONELLA (*To La Nuche*) Pray, madam, mind that cavalier who takes such pains to recommend himself to you.

LA NUCHE Yes, for a fine conceited fool —

PETRONELLA Rogue, a fool, what else?

LA NUCHE Right, they are our noblest customers, a fool, and a rich fool, and an English rich fool —

FETHERFOOL (*Aside to Blunt*) 'Sbud, she eyes me, Ned. I'll set myself in order. It may take — Hah —
(Sets himself.

PETRONELLA Leave him to me to manage. I'll to him —

LA NUCHE Or to the devil, so I had one minute's time to speak to Willmore in.

PETRONELLA And accosting him thus — Tell him —

LA NUCHE (*In a hasty tone*) — I am desperately in love with him, and am daughter, wife, or mistress to some grandee — Bemoan the condition of women of quality in Spain, who, by too much constraint, are obliged to speak first — But, were we blessed like other nations, where men and women meet —
(Speaking so fast, Petronella, offering to put in her word, is still prevented by 'tother's running on.

PETRONELLA What herds of cuckolds would Spain breed — 'S life, I could find in my heart to forswear your service. Have I taught ye your trade to become my instructor how to cozen a dull, phlegmatic, greasy-brained Englishman? — Go, and expect your wishes.

WILLMORE So, she has sent her matron to our coxcomb. She saw he was a dupe fit for game — Who would not be a rascal to be rich, a dog, an ass, a beaten hardened coward? — By Heaven, I will possess this gay insensible, to make me hate her — most extremely curse her — See — if she be not fallen to prayer again, from thence to flattery, jilting and purse-taking, to make the proverb good — (*To La Nuche*) My fair, false Sybil, what inspirations are you waiting from heaven? New arts to cheat mankind! — Tell me, with what face canst thou be devout, or ask anything from thence, who hast made so lewd a use of what it has already lavished on thee?

LA NUCHE Oh, my careless Rover! I perceive all your hot shot is not yet spent in battle. You have a volley in reserve for me, still — Faith, officer, the town has wanted mirth in your absence.

WILLMORE And so might all the wiser part for thee, who hast no mirth, no gaiety about thee, but when thou wouldst design some coxcomb's ruin. To all the rest, a soul thou hast so dull, that neither love, nor mirth, not wit or wine, can wake it to good nature — Thou'rt one who lazily workst in thy trade, and sellst for ready money so much kindness. A tame, cold sufferer only, and no more.

LA NUCHE What, you would have a mistress like a squirrel in a cage, always in action? — One who is as free of her favours as I am sparing of mine? — Well, captain — I have known the time when La Nuche was such a wit, such a humour, such a shape, and such a voice (though to say truth, I sing but scurvily), 'twas comedy to see and hear me!

WILLMORE Whe, yes, faith, for once thou wert, and for once mayst be again, till thou knowst thy man, and knowst him to be poor. At first you liked me, too! You saw me gay! No marks of poverty dwelt in my face or dress! And then I was the dearest, loveliest man — All this was to my outside. Death, you made love to my breeches, caressed my garniture and feather. An English fool of quality you thought me — 'S heart, I have known a woman dote on quality, though he has stunk through all his perfumes. One who never went all to bed to her, but left his teeth, an eye, false back and breast, sometimes his

palate, too, upon her dressing table, whilst her fair arms hugged the dismembered carcass, and swore him all perfection, because of quality.

LA NUCHE But he was rich, good captain, was he not?

WILLMORE Oh, most damnably, and a confounded blockhead, two certain remedies against your pride and scorn.

LA NUCHE Have you done, sir?

WILLMORE With thee and all thy sex, of which I've tried a hundred, and found none true or honest.

LA NUCHE Oh, I doubt not the number! For you are one of those healthy-stomached lovers that can digest a mistress in a night, and hunger again next morning. A pox of your whining, consumptive constitution, who are only constant for lack of appetite. You have a swingeing stomach to variety, and want, having set an edge upon your invention (with which you cut through all difficulties), you grow more impudent by success.

WILLMORE I am not always scorned, then.

LA NUCHE I have known you as confidently put your hand into your pockets for money in a morning, as if the devil had been your banker, when you knew you put 'em off at night as empty as your gloves.

WILLMORE And, it may be, found money there, too.

LA NUCHE Then, with this poverty, so proud you are, you will not give the wall to the Catholic king unless his picture hung upon it. No servants, no money, no meat, always on foot, and yet undaunted still.

WILLMORE Allow me that, child.

LA NUCHE I wonder what the devil makes you so termagant on our sex. 'Tis not your high feeding, for your grandees, only, dine, and that but when fortune pleases — For your parts, who are the poor dependant, brown bread and old Adam's ale* is only current amongst ye. Yet if little Eve walk in the Garden, the starved, lean rogues neigh after her, as if they were in Paradise.

*Adam's ale: water, the only drink in Eden

WILLMORE Still true to love, you see —

LA NUCHE I heard an English Franciscan monk swear, that if the king's followers could be brought to pray as well as fast, there would be more saints amongst 'em than the church has ever canonised.

WILLMORE All this, with pride, I own, since 'tis a royal cause I suffer for. Go, pursue your business your own way. Ensnare the fool — I saw the nets you set, and how that face was ordered for the conquest, your eyes brimful of dying, lying love! And, now and then, a wishing glance or sigh thrown, as by chance! Which, when the happy coxcomb caught — you feigned a blush, as angry and ashamed of the discovery. And all this cunning's for a little mercenary gain — fine clothes, perhaps some jewels too, whilst all the finery cannot hide the whore!

LA NUCHE There's your eternal quarrel to our sex. 'Twere a fine trade, indeed, to keep shop and give our ware for love. Would it make a profit, think ye, captain, to trick and dress to receive all would enter? Faith, captain, try the trade.

PETRONELLA (*Returning from discourse with Fetherfool, speaks to Sancho.*) What, in discourse with this
railer? — (*To La Nuche*) Come away — Poverty's catching.

WILLMORE So is the pox, good matron, of which you can afford good pennyworths.

LA NUCHE He charms me even with his angry looks, and will undo me yet.

PETRONELLA Let's leave this place. I'll tell you my success as we go.

(Exeunt some one way, some another; the front of the church shuts; Willmore, Blunt, Ariadne and Lucia remain.)

WILLMORE She's gone, and all the plagues of pride go with her.

BLUNT Hartlikins, follow her — Pox on it, if I'd but as good a hand at this game as thou hast, I'd venture upon
any chance —

WILLMORE Damn her, come, let's to dinner. Where's Fetherfool?

BLUNT Followed a good woodman who gave him the sign. He'll lodge the deer before night.

WILLMORE Followed her! — He durst not, the fool wants confidence to look at her.

BLUNT Oh, you know not how a country justice may be improv'd by travel. The rogue was hedged in at home
with the fear of his neighbours and the penal statutes. Now he's broke loose, he runs, neighing like a
stallion, upon the common.

WILLMORE However, I'll not believe this — Let's follow 'em. *(Exeunt Willmore and Blunt.)*

ARIADNE He is in love, but with a courtesan — Some comfort that.

We'll after him — 'Tis a faint-hearted lover

Who, for the first discouragement, gives over. *(Exeunt Ariadne and Lucia.)*

Act II, scene 1.

*Enter Fetherfool and Sancho, passing over the stage; after them,
Willmore and Blunt, followed by Ariadne and Lucia.*

WILLMORE 'Tis so, by heaven. He's haggling with her pimp. I'll spare my curses on him for having her. He
has a plague beyond 'em. — Hark ye, I'll never love nor lie with woman more, those slaves to lust, to
vanity and interest.

BLUNT Ha, captain! *(Shaking his head and smiling.)*

WILLMORE Come, let's go drink damnation to 'em all.

BLUNT Not all, good captain.

WILLMORE All, for I hate 'em all —

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Heavens! If he should indeed!

BLUNT But, Robert, I have found you most inclined to a damsel when you had a bottle in your head.

WILLMORE Give me thy hand, Ned — Curse me, despise me, point me out for cowardice if e'er thou seest
me court a woman more. Nay, when thou knowst I ask any of the sex a civil question again — A
plague upon 'em! How they've handled me — Come, let's go drink, I say — Confusion to the sex — A
woman! — No, I will be burnt with my own fire to cinders ere any of the brood shall snuff my flame —

ARIADNE (*Aside, passing by*) He cannot be so wicked to keep this resolution, sure? — Faith, I must be resolved — (*To Willmore*) You've made a pious resolution, sir, had you the grace to keep it —
(*As she passes on, he pauses and looks at her.*)

WILLMORE Hm — What's that?

BLUNT That? — Oh, — nothing — but a woman — Come away.

WILLMORE A woman! Damn her, what mischief made her cross my way, just on the point of reformation?

BLUNT (*Aside*) I find the devil will not lose so hopeful a sinner. — Hold, hold, captain, have you no regard to your own soul? 'Ds hartlikins, 'tis a woman, a very arrant woman.

ARIADNE Your friend informs you right, sir. I am a woman.

WILLMORE Aye, child, or I were a lost man — Therefore, dear lovely creature —

ARIADNE — How can you tell, sir?

WILLMORE Oh, I have naturally a large faith, child, and thou hast a promising form, a tempting motion, clean limbs, well dressed, and a most damnable, inviting air.

ARIADNE I am not to be sold, and so not fond of praise I merit not.

WILLMORE What? Not to be sold, too! By this light, child, thou speakst like a cherubim. I have not heard so obliging a sound from the mouth of womankind this many a day — I find we must be better acquainted, my dear.

ARIADNE Your reason, good, familiar sir? I see no such necessity.

WILLMORE Child, you are mistaken. I am in great necessity; for first, I love thee — desperately — Have I not damned my soul already for thee, and wouldst thou be so wicked to refuse a little consolation to my body? Then, secondly, I see thou art frank and good-natured, and wilt do reason gratis.

ARIADNE How prove ye that, good Mr Philosopher?

WILLMORE Thou sayst thou'rt not to be sold, and I'm sure thou'rt to be had — That lovely body, of so divine a form, those soft, smooth arms and hands, were made to embrace as well as be embraced. That delicate, white, rising bosom to be pressed, and all thy other charms to be enjoyed.

ARIADNE By one that can esteem 'em to their worth, can set a value and a rate upon 'em.

WILLMORE Name not those words. They grate my ears like jointure,⁵ that dull, conjugal cant that frights the generous lover! Rate? — Death, let the old dotards talk of rates, and pay it to atone for the defects of impotence. Let the sly statesman, who cheats the Commonwealth with his grave politics, pay for the sin, that he may dote in secret. Let the brisk fool inch out his meagre sense with a large purse more eloquent than he. But tell not me of rates, who bring a heart, youth, vigour, and a tongue to sing the praise of every single pleasure thou shalt give me.

ARIADNE Then, if I should be kind, I perceive you would not keep the secret.

⁵ **jointure**: the income due to a widow in return for the dowry that has been given to her husband.

WILLMORE Secrecy is a damned, ungrateful sin, child, known only where religion and weak beer are current, despised where Apollo and the vine bless the country. You find none of Jove's mistresses hid in roots and plants, but fixed stars in heaven for all to gaze and wonder at — And though I am no god, my dear, I'll do a mortal's part, and generously tell the admiring world what hidden charms thou hast. Come, lead me to some place of happiness —

BLUNT (*To Lucia*) Prithee, honest damsel, be not so full of questions. Will a pistole or two do thee any hurt?

LUCIA None at all, sir —

BLUNT Thou speakst like a hearty wench — And, I believe, hast not been one of Venus' handmaids so long but thou understandst thy trade — In short, fair damsel, this honest fellow here, who is so termagant upon thy lady, is my friend, my particular friend, and therefore I would have him handsomely and well-favouredly abused — You understand me?

LUCIA Truly, sir, a friendly request — But in what nature abused?

BLUNT Nature! — Why, any of your tricks would serve — But if he could be conveniently stripped and beaten, or tossed in a blanket, or any such trivial business, thou wouldst do me a singular kindness. As for robbery, he defies the devil: an empty pocket is an antidote against that ill.

LUCIA Your money, sir? And if he be not cozened, say a Spanish woman has neither wit nor invention upon when required.

BLUNT 'S hartlikins, how I shall love and honour thee for it — Here's money — and —

(Talks to her with joy and grimaces.

ARIADNE But, who was that you entertained at church but now? —

WILLMORE Faith, one, who, for her beauty, merits that glorious title that she wears. It was — a whore, child.

ARIADNE That's but a scurvy name. Yet, if I'm not mistaken in those false eyes of yours, they looked with longing love upon that — whore, child.

WILLMORE Thou art right, and, by this hand, my soul was full as wishing as my eyes. But a pox on't, you women have all a certain jargon, or gibberish, peculiar to yourselves: of value, rate, present, interest, settlement, advantage, price, maintenance, and the devil and all of fopperies; which, in plain terms, signify ready money, by way of fine before entrance. So that an honest, well-meaning merchant of love finds no credit amongst ye without his bill of lading.

ARIADNE We are not all so cruel — But the devil on't is, your good-natured heart is likely accompanied with an ill face — and worse wit.

WILLMORE Faith, child, a ready dish, when a man's appetite is up, is better than a tedious feast. I never saw any man yet cut my piece. Some are for beauty, some for wit, and some for the secret, but I for all, so it be in a kind girl. And, as for wit in woman, so she say pretty, fond things, we understand, though true or false, no matter.

ARIADNE Give the devil his due, you are a very conscientious lover. I love a man that scorns to impose dull truth and constancy on a mistress.

WILLMORE Constancy, that current coin with fools! No, child, heaven keep that curse from our doors.

ARIADNE Hang it, it loses time and profit. New lovers have new vows and new presents, whilst the old feed upon a dull repetition of what they did when they were lovers. 'Tis like eating the cold meat oneself, after having given a friend a feast —

WILLMORE — Yes, that's the thrifty food for the family when the guests are gone. Faith, child, thou hast made a neat and a hearty speech. But, prithee, my dear, for the future, leave out that same 'profit' and 'present', for I have a natural aversion to hard words. And for matter of quick dispatch in the business — give me thy hand, child — Let us but start fair, and if thou outstripst me, thou art a nimble racer. *(Lucia sees Shift.)*

LUCIA Oh, madam, let's be gone. Yonder's Lieutenant Shift, who, if he see us, will certainly give an account of it to Mr Beaumont. Let's get in through the garden. I have the key —

ARIADNE Here's company coming, and, for several reasons, I would not be seen. *(Offers to go.)*

WILLMORE Gad, child, nor I. Reputation is tender — Therefore, prithee let's retire — *(Offers to go with her.)*

ARIADNE You must not stir a step.

WILLMORE Not stir! No magic circle can detain me, if you go.

ARIADNE *(Speaking hastily)* Follow me, then, at a distance, and observe where I enter. And at night (if your passion lasts so long), return, and you shall find admittance into a garden.

(He runs out after her.)

Enter Shift.

SHIFT Well, sir, the mountebank's come, and just going to begin in the piazza. I have ordered matters so that you shall have a sight of the monsters, and leave to court 'em. And when won, to give the guardian a quarter of the dowries.

BLUNT Good. But, shhh! — Here's the captain, who must by no means know our good fortune till he see us in state —

Enter Willmore. Shift goes to him.

SHIFT All things are ready, sir, for our design: the house prepared as you directed me, the guardian wrought, by the persuasions of the two monsters, to take a lodging there, and try the baths of reformation. The bank's preparing, and the stagehands and musicians all ready, and the impatient town flocked together to behold the man of wonders. And nothing wanting but your donship and a proper speech.

WILLMORE 'Tis well. I'll go fit myself with a costume, and think of a speech, meanwhile. In the meantime, go you and amuse the gaping fools that expect my coming. *(Goes out.)*

Enter Fetherfool, singing a popular ballad and dancing.

FETHERFOOL *(sings)* Have you heard a Spanish lady,
How she wooed an English man?

BLUNT Whe, how now, Fetherfool?

FETHERFOOL (*sings*) Garments gay and rich as may be,
Decked with jewels, had she on.

BLUNT Whe, how now, justice! What, run mad out of the dog-days?

FETHERFOOL (*sings*) Of a comely countenance and grace is she,
A sweeter creature in the world, there could not be.

SHIFT Whe, what the devil's the matter, sir?

BLUNT Stark mad, 'Ds hartlikins.

FETHERFOOL Of a comely countenance — (*Speaking*) Well, lieutenant, the most heroic and illustrious
madonna! Thou sawst her, Ned. (*Singing*) And of a comely counte — (*Speaking*) The most magnetic
face — Well — I knew the charms of these eyes of mine were not made in vain. I was designed for
great things, that's certain — (*Singing*) And a sweeter creature in the world there could not be.

BLUNT What, then the two lady monsters are forgotten? The design upon the million of money, the coach
and six, and patent for right worshipful? All drowned in the joy of this new mistress. (*To Shift*) But
well, lieutenant, since he is so well provided for, you may put in with me for a monster. Such a jest,
and such a sum is not to be lost.

SHIFT (*Aside*) Nor shall not, or I have lost my aim.

FETHERFOOL (*Putting off his hat*) Your pardons, good gentlemen, and though I perceive I shall have no great
need for so trifling a sum as a hundred thousand pound, or so, yet a bargain's a bargain, gentlemen.

BLUNT Nay, 'Ds hartlikins, the lieutenant scorns to do a foul thing, do ye see. But we would not have the
monsters slighted.

FETHERFOOL Slighted! No, sir, I scorn your words. I'd have ye to know that I have as high a respect for madam
monster as any gentleman in Christendom, and so I desire she should understand.

BLUNT Whe, this is that that's handsome.

SHIFT Well, the mountebank's come, lodgings are taken at his house, and the guardian prepared to receive
you, on the aforesaid terms. And some fifty pistoles to the mountebank to appear as your friend, and
the business is done.

FETHERFOOL Which shall be performed accordingly. I have it ready about me.

BLUNT And here's mine. Put 'em together, and let's be speedy, lest some should bribe higher, and put in
before us. (*Fetherfool takes the money, and looks pitifully at it.*)

FETHERFOOL 'Tis a plaguy large sum, Ned. Pray God it turn to account.

BLUNT Account, 'Ds hartlikins, 'tis not in the power of mortal man to cozen me.

SHIFT Oh fie, sir, cozen you, sir? — Well, you'll stay here and see the mountebank. He's coming forth.

*Shouting. Enter from the front a moveable platform, which they fix
on the stage at one side; a little pavillion on't. Music playing,
and stagehands (who are grotesque dancers) to move the platform round below.
(Music plays, and a grotesque dance is performed.)*

Enter Willmore like a mountebank, with a dagger in one hand, and a vial in the other, with Harliquin. Carlo on horseback, with other Spaniards below, and rabble. Ariadne and Lucia above in the balcony, others on the other side. Fetherfool, Hunt and Blunt below.

WILLMORE (*bowing*) Behold this little vial, which contains, in its narrow bounds, what the whole universe cannot purchase, if sold to its true value. This admirable, this miraculous elixir, drawn from the hearts of mandrakes, Phoenix livers, and tongues of mermaids, and distilled by contracted sunbeams, has, besides the unknown power of curing all distempers, both of mind and body, that divine one of animating the heart of man to that degree that, however remiss, cold and cowardly by nature, he shall become vigorous and brave. Oh, stupid and insensible man, when honour and secure renown invites you, to treat it with neglect, even when you need but passive valour to become the heroes of the age; receive a thousand wounds, each of which would let out fleeting life. Here's that can snatch the parting soul in its full career, and bring it back to its native mansion; baffles grim death, and disappoints even fate.

FETHERFOOL Oh, pox, if a man were sure of that now.

WILLMORE Behold, here's demonstration — *(Harliquin stabs himself and falls as if dead.*

FETHERFOOL Hold, hold! Whe, what the devil, is the fellow mad?

BLUNT Why, dost think he's hurt himself?

FETHERFOOL Hurt himself! Whe, he's murdered, man. 'Tis flat *felo de se*⁶ in any ground in England, if I understand law. And I have been a Justice of the Peace.

WILLMORE See, gentlemen, he's dead —

FETHERFOOL Look ye there now, I'll be gone, lest I be taken as an accessory. *(Going out.*

WILLMORE Coffin him, inter him; yet after four-and-twenty hours, as many drops of this divine elixir gives him new life again. This will recover whole fields of slain, and all the dead shall rise and fight again — 'Twas this that made the Roman legions numerous, and now makes France so formidable. And this, alone — may be the occasion of the loss of Germany. *(Pours it in Harliquin's wound. Harliquin rises.*

FETHERFOOL Whe, this fellow's the devil, Ned, that's certain.

BLUNT Oh, plague, a damned conjurer, this —

WILLMORE Come, buy this coward's comfort, quickly buy. What fop would be abused, mimicked and scorned, for fear of wounds that can be so easily cured? Who is it would bear the insolence and pride of domineering, great men, proud officers, or magistrates? Or who would cringe to statesmen out of fear? What cully would be cuckolded? What foolish heir undone by cheating gamesters? What lord would be lampooned? What poet fear the malice of his satirical brother, or atheist fear to fight for fear of death? Come, buy my cowards' comfort, quickly buy.

FETHERFOOL Egad, Ned, a very excellent thing, this. I'll lay out ten gold coins upon this commodity.

(They buy, whilst another part of the dance is danced.

⁶ *felo de se*: suicide, a crime.

WILLMORE Behold this little paper, which contains a powder whose value surmounts that of rocks of diamonds and hills of gold. 'Twas this made Venus a goddess, and given her by Apollo; from her, derived to Helen, and in the sack of Troy lost, till recovered by me out of some ruins of Asia. Come, buy it, ladies, you that would be fair and wear eternal youth; and you in whom the amorous fire remains, when all the charms are fled; you that dress young and gay, and would be thought so, that patch and paint to fill up times old furrows on your brows, and set yourselves for conquest though in vain; here's that will give you auburn hair, white teeth, red lips, and dimples on your cheeks. Come, buy it, all you that are past bewitching, and would have handsome, young and active lovers.

FETHERFOOL Another good thing, Ned.

CARLO I'll lay out a pistole or two on this, if it have the same effect on men.

WILLMORE Come, all you city wives that would advance your husbands to Lord Mayors, come, buy of me new beauty. This will give it, though now decayed as are your shop commodities. This will retrieve your customers, and vend your false and out-of-fashioned wares. Cheat, lie, protest and cozen as you please, a handsome wife makes all a lawful gain. Come, city wives, come, buy.

FETHERFOOL A most prodigious fellow. *(They buy. He sits. The other part is danced.)*

WILLMORE But here, behold the life and soul of man! This is the amorous powder which Venus made and gave the god of love, which made him first a deity. You talk of arrows, bows, and killing darts: fables, poetical fictions and no more. 'Tis this, alone, that wounds and fires the heart, makes women kind, and equals men to gods! 'Tis this that makes your great lady dote on the ill-favoured fop, your great man be jilted by his little mistress, the judge cajoled by his semstress, and your politician by his comedian; your young lady dote on her decrepit husband, your chaplain on my lady's waiting-woman, and the young squire on the laundry-maid — In fine, messieurs,
'Tis this that cures the lover's pain,
And Celia, of her cold disdain.

FETHERFOOL A most devilish fellow, this!

BLUNT Hold, 's hartlikins. Fetherfool, let's have a dose or two of this powder for quick dispatch with our monsters.

FETHERFOOL Whe, pox, man, jugg,* my giant, would swallow a whole cartload before 'twould operate.

* sweetheart, homely woman

BLUNT No hurt in trying a paper or two, however.

CARLO A most admirable medicine. I shall have need on't.

WILLMORE I need say nothing of my divine baths of reformation, nor the wonders of the old oracle of the box which resolves all questions. My bills sufficiently declare their power. *(Sits down. They buy.)*

Enter Petronella Elenora carried in a sedan-chair, dressed like a girl of fifteen.

SHIFT Room, there, gentlemen! Room for a patient.

BLUNT Pray, señor, who may this be, thus muzzled by old gaffer Time?

CARLO One Petronella Elenora, sir, a famous, out-worn courtesan.

BLUNT Elenora? She may be that of Troy for her antiquity, though fitter for god Priapus to ravish than Paris.

SHIFT Hunt, a word. Dost thou see that same formal politician yonder, on the jennet,* the nobler animal of the two? * small Spanish horse

HUNT What of him?

SHIFT 'Tis the same drew on the captain this morning, and I must revenge the affront.

HUNT Have a care of revenges in Spain upon persons of his quality.

SHIFT Nay — I'll only steal his horse from under him.

HUNT Steal it? Thou mayst take it by force, perhaps, but how safely is a question.

SHIFT I'll warrant thee — Shoulder you up one side of his great saddle, I'll do the like on t'other; then, as we're heaving him gently up, Harliquin shall lead the horse from between his worship's legs. All this in the crowd will not be perceived, where all eyes are employed on the mountebank.

HUNT I apprehend you now —

(Whilst some are lifting Petronella onto the stage of the mountebank, they go into the crowd, and shoulder up Carlo's saddle. Harliquin leads the horse forward whilst Carlo is gazing and turning up his moustache. — They hold him up a little while, then let him drop — He rises, and stares about for his horse —

CARLO This is downright magic.

SHIFT What, is your worship on foot?

HUNT I never saw his worship on foot before.

CARLO Sirrah, none of your jests! This must be by diabolical art, and shall cost the señor dear — Men of my garb, affronted — My jennet vanished — Most miraculous, by St Jago. I'll be revenged — Hah, what here? — La Nuche —

(Surveys her at a distance.

Enter La Nuche, Aurelia, Sancho, followed by Beaumont.

LA NUCHE We are pursued by Beaumont, who will certainly hinder our speaking to Willmore should we have the good fortune to see him in this crowd — And yet there's no avoiding him.

BEAUMOND *(Aside)* 'Tis she. How carefully she shuns me.

AURELIA I'm satisfied he knows us, by that jealous concern which appears in that prying countenance of his.

BEAUMOND Stay, cruel. Is it love or curiosity that wings those nimble feet? *(Holds La Nuche.*

Enter Lucia and Ariadne above.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Beaumont, with a woman —

BEAUMOND Have you forgot this is the glorious day
That ushers in the night shall make you mine?
The happiest night that ever favoured love!

LA NUCHE Or if I have, I find you'll take care to remember me.

BEAUMOND Sooner I could forget the aids of life,

Sooner forget how first that beauty charmed me.

LA NUCHE Well, since your memory's so good, I need not doubt your coming.

BEAUMOND Still cold and unconcerned!

How have I doted, and how sacrificed?

Regardless of my fame, I am idling, here,

When all the youth of Spain were gaining honour,

Valuing one smile of thine above their laurels.

LA NUCHE And in return, I do submit to yield,

Preferring you above those fighting fools,

Who, safe in multitudes, reap honour cheaper.

BEAUMOND Yet there is one — one of those fighting fools,

Which, shouldst thou see, I fear I were undone.

Brave, handsome, gay, and all that women dote on;

Unfortunate in every good of life,

But that one blessing of obtaining women.

Be wise, for if thou seest him, thou art lost.

— Why dost thou blush?

LA NUCHE Because you doubt my heart. *(Aside)* 'Tis Willmore that he means. — *(Aloud)* We've eyes upon us. Don Carlo may grow jealous, and he's a powerful rival — At night, I shall expect ye.

BEAUMOND Whilst I prepare myself for such a blessing. *(Exit Beaumont.)*

CARLO *(Aside)* Hah! a cavalier in conference with La Nuche! And entertained without my knowledge! I must prevent this lover, for he's young — And this night, will surprise her —

WILLMORE *(To Petronella)* And you would be restored?

PETRONELLA Yes, if there be that divinity in your baths of reformation.

WILLMORE There are.

New flames shall sparkle in those eyes,

And these grey hairs, flowing and bright shall rise.

These cheeks, fresh buds of roses wear,

And all your withered limbs, so smooth and clear

As shall a general wonder move,

And wound a thousand hearts with love.

PETRONELLA A blessing on you, sir. There's fifty pistoles for you, and as I earn it, you shall have more.

(They lift her down.)

(Exit Willmore, bowing.)

SHIFT Messieurs, 'tis late, and the señor's patients wait for him at his laboratory. Tomorrow you shall see the conclusion of this experiment. And so, I humbly take my leave at this time.

*Enter Willmore, sees La Nuche, approaches her,
whilst the last part of the dance is dancing.*

LA NUCHE What makes you follow me, sir? *(She goes from him; he pursues.*

WILLMORE Madam, I see something in that lovely face of yours, which, if not timely prevented, will be your
ruin. I'm now in haste, but I have more to say — *(Goes off.*

LA NUCHE Stay, sir — He's gone — and filled me with a curiosity that will not let me rest till it be satisfied.
Follow me, Aurelia, for I must know my destiny.

(Goes out. The dance ended, the platform removed, the people go off.

FETHERFOOL Come, Ned. Now for our amorous visit to the two lady monsters.

(Exeunt Fetherfool and Blunt.

Act II, scene 2.

A fine chamber. Enter Ariadne and Lucia.

ARIADNE I'm pensive. Prithee, cousin, sing some foolish song —

Song

Phillis, whose heart was unconfined,
And free as flowers on meads and plains.
None boasted of her being kind,
'Mongst all the languishing and amorous swains.

No sighs, nor tears, the nymph could move *(Repeat*
To pity or return their love.

Till, on a time, the hapless maid
Retired, to shun the heat of the day,
Into a grove, beneath whose shade,
Strephon, the careless shepherd, sleeping lay.

But, oh, such charms the youth adorn, *(Repeat*
Love is revenged for all her scorn.

Her cheeks with blushes covered were,
And tender sighs her bosom warm;
A softness in her eyes appears,
Unusual pains she feels from every charm.

To woods and echoes now she cries, *(Repeat*
For modesty to speak denies.

ARIADNE Come, help to undress me, for I'll to this mountebank to know what success I shall have with my
cavalier. *(Unpins her things before a great mirror.*

LUCIA You are resolved, then, to give him admittance?

ARIADNE Where's the danger of a handsome, young fellow?

LUCIA But you don't know him, madam.

ARIADNE But I desire to do, and time may bring it about without miracle.

LUCIA Your cousin, Beaumont, will forbid the banns.

ARIADNE No. Nor old Carlos, neither, my mother's precious choice, who is as solicitous for the old gentleman as my stepfather is for his nephew. Therefore, Lucia, like a good and gracious child I'll end the dispute between my father and mother, and please myself in the choice of this stranger, if he be to be had.

LUCIA I should as soon be enamoured on the north wind, a tempest, or a clap of thunder. Bless me from such a blast.

ARIADNE I'd have my lover rough as seas in storms, upon occasion. I hate your dull, temperate lover. 'Tis such a husbandly quality! Like Beaumont's addresses to me, whom neither joy nor anger puts in motion; or if it do, 'tis visibly forced — I'm glad I saw him entertain a woman today. Not that I care, but would be fairly rid of him.

LUCIA You'll hardly advance yourself in this.

ARIADNE What, because he held discourse with a courtesan?

LUCIA Why, is there no danger in her eyes, do ye think?

ARIADNE None that I fear. That stranger's not such a fool to give his heart to a common woman. And she that's concerned where her lover bestows his body? Were I the man, I should think she had a mind to it herself.

LUCIA And rightly, madam, in a lawful way, 'tis your due.

ARIADNE What, all? Unconscionable Lucia! I am more merciful. But, be he what he will, I'll to this cunning man to know whether ever any part of him shall be mine.

LUCIA Lord, madam, sure he's a magician.

ARIADNE Let him be the devil, I'll try his skill, and to that end, will put on a suit of my cousin Endymion's. There are two or three very pretty ones of his in the wardrobe. Go, carry 'em to my chamber, and we'll fit ourselves, and away — Go, haste whilst I undress. *(Exit Lucia.)*

Whilst Ariadne is undressing before the mirror, enter Beaumont, arranging his clothes and looking at himself.

BEAUMOND Now, for my charming beauty, fair La Nuche — *(Aside)* Hah — Ariadne — damn the dull property.

How shall I free myself? *(She turns, sees him, and walks from the mirror. He takes no notice of her, but arranges his clothes in the mirror, humming a song.)*

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Beaumont. What devil brought him hither to prevent me? I hate the formal, matrimonial fop. *(Walks about and sings.)*

Somme nous pas trop heureux

Belle Irise, que nous ensemble ...?

— (*Aside*) A devil on him, he may chance to plague me till night, and hinder my dear assignation.

(Sings again.

La nuit est ce sombre voile
Couvert nos desires ardant;
Et l'amour est les étoiles
Sont nos secrets confidents.

BEAUMOND (*Aside*) Pox on't, how dull am I at an excuse. (*Adjusts his wig in the glass, sings.*

A pox of love and womankind,

And all the fops adore 'em.

(Puts on his hat, cocks it and goes to her.

How is't coz?

ARIADNE So, here's the saucy freedom of a husband-lover — A blest invention, this, of marrying, whoe'er first found it out.

BEAUMOND (*Uneasy*) Damn this English dog of a periwig-maker. What an ungainly air it gives the face, and for a wedding periwig, too — How dost thou like it, Ariadne? —

ARIADNE As ill as the man — I perceive you have taken more care for your periwig than your bride.

BEAUMOND And with reason, Ariadne. The bride was never the care of the lover, but the business of the parents. 'Tis a serious affair, and ought to be managed by the grave and wise. Thy mother and my uncle have agreed the matter, and would it not look very sillily in me, now, to whine a tedious tale of love in your ear, when the business is at an end? 'Tis like saying a grace when a man should give thanks.

ARIADNE Why did not you begin sooner, then?

BEAUMOND Faith, Ariadne, because I knew nothing of the design in hand. Had I had civil warning, thou shouldst have had as pretty, smart speeches from me as any coxcomb lover of 'em all could have made thee.

ARIADNE I shall never marry, like a Jew, in my own tribe. I'd rather be possessed by honest, old, doting age than by saucy, conceited youth, whose inconstancy never leaves a woman safe or quiet.

BEAUMOND You know the proverb of the half loaf, Ariadne. A husband that will deal thee some love, is better than one who can give thee none. You would have a blessed time on't with old father Carlo.

ARIADNE No matter. A woman may, with some lawful excuse, cuckold him, and 'twould be scarce a sin —

BEAUMOND Not so much as lying with him, whose reverend age would make it look like incest.

ARIADNE But to marry thee — would be a tyranny from whence there's no appeal: a drinking, whoring husband, 'tis the devil —

BEAUMOND You are deceived if you think Don Carlo more chaste than I; only duller, and more a miser. One that fears his flesh more, and loves his money better — Then, to be condemned to lie with him — Oh, who would not rejoice to meet a woollen waistcoat and knit night-cap without a lining? A shirt so nasty, a cleanly ghost would not appear in't at the latter day. Then, the compound of nasty smells

about him, stinking breath, moustache stuffed with villainous snuff tobacco, and hollow teeth. Thus prepared for delight, you meet in bed, where you may lie and sigh whole nights away. He snores it out till morning, and then rises to his sordid business.

ARIADNE All this frights me not. 'Tis still much better than a husband who keeps mistresses, whom neither beauty nor honour in a wife can oblige.

BEAUMOND Oh, you know not the good nature of a man of wit. At least I shall bear a conscience, and give you your sexual due, which heaven denies to old Carlo, were he willing.

ARIADNE Oh, he talks as high, and thinks as well of himself as any young coxcomb of ye all.

BEAUMOND He has reason. For if his faith were no better than his works, he'd be damned.

ARIADNE Death, who would marry, who would be chaffered thus, and sold to slavery? I'd rather buy a friend, at any price, that I could love and trust.

BEAUMOND Aye! Could we but drive on such a bargain!

ARIADNE You should not be the man. You have a mistress, sir, that has your heart, and all your softer hours. I know it, and if I were so wretched as to marry thee, must see my fortune lavished out on her, her coaches, dress and equipage exceed mine by far; possess she all the day thy hours of mirth, good humour and expense, thy smiles, thy kisses, and thy charms of wit. Oh, how you talk and look when in her presence! But when with me,

(Sings) A pox of love and womankind,
 And all the fops adore 'em.

How is it, coz? — Then, slap, on goes the beaver hat, which being cocked, you bear up briskly, with the second part to the same tune. — Hark ye, sir, let me advise you to pack up your trumpery and be gone: your honourable love, your matrimonial foppery, with your other trinkets thereunto belonging, or I shall talk aloud, and let your uncle hear you.

BEAUMOND *(Aside)* Sure, she cannot know I love La Nuche?

(Aloud) The devil take me, spoiled! What rascal has inveigled thee? What lying, fawning coward has abused thee? When fell you into this lewdness? Pox, thou art hardly worth the loving, now, that canst be such a fool to wish me chaste, or love me for that virtue; or that wouldst have me a ceremonious whelp, one that makes handsome bows to knights without laughing, or with a sneaking, modest, squirish countenance assure you I have my maidenhead. A curse upon thee, the very thought of wife has made thee prim.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* I must dissemble, or he'll stay all day to make his peace again — *(Aloud)* Why, have you ne'er — a mistress, then?

BEAUMOND A hundred, by this day, as many as I like. They are my mirth, the business of my loose and wanton hours. But thou art my devotion; the grave, the solemn pleasure of my soul — *(Aside)* Pox, would I were handsomely rid of thee, too. — *(Aloud)* Come, I have business — Send me pleased away.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Would to heaven thou wert gone —

(Aloud) — You're going to some woman now —

BEAUMOND Oh, damn the sex, I hate 'em all — but thee — Farewell, my pretty, jealous — sullen — fool —

(Goes out.

ARIADNE Farewell, believing coxcomb —

Enter Lucia.

LUCIA Madam, the clothes are ready in your chamber.

ARIADNE Let's haste and put 'em on, then. *(Runs out.*

Act III. scene 1.

A house. Enter Fetherfool and Blunt, staring about; after them, Shift.

SHIFT Well, gentlemen, this is the doctor's house, and your fifty pistoles has made him entirely yours. The ladies, too, are here in safe custody — Come, draw lots who shall have the dwarf, and who the giant.

(They draw.

FETHERFOOL I have the giant.

BLUNT And I the little tiny gentlewoman.

SHIFT Well, you shall first see the ladies, and then prepare for your Uncle Moses, the old Jew guardian, before whom you must be very grave and sententious: you know the old law was full of ceremony.

FETHERFOOL Well, I long to see the ladies, and to have the first onslaught over.

SHIFT I'll cause 'em to walk forth immediately. *(Goes out.*

FETHERFOOL My heart begins to fail me plaguily — I wish I could see 'em a little at a distance before they come slap-dash upon a man. *(Peeping)* — Hah! — Mercy upon us! — What's yonder! — Ah, Ned, my monster as big as the Whore of Babylon. Oh, I'm in a cold sweat — *(Blunt pulls him to peep; both do so)* — Oh, Lord! She's as tall as the St Christopher in Notre Dame at Paris, and the little one looks like the Christ upon his shoulders — I shall ne'er be able to stand the first brunt.

BLUNT 'Ds hartlikins, whither art going? *(Pulls him back.*

FETHERFOOL — Whe, only — to — say my prayers a little — I'll be with thee presently.

(Offers to go; Blunt pulls him.

BLUNT What a pox? Art thou afraid of a woman? —

FETHERFOOL Not of a woman, Ned, but of a she-gargantua. I am a Hercules in petticoats.

BLUNT The less resemblance, the better, 's hartlikins. I'd rather mine were a centaur than a woman. No, since my Naples adventure, I am clearly for your monster.

FETHERFOOL Prithee, Ned, there's reason in all things —

BLUNT But villainous woman — 'Ds hartlikins, stand your ground, or I'll nail ye to it. Whe, what a pox, are you so queasy-stomached a monster can't be swallowed by you, with a hundred thousand pound, to boot?
(Pulling him.

FETHERFOOL Nay, Ned, that mollifies something. And I scorn it should be said of Nicholas Fetherfool that he left his friend in danger, or did an ill thing. Therefore, as thou sayst, Ned, though she were a centaur, I'll not budge an inch.

BLUNT Whe, God-a-mercy.

Enter the giant and dwarf. With them, Shift as a stagehand, and Harliquin.

FETHERFOOL Oh — They come — Prithee, Ned, advance — *(Puts him forward.*

SHIFT Most beautiful ladies.

FETHERFOOL Whe, what a flattering son of a whore's this?

SHIFT These are the illustrious persons your uncle designs your humble servants, and who have so extraordinary a passion for your señoraships.

FETHERFOOL Oh, yes, a most damnable one. I wish I were cleanly out of the bet, and had my money again.

BLUNT Think of a million, rogue, and do not hang an arse thus.

GIANT *(To Shift)* What, does the cavalier think I'll devour him?

FETHERFOOL Somewhat inclined to such a fear.

BLUNT Go and greet her, or, ads hartlikins, I'll leave you to her mercy.

FETHERFOOL Oh dear, Ned, have pity on me — But as for greeting her, you speak of more than may be done, dear heart, without a scaling ladder. *(Exit Shift.*

DWARF Sure, señor Harliquin, these gentlemen are dumb.

BLUNT No, my little diminutive mistress, my small epitome of womankind, we can prattle when our hands are in. But we are raw and bashful, young beginners, for this is the first time we ever were in love. We are something awkward, or so, but we shall come on, in time, and mend upon encouragement.

FETHERFOOL *(Aside)* Pox on him, what a delicate speech has he made, now — 'Gad, I'd give a thousand pound a year for Ned's concise wit, but not a groat for his judgment in womankind.

Enter Shift with a ladder, sets it against the giant, and bows to Fetherfool.

SHIFT Here, señor, Don, approach, mount, and greet the lady.

FETHERFOOL Mount? Whe, 'twould turn my brains to look down from her shoulders — But hang it, Gad, I will be brave and venture. *(Runs up the ladder, kisses her, and runs down again.*

(Aside) And, egad this was an adventure, and a bold one — But since I am come off with a whole skin, I am ready for the next onset. — *(Goes to her, speaks, and runs back. Blunt claps him on the back.)*

Madam — has Your Greatness any mind to marry? —

GIANT What if I have?

FETHERFOOL Whe, then, madam, without enchanted sword or buckler, I am your man.

GIANT My man! My mouse. I'll marry none whose person and courage shall not bear some proportion to mine.

FETHERFOOL Your mightiness, I fear, will die a maid, then.

GIANT I doubt you'll scarce secure me from that fear, who court my fortune, not my beauty.

FETHERFOOL (*Aside*) Huh, how scornful she is. I'll warrant you — (*Aloud*) Whe, I must confess, your person is something heroical and masculine, but, I protest to Your Highness, I love and honour ye.

DWARF Prithee, sister, be not so coy. I like my lover well enough, and if señor mountebank keep his word in making us of reasonable proportions, I think the Gentlemen may serve for husbands.

SHIFT (*Aside to the giant.*) Dissemble, or you reveal your love for us.

GIANT And if he do keep his word, I should make a better choice. Not that I would change this noble frame of mine, could I but meet my match, and keep up the first race of man entire. But since this scanty world affords none such, I, to be happy, must be new-created, and then I shall expect a wiser lover.

FETHERFOOL Whe, what a peevish tit's this? Nay, look ye, madam; as for that matter, your extraordinariness may do what you please. — But 'tis not done like a monster of honour, when a man has set his heart upon you, to cast him off — Therefore, I hope you'll pity a despairing lover, and cast down an eye of consolation upon me. For I vow, most Amazonian Princess, I love ye as if heaven and earth would come together.

DWARF My sister will do much, I'm sure, to save the man that loves her so passionately — She has a heart.

FETHERFOOL And a swinger 'tis. — (*Aside*) 'Sbud — She moves like the Royal Sovereign, and is as long a-tacking about.

GIANT Then, your religion, sir.

FETHERFOOL Nay, as for that, madam, we are English, a nation, I thank God, that stands as little upon religion as any nation under the sun, unless it be in contradiction; and at this time, have so many amongst us, a man knows not which to turn his hand to — Neither will I dispute with Your Hugeness for a small matter of faith, or so — Religion shall break no squares.

DWARF I hope, sir, you are of your friend's opinion?

BLUNT My little spark of a diamond, I am. I was born a Jew, with an aversion to swine's flesh.

DWARF Well, sir, I shall hasten señor doctor to complete my beauty, by some small addition, to appear the more gratifying to you.

BLUNT Lady, do not trouble yourself with transitory parts. 'Ds hartlikins, thou art as handsome as needs be for a wife.

DWARF A little taller, señor, would not do amiss. My younger sister has got so much the start of me.

BLUNT In troth, she has, and now I think on it, a little taller would do well for propagation. I should be loath the posterity of the ancient family of the Blunts of Essex should dwindle into Pygmies or fairies

GIANT Well, señors, since you come with our uncle's liking, we give ye leave to hope. Hope — and be happy —
— (*Giant, dwarf, Shift, and Harliquin go out.*)

FETHERFOOL Egad, and that's great and gracious —

Enter Willmore, disguised as a mountebank, with a stagehand.

WILLMORE Well, gentlemen, and how like you the ladies?

BLUNT Faith, well enough for the first course, sir.

WILLMORE The uncle, by my endeavour, is entirely yours — But whilst the baths are preparing, 'twould be well if you would think of what age, shape, and complexion you would have your ladies formed in.

FETHERFOOL Why, may we choose, Mr Doctor?

WILLMORE What beauties you please.

FETHERFOOL Then will I have my giant, Ned, just such another gentlewoman as i saw at church today — and about 15.

BLUNT Hum, 15 — I begin to have a plaguy itch about me, too, towards a handsome damsel of 15. But first, let's marry, lest they should be boiled away in these baths of reformation.

FETHERFOOL — But, doctor, can you do all this without the help of the devil?

WILLMORE Hum, some small hand he has in the business. We make an exchange with him: give him the clippings of the giant for so much of his store as will serve to build the dwarf.

BLUNT Whe, then mine will be more than three parts devil, Mr Doctor.

WILLMORE Not so. The stock is only devil, the graft is your own little wife, inoculated.

BLUNT Well, let the devil and you agree about this matter as soon as you please.

Enter Shift as a stagehand.

SHIFT Sir, there is, without, a person of an extraordinary size would speak with you.

WILLMORE Admit him.

Enter Harliquin, ushering in Hunt as a giant.

FETHERFOOL Hah — some o'ergrown rival, on my life. *(Fetherfool gets from it.)*

WILLMORE *(Aside)* What the devil have we here?

HUNT *Beso las manos, señor.* I understand there is a lady whose beauty and proportion can only merit me. I'll say no more — but shall be grateful to you for your assistance —

FETHERFOOL 'Tis so —

HUNT *(Aside)* The devil's in it if this does not fright 'em from a farther courtship —

WILLMORE *(Talks to Hunt)* Fear nothing, señor — Señor, you may try your chance, and visit the ladies.

FETHERFOOL Whe, where the devil could this monster conceal himself all this while, that we should neither see nor hear of him?

BLUNT Oh — He lay disguised. I have heard of an army that has done so.

FETHERFOOL Pox, no single house could hold him.

BLUNT No — He disposed himself in several parcels, up and down the town. Here a leg, and there an arm; and hearing of this proper match for him, put himself together to court his fellow monster.

FETHERFOOL Good Lord! I wonder what religion he's of.

BLUNT Some heathen Papist, by his notable plots and contrivances.

WILLMORE *(Aside)* 'Tis Hunt, that rogue — *(Aloud)* Sir, I confess there is great power in occult affinity —
Conduct him to the ladies — *(Hunt tries to go in at the door.)* — I am sorry you cannot enter at that
low door, señor. I'll have it broken down —

HUNT No, señor, I can go in at twice.

FETHERFOOL How, at twice? What a pox can he mean?

WILLMORE Oh, sir, 'tis a frequent thing by way of enchantment.

(Hunt, being all doublet, leaps off from another man who is all britches, and goes out. Britches follows, stalking.)

FETHERFOOL Oh, pox, Mr Doctor, this must be the devil.

WILLMORE Oh fie, sir. The devil? No, 'tis all done by an enchanted girdle — *(Aside)* These damned rascals will
spoil all by too gross an imposition on the fools.

FETHERFOOL This is the devil, Ned, that's certain — But, hark ye, Mr Doctor, I hope I shall not have my mistress
enchanted from me by this enchanted rival, hah?

WILLMORE Oh, no, sir. The Inquisition will never let 'em marry, for fear of a race of giants. 'Twill be worse
than the invasion of the Moors, or the French. But, go — think of your mistresses' names and ages.
Here's company, and you would not be seen. *(Exeunt Blunt and Fetherfool.)*

Enter La Nuche, Aurelia. Willmore bows to La Nuche.

LA NUCHE Sir, the fame of your excellent knowledge, and what you said to me this day, has given me a
curiosity to learn my fate; at least, that fate you threatned.

WILLMORE Madam, from the oracle in the box you may be resolved any question —

(Leads her to the table where stands a box full of balls. Stares on her.)

— *(Aside)* How lovely every absent minute makes her — *(Aloud)* Madam, be pleased to draw from
out this box what ball you will. *(She draws, he takes it and gazes on her and on it.)*

Madam, upon this little globe is charactered your fate and fortune; the history of your life to come
and past — First, madam, — you're — a whore.

LA NUCHE A very plain beginning.

WILLMORE My art speaks simple truth. The moon is your ascendant, that covetous planet that borrows all
his light, and is in opposition still to Venus, and — Interest more prevails with you than love! Yet here
I find a cross — intruding line — that does inform me — you have an itch that way, but interest still
opposes: you are a slavish, mercenary prostitute.

LA NUCHE Your art is so, though called divine! And all the universe is swayed by interest. And would you
wish this beauty which adorns me should be disposed about for charity? Proceed, and speak more
reason.

WILLMORE — But Venus here gets the ascent again, and — spite of — interest, spite of all aversion, will
make you dote upon a man — *(Still looking on and turning the ball.)* — wild, fickle — restless, faithless

as the winds! — A man of arms he is — and by this line — a captain — (*Looking on her*) — For Mars and Venus were in conjunction at his birth — and love and war's his business —

LA NUCHE There, thou hast touched my heart! And spoke so true, that all thou sayst, I shall receive as oracle. Well, grant I love. That shall not make me yield.

WILLMORE I must confess, you're ruined, if you yield. And yet, not all your pride, not all your vows, your wit, your resolution or your cunning can hinder him from conquering absolutely. Your stars are fixed, and fate irrevocable.

LA NUCHE No, — I will control my stars and inclinations, and though I love him more than power or interest, I will be mistress of my fixed resolves — One question more — Does this same captain, this wild happy man — love me?

WILLMORE — I do not — find — it here — Only a possibility, encouraged by your love — Oh, that you could resist — But you are destined his, and to be ruined — (*Sighs and looks on her. She grows in rage.*)

LA NUCHE Why do you tell me this? — I am betrayed, and every caution blows my kindling flame — Hold — tell me no more — I might have guessed my fate, from my own soul have guessed it — But yet I will be brave. I will resist, in spite of inclinations, stars, or devils.

WILLMORE Strive not, fair creature, with the net that holds you. You'll just entangle more. Alas! — You must submit and be undone.

LA NUCHE Damn your false art! — Had he but loved me too, it had excused the malice of my stars.

WILLMORE Indeed, his love is doubtful. For here — I trace him in a new pursuit — Which if you can this night prevent, perhaps you fix him.

LA NUCHE Hah, pursuing a new mistress! There thou hast met the little resolution I had left, and dashed it into nothing — But I have vowed allegiance to my interest — Curse on my stars. They could not give me love where that might be advanced — I'll hear no more — (*Gives him money.*)

Enter Shift as a stagehand.

SHIFT Sir, there are several strangers arrived who talk of the old oracle. How will you receive 'em?

WILLMORE I've business now — and must be excused a while — (*Aside*) Thus far — I'm well, but I may tell my tale so often o'er, till, like the trick of love, I spoil the pleasure by the repetition — Now I'll disrobe, and see what effects my art has wrought on La Nuche. For she's the promised good, the philosophic treasure that terminates my toil and industry. Wait you here. (*Exit Willmore.*)

Enter Ariadne and Lucia in men's clothes, and other strangers.

ARIADNE — How now, señor stagehand, where's this renowned man of arts and sciences, this don of wonders? — Hah? May a man have a pistole's worth or two of his tricks? Will he show, señor?

SHIFT Whatever you dare see, sir.

ARIADNE And I dare see the greatest bugbear he can conjure up, my mistress's face in a glass excepted.

SHIFT That he can show, sir, but is now busied in weighty affairs with a grandee.

ARIADNE Pox, must we wait the leisure of formal grandees and statesmen? — Ha, who's this? — The lovely
conqueress of my heart, La Nuche. *(Goes to her. She is talking to Aurelia.)*

LA NUCHE What foolish thing art thou?

ARIADNE Nay, do not frown, nor fly, for if you do, I must arrest you, fair one.

LA NUCHE At whose suit, pray?

ARIADNE At love's — You've stolen a heart of mine and used it scurvily.

LA NUCHE By what marks do you know the toy, so that I may be no longer troubled with it?

ARIADNE By a fresh wound, which, touched, by her that gave it, bleeds anew. A heart all over kind and
amorous.

LA NUCHE When was this pretty robbery committed?

ARIADNE Today, most sacrilegiously, at church, where you debauched my zeal, and when I would have prayed,
your eyes had put the change upon my tongue, and made it utter railings. Heaven forgive ye!

LA NUCHE You are the gayest thing without a heart I ever saw.

ARIADNE I scorn to flinch for a bare wound or two. Nor is he routed that has lost the day. He may again rally,
renew the fight, and vanquish.

LA NUCHE You have a good opinion of that beauty which I find not so powerful, nor that fond prattle
uttered with such confidence.

ARIADNE But I have quality and fortune, too.

LA NUCHE So you had need. I should have guessed the first by your pertness, for your saucy thing of quality
acts the man as impudently at fourteen as another at thirty. Nor is there anything so hateful as to
hear it talk of love, women and drinking. Nay, to see it marry, too, at that age, and get itself a
playfellow in its son and heir.

ARIADNE This satire on my youth shall never put me out of countenance, or make me think you wish me one
day older. And, egad, I'll warrant 'em that tries me shall find me ne'er an hour too young.

LA NUCHE You mistake my humour. I hate the person of a fair, conceited boy.

Enter Willmore, dressed as himself, singing.

WILLMORE Volez, volez dans cette cage,
Petit oiseau dans cette bocage.

— How now, fool. Where's the doctor?

SHIFT A little busy, sir.

WILLMORE Call him. I am in haste, and come to bid for monster.

SHIFT As how, sir?

WILLMORE In an honourable way. I will lawfully marry one of 'em, and have pitched upon the giant. I'll bid as
fair as any man.

SHIFT No doubt but you will succeed, sir. Please you, sir, to walk in.

WILLMORE I'll follow — Volez, volez dans cette cage, etc.

LUCIA (*Aside to Ariadne*) Whe, 'tis the captain, madam —

LA NUCHE Hah — Marry — Hark ye, sir — A word, pray. (*She pulls him as he's going out*

WILLMORE Your servant, madam, your servant — Volez, volez, etc.

(Puts his hat off carelessly, and walks by, going out.)

LUCIA And to be married, mark that.

ARIADNE Then there's one doubt over. I'm glad he is not married.

LA NUCHE Come back — (*Aside*) Death, I shall burst with anger — This coldness blows my flame, which, if once visible, makes him a tyrant —

WILLMORE Fool, what's the time, fool? This noise hinders me from hearing it strike.

(Shakes his pockets to make coins jingle, and walks up and down.)

LA NUCHE A blessed sound if no hue and cry pursue it. — What — You are resolved, then, upon this notable exploit?

WILLMORE What exploit, good madam?

LA NUCHE Whe, marrying of a monster, and an ugly monster.

WILLMORE Yes, faith, child. Here stands the bold knight that singly, and unarmed, designs to enter the lists with Thogogandiga the giant. A good sword will defend a worse cause than an ugly wife. I know no danger worse than fighting for my living, and I have done it this dozen years for bread.

LA NUCHE This is the common trick of all rogues when they have done an ill thing: to face it out.

WILLMORE An ill thing? — Your pardon, sweetheart. Compare it but to banishment, a frozen sentry with brown bread and Spanish pay, and if it be not better to be master of a monster, than slave to a damned Commonwealth — I submit — And since my fortune has thrown this good in my way —

LA NUCHE You'll not be so ungrateful to refuse it. Besides, then you may hope to sleep again without dreaming of famine or the sword, two plagues a soldier of fortune is subject to.

WILLMORE Besides cashiering, a third plague.

LA NUCHE Still unconcerned! — You call me mercenary, but I would starve ere suffer myself to be possessed by a thing of horror.

WILLMORE You lie. You would, by anything of horror. Yet these things of horror have beauties too, beauties thou canst not boast of, beauties that will not fade: diamonds to supply the lustre of their eyes, and gold the brightness of their hair, a well-got million to atone for shape, and orient pearls, more white, more plump and smooth, than that fair body men so languish for, and thou hast set such price on.

ARIADNE (*Aside to Lucia*) I like not this so well. 'Tis a trick to make her jealous.

WILLMORE Their hands, too, have their beauties, whose very mark finds credit and respect. Their bills are current o'er the universe. Besides these, you shall see, waiting at my door, four footmen, a velvet coach with six Flanders beauties more. And are not these most comely virtues in a soldier's wife, in this most wicked, peaceable age?

LUCIA (*Aside to Ariadne*) He's poor too. There's another comfort.

ARIADNE (*Aside to Lucia*) The most encouraging one I have met with yet.

WILLMORE Pox on't, I grow weary of this virtuous poverty. There goes a gallant fellow, says one, but gives him not an onion. The women, too: faith, 'tis a handsome gentleman, but the devil a kiss he gets gratis.

ARIADNE (*Aside*) Oh, how I long to undeceive him of that error.

LA NUCHE (*Aside*) He speaks not of me. Sure he knows me not.

WILLMORE — No, child, money speaks sense in a language all nations understand, 'tis beauty, wit, courage, honour, and undisputable reason — See the virtue of a wager, that new, philosophical way lately found out, of deciding all hard questions — Socrates, without ready money to lay down, must yield.

ARIADNE (*Aside*) Well, I must have this gallant fellow.

LA NUCHE (*Aside*) Sure he has forgot this trivial thing.

WILLMORE (*in a soft tone*) — Even thou — who seest me dying unregarded, would then be fond and kind, and flatter me. (*In a raised tone*) By heaven, I'll hate thee then. Nay, I will marry to be rich to hate thee. The worst of that is but to suffer nine days' wonderment. Is not that better than an age of scorn from a proud, faithless beauty?

LA NUCHE (*Aside*) Oh, there's resentment left — (*Aloud*) Whe, yes, faith, such a wedding would give the town diversion. We should have a lamentable ditty made of it, entitled, 'The Captain's Wedding', with the doleful relation of his being overlaid by an o'er-grown monster.

WILLMORE I'll warrant ye I escape that, as sure as cuckolding. For I would fain see that hardy wight that dares attempt my lady bright, either by force or flattery.

LA NUCHE So, then, you intend to bed her?

WILLMORE Yes, faith, and beget a tribe of heroes. The mother's form with all the father's qualities.

LA NUCHE Faith, such a brood may prove a pretty livelihood for a poor, decayed officer. You may chance to get a patent to display 'em in England, that nation of change and novelty.

WILLMORE A provision old Carlo cannot make for you in preparation for the abandoned day.

LA NUCHE He can supply the want of issue a better way. And though he be not so fine a fellow as yourself, he's a better friend. He can keep a mistress. Give me a man can feed and clothe me, as well as hug and all to bekiss me, and tho his sword be not so good as yours, his bond's worth a thousand captains. (*Aside*) This will not do. I'll try what jealousy will do. (*Aloud*) Your servant, captain — Your hand, sir.

(Takes Ariadne by the hand.

WILLMORE Hah, what new coxcomb's that? — Hold, sir. — *(Takes La Nuche from Ariadne.*

ARIADNE What? Would you, sir, aught with this lady?

WILLMORE Yes, that which thy youth will only let thee guess at — This — (child) is man's meat. There are other toys for children. *(Offers to lead her off.*

LA NUCHE Oh, insolent. And whither wouldst thou lead me?

WILLMORE Only out of harm's way, child. Here are pretty neat conveniences within. The doctor will be civil — 'Tis part of's calling— Your servant, sir — *(Going off with her.*

ARIADNE *(Aside)* I must huff now, though I may chance to be beaten — *(Aloud)* Come back — or I have something here that will oblige ye to. *(Indicates his/her sword.*

WILLMORE Yes, faith. Thou art a pretty youth. But at this time, I've more occasion for a thing in petticoats — Go home, and do not walk the streets so much. That tempting face of thine will debauch the grave men of business, and make the magistrates lust after wickedness.

ARIADNE You are a scurvy fellow, sir. *(Going to draw.*

WILLMORE Keep in your sword, for fear it cut your fingers, child.

ARIADNE So 'twill your throat, sir — *(Aside.)* Here's company coming that will part us, and I'll venture to draw. *(Draws. Willmore draws.*

Enter Beaumont.

BEAUMOND Hold, hold — Hah, Willmore! Thou man of constant mischief, what's the matter?

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* Beaumont! Undone.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* — Beaumont —

WILLMORE Whe, here's a young spark will take my lady bright from me. The unmannered hotspur would not have patience till I had finished my small affair with her. *(Puts up his sword.*

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Death, he'll know me — *(To Willmore)* Sir, you see we are prevented. *(Draws him aside.)* — or — *(Seems to talk to him. Beaumont gazes on La Nuche, who has pulled down her veil.*

BEAUMOND 'Tis she. Madam, this veil's too thin to hide the perjured beauty underneath. Oh, have I been searching for thee with all the diligence of impatient love? And am I thus rewarded, to find thee here encompassed round with strangers, fighting about who first should take my right away? — Gods, take your reason back. Take all your love! For easy man's unworthy of the blessings.

WILLMORE Hark ye, Harry! — The woman — the almighty whore — thou toldst me of today.

BEAUMOND Death, dost thou mock my grief? — Unhand me straight, for though I cannot blame thee, I must hate thee. — *(Goes out.*

WILLMORE What the devil ails he? —

ARIADNE You will be sure to come?

WILLMORE At night, in the piazza. I have an assignation with a woman; that once dispatched, I will not fail ye, sir.

LUCIA *(To Ariadne)* And will you leave him with her?

ARIADNE Oh yes. He'll be ne'er the worse for my use, when he has done with her.

(Exeunt Lucia and Ariadne. Willmore looks with scorn on La Nuche.

WILLMORE Now you may go o'ertake him, lie with him — and ruin him. The fool was made for such a destiny — if he escapes my sword. *(He offers to go.*

LA NUCHE (*Aside*) I must prevent his visit to this woman — but dare not tell him so. — (*Aloud*) I would not have
ye meet this angry youth.

WILLMORE Oh, you would preserve him for a farther use —

LA NUCHE — Stay — You must not fight — By heaven, I cannot see — that bosom — wounded —
(Turns and weeps.

WILLMORE Hah! Weepst thou? Curse me when I refuse a trust in that obliging language of thy eyes — Oh,
give me one proof more, and after that, thou conquerest all my soul. Thy eyes speak love — Come, let
us in, my dear! Ere the bright fire subsides that warms my heart. *(Goes to lead her out.*

LA NUCHE Your love grows rude, and saucily demands it. *(Flings away.*

WILLMORE Love knows no ceremony, no respect, when once approached so near the happy minute.

LA NUCHE What desperate easiness have you seen in me, or what mistaken merit in yourself, should make
you so ridiculously vain to think I'd give myself to such a wretch, one fallen even to the last degree of
poverty, whilst all the world is prostrate at my feet, whence I might chuse the brave, the great, the
rich? *(He stands spitefully gazing at her)* — *(Aside)* Still as he fires, I find my pride augment, and when
he cools, I burn.

WILLMORE Death, thou art a — vain, conceited, tawdry jilt, who'st drawn me in as swindlers do simpletons
to make me venture all my stock of love.

And then you turn me out, despised and poor — *(Offers to go.*

LA NUCHE You think you're gone, now —

WILLMORE Not all thy arts nor charms can hold me longer —

LA NUCHE I must submit — And can you part thus from me? — *(Pulls him.*

WILLMORE I can — Nay — by heaven, I will not turn, nor look at thee. No, when I do, or trust that faithless
tongue again — may I be ... !

LA NUCHE Oh, do not swear —

WILLMORE Ever cursed — *(Breaks from her. She holds him.*

LA NUCHE You shall not go — Plague! — *(Aside)* of this needless pride.

— *(Aloud)* Stay — and I'll follow — all the dictates of my love.

WILLMORE Oh, never hope to flatter me to faith again. *(His back to her, she holding him.*

LA NUCHE I must, I will; what would you have me do?

WILLMORE *(turning softly to her)* Never — *(sighing)* deceive me more. It may be fatal to wind me up to an
impatient height, then dash my eager hopes.

Forgive my roughness — and be kind, La Nuche. I know thou would —

LA NUCHE And will you, then, be ever kind and true?

WILLMORE Ask thy own charms. And to confirm thee more, yield and disarm me quite.

LA NUCHE Will you not marry, then? For though you never can be mine that way, I cannot think that you
should be another's.

WILLMORE No more delays, By heaven, 'twas but a trick —

LA NUCHE And will you never see that woman neither, whom you're this night to visit?

WILLMORE Damn all the rest of thy weak sex, when thou lookst thus, and art so soft and charming.

(Offers to lead her out.

LA NUCHE Sancho — my coach.

(Turns in scorn.

WILLMORE Take heed. What mean ye?

LA NUCHE Not to be pointed at by all the envying women of the town, who'll laugh and cry, 'Is this the high-prized lady now fallen so low to dote upon a captain, a poor, disbanded captain?' Defend me from that infamy.

WILLMORE Now, all the plagues — But yet I will not curse thee. 'Tis lost on thee, for thou art destined damned.

(Going out.

LA NUCHE Whither so fast?

WILLMORE Whe — I am so indifferent grown — that I can tell thee now — to a woman young, fair and honest, for she'll be kind and thankful — Farewel, jilt — Now — shouldst thou die for one sight more of me — thou shouldst not have it. Nay, shouldst thou sacrifice all thou hast cozened other coxcombs of, to buy one single visit — I am so proud, by heaven, thou shouldst not have it — To grieve thee more, see here, insatiate woman *(shows her a purse, or hands full of gold)* the charm that makes me lovely in thine eyes. It'd all been thine, hadst thou not basely bargained with me. Now, 'tis the prize of some well-meaning whore, whose modesty will trust my generosity.

(Goes out.

LA NUCHE Now, I could rave to've lost an opportunity which industry nor chance can give again — When, on the yielding point, a cursed fit of pride comes cross my soul, and stops the kind career — I'll follow him — Yes, I will follow him, even to the arms of her to whom he's gone.

AURELIA Madam, 'tis dark, and we may meet with insolence.

LA NUCHE No matter, Sancho. Let the coach go home, and you follow me —
Women may boast their honour and their pride,
But love soon lays those feebler powers aside.

Act IV, scene 1.

The street, or back-side of the piazza, dark. Enter Willmore, alone.

WILLMORE A pox upon this woman that has jilted me, and I, for being a fond, believing puppy to be in earnest with so great a devil. Where be these coxcombs, too, this Blunt and Fetherfool? When a man needs 'em not, they are plaguing him with their unseasonable jests — Could I but light on them, I would be very drunk tonight — But first, I'll try my fortune with this woman — Let me see — hereabouts is the door —

(Gropes about for the door.

Enter Beaumont, followed by La Nuche and Sancho.

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* 'Tis he, I know it by his often and uneasy pauses —

BEAUMOND *(Aside)* — And shall I home and sleep upon my injury — whilst this more happy rover takes my right away — No, damn me, then, for a cold, senseless coward! *(pauses, and pulls out a key.*

WILLMORE This damsel, by the part of the town she lives in, should be of quality, and therefore can have no dishonest design on me. It must be rightdown, substantial love, that's certain.

BEAUMOND Yet I'll in, and arm myself for the encounter, for 'twill be rough between us, though we're friends.
(Groping about, finds the door.

WILLMORE Oh, 'tis this, I'm sure, because the door is open.

BEAUMOND Hah — Who's there? — *(Beaumont, advancing to unlock the door, runs against Willmore. Draws.*

WILLMORE That voice is of authority. Some husband, lover, or a brother, on my life — This is a nation of a word and a blow, therefore I'll betake me to sword — *(Willmore, in drawing, hits his sword against that of Beaumont, who turns and fights. La Nuche runs into the garden, frightened.*

BEAUMOND Hah, are you there?

SANCHO I'll draw in defence of the captain — *(Sancho fights for Beaumont and beats out Willmore.*

WILLMORE Hah, two to one — *(Turns and goes in.*

BEAUMOND The garden door closed; sure, he's got in. Nay, then I have him, sure

Act IV, scene 2.

La Nuche in a garden. To her, Beaumont, who takes hold of her sleeve.

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* Heavens, where am I?

BEAUMOND *(Aside)* Hah — A woman! And by these jewels — should be Ariadne —
(Feels) 'Tis so! Death, are all women false? *(She struggles to get away. He holds her. — (Aloud)* Oh, 'tis in vain thou flyst. Thy infamy will stay behind thee still.

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* Hah, 'tis Beaumont's voice!
Now for an Art to turn the trick upon him. I must not lose his friendship.
Enter Willmore, softly, peering to check if he's being followed.

WILLMORE *(Aside)* — What a devil have we here? More mischief yet? — Hah — my woman with a man — I shall spoil all — I ever had an excellent knack of doing so.

BEAUMOND Oh, modesty, where art thou? Is this the effect of all your put-on jealousy, that mask to hide your own new falshood in? New — By heaven, I believe thou art old in cunning that couldst contrive, so near thy wedding-night as this, to deprive me of the rights of love!

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* Hah, what says he?

WILLMORE *(Aside)* What, a maid, and young, and to be married, too; a rare wench, this, to contrive matters so conveniently. Oh, for some mischief, now, to send him neatly off.

BEAUMOND Now you are silent. But you could talk today loudly of virtue! And upbraid my vice! Oh, how you hated a young, mistress-keeping husband, whom neither beauty nor honour in a wife could oblige to reason! — Oh, damn your honour. 'Tis that that's the sly pretence of all your domineering, insolent wives. — Death — What didst thou see in me should make thee think that I would be a tame contented cuckold? *(He going, she holds him.)*

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* I must not lose this lavish, loving fool —

WILLMORE *(Aside)* So, I hope he will be civil and withdraw, and leave me in possession—

BEAUMOND No, though my fortune should depend on thee; nay, every hope of future happiness — by heaven, I scorn to marry thee, unless thou couldst convince me thou wert honest — A whore! — Death, how it cools my blood —

WILLMORE *(Aside)* And fires mine, extremely —

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* Nay, then I am provoked, though I spoil all — *(Aloud)* — And is a whore — a thing so much despised? Turn back, thou false forsworn — Turn back, and blush at thy mistaken folly — *(He stands amazed.)*

BEAUMOND La Nuche —

Enter Ariadne, peering, advancing cautiously, informally clothed, Lucia following.

ARIADNE Oh, he is here — Lucia, attend me in the orange-grove — *(Exit Lucia)*
Hah, a woman with him!

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Hm — What have we here? Another damsel — She's gay, too, and seems young and handsome — Sure, one of these will fall to my share; no matter which, so I am sure of one.

LA NUCHE Who's silent now? Are you struck dumb with guilt? Thou shame to noble love! Thou scandal to all brave debauchery, thou fop of fortune. Thou slavish heir to estate and wife, born rich and damned to matrimony.

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Egad, a noble wench — I am divided yet.

LA NUCHE Thou formal ass disguised in generous lewdness, see — when the vizor's off,
How sneakingly that empty form appears —
Nay, 'tis thy own —
Make much on't, marry with it, and be damned. *(Offers to go.)*

WILLMORE *(Aside)* I hope she'll beat him for suspecting her. *(Beaumont holds La Nuche. She turns.)*

ARIADNE *Aside* Hah — Who the devil can these be —

LA NUCHE What silly, honest fool did you mistake me for; what senseless, modest thing? Death, am I grown so despicable? Have I deserved no better from thy love, than to be taken for a virtuous changeling?

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Egad, 'twas an affront.

LA NUCHE I'm glad I've found thee out to be an arrant coxcomb, one that esteems a woman for being chaste, forsooth! 'S hart, I shall have thee call me pious, shortly, a most — religious matron!

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Egad, she has reason —

BEAUMOND *(Sighing)* Forgive me, — for I took ye — for another —

LA NUCHE Oh, did you so? It seems you keep fine company the while — Death, that I should e'er be seen with such a vile dissembler, with one so vain, so dull and so impertinent as can be entertained by honest women!

WILLMORE *(Aside)* A heavenly soul, and to my wish, were I but sure of her.

BEAUMOND Oh, you do wondrous well to accuse me first! Yes, I am a coxcomb — a confounded one, to dote upon so false a prostitute; nay, to love seriously, and tell it too. Yet such an amorous coxcomb I was born, to hate the enjoyment of the loveliest woman unless I have the heart. The fond, soft prattle and the lolling dalliance, the frowns, the little quarrels, and the kind stages of making peace again, are joys which I prefer to all the sensual, whilst I endeavour to forget the whore, and pay my vows to wit, to youth and beauty.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Now, hang me if it be not Beaumond!

BEAUMOND Would any devil less than common woman have served me as thou didst? Say, was not this my night? My paid-for night? My own by right of bargain, and by love? And hast not thou deceived me for a stranger?

WILLMORE *(Aside)* So — make me thankful, then she will be kind. *(Hugs himself.*

BEAUMOND — Was this done like a whore of honour, think ye? And would not such an injury make me forswear all joys of womankind, and marry in mere spite?

LA NUCHE Why, where had been the crime, had I been kind?

BEAUMOND Thou dost confess it, then.

LA NUCHE Why not?

BEAUMOND Those bills of love, the oftener paid and drawn, make women better merchants than lovers.

LA NUCHE And 'tis the better trade.

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Oh, pox, there she dashed all again. I find they grow calm upon it, and will agree. Therefore I'll pull up to this small frigate and board her. *(Goes to Ariadne.*

LA NUCHE However, I am glad the visor's off. You might have fooled me on, and sworn I was the only conquerer of your heart, had not good nature made me follow you to undeceive your false suspicions of me. How have you sworn never to marry? How railed at wives, and satirised fools obliged to wedlock? And now, at last, to thy eternal shame, thou hast betrayed thyself to be a most pernicious, honorable lover, a perjured — honest — Nay, a very husband. *(Turns away. He holds her.*

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Hah, sure, 'tis the captain.

WILLMORE Prithee, child, let's leave 'em to themselves. They'll agree matters, I'll warrant them, when they're alone. And let us try how love and good nature will provide for us.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Sure, he cannot know me? — *(Aloud)* Us? — Pray, who are you, and who am I?

WILLMORE Whe, look ye, child, I am a very honest, civil fellow, for my part, and thou art a woman, for thine.
And I desire to know no more at present.

ARIADNE (*Aside*) 'Tis he, and knows not me to be the same he appointed today — (*Aloud*) Sir, pursue that path
on your right hand, that grove of orange trees, and I'll follow you immediately.

WILLMORE Kind and civil — Prithee, make haste, dear child. (*Exit Willmore.*)

BEAUMOND (*Lovingly*) And did you come to call me back again?

LA NUCHE No matter. You're to be married, sir —

BEAUMOND No more. 'Tis true, to please my uncle, I have talked of some such thing. But I'll pursue it no
farther, if thou wilt yet be mine, and mine entirely — I hate this Ariadne — for a wife — By heaven I
do.

ARIADNE A very plain confession. (*Claps him on the back.*)

BEAUMOND Ariadne!

LA NUCHE (*Aside*) I'm glad of this. Now, I shall be rid of him.

— (*Aloud*) How is't, sir? I see you struggle hard 'twixt love and honour, and I'll resign my place —
(*Offers to go. Ariadne pulls her back.*)

ARIADNE (*Aside*) Hold. If she take him not away, I shall disappoint my man — (*Aloud*) Faith, I'll not be outdone
in generosity. (*Gives him to La Nuche*) Here — love deserves him best — and I resign him —
(*To Beaumont.*) Pox on it, I'm honest, though that's no fault of mine. 'Twas fortune who has made a
worse exchange, and you and I should suit one another most damnably.

BEAUMOND (*Aside*) I am sure there's something in the wind, she being in the garden, and the door left open.
(*Aloud*) — Yes, I believe you are willing enough to part with me when you expect another you like
better.

ARIADNE I'm glad I forestalled you, then.

BEAUMOND Very good. And the door was left open to give admittance to a lover.

ARIADNE 'Tis visible it was to let one in to you, false as you are.

LA NUCHE Faith, madam, you mistake my constitution: my beauty and my business is only to be beloved,
not to love. I leave that slavery for you women of quality, who must invite, or die without the
blessing; for, likely, the fool you make choice of lacks wit or confidence to ask first. You are obliged to
whistle, before the dogs will fetch and carry, and then, too, they approach by stealth. And having
done the drudgery, the submissive curs are turned out, for fear of dirtying your apartment, or that the
mongrels should scandalise ye. Whilst all my lovers, of the noble kind, throng to adore and fill my
presence daily, gay, as if each were triumphing for victory.

ARIADNE Aye, this is something. What a poor, sneaking thing an honest woman is.

LA NUCHE — And if we chance to love, still there's a difference: your hours of love are like the deeds of
darkness, and mine like cheerful birds in open day.

ARIADNE You may. You have no honour to lose.

LA NUCHE Or if I had, why should I double the sin by hypocrisy?

(Lucia squeals from offstage, crying, help, help.)

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Heavens, that's Lucia's voice.

BEAUMOND Hah, more caterwauling?

Enter Lucia in haste.

LUCIA Oh, madam, we're undone. And, sir, for heaven's sake, do you retire.

BEAUMOND What's the matter?

LUCIA Oh, you have brought the most villainous, mad friend with you — He found me sitting on a bank — and did so ruffle me.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* Death, she takes Beaumont for the stranger, and will ruin me.

LUCIA Nay, made love so loud, that my lord, your stepfather, who was in his study, heard us from the orange-grove, and has sent to search the garden — And should he find a stranger with you — *(To Beaumont)* Just retire, sir, and all's well — yet —

ARIADNE *(Aside)* The devil's in her tongue.

LUCIA For if Mr Beaumont be in the house, we shall have the devil to do with his jealousy.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* So, there, 'tis out.

BEAUMOND *(Aside)* She takes me for another — I am jilted everywhere — *(Aloud)* What friend? — I brought none with me. *(To La Nuche.)* — Madam, you retire —

LA NUCHE Glad of my freedom, too — *(Goes out.)*

A clashing of swords offstage. Enter Willmore, fighting, pressed back by 3 or 4 men. Abeville, Ariadne and Lucia run out.

BEAUMOND Hah, outnumbered. *(Puts himself between their swords, and speaks to Willmore aside.)* Hold, though thou be'st my rival, I will free thee, on condition thou wilt meet me tomorrow morning in the piazza by daybreak.

WILLMORE By heaven, I'll do it.

BEAUMOND Retire in safety, then. You have your pass.

ABEVILE Fall, fall on, the number is increased. *(Men attack Beaumont.)*

BEAUMOND Rascals, do you not know me? *(Attacks 'em and beats 'em back, and Exit with them.)*

WILLMORE Nay, if you be so well acquainted, I'll leave you — Unfortunate still I am. My own well meaning, but ill-management is my eternal foe. Plague on 'em, they have wounded me — Yet not one drop of blood's departed from me that warmed my heart for woman! And I'm not willing to quit this fairy-ground till some kind devil have been civil to me.

Enter Ariadne and Lucia.

ARIADNE *(Aside to Lucia)* I say, 'tis he. Thou'st made so many dull mistakes tonight, thou darest not trust thy senses when they're true — — *(Aloud)* How are you, sir? —

WILLMORE *(Aside)* That voice has comfort in it, for 'tis a woman's. Hah, more interruption?

ARIADNE A little this way, sir. *(Exeunt Ariadne and Willmore into the garden.)*

Enter Beaumont, with Abevile in a submissive posture.

BEAUMOND No more excuses — By all these circumstances, I know this Ariadne is a gypsy. What difference, then, between a money-taking mistress and her that gives her love? Only, perhaps, this sins the more privately by it, and talks of honour more. What fool would be a slave to empty name, or value woman for dissembling well? — I'll to La Nuche — the honestest of the two — Abevile — get me my musicians ready, and attend me at La Nuche's. *(Exeunt separately.)*

LUCIA He's gone, and to his mistress, too.

Enter Ariadne pursued by Willmore.

WILLMORE My little Daphne, 'tis in vain to fly, unless, like her, you could be changed into a tree. Apollo's self pursued not with more eager fire than I. *(Holds her.)*

ARIADNE Will you not grant a parley ere I yield? —

WILLMORE I'm better at a storm.

ARIADNE Besides, you're wounded too.

WILLMORE Oh, leave those wounds of honour to my surgeon. Thy business is to cure those of love. Your true-bred soldier ever fights with the more heat for a wound or two.

ARIADNE Hardly, in Venus's wars.

WILLMORE Herself ne'er thought so, when she snatched her joys between the rough encounters of the god of war. Come, let's pursue the business we came for. See, the kind night invites, and all the ruffling winds are hushed and still. Only the zephyrs spread their tender wings, courting, in gentle murmurs, the gay boughs. 'Twas in a night like this, Diana taught the mysteries of love to the fair boy Endymion. I am plaguy full of history and simile tonight —

ARIADNE You see how well he fared for being modest.

WILLMORE He might be modest, but 'twas not over-civil to put her goddessship to asking first. Thou seest, I'm better bred — Come, let's haste to silent grots that await us, dark groves where none can see — and murmuring fountains.

ARIADNE Stay, let me consider first. You are a stranger. Inconstant, too, as island winds, and every day are fighting for your mistresses. Of which you've had at least four since I saw you first, which is not a whole day.

WILLMORE I grant ye, before I was a lover, I ran at random, but I'll take up now, be a patient man, and keep to one woman a month.

ARIADNE A month!

WILLMORE And a fair reason, child. Time was, I would have worn one shirt, or one pair of shoes, so long as have let the sun set twice upon the same sin. But, see the power of love: thou hast bewitched me, that's certain.

ARIADNE Have a care of giving me the ascendant over ye, for fear I make ye marry me.

WILLMORE Hold, I forbid that prediction, child. No, I'm none of those spirits that can be conjured into a wedding-ring, and dance in the dull, matrimonial circle all my days.

ARIADNE But what think you of a hundred thousand crowns, and a beauty of sixteen?

WILLMORE As of most admirable blessings — But hark ye, child, I am plaguily afraid thou art some scurvy, honest thing of quality by these odd questions of thine, and hast some wicked design upon my body.

ARIADNE *(Aside)* What, to have and to hold, I'll warrant.

— *(Aloud)* No, faith, sir. maids of my quality expect better jointures than a buff-coat, scarf and feather. Such dowries as mine are better ornaments in a family than a captain and his commission.

WILLMORE Whe, well said. Now thou hast explained thyself like a woman of honour — Come, come, let's away.

ARIADNE Explained myself! How mean ye?

WILLMORE — Thou sayst I am not fit to marry thee — And I believe this assignation was not made to tell me so, nor yet to hear me whistle to the birds.

ARIADNE Faith, no. I saw you, liked ye, and had a mind to ye.

WILLMORE Aye, child —

ARIADNE In short, I took ye for a man of honour.

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Nay, if I tell, the devil take me.

ARIADNE I am a virgin in distress.

WILLMORE Poor heart.

ARIADNE To be married within a day or two to one I like not.

WILLMORE Hm — And therefore wouldst dispose of a small virgin treasure (too good for silly husbands) in a friend's hands. Faith, child, — I was ever a good religious, charitable Christian, and shall acquit myself as honestly and piously in this affair as becomes a gentleman.

Enter Abeville with musicians.

ABEVILE *(To the musicians)* Come along. Are ye all armed for the business?

ARIADNE Hah, armed. We are surprised again.

WILLMORE Fear not. *(Draws.*

ARIADNE *(Speaking quick, and pushing him forwards, runs off.)* Oh God, sir, haste away, you are already wounded! But I conjure you, as a man of honour, be here at the garden gate tonight again, and bring a friend, in case of danger, with you. And if possible, I'll put myself into your hands, for this night's work has ruined me —

ABEVILE (*Peering, advancing*) — My master, sure, not gone yet.

WILLMORE Rascals, though there are more of you, you'll find hot work in vanquishing. (*Falls on 'em.*)

ABEVILE Hold, sir. I am your page. Do you not know me? And these the musicians you commanded — Shall I carry 'em where you ordered, sir?

WILLMORE (*Aside*) They take me for some other. This was lucky.

(*Aloud*) Oh, aye — 'tis well — I'll follow — (*Aside*) But whither? — Plague of my dull mistakes, the woman's gone — (*Calls 'em.*) Yet stay — (*Aside*) For now I think on it, this mistake may help me to another — (*Calls*) Stay — (*Aside*) I must dispose of this mad fire about me, which all these disappointments cannot allay — Oh, for some young, kind sinner right now — How I could fall upon her like a bird of prey, and worry her with kindness — (*Calls*) Go on. I follow. (*Go out.*)

ACT IV, SCENE 3.

La Nuche's house in the dark. Enter Petronella and Aurelia with light.

AURELIA Well, the stranger is in bed, and most impatiently expects our patrona, who is not yet returned.

PETRONELLA Curse of this love! I know she's in pursuit of this rover, this English piece of impudence. Pox on 'em, I know nothing good in the whole race of 'em, but giving all to their shirts when they're drunk. What shall we do, Aurelia? This stranger must not be put off, nor Carlo neither, who has paid again as if for a new maidenhead.

AURELIA You are so covetous, you might have put 'em off, but now 'tis too late.

PETRONELLA Put off? Are these fools to be put off think ye? A fine fop Englishman, and an old, doting grandee? — No, I could put the old trick on 'em still, had she been here but to have entertained 'em. But, hark, someone knocks. 'Tis Carlo, on my life —

Enter Carlo. Gives Petronella gold.

CARLO Let this plead for me —

PETRONELLA Sweet don — You are the most eloquent person —

CARLO I would feast tonight — I know it is not mine, but I've sent five hundred crowns to purchase it because I saw another bargaining for it. And persons of my quality must not be refused. You understand me.

PETRONELLA Most rightly — That was the reason, then, she came so out of humour home — and is gone to bed in such a sullen fit —

CARLO To bed, and all alone? — I would surprise her there. Oh, how it pleases me to think of stealing into her arms like a fine dream, wench, hah.

AURELIA 'Twill be a pleasant one, no doubt.

PETRONELLA (*Aside*) He lays out the way how he'll be cozened —

(*Aloud*) The señora, perhaps, may be angry, sir. But I'll risk that to accommodate you. And that you may surprise her the more readily, be pleased to stay in my chamber till you think she may be asleep.

CARLO Thou art a perfect mistress of thy trade.

PETRONELLA (*Aside to Aurelia*) So, now will I to the señora's bed myself, dressed and perfumed, and finish two good works at once: earn five hundred crowns, and keep up the honour of the house — (*To Carlo*) Softly, sweet don. (*Lights him out.*)

AURELIA And I will do two more good things: disappoint your expectations, jilt the young English fool, and have old Carlo well beaten, if 'tother have any courage.

Enter La Nuche in a rage, and Sancho.

LA NUCHE Aurelia, help, help me to be revenged upon this wretched, unconsidering heart.

AURELIA Heavens, have you made the rover happy, madam?

LA NUCHE Oh, I wish I had, or that or any sin would change this rage into some easier passion. Sickness and poverty, disgrace and pity, all met in one, were kinder than this love, this raging fire of a proud, amorous heart.

Enter Petronella.

PETRONELLA Heavens, what's the matter?

AURELIA (*To La Nuche*) Here's Petronella. Dissemble but your rage a little.

LA NUCHE Damn all dissembling now, it is too late — The tyrant love reigns absolute within, and I'm lost, Aurelia.

PETRONELLA What, love? Forbid it, heaven! Will love maintain ye?

LA NUCHE Curse on your maxims. Will they ease my heart? Can your wise counsel fetch me back my rover?

PETRONELLA Hah, your rover. A pox upon him.

LA NUCHE He's gone — Gone to the arms of some gay, generous maid, who nobly follows love's diviner dictates, whilst I, 'gainst nature studying thy dull precepts, and to be base and infamously rich, have bartered all the joys of human life — Oh, give me love! I will be poor and love!

PETRONELLA (*Aside*) She's lost — (*Aloud*) But hear me —

LA NUCHE I won't. From childhood thou hast trained me up in cunning, read lectures to me of the use of man, but kept me from the knowledge of the right. Taught me to jilt, to flatter and deceive, and hard it was to learn the unwelcome lessons. But oh, how soon plain nature taught me love! And showed me all the cheat of thy false tenets — No — Give me love, with any other curse.

PETRONELLA But who will give you that when you are poor? When you are wretchedly despised and poor —

LA NUCHE Hah —

PETRONELLA Do you not daily see — fine clothes, rich furniture, jewels, gold and silver vessels, are more inviting than beauty unadorned? Be old, diseased, deformed, be anything, so you be rich and splendidly attended, you'll find yourself loved and adored by all — But I'm an old fool still — Well, Petronella, hadst thou been half as industrious in thy youth as in thy age — thou hadst not come to this —
(*Weeps.*)

FETHERFOOL (*Aside*) Hah, what a pox have we here? — I wish I were well out o'th' 'tother side — Perhaps 'tis her husband, and then I'm a dead man if I'm discovered.

(Removes to 'tother side. Carlo holds his hand.

CARLO Nay, do not fly — I know you took me for some happier person —

(Fetherfool struggles. Carlo rises, and takes him in his arms and kisses him.

FETHERFOOL (*In a shrill voice*) What, will you ravish me?

CARLO Hah, that voice is not La Nuche's — Lights there. Lights!

FETHERFOOL Nay, I can hold a bearded Venus, sir, as well as any man. *(Holds Carlo.*

CARLO What art thou? Rogue, villain, slave? *(They fall to blows, and fight till they are bloody, fall from the bed, and fight on the floor.*

Enter Petronella, Sancho, and Aurelia.

PETRONELLA Heaven, what noise is this? — We are undone. Part 'em, Sancho. *(They part 'em.*

FETHERFOOL Give me my sword. Nay, give me but a knife, that I may cut yon fellow's throat —

CARLO Sirrah, I'm a grandee, and a Spaniard, and will be revenged.

FETHERFOOL And I'm an Englishman, and a justice, and will have law, sir.

PETRONELLA (*Aside to Sancho, who is whispering to Carlo*) Say 'tis her husband, or anything to get him hence. — *(To Carlo, aside)* These English, sir, are devils, and on my life 'tis unknown to the señora that he's i'th' house.

CARLO Come, I'm abused, but I must put up with it for fear of my honour; a statesman's reputation is a tender thing. Convey me out the back way. I'll be revenged. *(Goes out, while Aurelia whispers aside to Fetherfool.*

FETHERFOOL What? Her husband? Prithee, convey me out. My clothes, my clothes, quickly —

AURELIA Out, sir. He has locked the door, and designs to have ye murdered.

FETHERFOOL Oh, gentle soul — take pity on me — Where, oh what shall I do? — My clothes, my sword and money.

AURELIA Quickly, Sancho, tie a sheet to the window, and let him slide down by that — Be speedy, and we'll throw your clothes out after ye. Here, follow me to the window —

FETHERFOOL Oh, any whither, any whither. That I could not be warned from whoring in a strange country by my friend Ned Blunt's example! — If I can but keep it secret now, I care not — *(Exeunt.*

Act IV, scene 5.

In the street, a sheet tied to the balcony, and Fetherfool sitting across to slide down.

FETHERFOOL So — now, your neck or your throat, choose ye either, wise Mr Nicholas Fetherfool — But stay, I hear company. Now dare not I budge an inch.

Enter Beaumont alone.

BEAUMOND Where can this rascal, my page, be all this while? I waited in the piazza so long that I believed
 he had mistook my order, and gone directly to La Nuche's house — but here's no sign of him —

FETHERFOOL Hah — I hear no noise. I'll venture down. *(Goes halfway down, and stops.)*

Enter Abevile, Harliquin, musicians, and Willmore.

WILLMORE Whither will this boy conduct me? — But since to a woman, no matter whither 'tis.

FETHERFOOL Hah, more company. Now dare not I stir up nor down. They may be hired thugs to cut my
 throat.

BEAUMOND Oh, sure, these are they —

WILLMORE Come, my heart, lose no time, but tune your pipes. *(Harliquin plays on his guitar, and sings.)*

BEAUMOND How, sure this is some rival. *(Goes near and listens.)*

WILLMORE Hark ye, child, hast thou ne'er an amorous ditty, short and sweet, hah? —

ABEVILE Shall I not sing that you gave me, sir? —

WILLMORE I shall spoil all with hard questions — Aye, child — That, that —

(The boy sings. Beaumont listens, and seems angry the while.)

Song.

A pox upon this needless scorn!
Silvia, for shame, the cheat give o'er.
The end to which the fair are born
Is not to keep their charms in store,
But lavishly dispose, in haste,
Of joys which none but youth improve;
Joys which decay when beauty's past:
And who, when beauty's past, will love?

When Age those glories shall deface,
Revening all your cold disdain,
And Silvia shall, neglected, pass
By every once-admiring swain;
And we can only pity pay,
When you, in vain, too late shall burn:
If love increase, and youth decay,
Ah, Silvia, who will make return?

Then haste, my Silvia, to the grove
Where all the sweets of May conspire
To teach us every art of love,

And raise our charms of pleasure higher;
Where, whilst embracing, we should lie,
Loosely in shades, on banks of flowers:
The duller world, whilst we defy,
Years will be minutes, ages hours.

BEAUMOND 'S death, that's my page's voice. Who the devil is't that ploughs with my heifer?

AURELIA Don Henrick, Don Henrick — *(The door opens, Beaumond goes up to't. Willmore puts him by, and offers to go in; Beaumond pulls him back.)*

WILLMORE How now! What intruding slave art thou?

BEAUMOND What thief art thou that basely, and by dark, robst me of all my rights?

(Strikes him. They fight, and blows light on who hangs down from the balcony. Sancho throws Fetherfool's clothes out, and Harliquin takes 'em up in confusion. They fight out Beaumond. All go off, but Willmore gets into the house. Harliquin and Fetherfool remain. Fetherfool gets down, runs against Harliquin in the dark. Both seem frightened.)

HARLIQUIN *Que questo?*

FETHERFOOL *Ah, un povre dead homme, murthered, killed.*

HARLIQUIN *(in Italian accent)* You are the first dead man I ever saw walk.

FETHERFOOL Hah, señor Harliquin!

HARLIQUIN *Señor* Nicholas!

FETHERFOOL A pox, Nicholas, ye. I have been mauled and beaten indoors, and hanged and bastinado'd outdoors, lost my clothes, my money, and all my belongings. But this is nothing to the secret-taking air. Ah, dear señor, convey me to the mountebank's. There I may have recruit and cure at once —

Act V, scene 1.

A chamber. La Nuche on a couch, informally dressed, Willmore at her feet on his knees, with all his clothes unfastened. His hat, sword, etc. on the table at which she is doing her hair.

WILLMORE Oh gods! No more!

I see a yielding in thy charming eyes,
The blushes on thy face, thy trembling arms,
Thy panting breast, and short-breathed sighs confess
Thou would be mine, in spite of all thy art.

LA NUCHE What need you urge my tongue, then, to repeat what from my eyes you can so well interpret?
(Bowing down her head to him, and sighing.)

— Or if — it must — Dispose — me as you please —

WILLMORE Heaven, I thank thee! *(Rises with joy.)*

— Who would not plough an age in winter seas,

Or wade seven long years in ruder camps,* * army camps
To find out this rest at last? — *(Leans on and kisses her bosom.*
Upon thy tender bosom to repose;
To gaze upon thy eyes, and taste thy balmy kisses *(Kisses her.*
— Sweeter than everlasting groves of spices,
When the soft winds display the opening buds.
— Come, haste, my soul, to bed —

LA NUCHE You can be soft, I find, when you would conquer absolutely —

WILLMORE Not infant angels, not young, sighing Cupids
Can be more. This ravishing joy that thou hast promised me
Has formed my soul to such a calm of love,
It melts, even at my eyes —

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* What have I done? That promise will undo me.
— *(Aloud)* This chamber was prepared, and I was dressed,
To give admittance to another lover.

WILLMORE But love and fortune both were on my side —
Come, come to bed — Consider nought but love — *(As they are leave, a knocking.*

LA NUCHE Hark!

BEAUMONT *(from offstage)* By heaven, I will have entrance! —

LA NUCHE 'Tis he whom I expect. As thou lovest life and me, retire a little into this closet —

WILLMORE Hah, retire —

LA NUCHE He's the most fiercely jealous of his sex,
And disappointment will enrage him more.

WILLMORE Death, let him rage, whoe'er he be. Dost think I'll hide me from him, and leave thee to his
love?

Shall I, pent up through the thin wainscot, hear
Your sighs, your amorous words and sound of kisses?
No. If thou canst cozen me, do it but discreetly,
And I shall think thee true.

I have thee now, and when I tamely part with thee, may cowards huff and bully me.

(Knocking again from offstage.

LA NUCHE And must I be undone because I love ye?

This is the mine from whence I fetched my gold!

WILLMORE Damn the base trash. I'll have thee poor, and mine.

'Tis nobler, far, to starve with him thou lovest,
Than, gay without, and pining all within.

(Knocking breaking the door. Willmore snatches up his sword.

LA NUCHE *(Aside)* Heavens, here will be murder done — He must not see him.

(As Beaumont breaks open the door, she runs away with the candle. They are by dark.

Beaumont enters with his sword drawn.

WILLMORE What art thou?

BEAUMOND A man. *(They fight.*

Enter Petronella with light, La Nuche following. Beaumont runs to her.

— Oh, thou false woman. Falser than thy smiles,
Which serve but to delude good-natured man,
And when thou hast him fast, betrayst his heart.

WILLMORE Beaumont!

BEAUMOND Willmore! Is it with thee that I must compete for territory?

For I lay claim to all this world of beauty. *(Looking with scorn on Willmore, takes La Nuche.*

LA NUCHE Heavens, how got this ruffian in?

WILLMORE Hold, hold, dear Harry. Lay no hands on her till thou canst make thy claim good.

BEAUMOND She's mine, by bargain mine, and that's sufficient.

WILLMORE In law, perhaps, it may, for aught I know. But 'tis not so in love. But thou art my friend, and I'll therefore give thee fair play — If thou canst win her, take her. But a sword and a mistress are not to be lost if a man can keep 'em.

BEAUMOND I cannot blame thee, thou but acts thyself —

But thou, fair hypocrite, to whom I gave my heart,
And this — exception made of all mankind?
Why wouldst thou, as if in malice to my love,
Give it the only wound that could destroy it?

WILLMORE Nay, if thou didst forbid her loving me, I have her, sure.

BEAUMOND I yield him many charms. He's nobly born,

Has wit, youth, courage, all that takes the heart,
And only lacks what pleases women's vanity,
Estate:* the only good that I can boast, * worldly standing
And that I sacrifice to buy thy smiles.

LA NUCHE *(To Willmore)* See, sir — Here's a much fairer trader — You may be gone —

WILLMORE Faith, and so there is, child; as for me, I carry all about me, and that, by heaven, is thine. I'll settle all upon thee but my sword, and that will buy us bread. I've two led-horses, too. One, thou shalt handle, and follow me through dangers.

BEAUMOND Forgive me. Oh, so very well I love,

Did I not know that thou hadst been a whore,

I'd give thee the last proof of love — and marry thee —

WILLMORE The last indeed — for there's an end of loving.

— *(To La Nuche)* Do, marry him, and be cursed by all his family.

Marry him, and ruin him, that he may curse thee, too.

— *(To Beaumont)* But, hark ye, friend, this is not fair. 'Tis drawing blades on a man that's only armed with the defensive cudgel. I'm for no such dead-doing arguments. *(To La Nuche)* If thou'rt for me, child, it must be without the folly, for better for worse. There's a kind of nonsense in that vow, fools only swallow.

LA NUCHE But when I've worn out all my youth and beauty, and suffered every ill of poverty, I shall be compelled to begin the world again without a stock to set up with. No, faith, I'm for a substantial merchant in love, who can repay the loss of time and beauty; with whom to make one thriving voyage, sets me up for ever, and I need never put to sea again. *(Comes to Beaumont.)*

BEAUMOND Nor be exposed to storms of poverty. The Indies shall come to thee — see here — This is the merchandise my love affords. *(Gives her pearls and diamond pendants.)*

LA NUCHE *(To Willmore)* Look ye, sir. Will not these pearls do better round my neck, than those kind arms of yours? These pendants in my ears, than all the tales of love you can whisper there?

WILLMORE *(Aside)* So — I am deceived — Deal on, for trash — and barter all thy joys of life for baubles — This night presents me one adventure more — I'll try thee once again, inconstant fortune, and if thou failst me then — I will forswear thee —
— *(Aloud)* Death, hadst thou loved my friend for his own value, I had esteemed thee. But when this youth and beauty could not plead, to be the mercenary conquest of his presents was poor, below thy wit. I could have conquered so, but I scorn thee at that rate — My purse shall never be my pimp — Farewell, Harry —

BEAUMOND Thoust shamed me out of folly — Stay —

WILLMORE Faith — I have an assignation — with a woman — A woman friend! Young as the infant day, and sweet as roses ere the morning sun — have kissed their dew away — She will not ask me money, neither.

LA NUCHE Hah! Stay — *(Holds him and looks on him.)*

BEAUMOND *(Aside)* She loves him, and her eyes betray her heart.

WILLMORE I am not for your turn, child — Death, I shall lose my mistress, fooling here — I must be gone —
— *(She holds him. He shakes his head and sings.)*

No, no, I will not hire your bed,

Nor tenant to your favours be;

I will not farm your white and red,

You shall not let your love to me:

I court a mistress — not a landlady.

(Repeat

BEAUMOND He's in the right. And shall I waste my youth and powerful fortune on one who, all this while, has jilted me, seeing I was a lavish loving fool! — No — This soul and body shall not be divided —

(Gives her to Willmore.

WILLMORE I am so much thy friend, another time I might be drawn to take a bad bargain off thy hands — But I have other business at present. Wouldst thou do a kind thing, Harry? — Lend me thy aid to carry off my woman tonight. 'Tis hard by in the piazza. Perhaps we may find resistance.

BEAUMOND Myself and sword are yours. I have a sedan-chair waits below, too, that may do you service.

WILLMORE I thank ye — Madam — your servant —

LA NUCHE Left by both?

BEAUMOND You see our affairs are pressing — *(Bows and smiles carelessly. Exit Willmore singing.*

LA NUCHE Gone! Where's all your power, ye poor deluded eyes? Curse on your feeble fires that cannot warm a heart which every common Beauty kindles. Oh — He is gone for ever —

Enter Petronella.

PETRONELLA Yes he is gone, to your eternal ruin. Not all the race of man could have produced so bountiful and credulous a fool —

LA NUCHE No, never. Fetch him back, my Petronella:

Bring me my wild inconstant, or I die — *(Begins to push her out.*

PETRONELLA The devil fetch him back for Petronella. Is't he you mean? You've had too much of him. A curse upon him. He's ruined you.

LA NUCHE He has. He shall, he must complete my ruin.

PETRONELLA *(Aside)* She raves. The rogue has given her a Spanish love-potion.

LA NUCHE My coach, my veil — or let 'em all alone. Undressed, thus loosely to the winds commit me to darkness, and no guide but pitying Cupid. *(She going out, Petronella holds her.*

PETRONELLA What, are you mad?

LA NUCHE As winds let loose, or storms when they rage high. *(Goes out.*

PETRONELLA She's lost, and I'll shift for myself, seize all her money and jewels, of which i have the keys. And if señor mountebank keeps his word, be transformed to youth and beauty again, and undo this La Nuche at her own trade — *(Goes in.*

Act V, scene 2.

The street. Enter Willmore, Beaumont, the sedan-chair following.

WILLMORE (*To Chairmen*) Set down the chair; you're now within call. I'll to the garden door and see if any lady bright appear — Dear Beaumont, stay here a minute, and if I find occasion, I'll give you the word.

BEAUMOND 'Tis hard by my lodgings. If you want conveniences, I have the key of the back way through the garden, whither you may carry your mistress.

WILLMORE I thank thee — Let me first secure my woman — *(Goes out.*

BEAUMOND — I thought I'd loved this false, this jilting fair, even above my friendship. But I find I can forgive this rogue, though I am sure he's robbed me of my joys.

Enter Ariadne with a casket of jewels.

ARIADNE Not here yet. A devil on him, he's dear-hearting it with some other kind damsel — Faith, 'tis most wickedly done of me to venture my body with a mad, unknown fellow. Thus a little more delay will put me into a serious state of mind, and I shall just go home again, sleep and be sober. *(She walks about.*

BEAUMOND (*Aside*) Hah, a woman! Perhaps the same he looks for — I'll counterfeit his voice and try my chance — Fortune may set us even.

ARIADNE Hah, is not that a man? yes — and a Chair waiting. *(She peers in the dark.*

BEAUMOND Who's there?

ARIADNE A maid.

BEAUMOND (*Aside*) A miracle — *(Aloud)* Oh, art thou come, child?

ARIADNE (*Aside*) 'Tis he. *(Aloud)* You are a civil captain, are you not, to make a longing maid expect thus? What woman has detained you?

BEAUMOND Faith, my dear, though flesh and blood be frail, yet the dear hopes of thee has made me hold out with a Herculean courage — *(Aside)* Stay, where shall I carry her? Not to my own apartment: Ariadne may surprise me. I'll to the mountebank here i'th' piazza. He has a cure for all things, even for longing love, and for a pistole or two will do reason. — *(Aloud)* Hah, company. Here, step into this chair.

She gets in. They go off just as Willmore enters.

WILLMORE Hm, a woman of quality, and jilt me? — Egad, that's strange now — Well, who shall a man trust in this wicked world!

Enter La Nuche, informally dressed, as before.

LA NUCHE This should be he. He saunters about like an expecting lover.

(Willmore peering and approaching.

WILLMORE By this light, a woman. If she be the right — but, right or wrong, so she be feminine. Hark ye, child, I fancy thee some kind thing that belongs to me.

LA NUCHE (*In a low voice*) Who are you? —

WILLMORE A wandering lover that has lost his heart. And I have a shrewd guess 'tis in thy dear bosom, child.

LA NUCHE Oh, you're a pretty lover. A woman's like to have a sweet time on't, if you're always so tedious.

WILLMORE By yon bright star-light, child, I walked here in short turns like a sentinel, all this live-long evening, and was just going (Gad forgive me) to kill myself.

LA NUCHE I rather think some beauty has detained you. Have you not seen La Nuche?

WILLMORE La Nuche! — Whe, she's a whore — I hope you take me for a civiller person than to throw myself away on whores. — No, child, I lie with none but honest women, I. But, no disputing now, come — to my lodging, my dear — Here's a chair waits hard by — (*Exeunt.*)

Act V, scene 3.

Willmore's Lodging. Enter Harliquin with Fetherfool's clothes on his shoulder, leading him limping by one hand, Blunt (drunk) by the other, by dark — Fetherfool bloody, his coat put over his shoulders.

FETHERFOOL *Piano, piano, señor.* Gently, good Edward — For I'll not limp in front of a cripple. I have lost a great part of my agile faculties.

BLUNT Ah — see the inconstancy of fickle fortune, Nicholas — A man today, and beaten tomorrow. But, take comfort: there's many a proper fellow has been robbed and beaten on this highway of whoring.

FETHERFOOL Aye, Ned, thou speakst by woeful experience — But, that I should miscarry after thy wholesome documents. But we are all mortal, as thou sayst, Ned — I wish I had never crossed the ferry from Croydon. A few such nights as these would learn a man experience enough to be a wizard, if he have but the ill luck to escape hanging.

BLUNT 'Ds hartlikins, I wonder in what country our kinder stars rule in England, plundered, sequestered, imprisoned and banished. In France, starved, walking like the sign of the Naked Boy inn, with cudgels in our hands. In Italy and Spain, robbed, beaten, and thrown out at windows.

FETHERFOOL Well — How happy am I — in having so true a friend to condole me in affliction — (*Weeps*) I am obliged to señor Harliquin, too, for bringing me hither to the mountebank's, where I shall not only conceal this catastrophe from those fortunate rogues our comrades, but procure a little album graecum⁷ for my backside. Come, señor, my clothes — But, señor — *un porta vera. Poco palauea.*⁸
(*Dresses himself.*)

HARLIQUIN Señor.

FETHERFOOL *Entende vos señora Inglesa?*⁹

HARLIQUIN *Em poco,*¹⁰ *em poco,* señor.

FETHERFOOL *Per quelqu'arts*¹¹ did your señorship escape cudgeling?

HARLIQUIN *La art de transformatio.*¹²

⁷ *album graecum*: dried dog excrement, an ingredient in some medicines.

⁸ *un porta vera. Poco palauea*: 'True clothes. A quick word'; corrupt French-Italian-Spanish.

⁹ *Entende...Inglesa*: 'do you understand English, sir?'

¹⁰ *Em poco*: a little; 'un poco' in Spanish and Italian.

¹¹ *Per quelqu'arts*: by which arts (fusion of French, Spanish, and Italian).

¹² *La art de transformatio*: the art of transformation (in Harliquin and Fetherfool's curious language).

FETHERFOOL *Transformatio* — Whe, wert thou not born a man?

HARLIQUIN No, señor, *un vieule femme*.¹³

FETHERFOOL How, born an old woman?

BLUNT Good Lord! Born an old woman! And so, by transformation, became invulnerable.

FETHERFOOL Aye — in- — invulnerable — What would I give to be invulnerable? And, egad, I am almost weary of being a man, and subject to beating. I wish I were a woman. A man has but an ill time on't: if he has a mind to a wench, the making love is so plaguy tedious — Then, paying, is, to my soul, insupportable. But to be a woman, to be courted with presents, and have both the pleasure and the profit — To be without a beard, and sing a fine treble — And squeak if the men but kiss me — 'Twere fine — And what's better, I am sure never to be beaten again.

BLUNT Pox on't, do not use an old friend so scurvily. Consider the misery thou wilt endure to have the heart and mind of a jilting whore possess thee. What a fit of the devil must he suffer who acts her part from fourteen to fourscore. No, 'tis resolved. Thou remain Nicholas Fetherfool still, shalt marry the monster, and laugh at fortune.

FETHERFOOL 'Tis true, should I turn whore to the disgrace of my family — what would the world say? 'Who would have thought it?', cries one; 'I could never have believed', cries another. No, as thou sayst: I'll remain as I am — marry, and live honestly.

BLUNT Well resolved. I'll leave you, for I was just going to serenade my fairy queen when I met thee at the door — Some deeds of gallantry must be performed, señor, *bonus nochus*.¹⁴ (Exit Blunt.

Enter Shift with a light.

FETHERFOOL Hah, a light. Undone!

HARLIQUIN *Patientia*,¹⁵ *patientia*, señor.

SHIFT Where the devil can this rogue Hunt be? Just now, all things are ready for marrying these two monsters. They wait, the house is hushed, and in the lucky minute to have him out of the way, sure the devil owes me a spite. (Runs against Harliquin, and puts out his candle.

HARLIQUIN *Que est la!*¹⁶

SHIFT 'Tis Harliquin. Pox on't, is't you?

HARLIQUIN (*Aside to Shift*) Peace, here's Fetherfool. I'll secure him whilst you go about your affair. (Exit Shift

FETHERFOOL Oh, I hear a noise. Dear Harliquin, secure me. If I am discovered I am undone — Hold, hold — Here's a door — (They both go in.

¹³ *un vieule femme*: an old woman; French 'une vieille femme'.

¹⁴ *bonus nochus*: good night; 'buenas noches' (Spanish).

¹⁵ *Patientia*: have patience, calm down; plausibly Spanish or Italian, but actually neither.

¹⁶ *Que et la*: who or what is there? French 'Qui est là?', but with the Spanish 'que', 'what'.

Act V, scene 4.

A chamber, with the she-giant asleep in a great big chair. Enter Fetherfool and Harliquin.

FETHERFOOL — Hah — My lady monster. Have I, to avoid Scylla, run upon Charybdis? — Hah, she sleeps. Now would some magnanimous lover make good use of this opportunity, take fortune by the forelock, put her to't, and make sure work — But, egad, he must have a better heart, or a better mistress, than I.

HARLIQUIN (*In his Italian accent*) Try your strength. I'll be civil and leave you.

FETHERFOOL Excuse me, señor, I would crack like a wicker bottle in her arms — No, señor, there's no venturing without a grate between us. The devil would not give her due benevolence¹⁷ — No, when I'm married, I'll just show her a fair pair of heels. Her dowry will pay for the rapid journey — But what if the giant should win her? That's to be feared; then I have swaggered and dressed, and paid fees, and ventured all this while for nothing.

HARLIQUIN Faith, señor, if I were you, I would make sure of something. See how rich she is in gems.

FETHERFOOL Right. As thou sayst, I ought to make sure of something, and she is rich in gems. How amiable looks that neck with that delicious row of pearls about it.

HARLIQUIN She sleeps.

FETHERFOOL Aye, she sleeps as 'twere her last. What if I made bold to strip her of the pearls? So, if I miss the lady, I have at least my charges paid. What vigorous lover can resist her charms — (*Looks on her*) But should she wake and miss it, and find it about me, I should be hanged — (*Turns away.* — So, then, I lose my lady, too — But flesh and blood cannot resist — What if I left the town? Then I lose my lady still, and who would lose a hog for the rest of the proverb¹⁸ — And yet, a bird in hand, friend Nicholas — Yet sweet meat may have sour sauce — And yet, refuse when fortune offers¹⁹ — Yet, honesty's a jewel²⁰ — but a pox upon pride when folks go naked²¹ —

HARLIQUIN Well said. *(Encouraging him by signs.*

FETHERFOOL Aye — I'll do it — But what remedy, now, against discovery and restitution?—

HARLIQUIN Oh, sir, take no care. You shall — swallow 'em.

FETHERFOOL How, swallow 'em? I shall ne'er be able to do it.

HARLIQUIN I'll show you, señor. 'Tis easy.

FETHERFOOL 'Gad that may be. 'Twere excellent if I could do't; but first — by your leave. (*Unties the necklace, breaks the string, and Harliquin swallows one to show him.*

HARLIQUIN Look ye, that's all —

¹⁷ **due benevolence:** sexual offices.

¹⁸ **lose a Hog...Proverb:** 'Lose not a hog for a halfpennyworth of tar', i.e. do not lose something valuable to save a trifling expense.

¹⁹ **fortune offers:** a version of 'When fortune smiles on thee take advantage'.

²⁰ **honesty...jewel:** alluding to proverbs including 'Plain dealing is a jewel', and 'Plain dealing is a jewel but they that use it die beggars'.

²¹ **Pox...naked:** alluding to the proverb, 'Poor and proud; fie, fie'.

FETHERFOOL Hold, hold, señor. If you be so nimble, I shall pay dear for my learning — Let me see — Friend Nicholas, thou hast swallowed many a pill for the disease of the body, let's see what thou canst perform for that of the purse. *(Swallows 'em.*

— So — a strengthening business, this — Three or four thousand pound in restorative pearl 'Sbud, Mark Anthony was never so treated by his Egyptian crocodile — Hah, what noise is that?

HARLIQUIN Stagehand, stagehand, señor.

FETHERFOOL How, a stagehand? Whe, what the devil makes he here? Some plot upon my lady's chastity. Were I given to be jealous, now, danger would ensue — Oh, he's entering. I would not be seen for all the world. Oh, some place of refuge — *(Looking about.*

HARLIQUIN I know of none.

FETHERFOOL Hah, what's this? — A clock-case —

HARLIQUIN Good, good — Look you, sir: do you do thus, and 'tis impossible to discover ye.

(Goes into the case and shows him how to stand; then Fetherfool goes in, pulls off his periwig, his head out, turning, for the minutes o'th' top. His hand out, and his finger pointing to a number.

Enter Shift and Hunt, disguised as stagehands

FETHERFOOL *(Aside)* Oh heaven, he's here.

SHIFT See where she sleeps. Get you about your business. See your own little marmoset and the priest be ready, so that we may marry and consummate before day. And in the morning, our friends shall see us abed together, give us the good morrow, and the work's done. *(Exit Hunt.*

FETHERFOOL Oh, traitor to my bed. What a hellish plot's here discovered? *(Shift wakes the giant.*

GIANT Oh, are you come, my sweetest?

FETHERFOOL *(Aside)* Hah, the mistress of my bosom false too. Ah, who would trust faithless beauty? — Oh, that I durst speak —

SHIFT Come let's away. Your uncle and the rest of the house are fast asleep. Let's away ere the two fools, Blunt and Fetherfool, arrive.

GIANT Hang 'em, timid-hearted slaves —

SHIFT A clock — Let's see what hour 'tis — *(Lifts up the light to see. Fetherfool blows it out.*

— How! Betrayed — I'll kill the villain. *(Draws.*

FETHERFOOL Say you so? Then 'tis time for me to uncase.

SHIFT *(To the giant)* Have you your lovers hid? *(Gets out, all groping in the dark. Fetherfool gets the giant by the hand.*

GIANT Softly, or we're undone; give me your hand and be undeceived.

FETHERFOOL *(Aside)* 'Tis she, now shall I be revenged. *(Leads her out.*

SHIFT What gone! Death, has this monster got the arts of woman?

(Harliquin meets him in the dark and plays tricks with him. (Exeunt all.

Enter Willmore and La Nuچه by dark.

WILLMORE Now we are safe and free, let's in, my soul,
And gratefully first sacrifice to love,
Then, to the gods of mirth and wine, my dear. *(Exit, passing over the stage.)*

*Enter Blunt with Petronella, embracing her, his sword in his hand,
and a box of jewels.*

PETRONELLA *(Aside)* I was damnably afraid I was pursued.

BLUNT *(Aside)* Something in the fray I've got. Pray heaven it prove a prize, after my cursed ill luck of losing my lady dwarf. *(Aloud)* Why do you tremble, fair one? — You're in the hands of an honest gentleman, ads hartlikins.

PETRONELLA Alas, sir, just as I approached señor doctor's door, to have myself surrounded with naked weapons, then to drop, with the fear, my casket of jewels, which had not you, by chance, stumbled on and taken up, I had lost a hundred thousand crowns with it.

BLUNT Ha um — a hundred thousand crowns — a pretty trifling sum — *(Aside)* I'll marry her out of hand.

PETRONELLA *(Aside)* This is an Englishman, of a dull, honest nation, and might be managed to advantage, were but I transformed now. *(Aloud)* I hope you are a man of honour, sir. I am a virgin, fled from the rage of an incensed brother. Could you but secure me with my treasure, I would be devoted yours.

BLUNT Secure thee? By this light, sweet soul, I'll marry thee: — *(Aside)* Belvile's lady ran just so away with him — This must be a prize — *(Aloud)* But, hark — Prithee, my dear, step in a little. I'll keep my good fortune to myself.

PETRONELLA See what trust I repose in your hands: those jewels, sir.

BLUNT So — There can be no jilting here. I am secured from being cozened, however. *(Exit Petronella.)*

Enter Fetherfool.

FETHERFOOL A pox on all fools, I say, and a double pox on all fighting fools. Just when I had miraculously got my monster by a mistake in the dark, conveyed her out, and within a moment of marrying her, to have my friend set upon me and occasion my losing her, was a catastrophe which none but thy quarrelsome courage (which never did any man good) could have procured.

BLUNT 'Ds hartlikins, I could kill myself —

FETHERFOOL To fight away a couple of such hopeful monsters, and two millions — Zounds, was ever valour so improvident?

BLUNT Your fighting made me mistake — For who the pox would have looked for Nicholas Fetherfool in the person of a hero?

FETHERFOOL Fight? 'Sbud, a million of money would have provoked a bully; besides, I took you for the damned rogue my rival.

BLUNT Just as I had finished my serenade, and had put up my pipes to be gone, out-stalked me your huge lady, with a man at her belt like a bunch of keys, whom I, taking for nothing less than someone who had some foul design upon the gentlewoman, like a true Knight Errant, did my best to rescue her.

FETHERFOOL Yes, yes, I feel you did. A pox of your heavy hand.

BLUNT So, whilst we two were lovingly cuffing each other, comes the rival, I suppose, and carries off the prize.

FETHERFOOL Who must be señor Lucifer himself, he could never have vanished with that celerity else, with such a burden — But, come, all we have to do is to alert the mountebank and the guardian, pursue the rogues, have 'em hanged by law for a rape and theft, and then we stand fair again.

BLUNT (*Aside*) Faith, you may if you please. But fortune has provided otherwise for me.

(Exeunt Blunt and Fetherfool.

Enter Beaumont and Ariadne.

BEAUMOND Sure, none lives here, or thieves are broken in. The doors are all left open.

ARIADNE (*Aside*) Pray heaven this stranger prove but honest now.

BEAUMOND Now, my dear creature, everything conspires to make us happy. Let us not defer it.

ARIADNE Hold, dear captain. I yield but on conditions, which are these — I give you up a maid of youth and beauty, ten thousand pound in ready jewels, here — Three times the value in estate to come, of which, here be the writings, you delivering me a handsome, proper fellow, heart-whole and sound, that's all — Your name I ask not till the priest declare it, who is to seal the bargain. I cannot deceive, for I let you know I am stepdaughter to the English ambassador.

BEAUMOND (*Aside*) Ariadne! How vain is all man's industry and care to make him accomplished, when the gay, fluttering fool, or the half-witted, rough, unmannered brute, who, in plain terms, comes right down to the business, out-rivals him in all his love and fortunes.

ARIADNE — Methinks you cool upon it, captain.

BEAUMOND Yes, Ariadne —

ARIADNE Beaumont!

BEAUMOND Oh, what a world of time have I mispent
For want of being a blockhead — 'Sdeath and hell,
Would I had been some brawny, ruffling fool,
Some forward, impudent, unthinking sloven,
A woman's tool; for all beside's unmanageable.
— Come, swear that all this while you thought 'twas I:
The devil has taught ye tricks to bring your falsehood off.

ARIADNE Know 'twas you? No, faith, I took you for as arrant a right-down captain as ever woman wished for.
And 'twas uncivil, egad, to undeceive me, I tell you that now.

Enter Willmore and La Nuche by dark.

WILLMORE *(Aside to La Nuche)* Thou art all charms, a heaven of sweets all over, plump, smooth, round limbs, small, rising breasts, a bosom soft and panting — I long to wound each sense. *(Aloud)* Lights, there — Who waits? — There yet remains a pleasure unpossessed, the sight of that dear face. — Lights there — Where are my vermin? *(Exit Willmore.)*

ARIADNE My captain with a woman — and is it so —

Enter Willmore with lights, sees Ariadne and goes to her.

WILLMORE By heaven, a glorious beauty! Now, a blessing on thee for showing me so dear a face — Come, child, let's retire, and begin where we left off.

LA NUCHE A woman!

ARIADNE Where we left off? Pray, where was that, good captain?

WILLMORE Within, upon the bed, child — Come — I'll show thee —

BEAUMOND Hold, sir.

WILLMORE Beaumont come fit to celebrate my happiness? Ah, such a woman, friend!

BEAUMOND Do ye know her?

WILLMORE All o'er, to be the softest, sweetest creature —

BEAUMOND I mean, do ye know who she is?

WILLMORE Nor care. 'Tis the last question I ever ask a fine woman.

BEAUMOND And you are sure you are thus well acquainted?

WILLMORE I cannot boast of much acquaintance — But I have plucked a rose from her bosom — or so — and given it her again — We've passed the hour of the sheperdhess together, that's all —

BEAUMOND And do you know — this lady is my — wife? *(Draw.)*

WILLMORE Hah! Hm, hm, hm, hm — *(Turns and sings, sees La Nuche, and returns, quick, with an uneasy grimace.)*

BEAUMOND Did you not hear me? — *Draw.*

WILLMORE Draw, sir? — What — on my friend?

BEAUMOND On your cuckold, sir, for so you've doubly made me. Draw, or I'll kill thee —

(Passes at him. He fences with his hat. La Nuche holds Beaumont.)

WILLMORE Hold, prithee, hold —

LA NUCHE Put up your sword. This lady's innocent, at least in what concerns this evening's business. I own — with pride I own, I am the woman that pleased so well tonight.

WILLMORE La Nuche! Kind soul, to bring me off with so handsome a lie. How lucky 'twas she happened to be here.

BEAUMOND False as thou art, why should I credit thee?

LA NUCHE By heaven, 'tis true. I will not lose the glory on't.

WILLMORE Oh, the dear, perjured creature, how I love thee for this dear, lying virtue — *(To Ariadne aside)*

Hark ye, child, hast thou nothing to say for thyself to help us out withall? —

ARIADNE !! I renounce ye — false man.

BEAUMOND Yes, yes, I know she's innocent of this, for which I owe no thanks to either of you, but to myself, who mistook her in the dark.

LA NUCHE *(To Willmore)* And you, it seems, mistook me for this lady. I favoured your design to gain your heart, for I was told that if this might I lost you, I should never regain you. Now I am yours, and o'er the habitable world will follow you, and live and starve by turns as fortune pleases.

WILLMORE Nay, by this light, child, I knew when once thou'dst tried me, thou'dst ne'er part with me — give me thy hand. No poverty shall part us. *(Kisses her.*

— So — Now here's a bargain made without the formal foppery of marriage.

LA NUCHE Nay, faith, captain, she that will not take thy word as soon as the parson's of the parish deserves not the blessing.

WILLMORE Thou art reformed, and I adore the change.

Enter the guardian, Blunt and Fetherfool.

GUARDIAN My nieces stolen, and by a couple of the señor's men! The señor fled too. Undone, undone.

WILLMORE *(Aside)* Hah, now's my cue. I must finish this jest. *(Goes out.*

Enter Shift and Giant, Hunt and dwarf.

GUARDIAN Oh, impudence! My nieces, and the villains with 'em. I charge ye, gentlemen, to lay hold on 'em.

DWARF For what, good uncle? For being so courageous to marry us?

GUARDIAN How? Married to rogues, rascals, John Potages!

BLUNT Who the devil would have looked for jilting in such hobgoblins?

FETHERFOOL And hast thou deceived me, thou foul, filthy synagogue?

Enter Willmore like a mountebank, as before, with Rag.

BLUNT The mountebank! Oh, thou cheating quack, thou sophisticated, adulterated villain.

FETHERFOOL Thou cozening, lying, fortune-telling, fee-taking rascal.

BLUNT Thou juggling, conjuring, canting rogue!

WILLMORE What's the matter, gentlemen?

BLUNT Hast thou the impudence to ask, who took my money to marry me to this ill-favoured baboon?

FETHERFOOL And me to this foul, filthy o'er-grown chronicle?

BLUNT And hast suffered rogues, thy servants, to marry 'em? Sirrah, I will beat thee past cure of all thy hard-named drugs, thy Guzman medicines.

FETHERFOOL Nay, I'll impeach him in the inquisition for a wizard, and have him hanged as a witch.

SHIFT (*Aside to the guardian*) Sir, we are gentlemen, and you shall have the thirds of their dowries. What would you more? (*Aloud*) Look ye, sir. (*Pulls off their disguises.*)

BLUNT Hunt!

FETHERFOOL Shift! We are betrayed! All will out to the captain.

WILLMORE He shall know no more of it than he does already through me, gentlemen. (*Pulls off his disguise.*)

BLUNT Willmore!

FETHERFOOL Aye, aye. 'Tis he.

BLUNT Draw, sir — you know me —

WILLMORE — For one that 'tis impossible to cozen. (*All laugh.*)

BEAUMOND Have a care, sir. We are all for the captain.

FETHERFOOL As for that, sir, we fear ye not, d'ye see, were you Hercules and all his Myrmidons. (*Draws, but gets behind Blunt.*)

WILLMORE Fools, put up your swords, fools, and do not publish the jest. Your money you shall have again, on condition you never pretend to be wiser than your other men, but modestly believe you may be cozened as well as your neighbours. (*The guardian talking with Hunt and Shift and giant this while.*)

FETHERFOOL La, you, Ned, why should friends fall out?

BLUNT Cozened, it may be not, sir. For look ye, sir, the Essex fool, the cozened, dull rogue can show belongings or so — nay, they are right, too — (*Shows his jewels.*) This is no Naples adventure, gentlemen, no copper chains. All substantial diamonds, pearls and rubies — (*Willmore takes the casket and looks in it.*)

LA NUCHE Hah, do not I know that casket, and those jewels?

FETHERFOOL How the pox came this rogue by these?

WILLMORE Hm, Edward, I confess you have redeemed your reputation, and shall hereafter pass for a wit — By what good fortune came you by this treasure? — What lady? —

BLUNT Lady, sir? Alas, no. I am a fool, a country fop, an ass, I. But that you may perceive yourselves mistaken, gentlemen, this is but an earnest of what's to come, a small token of remembrance, or so — And yet I have no charms, I; the fine captain has all the wit and beauty — But thou art my friend, and I'll impart. (*Brings out Petronella, veiled.*)

Enter Aurelia and Sancho.

AURELIA Hither we traced her, and see, she's yonder.

SANCHO Sir, in the king's name lay hold of this old cheat. She has, this night, robbed our patrona of a hundred thousand crowns in money and jewels.

BLUNT Hah! (*Gets from her.*)

LA NUCHE You are mistaken, friend Sancho. She only seized 'em for my use, and has delivered 'em in trust to my friend, the captain.

PETRONELLA Hah, La Nuche!

BLUNT How? Cozened again?

WILLMORE Look ye, sir. She's so beautiful, you need no dowry. That alone's sufficient for a wit.

FETHERFOOL Much good may it do you with your rich lady, Edward.

BLUNT Death, this fool laughs at me, too — Well, I am an arrant, right-down loggerhead, a dull, conceited, cozened, silly fool, and he that ever takes me for any other, 'Ds hartlikins, I'll beat him. I forgive you all, and will henceforth be good-natured. Would you borrow any money? Pox on't, I'll lend as far as e'er 'twill go, for I am now reformed.

GUARDIAN (*To Fetherfool*) Here is a necklace of pearl lost, which, sir, I lay to your charge.

FETHERFOOL Hm, I was bewitched I did not make off with it when it was mine — who I, if e'er I saw a necklace of pearl, I wish 'twere in my belly.

BLUNT How? A necklace, unconscionable rogue? Not to let me share? Wel, I there is no friendship in this world. I hope they'll hang him.

SHIFT He'll ne'er confess without the rack — Come, we'll toss him in a blanket.

FETHERFOOL Hah, toss me in a blanket? That will turn my stomach most villainously, and I shall vomit and discover all.

SHIFT Come, come, the blanket. *(They lay hold of him.)*

FETHERFOOL Hold, hold. I do confess, I do confess —

SHIFT Restore, and have your pardon.

FETHERFOOL That is not in nature at present, for, gentlemen, I have eat 'em.

SHIFT 'Sdeath, I'll dissect ye. *(Goes to draw.)*

WILLMORE Let me redeem him. (*To Rag*) Here, boy, take him to my chamber, and let the doctor enema him soundly, and I'll warrant you your pearl again.

FETHERFOOL If this be the end of travelling, I'll just to old England again, take the covenant, get a sequestrator's place, grow rich, and defy all cavaliering.

BEAUMOND 'Tis morning. Let's home, Ariadne, and try, if possible, to love so well to be content to marry. If we find that amendment in our hearts to say we dare believe and trust each other, then let it be a match.

ARIADNE With all my heart.

WILLMORE You have a hankering after marriage still, but I am for love and gallantry.

So tho by several ways we gain our end,

Love still, like death, does to one centre tend.

Epilogue, spoken by Mrs Barry (who plays La Nuche)

Poets are Kings of Wit, and you appear

A parliament, by play-bill summoned here.

Whene'er in want, to you, for aid, they fly,
And a new play's the speech that begs supply.* *payment

But now —

The scanted tribute is so slowly paid,
Our poets must find out another trade.
They've tried all ways the insatiate clan to please,
Have parted with their old prerogatives:
Their birthright satiring, and their just pretence
Of judging, even their own wit and sense,
And write, against their consciences, to show
How dull they can be to comply with you.
They've flattered all the mutineers in the nation,
Grosser than e'er was done in dedication;
Pleased your sick palates with fantastic wit,
Such as was ne'er a treat, before, to the pit;
Giants, fat cardinals, Pope Joans, and friars,
To entertain Right Worshipfuls and squires,
Who laugh, and cry 'Ads nigs, 'tis woundy good',
When the figure's all the jest that's understood.
And yet you'll come but once, unless by stealth,
Except the author be for Commonwealth.

Then, half-crown more you nobly throw away, }
And, though my lady seldom see a play, }
She, with her eldest daughter, shall be boxed that day. }

Then, prologue comes. 'Ads lightikins', cries Sir John,
'You shall hear notable conceits anon:
How neatly, sir, he'l mock the court and French king,
And tickle away — you-know-who — for wenching' —

 All this won't do. They may just spare their speeches,
For all their greasing will not buy 'em britches.
To get a penny new-found ways must take,
As forming Popes, and squibs and crackers make.
In coffee-houses, some their talent vent,
Rail for the cause against the government,
And make a pretty thriving living on't,
For who would let a useful member want?

Things being brought to this distressed estate,
'Twere fit you took the matter in debate.
There was a time, when, loyally by you,
True wit and sense received allegiance due.
Our king of poets* had his tribute paid, * Dryden, Poet Laureate
His peers secured beneath his laurel's shade.
What crimes have they committed that they must be
Driven to the last and worst extremity?

Oh, let it not be said of Englishmen,
Who have to wit so just and noble been,
They should their loyal principles recant,
And let the glorious monarch of it want.