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SF PERUSALS

Thornton Wilder and Ken Ludwig's
adaptation of

The Beaux' Stratagem

by George Farquhar

A Samuel French Acting Edition



New York Hollywood London Toronto
SAMUELFRENCH.COM

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Thornton Wilder and Ken Ludwig's
adaptation of
THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM
by George Farquhar

World Premiere Produced by
Shakespeare Theatre Company
Michael Kahn
Artistic Director
Nicholas T. Goldborough
Managing Director

This adaptation of ***THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM*** was first produced by the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. (Artistic Director Michael Kahn, Managing Director Nicholas T. Goldsborough) from November 7 to December 31, 2006. The set was designed by James Kronzer, the Costume Designer was Robert Perdziola, the Lighting Designer was Joel Moritz, the Sound Designer was Martin Desjardins, the Choreographer was Peter Pucci, and the Fight Director was Paul Dennhardt. The production was under the direction of Michael Kahn with the following cast:

Boniface.....DREW ESHELMAN
Cherry.....COLLEEN DELANY
Daniel.....MATTHEW STUCKY
A Lady.....DIANE LIGON
Jack Archer…….....CHRISTOPHER INNVAR
Tom Aimwell.....CHRISTIAN CONN
Gloss.....RICK FOUCHEUX
Mrs. Kate Sullen.....VEANNE COX
Dorinda.....JULIA COFFEY
Lady Bountiful.....NANCY ROBINETTE
Scrub.....HUGH NEES
A Country Woman.....ANNE STONE
Sullen.....IAN BEDFORD
Servants.....MARIA KELLY, DAVID MURGITTROYD
Hounslow.....DAN CRANE
Bagshot.....NICK VIENNA
Sir Charles Freeman.....DANIEL HARRAY
Foigard.....FLOYD KING

CAST

in order of appearance

BONIFACE, *landlord of an inn*
CHERRY, *the landlord's daughter*
DANIEL, *the landlord's servant*
A LADY, *set upon by robbers and disconcerted by it*
JACK ARCHER, *a gentleman of broken fortune, acting as a servant*
TOM AIMWELL, *a gentleman of broken fortune, acting as his master*
GLOSS, *a man of two professions, highwayman and clergyman*
MRS. KATE SULLEN, *Lady Bountiful's daughter-in-law*
DORINDA, *Lady Bountiful's daughter*
LADY BOUNTIFUL, *a country gentlewoman, foolishly fond of her son*
SCRUB, *servant to Sullen*
A COUNTRY WOMAN, *seeking medical advice*
SULLEN, *Lady Bountiful's son, brutal to his wife*
SERVANTS, *serving in the Sullen Household*
HOUNSLOW, *a highwayman*
BAGSHOT, *a highwayman*
SIR CHARLES FREEMAN, *Mrs. Sullen's brother*
FOIGARD, *a French parson anxious to perform a wedding*

SCENE OF THE ACTION

Lichfield, England, 1707

NOTES ON THIS ADAPTATION

For more than 200 years this celebrated late Restoration comedy, with its timelessly wicked and witty observations about society and differences between the sexes, was one of England's most popular and performed comedies. First produced in 1707, *The Beaux'*, as it is known familiarly, is still produced occasionally in England. But in this country, while routinely included in anthologies of Restoration drama, *The Beaux'* is rarely seen on stage outside a university or conservatory setting.

In the fall of 1939, with the goal of making it more accessible to a modern audience, Thornton Wilder began, but never completed, an adaptation of *The Beaux' Stratagem.* In 2004, Ken Ludwig accepted the invitation offered by the Wilder estate to finish the work. The completed play, sixty-seven years in the making, was produced with great success in 2006 by the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C.

THE MAKING OF THE WILDER-LUDWIG *BEAUX'*

Remarks by Tappan Wilder, Thornton Wilder's nephew and literary executor, and Ken Ludwig, to the cast and production company of *The Beaux' Stratagem* at the first rehearsal of the play, held on September 24, 2006.

Once upon a time, when I was reading Thornton Wilder's manuscripts in Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, where it's so quiet you are afraid to breathe, I came across the script of his unfinished adaptation of George Farquhar's celebrated *The Beaux' Stratagem.* It has been part of Wilder's archives for decades, but nobody appears to have paid any attention to it. As I read it, I started laughing so hard that a starchy scholar working at a nearby table gave me a public dressing down. That was my introduction to Thornton Wilder's take on *The Beaux' Stratagem.*

Where does this play fit into Wilder's career? My uncle entered the decade of the '30s, when he was in his 30s, determined to achieve Broadway standing. He had many an asset to help make this happen. He was a world-famous, Pulitzer-Prize winning novelist by this time, which meant that many doors were open to him. He had also been writing drama from boyhood on, and publishing plays from college on — and destroying them, too. By nature, Wilder wasn't a "keeper." Starting young, he threw away reams of material. ("I don't want future scholars to be bothered," he said later, adding his much-quoted line: "A wastepaper basket is a writer's best friend.") One of the plays he wrote as a young man was a Restoration comedy. It has not survived.

Another asset was his erudition, a talent on parade in his role as a celebrated teacher of classics in translation (part-time at the University of Chicago during the '30s), as well as his proficiency in French, German, Italian and Spanish that allowed him to read plays in their native tongue. It is no surprise, then, that he first got to Broadway by way of translation and adaptation. He translated André Obey's *Lucrece* from the French for Katharine Cornell in 1932. The

play, which Cornell called her "favorite failure," died after only 31 performances. (Five years later, the admired British actor Brian Aherne, who played the villainous Tarquin in this show, was apparently slated for a major role in *The Beaux'.*)

Wilder's first Broadway success was another adaptation/translation, this time, in part, from German sources —a new stage version of *A Doll's House* for Jed Harris and Ruth Gordon. He finished this task in the spring of 1937 before departing for Europe to write plays buzzing in his own head. *A Doll's House* opened that summer in Central City, Colorado; played that fall with enormous success in the Midwest; and opened on Broadway at the end of 1937. The production set the record for the longest running *Doll's House* on Broadway —144 performances — a feat unsurpassed until 1997.

These adaptations and translations were followed by Wilder's innovative *Our Town*, which opened February 4, 1938, and which has never closed. He wound up 1938 with another adaptation, a free-ranging adaptation, if you will, of a Johann Nestroy comedy he called *The Merchant of Yonkers.* It died a quick death, although everyone who mattered knew it would someday be a success. In the early 1950s Ruth Gordon picked it up and, with minor changes by Wilder, turned it in 1954 into *The Matchmaker*, the playwright's biggest success on Broadway.

By the end of the 1930s, an exhausted Wilder informed family and friends that he planned to devote the fall of 1939 to catching up on promised odd jobs, among them an introduction for an edition of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (completed but not published until 1955) and an essay on playwriting (published in 1941 as "Some Thoughts on Playwrighting"). Then he consulted with Sol Lesser, the producer making a film of *Our Town.* Wilder had not counted on this diversion, which involved face-to-face meetings, telegrams, constant letters, etc., leaving him with little time to work on a project promised at the request of theatre producer Cheryl Crawford with, we believe, the added interest of the British-born actress/producer/director Margaret Webster — an adaptation of *The Beaux' Stratagem.* He started work on this task in September, just as war was declared in

Europe. By early December, he realized that he had lost his way with it and must give it up, although Crawford apparently had reserved a Broadway address for the show. In 1940, he began writing *The Skin of Our Teeth*, a new play of his own that spoke to the times.

Given his propensity for destroying paper, it speaks well for his view of its merits that Thornton Wilder preserved the record of his unfinished *Beaux'*. And I, for one, certainly never forgot my encounter with dramatic events in Lichfield. In fact, after that memorable day in the Beinecke, I began to dream of finding the right playwright to finish the play. Two years ago at the Alley Theater in Houston, Texas, I met Ken Ludwig. By chance we fell to talking about a subject of abiding interest to him, Restoration comedy. And here we are!

—Tappan Wilder

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When Thornton Wilder began adapting *The Beaux' Stratagem* for a modern audience, he did something that few if any other playwrights have ever done before. Normally, when a dramatist chooses an underlying work to adapt, that work is in a different language, or it is in another medium altogether, be it a novel, a poem or, lately, a movie. What Wilder did was take a play written in English and create an adaptation of it in English, set in the same time period with almost all of the same characters. And the original work itself was already considered a minor classic of Restoration comedy.

As he sat with the original text in front of him, I imagine that Wilder must have been thinking something along the following lines: "Here is a great piece of theatre with remarkable comic exuberance, gloriously funny characters and an abundance of genuinely witty dialogue; and it sits on the shelf, unperformed for decades at a time, especially in this country, because it is too long; contains too many turgid, unedited passages, and features two minor characters who are given far too much stage time and whose 18th-century stereotypes (the funny Frenchman and the funny Irishman) leave us cold

today. So why don't I pick this piece up and shake it a bit. I'll keep the exuberant storyline, the major characters and the great speeches. But I'll cut out all the boring bits, and, to make up for the cuts, add some new plot twists, some new characters and write some new scenes. Then, perhaps, I will be able to restore this play to the glory it deserves as a true classic of the 18th century, ready to stand beside its only peers, *She Stoops to Conquer, The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal."*

Thornton Wilder was famously generous about acknowledging literary influences. His view of literature was that we are a part of a great continuum — a literary fellowship — and we stand upon the shoulders of the great writers who came before us. He once said, "Literature has always more closely resembled a torch race than a furious dispute among heirs." His work on the *Beaux'*, unfinished as it is, is a case study in the tradition he loved best. Here he was, some three hundred years along, standing on the shoulders of George Farquhar. And now I get to stand on the shoulders of both of these great writers. And so, in working on this play, when I got to a particular scene or speech that needed to be written anew or changed, I would ask myself two questions. First, what would Wilder or Farquhar do in this passage if he were standing in my shoes? And then – the ultimate question – what would the three of us do if we were working together right now, collaborating, and preparing for opening tonight?

— Ken Ludwig

A detailed review of the making of this adaptation will appear in the forthcoming collection of Thornton Wilder's translations and adaptations to be published by Theatre Communications Group Press (TCG). This volume, for which Ken Ludwig has contributed the Preface, will include both the completed adaptation of *The Beaux'* and Wilder's original fragment.

ACT I
Scene 1

(The hall of the inn, Saturday. ENTER BONIFACE from the yard.)

BONIFACE. *(Shouting)* Daniel! Cherry! Is everyone asleep? Are you all dead? Daniel! Daughter Cherry!

(ENTER DANIEL from the kitchen, and CHERRY on the balcony.)

CHERRY. Here! Here! Why do you bawl so?

BONIFACE. The company of the London coach has stood in the yard this hour and nobody to show them to their rooms. And, Daniel, there's a gentleman that has come by horse with his servant — help them in.

DANIEL. Yes, sir.

BONIFACE. And Cherry — hark'ee — there is a woman there, weeping and wailing that some highwaymen have robbed her. The London coach found her by the side of the road, half naked.

CHERRY. Poor woman!

BONIFACE. (*Whispering*) Faith, it was our highwaymen

that were on the road today; can there be any others that are serving this district?

CHERRY. Aye, there can. The work has become so easy and profitable that the highwaymen will soon be feeding on one another.

(The door is suddenly filled with an enormous woman, who staggers into the room. CHERRY runs and supports her.)

THE LADY. Thieves! Robbers! Where's the militia? God's oath, was ever woman so insulted!

CHERRY. Madam, calm yourself. You're safe here.

THE LADY. Devils and demons! The rogues rifled me and pulled me about like a rag doll! I'll send the militia after them or I am no true woman!

BONIFACE. Come, madam, your anger will do you more harm than the highwaymen, that's the truth. Cherry, help the lady up the stairs — gently! Gently!

THE LADY. (*On the stairs.*) Scurvy fellows, mousing and mussing me about and searching me under my clothes where they have no business. It's a miracle, sir, that I wasn't ravished! (*And she's gone.*)

BONIFACE. Faith, I'd have left her alone too...

(ARCHER ENTERS, followed by DANIEL, bowed down with boxes, bandboxes, etc.)

ARCHER. A room for my master, landlord, and dinner as soon as you're ready, for we've ridden many miles today. And make it the best you have.

BONIFACE. Aye, sir. The best it shall be. Daniel, carry

the luggage up to the Rose and Thistle, our best room, sir. Does your master stay long in town, one way and another?

(DANIEL goes upstairs with the luggage.)

ARCHER. I can't tell you, one way and another.

BONIFACE. Ah. And he is coming from…?

ARCHER. Where he began.

BONIFACE. And going to…?

ARCHER. Where he'll end up.

BONIFACE. I see. But can you tell me your master's name?

ARCHER. His name, sir? He's not come to you to be christened, sir. But here he is; if you want his name you can ask him yourself. *(ENTER AIMWELL.)*

BONIFACE. Welcome, sir, you're welcome. I'm old Will Boniface, pretty well known upon this road, one way and another.

AIMWELL. Mr. Boniface, your servant.

BONIFACE. And what will your honor please to drink?

AIMWELL. I have heard your town of Lichfield famed for its ale. I think I'll taste that.

(As BONIFACE draws the ale, AIMWELL turns on ARCHER.)

AIMWELL. Well, well, — gawking, staring, idling. Was ever man cursed with such a dolt? I wager this servant of mine has been telling you everything about me?

BONIFACE. Not a word, your worship.

AIMWELL. The dog blabs without prompting. God's faith, I wonder I have the patience to keep the fellow in my

service. There's a fellow, landlord, if you bring him a dram or a coaxing wench, will tell everything he knows and a deal more. *(To ARCHER.)* Sirrah, don't forget to go to the stables and see my horses well-rubbed.

(ARCHER starts out the door.)

AIMWELL. No, no, first carry these to my room! One would think the fellow had never seen service before, though his father was hanged for miscounting spoons.

(ARCHER goes upstairs.)

AIMWELL. So you're proud of your ale, landlord?

BONIFACE. Aye, tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as the odor of a good woman. Your health, sir.

AIMWELL. 'Tis confounded strong.

BONIFACE. It must be so, or how should we be strong that drink it? Ah, I remember the first glass of it was drunk by my Lady Bountiful, God bless her soul, when she'd come to see my daughter Cherry christened at the font.

AIMWELL. Lady Bountiful?

BONIFACE. Od's my life, sir, we'll drink her health. — My Lady Bountiful is one of the best of women. Her second husband left her worth a thousand pound a year and I believe she lays out half of it in charitable uses. She's very strong on doctoring, y' know, and cures almost as many as she kills.

AIMWELL. Doctoring?

BONIFACE. Aye, she treats rheumatisms, ruptures and wind in men; greensickness, obstructions and convulsions in

women. And I've noticed that once her patients visit her — just the one time — they never go back again, that's how good she is.

AIMWELL. Has this Lady Bountiful a family?

BONIFACE. She has a daughter that's called Dorinda — the finest woman in all our country and the greatest fortune. I drink her health.

AIMWELL. Handsome, and a fortune! Surely, she's married.

BONIFACE. No, sir, though there's many as would like to. Lady Bountiful has a son, too, Squire Sullen, we'll drink his health!

AIMWELL. What sort of a man is he?

BONIFACE. Why, sir, the man's well enough. Says little, thinks less and does nothing at all. But he's a...he wants it *here*, sir. (*Tapping his head.*)

(CHERRY comes along the balcony.)

BONIFACE. There's my daughter now. Cherry, is the lady comfortable?

CHERRY. Aye, sir, she snores like a broken bagpipe. Good day, sir.

BONIFACE. Daughter, I was just telling this gentleman, — I don't know your name, sir?

AIMWELL. Why sir, I would not burden your memory with it.

BONIFACE. No, sir. — I was telling him about Squire Sullen.

CHERRY. He was here until three this morning and has broken all the windows in the tap-room for the tenth time.

BONIFACE. 'Tis a fact, sir, he's never at home, though he married a fine lady from London four years back — Mrs. Sullen — we'll drink her health, sir.

CHERRY. Your servant, sir.

(CHERRY EXITS. ARCHER appears on the balcony.)

BONIFACE. Now what will your worship please to have for supper? The world resides under my roof, sir. Anything you please.

AIMWELL. Have you any veal?

BONIFACE. We're out of it.

AIMWELL. A nice trout?

BONIFACE. Sold the last of it this morning.

AIMWELL. Have you got any wildfowl?

BONIFACE. Um, no. We have a delicate pair of rabbits, sir.

AIMWELL. Fine.

BONIFACE. Fricasseed or smothered with onions.

AIMWELL. Smothered with onions.

BONIFACE. We're out of onions.

AIMWELL. Fricasseed then, and when you're ready.

BONIFACE. Yes, sir. (*EXIT*)

AIMWELL. So, Archer, welcome to Lichfield! Our adventure has begun! Tell me, Jack, how feels it to be a servant?

ARCHER. You gave me a deuced bad character just now. Just wait till Nottingham, when I shall be master and you servant. Then you'll hear things.

AIMWELL. Then at Lincoln you'll be under the stairs again.

ARCHER. And at Norwich, I'll mount 'em. — Nay, I like it. We're men of intrinsic merit, Tom, who can strike our fortunes out for ourselves. We have heads to get money and hearts to spend it.

AIMWELL. (*Touching the strong-box.*) But this last two hundred pounds —

ARCHER. Why let me tell you, those two hundred pound, with the experience that we are masters of, is a better estate than the two thousand we have spent. Now, I am for risking one of our hundred, if you will, upon this knight-errantry — to find one of us a rich wife and share the fortune down the middle, halves each — ; but in case we fail, we'll reserve the other hundred to carry us to some battlefield, where we may die, as we lived, in a blaze.

AIMWELL. With all my heart, and we have lived, — there's no doubting that, Jack. We won't say that we spent our fortunes, but that we enjoyed'em.

ARCHER. Right! So much pleasure for so much money. And had I millions, I would go to the same market again. Oh, London! London! Well, we have had our share and let us be thankful; past pleasures, for aught I know, are best; those to come may disappoint us. But hark'ee, Tom, I'll marry no *ugly* heiress however rich she be. I love hunting, but would not like Actaeon be eaten by my own dogs. Now tomorrow is Sunday. You can go to Church and scrape what acquaintance you can there, and I shall inquire in the kitchen as to what rich fortunes are settled hereabouts. But Tom, have you remarked the landlord's daughter; she has already given me a certain leer of invitation as the poet says.

AIMWELL. I confess I have not.

ARCHER. Good. 'Tis best so, for she is my adventure in

Lichfield, not yours. *(ENTER BONIFACE.)*

BONIFACE. The rabbits are on the fire, sir; you'll be served presently.

AIMWELL. Landlord, I have a small charge of money and your house is so full of strangers, that I believe it may be safer in your custody than in mine; for when this scurvy fellow of mine gets drunk he minds nothing. Just look at the dog, stooped over like a diseased rat. Here, Sirrah, reach me the strong-box.

ARCHER. Yes, your holiness.

AIMWELL. And take a bath for God's sake! He takes one once a year. They scrape him with a knife and he calls out "Lord Christ, I'm clean at last!" Here, landlord. The locks are sealed down, both for your security and mine, and it holds something above two hundred pound. Be sure you lay it where I may have it at a moment's warning. Perhaps I may be gone in half an hour; perhaps I may be your guest till the best part of that be spent; and pray order your ostler to keep my horses always saddled. Here, you dolt, show me to my room. And leave the servant girls alone this time!

(AIMWELL and ARCHER disappear into AIMWELL's room.)

BONIFACE. Cherry! Cherry!

(ENTER CHERRY with a tray from the kitchen.)

CHERRY. Yes, father?

BONIFACE. Consider well and tell me what you make of those two men up there?

CHERRY. I don't know, but I know one thing, sure: that servant is no servant.

BONIFACE. Then what is he, girl? What are they both?

CHERRY. I know not.

BONIFACE. What is it that says he may stay half an hour, or may remain till half two hundred pound are spent? What is it that asks that his horse be always saddled? Won't give his name and will say nothing of his business? And that leaves this box —

CHERRY. A highwayman, father!

BONIFACE. Ten to one, and this is some new-fetched booty of his. Now could we find him out, the money were ours.

CHERRY. He don't belong to our men.

BONIFACE. And since he don't belong to our fraternity we may betray him with a safe conscience. Look'ee, child, we must go cunningly to work; proofs we must have. The gentleman's servant loves drink, I'll ply him that way; and his master says he's easily coaxed by a wench, which shall be your opening, as the saying goes.

CHERRY. Father, would you have me give my secret for his?

BONIFACE. Consider, child, there's two hundred pound at stake. — Now mind your business. *(EXIT BONIFACE.)*

CHERRY. (*To the audience.*) What a rogue my father is! My father! I deny it. I have lived with myself long enough to know that I am no daughter of his. My mother was a good free-hearted generous woman; only I can't tell how far her good nature might have extended for the benefit of her children. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest and risk his daughter's honor, all for two hundred pounds. I wouldn't do it for five hundred. Or eight or nine. A thousand possibly, but that's real money.

And as for that fellow upstairs, I would rather he were a highwayman than a footman, for if he be a footman he has no future and is as misbegotten as I am.

(She goes up the stairs and knocks on AIMWELL'S door.)

CHERRY. Sir, your master's dinner's ready.

(ENTER ARCHER.)

ARCHER. Friend, your knock startled me. I was thinking of you at this very moment.

CHERRY. Of me, sir?

ARCHER. My master is so severe with me that I was afraid you would gather a low opinion of my merits.

CHERRY. Why, sir, my judgments are my own.

ARCHER. Good, for there is no one in Staffordshire by whom I would rather be well thought on.

CHERRY. Why sir, flattery is no way to bring it about.

ARCHER. Then let me wrestle for your good opinion. *(He does.)*

CHERRY. Sir! Tell yourself that I am the landlord's daughter in this inn; that there is no advance that you are likely to make which I have not fought off a hundred times, and with these reflections carry your master's dinner to him, for I think he is hungry.

(Starts to go. He tries to kiss her again but she pushes him away.)

ARCHER. I would fain make love to you, so render me the formula and tell me what to say.

CHERRY. Well then ask me a question about love and I'll answer it.

ARCHER. What is Love?

CHERRY. Love is I know not what, it comes I know not how, and goes I know not when.

ARCHER. Where does Love enter?

CHERRY. Into the eyes.

ARCHER. And where go out?

CHERRY. I won't tell you.

ARCHER. What are objects of that passion?

CHERRY. Youth, Beauty, and Clean Lips.

ARCHER. The reason?

CHERRY. The first two are fashionable in Nature; the third is a personal preference.

ARCHER. What are the signs and tokens of that passion?

CHERRY. A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words improbable, designs impossible, and actions impracticable. And since you are so bold as to furnish surmises about me, friend, I shall offer the same to you.

ARCHER. And what is that, my angel?

CHERRY. You are no footman, and why you are in this disguise, I think I know, too.

ARCHER. 'Sdeath! You are a witch in every way. Give me a kiss. (*He kisses her.*)

BONIFACE. (*Off*) Cherry! Cherry!

CHERRY. Mmmm — my father calls. You plaguey devil, how durst you stop my breath so? — Offer to follow me one step, if you dare!

(ARCHER EXITS into the room with his master's tray as BONIFACE ENTERS.)

BONIFACE. Well, daughter, have you smoked him out?

CHERRY. Pray, father, don't put me upon getting anything out of a man again. I'm but young and I don't understand wheedling.

BONIFACE. Don't understand wheedl —? You're a woman — it comes natural.

(ENTER from the yard MR. GLOSS.)

GLOSS. Landlord! Landlord!

BONIFACE. Oh, Mr. Gloss!

GLOSS. Is the coast clear?

BONIFACE. What's the news?

GLOSS. Four little encounters on the road — "stick 'em up," ha! ha! — all fair, square and honorable, that's all. Here, my dear Cherry, lay these with the rest. Nearly fifty sterling pounds. No one interfered with, and the transactions closed friend to friend!

BONIFACE Aye, I think we have one of your recent friends in the house: a large woman, she hath had the convulsions the greater part of this hour.

GLOSS. I remember her well. Wanted to be ravished. We had to keep denying her. Now let's see...Here are three wedding rings or — funeral rings — 'tis much the same, you know. Their owners begged me for them on their knees and, faith, I was moved to tears, though I do confess it. But I had almost forgot, my dear Cherry, I have a present for you.

CHERRY. What is it?

GLOSS. A pot of cerise, child, that I took out of the lady's underpocket.

CHERRY. What! Mr. Gloss, do you think I paint?

GLOSS. Why, your betters do. These things are but the usage of the world, my child, and when usage has made them acceptable, tis but cant and hypocrisy to cry out against 'em.

BONIFACE. Aye, Mr. Gloss. You reason wondrous clearly.

GLOSS. Thank you, sir. That comes from having a part-time occupation as chaplain of the militia. When I am not out on the road relieving women of their purses, I am a man of the cloth, restoring men to their souls. And do you know, I find that the sermons I preach in the camp are much benefited by my second profession on the road. When those I rob cry out *"Oh God! Oh God!"* I am reminded that He Above is the great giver of all that is good. And when, of a cold, damp night, they cry *"May you go to Hell!"* I am touched that they wish me the comfort of a warmer climate. And so, as the poet says, there be sermons in storms and good in everything.

BONIFACE. Do you know any other gentlemen of the pad that are now in the district?

GLOSS. No.

BONIFACE. I fancy that I have two that lodge in the house just now.

GLOSS. The devil!

BONIFACE. One of them pretends to be the servant of the other and is up in his master's room now serving him dinner. They have brought me a box to guard worth two hundred pound.

GLOSS. Doubtless some of these new fellows that cannot do the work of the road with honor and have brought the whole profession into bad repute.

BONIFACE. Look'ee, here comes the servant now, or the one that calls himself the servant.

(ENTER ARCHER above, cleaning boots.)

GLOSS. Mr. Landlord, draw us some ale and leave me alone with him. And you, Cherry, take my coat and secure these goods. Good evening, sir.

ARCHER. (*Descending*) Good evening.

GLOSS. Sir, the landlord has drawn some ale for us. Will you not have a glass with me? I am chaplain of the militia here. My name is Gloss.

ARCHER. Why, thank you, sir. I was on the way to the kitchen to ask this lady to join me in dinner.

BONIFACE. 'Twill be ready when you come. You'll have time for a talk with Mr. Gloss. Come, Cherry.

(EXIT BONIFACE and CHERRY.)

GLOSS. Your health, Mister …?

ARCHER. Uh, Martin.The name is Martin. (*They drink.*) There has been a hue and cry here for your militia, Mr. Gloss. There were highwaymen on the roads today. A poor woman was picked up by the London coach. She says she was nearly ravished.

GLOSS. Oh, I doubt that.

ARCHER. And that she was robbed, sir.

GLOSS. Of how much?

ARCHER. By her lamentations I should say it was a good deal.

GLOSS. Lamentations have nothing to do with it, Mr. Martin. I fancy some women make as much noise over the loss of a wedding ring as others make over two hundred pound.

ARCHER. Mr. Gloss, for a man of the cloth, you have a surprising clear insight into such matters.

GLOSS. And you, for a footman, Mr. Martin. I could swear on the Bible which I always have with me, — Devil take it, where's the plaguey thing gone — well, it's no matter, — I could swear on the Bible, sir, that you are no footman.

ARCHER. That's very strange, Mr. Gloss, because I could swear on the Bible, if you had one, that there's something in your face that is more than a chaplain. (*They both laugh.*)

GLOSS. Have I twigged you, Mr. Martin? Eh?

ARCHER. You are very sharp, sir.

GLOSS. Now, Mr. Martin, why should we not be above board with one another? You may be well-suited with your master as you call him; but I could do very well with a stout young fellow who's not afraid of a brisk moment or two on the road. However, we might begin lightly until we know one another better, so to speak. There's a piece of work in the neighborhood I have in mind. 'Tis in a house, sir, and the men I work with now are awkward boobies and would knock over every table in the way. They lack what I would call the light touch, as necessary in house-breaking as it is in religion.

ARCHER. You have henchmen, sir?

GLOSS. Aye, two fellows for the work on the road, and the innkeeper here and his daughter understand me, so to speak.

ARCHER. Mr. Boniface and his pretty daughter?

GLOSS. Aye, Cherry stores the goods and the landlord tells us the news of the road. Now, hark'ee, this house that I've mentioned will be easy pickings — with a deal of family plate that

could be melted down, and I doubt not a good amount of money and jewels besides. Would such a venture interest you, Mr. Martin; you have only to think it over and give me a sign.

ARCHER. It shall have my full attention. You do me honor, Mr. Gloss.

GLOSS. Your servant, sir. *(GLOSS EXITS.)*

ARCHER. (*To the audience.*) Has one ever seen before such outright and arrant villainy? The man is a walking Babylon. I have been abroad, seen much and believed little. I have seen mountebanks disguised as doctors; speculators disguised as men of finance; and pick-pockets as attorney's at law; but never before have I met a highwayman disguised as a man of the cloth. Now there's a stratagem for you. Does not the poet say "Disguise, thou art a wickedness wherein the pregnant enemy does much?" Yet who am I to cast the first stone? Who does not wear the mask and apply the makeup? Look you, I am disguised as a footman at present, aimwell as a gentleman, Cherry as a maid. But Mr. Gloss, by *his* disguise and villainy means to violate some household and take their jewelry, plate and cash. Can I in good conscience stand by and watch such knavery, merely to preserve my own pretense? No — it cannot be. The world must be saved from its own inclinations; — and so my plan is this: I'll say yes to the villain and approve his script. But only until the eleventh hour, at which time, like young Prince Hal, "breaking through the foul and ugly mist of vapors," I'll expose his treachery, save the day, rescue the innocent and gain the undying love of the handsomest woman in all Staffordshire. Where is that woman, say you? Is it Cherry, the landlord's pliable daughter? No. Have we met her yet? No. But rest assured, she will turn up — for in a comedy, as opposed to life, the ending of

the play is never in doubt. The only question is how we get there.

(He tips his hat, as it were, and EXITS.)

Scene 2

(LADY BOUNTIFUL'S house, Sunday morning. MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA are stretched out in attitudes of complete boredom. ENTER LADY BOUNTIFUL followed by SCRUB carrying two large trays of medicaments.)

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Scrub, Scrub, are there many patients waiting for me this morning?

SCRUB. Yes, Milady, — There are two jaundices and a phlebotomy to my certain knowledge, —

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Indeed! Did you hear that my dears? It is not every morning that we have a phlebotomy, Scrub.

SCRUB. No, Milady, your phlebotomies are become monstrous rare. And Goodman Hodge is here again —

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Ah, that will be a pepper poultice, I think. Daughter-in-law Sullen, you must come and see me make a poultice, it is the most diverting sight in the world.

MRS. SULLEN. To tell the truth, Madam, I could not rise from this chair to see an amputation, for all the pleasure in't, could you, sister?

DORINDA. These Sunday delights are become so frequent here that the edge of pleasure is somewhat dulled.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Is everything ready, Scrub? You

have not forgot anything? The vinegar? The flour? The bone saw?

MRS. SULLEN. Do not your patients object a little to the sawing of their bones?

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Oh, I only use it in extreme cases. Gangrene. Leprosy. Severe headache. Scrub, you have not one-fourth the hydrophil and binding we will use. And don't we have a delivery today? Where is that new head clamp? I'm most anxious to try it.

MRS. SULLEN. *(Aside to DORINDA.)* It makes one rather glad to have been born already.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Remember, ladies, men with fortunes may come and go, but a good head clamp lasts a lifetime. You are quite well, daughter-in-law? You look a little drawn.

MRS. SULLEN. I am in excellent health, Madam, to no purpose.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. You must keep up your strength, you know. My son, your husband, requires constant attention. He's of a sickly nature, more so even than most husbands.

MRS. SULLEN. He is drunk, madam; or was so when last I saw him.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. You are severe, daughter Sullen. He drinks entirely for his health. He has a poor constitution and finds that spirits restore his blood.

MRS. SULLEN. In that case, he must be the healthiest man in England.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. He will be up before long and will amuse you till church-time.

MRS. SULLEN. And to the same degree.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Come, Scrub, we must to work. Two jaundices, you say?

SCRUB. Yes, milady, 'twill e'en do your heart good to see them. They are as yellow as oranges.

(Exeunt LADY BOUNTIFUL and SCRUB.)

DORINDA. You are for church this morning, sister-in-law?

MRS. SULLEN. Anywhere to pray, for Heaven alone can help me. But I think, Dorinda, there is no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands.

DORINDA. But there's a form of law in the courts, and I swear that rather than see you thus, continually discontented, I would advise you to apply for that.

MRS. SULLEN. Heigh-ho!

DORINDA. And yet supposing, Madam, that you did bring it to a case of separation, what can you urge against your husband? My brother is, first, the most constant man alive. He never sleeps away from you.

MRS. SULLEN. (*Ruefully*) No, he is always there.

DORINDA. He allows you a maintenance suitable to your quality.

MRS. SULLEN. A maintenance! Do you take me, Madam, for a country orphan that I must sit down and bless my benefactors for meat and drink? I brought your brother a dowry of ten thousand pounds out of which I might expect a few pleasures.

DORINDA. You share in all the pleasures that the country affords.

MRS. SULLEN. Country pleasures! Racks and torments! I was not trained, child, in leaping of ditches and clambering over stiles — drinking fat ale, playing at whisk and making poultices with that good old gentlewoman my mother-in-law! But look, here is something come to divert us —

(ENTER a COUNTRYWOMAN.)

COUNTRYWOMAN. I come, an't please your Ladyship, — you're my lady Bountiful, an't ye?

MRS. SULLEN. Well, good woman, go on.

COUNTRYWOMAN. I come seventeen long mile to have a cure for my husband's sore leg.

MRS. SULLEN. Your husband! What, woman, cure a husband!

COUNTRYWOMAN. Aye, poor man, for his leg won't let him stir from home.

MRS. SULLEN. And what's the matter with his leg, Goody?

COUNTRYWOMAN. It come first, as one might say, with a sort of dizziness in his foot.

MRS. SULLEN. Aye, dizziness is very common in husbands.

COUNTRYWOMAN. Then he had a kind of laziness in his joints, and then his leg broke out, and then it swelled, and then it closed again, and then it broke out again, and then it festered, and then it grew better, and then it grew worse again.

MRS. SULLEN. Well, my good woman, I'll tell you what you must do. You must lay your husband's leg upon a table, and with a chopping knife you must lay it open as broad as you can.

COUNTRYWOMAN. Yes, your ladyship.

MRS. SULLEN. Then you must take out the bone, and beat the flesh soundly with a rolling pin; then take some salt, pepper and cloves and season it well. Then roll it up like brawn and put it in the oven for two hours.

COUNTRYWOMAN. Heaven reward your ladyship. I have two little babies, too, that are piteous bad with the gripes, an't please you.

MRS. SULLEN. Ah, that I know nothing about. My knowledge extends only to husbands, Goody, and is boundless.

(ENTER LADY BOUNTIFUL.)

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Daughters, daughter, you must come quickly, I am making ointment for the treatment of goiters and you don't want to miss it. I used it last week on one poor gentleman and his goiter has simply *doubled* in size! It looks like a cannon ball. Which is a good development, of course, because any time now, with the application of just a bit more ointment, it will explode and disappear. What's this, my good woman, have you come to see me?

MRS. SULLEN. I beg your ladyship's pardon for taking your business out of your hands. I have been atampering here with one of your patients.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Come, good woman, don't mind this mad creature. I am the person that you want. The great healer. Now what is the problem?

COUNTRYWOMAN. Me husband's leg, ma'am. It's swole up like a sausage, fit to burst.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. A swollen leg. That will require the raccoon milk. He must bathe it in that twice a week. Come, it's in my dispensary — or at least a portion of it. As you can imagine, it is hard to gather in sufficient quantities, raccoons having such small breasts.

(COUNTRYWOMAN EXITS.)

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Daughter Sullen, how can you be merry with the misfortunes of other people?

MRS. SULLEN. Because my own make me sad, madam.

LADY BOUNTIFUL. Do not forget, pray, that I brought your husband back from death's door. We doubted of his life.

MRS. SULLEN. I was not here at the time, madam — I do not know how I could have bourn the suspense.

(EXIT LADY BOUNTIFUL.)

MRS. SULLEN. O, sister, sister! If ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot, one that's always musing but never speaks. Think now: He came home this morning at his usual hour of four and wakened me out of a sweet sleep by tumbling over the tea table which he broke all to pieces; after his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as furnace, and his face as greasy as a raw pork chop. O matrimony. He tosses up the clothes, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half-naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale his nose. But here he comes, and you shall see how handsomely he will beg my pardon.

(ENTER SULLEN. Stands silent. Then belches loudly.)

SULLEN. My head aches consumedly.

MRS. SULLEN. Will you be pleased, husband dear, to drink tea with us this morning? It will do your head good.

SULLEN. Tea gives me the wind. Scrub! Scrub!

(ENTER SCRUB.)

SCRUB. Sir!

SULLEN. What day of the week is't?

SCRUB. Sunday, an't please your worship.

SULLEN. Sunday? 'Twas Sunday t'other day!

MRS. SULLEN. Aye, every seventh, my love. You'll get the hang of it in time.

SULLEN. Bring me a dram. And set out the venison-pasty and a tankard of strong beer. I'll go to breakfast.

(Another loud belch and he's gone, followed by SCRUB.)

MRS. SULLEN. Inveterate stupidity! Did you ever know such a lump as this?! Nay, I shall never have good of the beast till I get him to town — Oh London, London is the place for managing a husband. A man dare not play the tyrant in London. Like all capitol cities, it is full of loose behavior. Wives get away with anything there.

DORINDA. Tell me, sister Sullen, if you are not angry with me for asking, why did you ever marry my brother?

MRS. SULLEN. He said beautiful things to me. Believe it or not. When a man is courting, he is not himself. He is the oil painting on which the sketch is based. Also, at that time I was on the point of making a no less grievous mistake, for I almost married a certain Lord Robert Aimwell, who has under marriage turned out to be a monster of avarice and cruelty, so report says.

DORINDA. In one way or another the story of all wives; and as for me I shall expect of no man anything more than

false appearance and deception, and am sure of nothing save that I shall remain single to the end of time.

MRS. SULLEN. Now you are too earnest in this, and henceforth I swear to speak only well of the marriage state; for you should know the misfortune of my own has made me all the more resolved that you shall be happily married.

DORINDA. Your labor, I fear, will be in vain.

MRS. SULLEN. Come, it is time to prepare for church, — no, Dorinda, we shall find for you a husband with no deception in him.

(A servant ENTERS.)

DORINDA. A husband and no deception. Is that an oxymoron?

MRS. SULLEN. Ox and moron describe many a husband, but this one shall be honest at least.

DORINDA. A bargain! *They go out*.

Scene 3

(ENTER MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA.)

MRS. SULLEN. Ha! ha! ha! my dear sister, let me embrace thee! Now we are friends indeed; for I shall have a secret of yours as a pledge for mine. I shall have you conversable in the subject of sex.

DORINDA. But do you think that I am so weak as to fall in love with a fellow at first sight?

MRS. SULLEN. Pshaw! Now you spoil all; why should

not we be as free in our friendships as the men? I warrant you, the gentleman you saw just now in church has got to his confidant already, has avowed his passion, toasted your health, called you ten thousand angels, has run over your lips, eyes, neck, shape, air, and everything, in a description that warms their mirth to a second enjoyment.

DORINDA. Your hand, sister, I an't well.

MRS. SULLEN. So — she's breeding already. — Come, child, now tell me, don't you like the gentleman?

DORINDA. The man's well enough.

MRS. SULLEN. Well enough! Is he not a demigod, a Narcissus, a star, the man in the moon? Penelope herself, I warrant, waited in Ithaca for just such a man. O, here comes our Mercury!

(ENTER SCRUB.)

MRS. SULLEN. Well, Scrub, what news of the gentleman?

SCRUB. Madam, I have brought you a packet of news.

MRS. SULLEN. Open it quickly, come.

SCRUB. In the first place I inquired who the gentleman was; they told me, he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was; they answered and said, that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I inquired what countryman he was; they replied, 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came; their answer was, they could not tell. And, fifthly, I asked whither he went, and they replied, they knew nothing of the matter — and this is all I could learn.

MRS. SULLEN. But what do the people say? Can't they guess?

SCRUB. Why, some think he's a spy, some guess he's a mountebank; some say one thing, some another; and yet everyone admires his beauty.

MRS. SULLEN. Scrub. Listen. You must go right now and get acquainted with his footman. Invite him hither for a glass of ale.

DORINDA. What?

SCRUB. Yes, madam.

MRS. SULLEN. O, 'tis the best plot in the world! As you drink with him, *we* will drop in by accident and ask the fellow some questions.

(A servant ENTERS.)

SERVANT. Madam, dinner's upon the table.

MRS. SULLEN. Scrub, we'll excuse your waiting. I am Oberon, you are Puck. Go. Go! Look how you go, Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow!

SCRUB. Madam, I shall! *(SCRUB runs out.)*

Scene 4

(The Inn, Sunday after church. ENTER GLOSS, mopping his brow, followed by BONIFACE.)

BONIFACE. Come, Mr. Gloss, you will need a Sunday glass of ale, for I doubt not you preached a loud sermon and thumped the Bible soundly.

GLOSS. Faith, I was strong today, monstrous strong. The men wept like babies, Mr. Boniface, and a round dozen of them swooned away. I gave 'em the Judgment Day, sir. The

Judgment Day! And when I parted the sheep from the goats — did you not hear a kind of noise on the air?

BONIFACE. 'Tis true, sir. The camp is two miles away, but I heard a noise this morning like distant thunder.

GLOSS. Aye, that was the goats going to eternal damnation. When I think of sinners, Mr. Boniface, I cannot contain myself, I must let go.

BONIFACE. Sure, there's advancement for you in the church, Mr. Gloss. Have you thought of that?

GLOSS. You have hit upon it, sir! My fondest wish! Some day I hope to establish myself and make a name to be reckoned with. Which leads me to the matter at hand, sir, for I have come to ask you for the hand of your daughter Cherry.

BONIFACE. In marriage, Mr. Gloss? Why, this is a great honor, sir. Cherry is but young yet, but she's of an age to make up her own mind in these matters. I'll call her. Cherry! Cherry!

GLOSS. There's no time to be lost. I think I have noticed a certain understanding between your daughter and that young footpad upstairs.

BONIFACE. Cherry!

(ENTER CHERRY.)

CHERRY. Yes, Father?

BONIFACE. Daughter Cherry, our friend Mr. Gloss has something to say. to you. I'll leave you now.

(EXIT BONIFACE.)

GLOSS. My dear Cherry, all-wise providence has ordained the institution of marriage for the propagation of the

race and the comfort of man. But it should not be entered into hastily. My dear Cherry, we have known one another for four years.

CHERRY. Yes, Mr. Gloss, since the day you were first arrested, started to cry and I loaned you me hanky.

GLOSS. Yes, yes. But, I've not failed to bring you presents, have I?

CHERRY. Thank you, sir. The first was the watch you stole from the Bishop.

GLOSS. That's not the point! Now, Cherry, I think I can say that I am held to be a man of substance —

CHERRY. Oh, yes. There's two hundred pounds on your head right now.

GLOSS. Why, Cherry, your thoughts run only on the business of the road; I am a man of the cloth, too, you know.

CHERRY. Mr. Gloss, if your addresses are directed to me, I thank you most humbly for the honor you do; but you may spare your pains, sir, for I have the unfortunate inclination, common to young women, of wishing to marry someone more nearly my own age. Or at least within twenty or thirty years.

GLOSS. Twenty or th — Aye, harkie, I know your drift. Your fancy's running on the footman that's upstairs. Well, there's your own age, minx, and a highwayman to boot.

CHERRY. 'Tis not certain, sir.

GLOSS. Not certain? Zounds! 'Tis as certain as sunrise, madam. For your Mr. Martin is about to engage with me this very night to enter Lady Bountiful's house and rob it, minx.

CHERRY. Lady Bountiful's? Mr. Gloss I'll not have it! Besides she is my godmother, she has done me and all my family a thousand kindnesses. Nay, I'll prevent it.

GLOSS. How, madam? Do you not know that any disclosure of this will bring you under the law also?

CHERRY. Mr. Gloss, I'll have no more to do with you. You shall have your presents back tonight, and I'll be no more the keeper of your stolen goods, sir, and you'll not take Mr. Martin with you in the shadow of the hangman's rope. If Mr. Martin be a highwayman, he is but new at it, and you'll not give him lessons.

(ARCHER ENTERS on the balcony.)

ARCHER. Good morrow, Mr. Gloss. Good morrow, Cherry.

CHERRY. Your servant, sir.

(CHERRY turns and goes out angrily.)

ARCHER. Is Cherry angry?

GLOSS. Is she a woman? Women are always angry. It's how they get things. Now Mr. Martin, have you considered the venture I spoke of?

ARCHER. Why, I'm warming to it, Mr. Gloss. Men of adventure can always use an extra coin or two. When is't to be?

GLOSS. I'm for it tonight, whether you decide to be of the party or no. Without you I'll take a likely assistant, but I'd prefer your company.

AIMWELL. (*From outside.*) Where's my servant? My servant, I say!

ARCHER. Wait — here comes my master. Would you have him in the business, too?

GLOSS. There's no need of him, Mr. Martin. The fewer the partners, the larger the portions, if you get my drift. And so, may I have your answer?

ARCHER. …You may cut me in.

GLOSS. Excellent! Excellent! Your servant, sir.

(GLOSS EXITS into kitchen. ENTER AIMWELL from church in high spirits.)

AIMWELL. Jack! Our journey's over. Our results are assured, and there's nothing left to do but rejoice!

ARCHER. What, are you married already?

AIMWELL. No; but I marry this girl I saw at church or die a bachelor. Jack, such beauty, such eyes, such an air.

ARCHER. Is she rich, too?

AIMWELL. She is, Jack. I tipped the sexton of the church a shilling and have learned the necessaries. She has twenty thousand pound and a thousand a year, or thereabouts — but, faith, Jack, I know not how far I'd go had she nothing.

ARCHER. Fortunately, that's not in question. What's her name?

AIMWELL. Dorinda, which means golden, don't it, Jack, for you're a scholar.

ARCHER. Why, yes, there appears to be some gold in Dorinda.

AIMWELL. And she's the daughter of a good woman named Lady Bountiful that lives hard by.

ARCHER. What? Lady Bountiful? Why, I've been invited this morning to the very house. Their servant Scrub came here and asked me to drink with him. An excuse, surely, to allow the lady time to pump me of your name and quality. What name shall I give you, Tom?

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