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**NARCISSUS,**  
OR  
**The SELF-ADMIRER.**  
**A COMEDY.**

Represented at Paris by his Majesty's Company of Comedians, on the 18th of December, 1752

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**PERSONS of the DRAMA.**

**MEN.**

- **LISIMON**, Father to Valentine and Lucinda, and Guardian to Leander and Angelica.
- **VALENTINE**, The Self-Admirer.
- **LEANDER**, brother to Angelica.
- **FRONTIN**, servant to Valentine.

**WOMEN.**

- **ANGELICA**
- **LUCINDA**
- **MARTHA**, Lucinda's woman.

Scene. The Apartments of Valentine.

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**The SELF-ADMIRER.**

**SCENE I.**

**LUCINDA and MARTHA.**

**LUCINDA.**

I just now saw my brother walking in the garden: let us make haste and lay his picture on his toilette before he returns.

**MARTHA.**

There it is, Madam, with the drapery so altered, that it cannot fail to make him ridiculous. Well, tho' he be one of the handsomest men in the world, he looks still prettier in the dress of a woman.

**LUCINDA.**

My brother Valentine is indeed so delicate and affectedly nice in his dress, that he is a kind of woman in man's cloaths; so that his portrait thus metamorphosed, seems rather his natural garb than a disguise.

**MARTHA.**

Nay, where is the harm? If the women are now a days fond of coming as near as possible to the men, is it not proper the men should meet them half way, and that one should affect the airs of coquetry, while the other affect airs of consequence? Thanks to the fashion, the sexes will thus soon be brought upon a level.

**LUCINDA.**

Well, I cannot bring myself to approve such ridiculous fashions. Perhaps our own sex may be so happy as not to be less agreeable, tho' less respectable. But for the men, I lament their blindness and infatuation. What can the foolish young fellows mean by usurping our privileges? Do they think to render themselves more agreeable to the women by endeavouring to resemble them?

**MARTHA.**

If they do, they are mistaken; for the women hate one another too cordially, to like anything that resembles them. But as to this picture, madam; are not you afraid the Chevalier will be offended at the trick you are going to put on him?

**LUCINDA.**

Not at all, Martha, my brother is naturally good-natured; and setting aside his particular foible, does not want sense. He will readily see, by the silent reproach of his picture, that I only designed to cure him of a piece of folly, which is even disagreeable to his mistress Angelica, my father's ward, to whom he is just going to be married. It will be doing her at least a piece of service, to correct the faults of her lover, and you know how greatly I stand in need of the assistance of this kind of friend, to break off the match my father intends for me with her brother.

**MARTHA.**

That young stranger then, I find, that Cleontes, whom you saw last summer at Passy, still sticks at your heart.

**LUCINDA.**

I do not deny it. I even fully depend upon his promise of seeing me again soon, and on that which Angelica hath made me to engage her brother to renounce me.

**MARTHA.**

Renounce you, madam! No, no. Believe me, your charms will have a greater influence to confirm that engagement, than Angelica will have to break it.

**LUCINDA.**

You are a flatterer, Martha, but I tell you, as Leander hath never seen me, it will be easy for his sister to prepossess him against me, and to persuade him that, as he cannot be happy with a woman whose heart is engaged to another person, he cannot do better than to disengage himself by a decent refusal.

**MARTHA.**

A decent refusal! Can you think, madam, Leander can have the *decency* to refuse such a fine young lady as you are, with a fortune of forty thousand crowns? — (*Aside.*) If she knew that Leander and Cleontes were the same person, she would not think such a refusal very *decent*.

**LUCINDA.**

Hark, Martha! What noise is that? Quick, quick, hide the picture. It is certainly my brother coming, and we have lost an opportunity, by standing to prattle here, of putting our project in execution.

**MARTHA.**

Madam, it is mistress Angelica.

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## SCENE II.

ANGELICA, LUCINDA, MARTHA.

**ANGELICA.**

You know, my dear Lucinda, with what reluctance I gave into your project, when you caused the drapery of your brother's picture to be altered. And now I see you on the point of putting it into execution, I tremble to think how much he may be displeas'd with us, when he finds himself made a jest of. I beg of you, therefore, to give up this foolish design. I perceive I am not form'd for diverting myself at the risk of my repose.

**LUCINDA.**

What a timid creature! Valentine is too fond to take any thing amiss from you, so long as you are only his mistress. Remember you have but one day left to indulge yourself in following your own inclinations. His turn will come soon enough. Besides, the intent is to cure him of a foible which exposes him to ridicule; and this is properly the task of a mistress. We may correct the faults of a lover; but alas! we must bear with those of a husband.

**ANGELICA.**

But in what, after all, do you find him so very ridiculous? As he is really amiable, is he so very wrong to think so? Don't we set him the example? He is desirous of pleasing; but if this be a foible, by what virtue more agreeable can a man recommend himself to society?

**MARTHA.**

Particularly the society of the ladies. (*Aside.*)

**ANGELICA.**

In short, Lucinda, if you will be ruled by me, we will conceal both the portrait, and this air of raillery; which may as well be taken for an insult, as for a correction.

**LUCINDA.**

Oh! No. I will not throw away thus the fruits of my industry. However, I will myself run the risk of its success; you may be no accomplice in the affair, any farther than to stand by and look on.

**MARTHA.**

A mighty pretty distinction truly! (*Aside.*)

**LUCINDA.**

I shall be delighted to observe the looks of Valentine. It will be a charming scene to behold how he takes the deceit.

**MARTHA.**

True Ma'am. The pretence, I see, is the correction of Valentine, but the real motive is to laugh at his expence. This is the happy turn of the women. They often correct the ridiculous, in thinking only to amuse themselves.

**ANGELICA.**

Well, well, if you are resolv'd on't; do: but remember, you shall be answerable to me for the event.

**LUCINDA.**

Be it so.

**ANGELICA.**

Mind, you have played me, since we have been together, a hundred unlucky tricks that I owe you payment for. If this affair should involve me in any scrape with Valentine, take care of yourself.

**LUCINDA.**

Yes, yes.

**ANGELICA.**

Think a little of your Leander.

**LUCINDA.**

Ah! my dear Angelica —

**ANGELICA.**

Nay, Nay, if you make me quarrel with your brother, I protest you shall marry mine. — *(In a lower tone to Martha.)* Martha, you have promised to keep the secret.

**MARTHA.**

You may depend on me.

**LUCINDA.**

Well then, I —

**MARTHA.**

I hear the Chevalier's voice. Away, away, unless you intend he should have a circle of women at his toilette.

**LUCINDA.**

Let us take care he don't see us. *(She lays down the picture on the table.)* There, now, the trap is baited.

**MARTHA.**

Now will I watch my gentleman, to see how —

**LUCINDA.**

Hush! Let us be going.

**ANGELICA.**

Well, I have an ominous notion of the success of this business.

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### **SCENE III.**

**VALENTINE, FRONTIN.**

**VALENTINE.**

Well, my *Frigidia*, to day will be a great day for you.

**FRONTIN.**

*Frigidia!* That is as much as to say, *Angelica*. Yes, yes, a wedding day is a great day indeed, that devilishly lengthens all those that come after it.

**VALENTINE.**

What pleasure it will give me to make Angelica happy?

**FRONTIN.**

Why, Sir, do you intend soon to leave her a widow?

**VALENTINE.**

Away with your unseasonable witticisms — You know how much I love her. Tell me now, what do you think can be wanting to her happiness? With so much love, with some understanding, and such a figure as you see; I think I am always certain to please.

**FRONTIN.**

Oh, Sir! the thing is indubitable; you have made the experiment first on yourself.

**VALENTINE.**

What I most regret in this affair is, that my marriage will make a number of others die with chagrin: they will be at such a loss to know where to bestow their hearts elsewhere.

**FRONTIN.**

Oh! most certainly. Those who love you, for example, will sincerely hate your dear half. And the others — but where the devil shall we find any of them?

**VALENTINE.**

But it grows late. It is time to dress to go to Angelica. Come on. (*He sits down to his toilette.*) What do you think of my looks to day? I am very pale, I don't seem to look so well as ordinary.

**FRONTIN.**

As ordinary! No. You are only as you are in ordinary.

**VALENTINE.**

This is a very vile custom, this use of *rouge*; and yet I cannot do without it; I should be undone by the want of it. Where is my patch-box? Ha! what's this? a picture! — Ah Frontin, what a charming object! — Where did you get this portrait?

**FRONTIN.**

I! sir — May I be hang'd if I know any thing of the matter.

**VALENTINE.**

What! was it not you who put this picture upon my toilette?

**FRONTIN.**

No, Sir, — let me die if I did.

**VALENTINE.**

Who could it be then?

**FRONTIN.**

Faith, I can't tell. It could be only the devil or yourself.

**VALENTINE.**

Or somebody else. You are paid for your secrecy, I see. — Do you know that the sight of this object is depreciating to Angelica? — Upon my honour it is the prettiest figure I ever saw in my life. What eyes are here! Frontin, I think they resemble mine.

**FRONTIN.**

That is saying every thing.

**VALENTINE.**

And a good deal of my air too! Faith, she's a charming creature; if her mind be answerable to her person. But her taste is a proof of her understanding. The little rogue is a judge of merit.

**FRONTIN.**

What the devil is all this? Let me have the honour, Sir, to look upon this marvellous beauty.

**VALENTINE.**

There, look. But don't think me the dupe of your affected simplicity. I am no novice in adventures.

**FRONTIN.**

Am I not mistaken? No. 'Tis even he; it is himself. How is he dressed up here with flowers and pompoons? This is, doubtless, some trick of Madam Lucinda's; in which Martha hath at least her share. But I shan't interfere with them, my indiscretion hath already cost me many a time too dear.

**VALENTINE.**

Well, doth Mr. Frontin know the original of that picture?

**FRONTIN.**

Poh! know her! Some hundred kicks on the breech, and as many repetitions of a box on the ear, which I have had the honour of receiving from her, have sufficiently confirmed my remembrance of her.

**VALENTINE.**

A young lady give kicks on the breech! That is a little frolicksome truly.

**FRONTIN.**

Oh Sir! only the effects of a little domestic impatience, which with her pass for nothing.

**VALENTINE.**

How! Have you been in her service?

**FRONTIN.**

Yes, Sir, and have even now the honour to be her very humble servant.

**VALENTINE.**

This is pleasant enough, that there should be a pretty woman in Paris, and I not know her. — Come, tell me sincerely, is the original as handsome as the portrait?

**FRONTIN.**

As handsome, Sir! why, to be sure, if any body hath any thing like your perfections, I know nobody capable of bearing a comparison with you but her.

**VALENTINE.**

*(Looking earnestly on the portrait.)* My heart can no longer resist such attractions. — Frontin, tell me the name of this beauty.

**FRONTIN.**

*(Aside.)* Ah! faith, now I am caught.

**VALENTINE.**

What is her name, I say? — Speak.

**FRONTIN.**

Her name, Sir! — Her name — She has no name, Sir: — She is one of those anonymous beauties, with which the town swarms.

**VALENTINE.**

Into what suspicions and perplexity this rascal throws me! Is it possible these charming features can be those of a wench nobody knows?

**FRONTIN.**

Why not, Sir! Beauty often takes a pleasure in ornamenting the faces of those who have nothing else to boast.

**VALENTINE.**

And so this is —

**FRONTIN.**

A little coquet, very fantastical, and very vain, without having any reason to be so: in a word, a true female petit-maitre.

**VALENTINE.**

Thus it is that these rascally valets speak of their masters and mistresses. I am resolved, however, to see her. Where is her house?

**FRONTIN.**

Her house, Sir! do you think such a little creature as that ever had a house?

**VALENTINE.**

Don't provoke me, rascal. Tell me where she lodges then.

**FRONTIN.**

Faith, Sir, without telling you a word of a lie, you know as much of her as I do.

**VALENTINE.**

How?

**FRONTIN.**

I'll be sworn I know the original of that picture no better than you.

**VALENTINE.**

And it was not you that put it here?

**FRONTIN.**

Devil take me if it was.

**VALENTINE.**

How then could you give me such ideas of her?

**FRONTIN.**

You furnished me with them yourself. Can any thing in the world be more ridiculous!

**VALENTINE.**

What, shan't I discover where this portrait came from! The difficulty and the mystery excite my curiosity strangely; for I must confess that I am actually in love with the object.

**FRONTIN.**

*(Aside.)* Well this is admirable! He is fallen in love with himself.

**VALENTINE.**

And yet Angelica, the charming Angelica! — Well, in reality I know nothing of the state of my heart; I must have a sight of this new mistress, before I determine absolutely on my marriage.

**FRONTIN.**

How, Sir! You will not surely — I see you are in jest.

**VALENTINE.**

No I tell you very seriously, that I cannot give my hand to Angelica; this uncertainty in my sentiments would be an obstacle to our mutual happiness. I cannot marry her to day; that is a point resolved on.

**FRONTIN.**

Yes, with you. But the good old gentleman, your father, hath also his little resolutions apart, and is perhaps the last man in the world to give them up in complaisance to others.

**VALENTINE.**

I must find her out, be the consequence what it will. Come, Frontin, make haste, let us make a thorough search: we must find her.

**FRONTIN.**

Come, Frontin, make haste; ay, fly I warrant ye. Let us take an inventory of all the pretty girls in Paris. A fine list we shall have, truly! The perusal of such a book would never set one to sleep.

**VALENTINE.**

Come, come, make haste and dress me.

**FRONTIN.**

Yes, sir, but in the mean time, very opportunely here comes your father. Let him make one of the party.

**VALENTINE.**

Silence, you scoundrel. How unlucky is this!

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## **SCENE IV.**

**LISIMON, VALENTINE, FRONTIN.**

**LISIMON.**

Well, son.

**VALENTINE.**

Frontin, a chair for my father.

**LISIMON.**

I had rather stand. I have but a word or two to say.

**VALENTINE.**

Indeed, sir, I cannot hear them till you please to be seated.

**LISIMON.**

But I don't chuse to be seated. What the devil means the impertinent fop in standing thus upon compliments with his father?

**VALENTINE.**

Sir, the respect which is due to —

**LISIMON.**

The respect due to me should consist in being obedient, and not being troublesome. But how is all this? What not dressed yet? and that upon your wedding-day? This is mighty pretty! What I suppose you have not yet visited Angelica!

**VALENTINE.**

I shall just finish my head, and shall dress myself immediately to pay my respects to her.

**LISIMON.**

Does it require all this apparatus to tie up your hair and put on your coat? Zounds, when I was a young fellow, we made better use of our time; and instead of losing three parts of the day in taking turns before the looking glass, had a better method of getting into the good graces of the ladies.

**VALENTINE.**

And yet, sir, it seems to me that a person desirous of being beloved, cannot take too much pains to render himself amiable, and that a lover attentive to please, should never appear in the garb of a sloven.

**LISIMON.**

Mere nonsense. A little negligence becomes a lover. The women are better pleased with our impatience than with our throwing away our time at the toilette; and without affecting so much delicacy in dress, we ought to have it in the heart. But all this is nothing to the purpose. I have a design to defer your marriage till the arrival of Leander, in order that he may have the satisfaction of being present, and that I might have the pleasure of seeing you and your sister married on the same day.

**VALENTINE.**

*(Aside to Frontin.)* Frontin, is not this lucky?

**FRONTIN.**

Oh yes, sir, the delay of marriage is always so much time gained on repentance.

**LISIMON.**

Well, Valentine, what say you? It appears to me not quite decent to marry the sister without waiting for the brother, when he is on the road.

**VALENTINE.**

I say, sir, it is most judiciously observed.

**LISIMON.**

And you are not displeas'd at this delay?

**VALENTINE.**

My readiness to obey your commands, sir, will overcome every kind of reluctance.

**LISIMON.**

It was out of fear of displeasing you, however, that I did not propose it before.

**VALENTINE.**

Your will, sir, is no less a rule for my inclinations than my actions. — (*Aside to Frontin.*) What a good creature of a father!

**LISIMON.**

I am pleased to find you so tractable; and you shall have the merit of it at an easy rate; for by a letter I have just now received, Leander informs me that he will be here to-day.

**VALENTINE.**

How! Sir!

**LISIMON.**

Yes, son; and so nothing, you see, need be altered.

**VALENTINE.**

And would you marry him, sir, the moment of his arrival?

**FRONTIN.**

Ay! Marry a man in his boots and spurs!

**LISIMON.**

Not so, altogether. Besides as Lucinda and he have not as yet seen each other, it is necessary they should have some little time to get acquainted. But he may be present at the marriage of his sister; and I have not the cruelty to restrain any longer the impatient desires of so obedient a son as you.

**VALENTINE.**

But, sir —

**LISIMON.**

Fear nothing; I know and approve the warmth of your passion too much to deceive you.

**VALENTINE.**

But, my good father —

**LISIMON.**

Leave it to me, I say, I know very well what you are going to —

**VALENTINE.**

But my dear sir — I — I — have reflected upon —

**LISIMON.**

Reflected! You reflect! I should never have suspected that. Well, sir, and pray what has been the subject of your sublime meditations?

**VALENTINE.**

The inconveniences of matrimony, sir.

**FRONTIN.**

A very fertile subject, truly.

**LISIMON.**

A blockhead indeed may sometimes reflect, but it is never till the folly is committed and past remedy. Here again is my son Valentine.

**VALENTINE.**

How sir! committed and past remedy! I am not yet married.

**LISIMON.**

True, Mr. Philosopher, but you are to know that there is no difference between my will and my act. What I resolve on, is as good as done. You should have moralized when I first proposed the match, and you were so eager for it. I should then have willingly listened to your objections. For you know very well how good-natured I am.

**FRONTIN.**

Yes, yes, sir, we are all ready to do you justice in that respect.

**LISIMON.**

But at present when every thing is settled, you are at liberty to speculate at leisure; you may indulge your reflections without any prejudice to your marriage.

**VALENTINE.**

My apprehensions, sir, increase my reluctance. Think of the importance of the affair, I entreat you, and delay it a few days.

**LISIMON.**

Good day to you, Valentine, you will be married this evening, or — you understand me. How was I duped by the pretended obedience of this equivocating rascal! (*Exit.*)

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## **SCENE V.**

**VALENTINE, FRONTIN.**

**VALENTINE.**

Heavens! How this obstinacy distresses me.

**FRONTIN.**

Yes, sir, 'tis even so: married or disinherited. You must either be tied to poverty or a woman. To be sure the preference is doubtful.

**VALENTINE.**

Doubtful! No. My choice was before uncertain, but my father's inflexibility hath determined me.

**FRONTIN.**

In favour of Angelica.

**VALENTINE.**

No. To the contrary.

**FRONTIN.**

I congratulate you, sir, on so heroic a resolution. You are determined then to starve a worthy martyr to liberty. But if you were required to marry the original of the portrait, I suppose matrimony would not appear quite so terrible, ha!

**VALENTINE.**

No. But if my father pretends to compell me, I believe I shall resist his importunity with equal obstinacy. And yet I perceive my heart would bring me back to Angelica, if it were attempted to force me from her.

**FRONTIN.**

Very tractable indeed! I see, whether you inherit your father's fortune or no, you will inherit at least his virtues. *(He looks earnestly at the picture, and gives a loud sigh.)* Ah!

**VALENTINE.**

What's the matter?

**FRONTIN.**

Since our disgrace, this portrait seems to me to have assumed a kind of family countenance; a certain chop-fallen —

**VALENTINE.**

'Tis throwing away time to listen to this impertinence. We should by this time have been all over Paris. *(Exit hastily.)*

**FRONTIN.**

Ay, keep up to that pace and you'll soon be the whole town over. I will go and wait the issue in the snug corner of some tavern; that he may think I have been upon the search too.

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## SCENE VI.

ANGELICA, MARTHA.

**MARTHA.**

Ha! ha! ha! What a diverting scene! Who could have thought it? O madam, what have you lost by not being on the watch with me, to have seen him so enamoured with his own charms!

**ANGELICA.**

He saw them doubtless with my eyes.

**MARTHA.**

And can you have still the weakness to entertain a passion for a man capable of such extravagance?

**ANGELICA.**

It appears to you then very criminal! But what can he be reproached with more than the common vice of his age? Think not however that I am insensible of this injustice done me by the Chevalier; I am afflicted that he should thus prefer the first agreeable face that presents itself; and have too much love not to have some delicacy. Nay Valentine shall either make a sacrifice of his follies to me to-day, or I shall make a sacrifice of my passion to the dictates of reason.

**MARTHA.**

I am afraid, madam, the one will be just as difficult as the other.

**ANGELICA.**

Here is Lucinda. My brother is expected to day. Take care that she does not suspect him to be her *incognito* till every thing be ripe for the discovery.

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## SCENE VII.

**MARTHA, LUCINDA, ANGELICA.**

**MARTHA.**

I'll lay you a wager, madam Lucinda, you will never guess what has been the effect of our scheme. You will laugh most immoderately at the success of the picture.

**LUCINDA.**

Oh! Martha, I cannot trouble my head about the portrait now. I have other things to mind. My dear Angelica, I am distracted, ruined and undone. Now is the time I stand in need of all your assistance. My father hath just informed me of the arrival of Leander; insisting upon my receiving him as a suitor today, and to give him my hand in a week's time.

**ANGELICA.**

And what is there so terrible in all this?

**MARTHA.**

Not terrible ma'am! What, to marry a fine young lady of eighteen, to a handsome, rich young fellow of twenty-two! Bless me, it is enough to make one tremble all over; and I am sure there is not a young girl in all Paris come to years of discretion, whom the very notion of such a marriage would not throw into a fever.

**LUCINDA.**

I will conceal nothing from you, Angelica. I have at the same time just received a letter from Cleontes, whom I expect every moment from Paris, to make proposals to your father. He conjures me to delay my marriage; in short, he still loves me. Oh, my dear friend, can you be insensible to the agitation of my heart? By that friendship which you have ever professed —

**ANGELICA.**

The more value I set on that friendship, the more I wish to confirm it by your marriage with my brother. However, your happiness, Lucinda, is the first object of my wishes; which are more conformable to yours

than you may imagine.

**LUCINDA.**

Recollect your promises then, Angelica, and give Leander to understand that my heart never can be his; that —

**MARTHA.**

Nay, madam, make no rash declarations. The men have so many arts, and the women so much inconstancy, that, if Leander should take it into his head to make love to you, I'd lay a wager he'd carry his point, in spite of your teeth.

**LUCINDA.**

Pray, Mrs. Martha —

**MARTHA.**

I would not give him above two days to supplant your *incognito*, and that without causing you the least regret.

**LUCINDA.**

Prithee, mind your own affairs — It is on you, my dear Angelica, I rely in the midst of this trouble. I shall use all my influence with my father, to defer, if possible, a marriage, which the pre-engagement of my heart makes me look upon with horror. (*Exit.*)

**ANGELICA.**

Now should I prevent her going to her father; but I know Lisimon is not a man to be moved by the solicitations of his daughter; whose entreaties will only serve to render him the more determined on a marriage which she as much wishes for as she seems to dread. If I divert myself a little with her present uneasiness, it is only to render the event more agreeable, when she is undeceived. Indeed this is all the revenge our friendship will permit.

**MARTHA.**

I'll follow her, however, madam, to prevent her, if possible, doing any thing ridiculous, without betraying your secret.

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## SCENE VIII.

**ANGELICA, *sola.***

What an insensible creature am I, to amuse myself thus, when I have so many things that lie at my heart! Perhaps even now Valentine is repeating his infidelity. Or perhaps, he hath discovered the imposition, and out of resentment makes an offer of his heart to some other object. For men are such strange creatures, that they never resent any thing so much as when they are in the wrong. But here he comes; taken up in contemplation of his portrait.

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## SCENE IX.

**ANGELICA, VALENTINE.**

**VALENTINE.**

(*Not seeing Angelica.*) I ramble about without knowing where to look for this charming object. Oh! that love would direct me in the search!

**ANGELICA.**

(*Aside.*) Ungrateful creature! He directs you but too well.

**VALENTINE.**

Thus love is always attended with its disquietudes; and because I am not under the sollicitude of making myself beloved, I must suffer the torment of looking in vain for a beloved object.

**ANGELICA.**

(*Aside.*) What strange impertinence! How, is it possible to be at once so amiable and so silly!

**VALENTINE.**

I must stay for the return of Frontin. He may possibly have been more successful. But at the worst, Angelica loves me.

**ANGELICA.**

(*Aside.*) Ah, traitor! You are but too sensible of my weakness.

**VALENTINE.**

After all, I shall stand no bad chance with her; her goodness of disposition, her charms —

**ANGELICA.**

(*Aside.*) He does me the honour to take up with me at the worst.

**VALENTINE.**

How unaccountable are my sentiments! I renounce the possession of a charming object, to which I find my heart at bottom sincerely devoted. I expose myself to the resentment of my father, to run after a mistress, perhaps unworthy of my sollicitude, perhaps merely imaginary, and that solely at the instigation of a portrait dropt from the clouds, and no doubt a flattering one. What caprice! What folly! But then these caprices and follies are an amusement, a relief to an agreeable man. (*He looks at the portrait.*) What graces! — What features! — How enchanting! How divine! No, no, Angelica must not flatter herself that she can bear any comparison with such beauty.

**ANGELICA.**

(*Snatching the portrait out of his hand.*) To be sure I shall not pretend to it. But pray let me share in your admiration of it. A sense of the charms of my rival, will mitigate at least the disgrace of my defeat.

**VALENTINE.**

O Heavens!

**ANGELICA.**

Well, sir, what have you to say? You seem confounded. I did not think a petit-maitre could have been so easily put out of countenance.

**VALENTINE.**

Cruel Angelica! But you know the ascendant you have over me, and therefore may insult me without reply.

**ANGELICA.**

To be sure I am greatly in the wrong: and of right doubtless, you should reproach me. Come, sir, I will have pity on your embarrassment. There is your portrait; and I am the less displeas'd to find you are in love with the original, as my sentiments are in that respect perfectly agreeable to yours.

**VALENTINE.**

How! Do you know the person of the original?

**ANGELICA.**

I not only know, but can assure you I love that person better than any other in the world.

**VALENTINE.**

Indeed! That's new to me, and the language something singular too in the mouth of a rival.

**ANGELICA.**

I know nothing of that; but what I say is very sincere. —If he is piqued, I triumph. (*Aside.*)

**VALENTINE.**

She has then a great deal of merit, you say.

**ANGELICA.**

It depends only on herself to have an infinite deal.

**VALENTINE.**

What! No faults at all!

**ANGELICA.**

Oh! yes, a great many. It is a little, whimsical, capricious, fickle, flighty thing; whose vanity is insupportable. But what of that? She is amiable notwithstanding all this; and I can foretell already that you will love this giddy creature as long as you live.

**VALENTINE.**

And you consent to it — Ha!

**ANGELICA.**

Yes.

**VALENTINE.**

And are not displeas'd at it?

**ANGELICA.**

No.

**VALENTINE.**

(*Aside.*) Her indifference distracts me. — (*To Angelica aloud.*) And may I flatter myself you will renew your acquaintance with her in my favour?

**ANGELICA.**

I desire nothing more ardently.

**VALENTINE.**

*(In a tone of anger and resentment.)* You say all this with a tranquillity that charms me.

**ANGELICA.**

How! You just now complained of my raillery, and now are angry at my indifference. There is no knowing how to deal with you.

**VALENTINE.**

*(Aside.)* I shall burst with spleen. — *(Aloud to Angelica.)* Will you do me the favour, madam, to bring me acquainted with the lady?

**ANGELICA.**

This is not a piece of service I am sure you expected of me; but I will be better than your expectation for once, and promise you I will.

**VALENTINE.**

It must be in a short time.

**ANGELICA.**

Perhaps this very day.

**VALENTINE.**

I can no longer contain myself. *(Going out.)*

**ANGELICA.**

*(Aside.)* This is a good omen: he hath too much anger not to have more love. *(Calling after him.)* Where are you going, Valentine?

**VALENTINE.**

I see my company is disagreeable, madam, and therefore was going out.

**ANGELICA.**

Oh! no, I am just going myself; it is not fair to drive you out of your own apartments.

**VALENTINE.**

Go then, and remember that those who have no love themselves, deserve not to be loved by others.

**ANGELICA.**

And yet it is better to have no love at all, than to be in love with one's self.

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## SCENE X.

**VALENTINE**, *solus*.

In love with one's self! Is it a crime to set a just value on one's own accomplishments? I am however greatly mortified. Is it possible for her to give up such a lover as I am without concern? One would think she looks upon me as an ordinary person. It is in vain to disguise the trouble I feel, and indeed I am almost afraid to love her after this proof of her inconstancy. But — No — my whole heart is a present taken up in the contemplation of this charming object. I will renew my search, and to the care of ensuring my own happiness, add that of exciting the jealousy of Angelica. Oh! here is Frontin.

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## **SCENE XI.**

**VALENTINE**, **FRONTIN**, *drunk*.

**FRONTIN.**

What the devil, can't I walk upright yet? Come, cheer up.

**VALENTINE.**

Well, Frontin, have you found —

**FRONTIN.**

Oh! yes sir.

**VALENTINE.**

Heav'ns! is it possible?

**FRONTIN.**

But I have taken a world of trouble.

**VALENTINE.**

Well, come, tell me — where?

**FRONTIN.**

I have run about among all the taverns in this part of the town.

**VALENTINE.**

The taverns!

**FRONTIN.**

But I have succeeded beyond my expectations.

**VALENTINE.**

Tell me then; how was it?

**FRONTIN.**

It was a — a — a—

**VALENTINE.**

What the devil is this vile animal muttering about?

**FRONTIN.**

Stay, sir, stay; let me tell you in method and order.

**VALENTINE.**

Silence, you drunken rascal; or give me a direct answer about the original of the portrait.

**FRONTIN.**

Oh, ay, the original. True. Rejoice, Sir, rejoice, good news I say.

**VALENTINE.**

Well.

**FRONTIN.**

It was neither at the White-Cross, nor at the Golden Lion, nor at the Pine-Apple, nor —

**VALENTINE.**

When will you speak to the purpose, rascal?

**FRONTIN.**

Patience, Sir, patience; as it was not there, it must of course be elsewhere; and — Oh, never fear but I shall come to it — I shall come to it.

**VALENTINE.**

I have a good mind to knock the fellow on the head. I cannot bear him any longer.

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## **SCENE XII.**

**FRONTIN, *solus.***

To be sure, I am a very pretty fellow. — This floor is devilish rough. — Where was I? Faith I am quite out. Ah! if I did but —

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## **SCENE XIII.**

**LUCINDA, FRONTIN.**

**LUCINDA.**

Frontin, where is your master?

**FRONTIN.**

Gone in search of himself.

**LUCINDA.**

In search of himself!

**FRONTIN.**

Ay, to be married to himself.

**LUCINDA.**

What's the meaning of this nonsense?

**FRONTIN.**

Nonsense! What you don't understand it then?

**LUCINDA.**

No, truly.

**FRONTIN.**

Faith nor I neither; I will explain it to you, however, if you please.

**LUCINDA.**

What will you explain what you don't understand yourself?

**FRONTIN.**

Oh! Madam, I have been at college.

**LUCINDA.**

You have been at the tavern I believe. He's certainly drunk. Come, Frontin, collect your senses a little; and endeavour to make yourself understood.

**FRONTIN.**

Nothing in the world is more easy. Stay. The portrait that you metamor — no, not metamor — yes, metamorphosed. That is to say my master, — that is I mean a young lady, — between whom you made such a mixture — I found it all out — you could not impose upon me. Ha! — Can any body speak more plainly?

**LUCINDA.**

On no, 'tis impossible.

**FRONTIN.**

Every body else but my master can understand me: but he is fallen in love with his own picture.

**LUCINDA.**

What! without knowing it?

**FRONTIN.**

Yes, and that is what makes it so extraordinary.

**LUCINDA.**

I comprehend all the rest. But who could foresee that? Run quickly, good Frontin, fly, and find out your

master: tell him I have something of the utmost consequence to communicate to him. But take particular care not to let him know any thing of your suspicions. Hold: there's something for you — (*Gives him money.*)

**FRONTIN.**

To drink, Madam; is it not?

**LUCINDA.**

Oh, no, you have no occasion for drink.

**FRONTIN.**

By way of hush-money, then.

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## SCENE XIV.

**LUCINDA, *sola.***

I will not hesitate a moment, but confess the whole, whatever be the consequence; I cannot bear a brother so dear to me should make himself ridiculous, by the very means that were employed to cure him. How unhappy am I? I have disoblighd my bother; my father, irritated by my reluctance to be married, is only the more absolute: my lover is absent, and in no condition to relieve me. I am afraid of being betrayed by my friend, and the stratagems of a man I cannot bear; for I certainly hate Leander, and should prefer death to being married to him.

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## SCENE XV.

**ANGELICA, LUCINDA, MARTHA.**

**ANGELICA.**

Come, come, comfort yourself, Lucinda; Leander will do you no great hurt. I must confess, however, that he was desirous of seeing you without your knowing it.

**LUCINDA.**

Alas! so much the worse.

**ANGELICA.**

But do you know that his behaviour was none of the most civil on the occasion?

**MARTHA.**

Oh only a little vein of family humour.

**LUCINDA.**

Good God! how provoking you are! well, after he saw me, what did he say?

**ANGELICA.**

He said he should be very sorry to have you against your consent.

**MARTHA.**

He even said your repugnance to him gave him some pleasure. But he said this with a comical air —

**LUCINDA.**

This mode of obedience is certainly not very polite.

**MARTHA.**

To be polite with other women, it is not necessary to be always so very obedient.

**ANGELICA.**

The only condition of his renunciation is, that you receive his visit of leave.

**LUCINDA.**

Oh no. I shall excuse him that ceremony.

**ANGELICA.**

Nay, but you cannot refuse him that. Besides, I engaged for you that you should do it. And indeed I must acquaint you, in confidence, that he depends greatly on the success of that interview; flattering himself that, when you have seen him, you will have no objection to his alliance.

**LUCINDA.**

He must have a considerable share of vanity, then.

**MARTHA.**

He conceives he shall be able to captivate you.

**ANGELICA.**

And it is in consequence of this expectation that he has consented to the treaty I proposed.

**MARTHA.**

I'll answer for it he would not have accepted the bargain, but that he was very sure you would not take him at his word.

**LUCINDA.**

He must be surely an insupportable block-head. Well, he need but make his appearance; I long to see how he will display his charms: and I will give you my word it shall be with an air — Let him come; let him come; he wants a lecture, and depend upon it he shall receive an instructive one.

**ANGELICA.**

Well we shall see, my dear Lucinda, but we do not always abide by our resolutions; I would venture to lay a wager he will soften you.

**MARTHA.**

Ah! these men are monstrously artful; you will see he will win upon you.

**LUCINDA.**

Make yourself easy about that.

**ANGELICA.**

Well, look to yourself. You cannot say we did not caution you.

**MARTHA.**

Ay, it is not our fault, if you suffer yourself to be surprised.

**LUCINDA.**

Well, really I believe you will make me crazy between you.

**ANGELICA.**

*(To Martha.)* We have worked her up to the pitch. — *(Aloud to Lucinda.)* Well, since you will have it so, Martha will go and introduce him.

**LUCINDA.**

What's that?

**MARTHA.**

We only left him in the anti-chamber, Madam. He will be here in a moment. *(Exit.)*

**LUCINDA.**

Oh! that my dear Cleontes were here, that he might see in what manner I receive his rival!

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## SCENE XVI.

ANGELICA, LUCINDA, MARTHA, LEANDER.

**ANGELICA.**

Come in, Leander, and know Lucinda's sentiments from herself. She imagines she hates you, and is doing herself violence to give you a bad reception: but I will answer for it, that all those appearances of hatred are in fact so many proofs of her love for you.

**LUCINDA.**

*(Turning her head away from Leander.)* On that supposition, he must be highly in favour indeed. Contemptible!

**ANGELICA.**

Lucinda! Doth your resentment get the better of your manners, child? Don't you look at the gentleman?

**LEANDER.**

If it be my passion which excites your resentment, behold a criminal indeed. *(Falling on his knees to Lucinda.)*

**LUCINDA.**

Ah! Cleontes! Provoking Angelica!

**LEANDER.**

Leander hath displeas'd you too much for me to hope, to receive under that name, the favours I experienced under that of Cleontes. But, if the motive of my disguise may justify the effect of it, you will pardon the delicacy of an heart, whose weakness was the desire of being beloved solely for its own sake.

**LUCINDA.**

Rise, Leander. An excess of delicacy can offend only those who are themselves destitute of it. Mine is fully satisfied with this proof of yours, as yours ought to be with its success. But, as for you, my dear Angelica, how could you have the cruelty thus to amuse yourself with my distresses?

**ANGELICA.**

You, certainly, have great reason to complain. You are both happy, while I am subjected to a thousand anxieties.

**LEANDER.**

And have you, my dear sister, been labouring for my happiness, while your own hath been at stake? This is such goodness as I shall never forget. (*He kisses her hand.*)

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## SCENE XVII.

LEANDER, VALENTINE, ANGELICA, LUCINDA, MARTHA.

**VALENTINE.**

(*Observing Leander and Angelica.*) So — So — Nay, let not my presence lay you under any restraint. I find, I did not know, Madam, the full extent of your conquests. I was a stranger to the happy object of your preference; and shall have the mortification to remember that after having been so long your faithful votary, Valentine hath been the person most injured.

**ANGELICA.**

It will be better so than you imagine; in fact, you stand in need of a lesson or two of modesty.

**VALENTINE.**

How, Madam, do you join raillery to insult? Have you the effrontery to applaud yourself for what you ought to blush at?

**ANGELICA.**

Oh, Sir, if you are angry, I leave you: I am not fond of being abused.

**VALENTINE.**

No, Madam, you shall stay if you please; I will have the satisfaction of being witness to your confusion.

**ANGELICA.**

Well, Sir, enjoy that satisfaction.

**VALENTINE.**

For I hope you have not the assurance to attempt your justification.

**ANGELICA.**

You need not fear it.

**VALENTINE.**

And that you don't flatter yourself, I retain the smallest sentiments in your favour.

**ANGELICA.**

My opinion on that subject will make no difference in the thing.

**VALENTINE.**

I protest to you, I am determined for the future to hate you.

**ANGELICA.**

Very well, sir.

**VALENTINE.**

*(Taking out the portrait.)* And this shall be the only object of my affection.

**ANGELICA.**

You are much in the right of it, Sir; and I protest to you, that I have an attachment to this gentleman *(turning to her brother)* by no means inferior to yours for the original of that portrait.

**VALENTINE.**

Ungrateful woman! Death is then my only refuge.

**ANGELICA.**

A word with you, Valentine. I really pity your situation. But you must confess that you are the most unjust of mankind, to take fire at an apparent inconstancy; of which you yourself have set me the example: but my good nature is still greater than your extravagance.

**VALENTINE.**

You will see, she will do me the favour to forgive me?

**ANGELICA.**

Why really you do not deserve it. I will tell you, however, upon what conditions I may be brought to do it. You have heretofore professed sentiments for me, to which I made too tender a return for such ingratitude. You have, nevertheless, injured me by conceiving an extravagant and fantastical passion, at sight of a mere picture; with all the levity, and I will add folly, of your age and character. We are not now to examine whether I ought to have imitated your behaviour, nor does it become you who are guilty, to censure my conduct.

**VALENTINE.**

Not become me! Good God! But let us see what all this fine discourse tends to.

**ANGELICA.**

It tends to this. I told you I knew the object of your new passion, and that was true. I added that I loved that object tenderly, and this was but too true. In avowing its merit, I did not disguise its faults. I did more; I promised to bring you acquainted with that object. And I now give you my word to do it this very day, even this very hour: for I can assure you, it is much nearer you than you imagine.

**VALENTINE.**

What am I to understand by all this?

**ANGELICA.**

Pray, don't interrupt me. The truth, in fine, obliges me to say again that person ardently loves you, and I can answer for such attachments as well as for my own. It is now your business to make choice between that object and me, of the person on whom you are determined to bestow all your tenderness. Chuse, Chevalier, but chuse immediately, and that for ever.

**MARTHA.**

A pleasant alternative this! How devilishly my gentleman is embarrassed! Be ruled by me, Sir, take the portrait, and you will be sure to have no rivals.

**LUCINDA.** Oh! Valentine, is it necessary to hesitate so long, to follow the dictates of your heart?

**VALENTINE.**

*(Throwing the picture away, and kneeling to Angelica.)* The conflict is over — you have conquered, my dear Angelica, and I feel how much inferiour the sentiments which arise from caprice are to those which are inspired by a love for you. *(Martha picks up the portrait, and gives it to Angelica.)* But alas! tho' my heart returns to you, may I flatter myself it will recover yours?

**ANGELICA.**

You may judge of my acknowledgements by the sacrifice you have made me. Rise, Valentine, and contemplate these features. *(Holding out the portrait.)*

**LEANDER.**

*(Looking also on the portrait.)* Sure I should know that face! — Hold — Yes, faith it is — it is he himself.

**VALENTINE.**

He! who? You mean she. It is a woman, whom I renounce together with the whole sex, and that for ever in favour of Angelica.

**ANGELICA.**

Yes, Valentine; it has been a mere woman hitherto: but I hope for the future to find him a man, superiour to all those little foibles which degrade his sex and character.

**VALENTINE.**

You surprize me strangely.

**ANGELICA.**

You ought the less to be ignorant of this object, as you have had the most intimate connection with it, and certainly cannot be accused of having neglected it. Take away but the effeminate drapery, by which your sister hath disguised it, and you will see it is —

**VALENTINE.**

Myself? — Heavens! what do I see?

**MARTHA.**

Is it not plain? You here see the portrait, and there the original.

**VALENTINE.**

I shall die with shame.

**MARTHA.**

You are the first person of the character, perhaps, that ever knew what shame was. (*Aside.*)

**ANGELICA.**

Ungrateful man! Was I wrong to say I loved the original of this picture?

**VALENTINE.**

I will love it for the future, only because it loves you.

**ANGELICA.**

To confirm our reconciliation, I am sure, you will have no objection to my presenting to you my brother Leander.

**LEANDER.**

Permit me, Sir —

**VALENTINE.**

Oh heavens! this is the summit of felicity; and was not Angelica false when I was ungrateful?

**LUCINDA.**

In taking part with your happiness, brother, my own is augmented.

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## **SCENE XVIII.**

**LISIMON, FRONTIN,** *with the persons of the foregoing scene.*

**LISIMON.**

Hah! I see you are all met together very opportunely. You, Valentine and Lucinda, having refused to marry agreeable to my inclinations, I at first intended to compel you; but I have reflected that it is sometimes necessary to act the part of a good father, and that constraint does not always make happy marriages. I have, therefore, determined to break off all the former connections, and to enter upon new ones. I will marry Angelica myself. Lucinda shall go into a convent; Valentine shall be disinherited: and as to you, Leander, you must have patience.

**MARTHA.**

Excellently well determined! faith!

**LISIMON.**

How's this? You all look confounded.

**FRONTIN.**

I'll be hang'd if any of them can open their lips. Plague take all foolish lovers, I say.

**LISIMON.**

Come, come, now you know my mind, and have nothing to do but to conform to it.

**LEANDER.**

Hold, Sir, hold; condescend to delay your sentence a little. Don't you read repentance in the looks and perplexity of the offenders? And would you involve the innocent in the same punishment?

**LISIMON.**

Well, I will be so weak as to make another trial of their obedience. Let us see. Come, Mr. Valentine, do you still make your reflections on matrimony?

**VALENTINE.**

Yes, Sir. But instead of its inconveniences, I see nothing in that state but happiness.

**LISIMON.**

Oh ho! You have chang'd your note, I see. And you Mrs. Lucinda, are you so fond of liberty still?

**LUCINDA.**

I am sensible, the loss of it, Sir, must be pleasing, when our duty requires it to be given up.

**LISIMON.**

Ay, now you talk like reasonable creatures. Now, you give me pleasure. Let me embrace my children; come, we will hasten to the celebration of your happy nuptials. A little exertion of authority, I see, is sometimes very proper.

**VALENTINE.**

Well, my fair Angelica; you have cured me of a foible, which was the disgrace of my youth: and for the future I hope to experience in your society, that when we truly love another, we cease to be fond of ourselves.

**THE END.**