

THE KISSING-DANCE

OR

She Stoops to Conquer

Musical in Two Acts

by

Howard Goodall

and

Charles Hart

Based on the play

by

Oliver Goldsmith

2nd Draft

27th March 2001

© Howard Goodall & Charles Hart 2001

## CHARACTERS

Mrs DOROTHY HARDCASTLE.....	Formerly Mrs Lumpkin.....
TONY LUMPKIN.....	Her young son {a scallywag}.....
SIR JAMES MARLOW.....	An impecunious London gentleman.....
THOMAS {of BRUNDISH}.....	His manservant.....
Mr CHARLES MARLOW.....	Sir James's son.....
ROGER.....	Mr Chas Marlow's man.....
Mr GEORGE HASTINGS.....	Friend to Mr Chas Marlow.....
STINGO.....	Manservant to Mr Hastings.....
Miss KATE HARDCASTLE.....	Daughter to Mr & Mrs Hardcastle.....
PIMPLE.....	Miss Hardcastle's maid.....
PANSY.....	A serving-girl.....
Miss CONSTANCE NEVILLE.....	Friend of Kate Hardcastle's {& niece to Mrs D Hardcastle}
Mr DICK HARDCASTLE.....	A landowner {Mrs Hardcastle's 2nd husband}
DIGGORY.....	His servant.....
PERKIN.....	An attractive stableboy.....
BRIDGET.....	Cook.....
MRS BOUNCER.....	Landlady of the "Fur & Feathers" public-house.....
BET BOUNCER.....	Her daughter {a handsome wench}.....
Ensemble.....	Servants, Country folk, patrons of the "Fur & Feathers" {as desired, etcetera}

---

The action takes place in the late seventeen-hundreds, in and around Nonesuch, an old country house deep in the English countryside.

## Act One

1.	All Fools' Eve	DIGGORY, BRIDGET & SERVANTS	Ensemble
2.	<u>Miss Hardcastle's Wedding</u> -- pre-echo	KATE	Song (fragment)
3.	<u>Two Gentlemen of London</u>	KATE & CONSTANCE	Duet
4.	<u>The Catch Club</u>	BET, MRS BOUNCER, TONY & ENSEMBLE	Ensemble
5.	<u>Nonesuch</u>	TONY, MARLOW, HASTINGS & MRS BOUNCER	Song with Chorus
6.	<u>Liberty Hall</u>	MR & MRS HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE	Trio
7.	<u>All Fools' Eve -- reprise</u>	HARDCASTLE & DIGGORY	Duet (fragment)
8.	<u>Courting the Lady</u>	HASTINGS, CONSTANCE, MARLOW & KATE	Quartet
9.	<u>The Poacher's Stick</u>	TONY	Song
10.	<u>Act One Finale</u>	COMPANY	Ensemble

---

Act Two

11.	<u>Moonraking</u>	SERVANTS, HASTING & CONSTANCE	Duet & Chorus
13.	<u>The Decent Thing</u>	MARLOW & KATE	Duet
14.	<u>Beating the Knave</u>	MARLOW, HASTINGS, CONSTANCE	Trio
15.	<u>The Kissing-Dance</u>	DIGGORY, BET & SERVANTS	Ensemble
17.	<u>All in a Garden Green</u>	HASTINGS & COMPANY	Song
18.	<u>Nonesuch -- reprise</u>	TONY & HASTINGS	Solo/Duet
19.	<u>Moonraking -- reprise</u>	CONSTANCE & HASTINGS	Duettino
20.	<u>Miss Hardcastle's Wedding</u>	KATE	Song
21.	<u>Act Two Finale</u>	COMPANY	Ensemble

---

NOTE

1. A vertical line in the left-hand margin of the text ...



... denotes areas of overlapping text.

---

2. A vertical line running centrally through the text ...



... denotes the presence of music (underscoring) outside the boundaries of musical numbers.

---

ACT ONE

Scene One

(Nonesuch. Sunset. DIGGORY, BRIDGET & SERVANTS, at first silhouetted, in freeze. Gentle music.

|  
The SHADOWS come to life. Round the house, SERVANTS light candles and make supper preparations in quiet anticipation.)

1. "All Fools' Eve"

Ensemble

SERVANTS

FILL THE PUNCHBOWL  
GRILL THE CHESTNUTS  
INK-BLACK NIGHT IS CLOSING IN  
SLICE THE MARROW  
SPICE THE SWEETBREADS  
POUR THE SHERRY  
LET THE MERRIMENT BEGIN

BRING THE SHEPHERDS HOME  
THE SHEEP TONIGHT  
ARE FREE TO ROAM  
TELL THE MILKING MAIDS  
TO LEAVE THEIR MILKING-STOOLS  
AND STOKE THE OVENS  
SOAK THE LENTILS  
HANG THE GARLANDS IN THE HALL  
TO CELEBRATE  
THIS LONG-AWAITED EVE  
WHICH SOME CALL  
ALL FOOLS

(Moment's pause in the preparations.)

ALL FOOLS' EVE  
ALL FOOLS' EVE  
NO MAN MAY TELL  
WHAT ELFIN SPELL  
THIS MAGIC NIGHT MAY WEAVE  
BUT THIS WE KNOW  
WHAT WAS WILL NOT BE SO  
THE SAGE SHALL PLAY THE KNAVE  
TONIGHT  
THE MAID SHALL MISBEHAVE  
TONIGHT  
AND ALL THE WORLD IT'S SAID  
WILL TURN UPON ITS HEAD

(We glimpse MRS HARDCASTLE, sweeping imperiously through, a casket under her arm. Cook, BRIDGET and butler, DIGGORY, to the fore.)

DIGGORY (to BRIDGET)  
NOW LET ME SEE THE BILL OF FARE

BRIDGET  
IT'S ALL HERE IN MY HEAD

DIGGORY  
THEN SAY TO ME THE BILL OF FARE  
IF IT'S EASIER SAID  
THAN READ

BRIDGET  
THERE'S SAUSAGE AND SIRLOIN AND BRAINS  
AND BRAWN IN BRINE  
THERE'S GIBLETS AND JUNKET AND JUGGED HARE  
AND PEARS IN WINE

(The SERVANTS set the food down.)

THERE'S HOTPOT AND HEADCHEESE  
AND TRIPE AND CURDS AND WHEY  
THERE'S MINCE  
AND TONGUE  
AND QUINCE  
AND LUNG  
AND PIE AND STEW  
AND LAMB RAGOUT

AND MINCEMEAT AND SWEETMEATS  
AND OATCAKES AND PANCAKES  
GOOSE AND PIGEON  
CURLY-KALE  
AND PIKE AND WIDGEON  
CAKES AND ALE  
AND OX AND DUCK  
AND GROUSE AND GRUEL  
AND HORSE  
AND THEN OF COURSE  
THERE'S RHUBARB FOOL

DIGGORY

MMM RHUBARB FOOL  
WELL IT'S APPETISING STUFF

SERVANTS

MMM RHUBARB FOOL

DIGGORY

BUT WILL IT BE ENOUGH?  
AFTER ALL HOW OFTEN IS IT  
SUCH ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONS VISIT  
AS SIR JAMES MARLOW AND HIS SON?

Ay, and that's to say nothing of the poor of the parish whose wont it is, as well you know, to come call this night. For on this night, no man may refuse a stranger -- no, not unless he wish for ill-fortune to befall his house.

SERVANTS (variously)

Ay ... ay ... that's true enough ... ay ... etc

(The SERVANTS continue their preparations. DIGGORY and BRIDGET move away.)

BRIDGET

Fear not, Diggory, there's food enough for Sir James and all the ragged children of the county! But what would be his business with Mr Hardcastle?

DIGGORY

Bridget, that is not for such as us to question. However, since you ask, I do believe he comes seeking a bride for Mr Charles, his eldest boy. Now -- about your business, and be quick ...

SUCH HIGH-BORN KINDS OF GUESTS  
WE'RE UNACCUSTOMED TO RECEIVE  
AND IF THEY COME AT ALL  
IT'S SELDOM THAT THEY CALL  
ON THIS AUSPICIOUS EVE

(Young PERKIN, makeshift fool, is borne on the  
shoulders of the OTHER SERVANTS in procession.)

ALL (bowing low to the FOOL)

ALL FOOLS' EVE  
ALL FOOLS' EVE  
ALL FOOLS' EVE  
WHEN SIMPLE MEN  
ARE ONCE AGAIN  
HALF-WILLING TO BELIEVE  
THAT PRAYERS ARE HEARD  
IF YOU BUT SAY THE WORD  
AND MAN AND MAID WHO KISS  
TONIGHT  
MAY FIND OUT SWEETEST BLISS  
TONIGHT  
FOR EVER AND A DAY  
OR SO BELIEVERS SAY

SO SAD YOUNG SWINEHERDS  
MAD OLD WIDOWS  
LONELY MORTALS DO NOT GRIEVE  
WEEP NO LONGER  
KEEP YOUR HOPES HIGH  
SPEND YOUR KISSES  
WELL FOR THIS IS ALL FOOLS' EVE

(Dumb-show. PERKIN-FOOL casts his spell over two  
SERVANT-LOVERS. Lights warm.)

AND THERE'S EVERY CHANCE  
TONIGHT YOU'LL LEARN  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
AND THE KINDNESS OF  
A NEW AND WARM EMBRACE

(The SERVANTS move affectionately closer to one another  
for a moment. MR and MRS HARDCASTLE are revealed in  
dancing pose. They drift downstage in stately dance.)

ALL

SHAKE THE RUGS OUT  
MAKE THE BEDS UP  
DAY IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE  
GRILL THE KIDNEYS  
KILL THE CAPON  
FILL THE PUNCHBOWL  
TILL THE PUNCHBOWL OVERFLOWS  
AND PRESS THE LINEN  
DRESS THE CURTAINS  
FOLD THE DAMASK SCENT THE LACE  
LAY TABLES  
PLAY MUSIC  
SAY GRACE  
LET ALL FOOLS' EVE  
TAKE PLACE

(Tableau.)

---

(The SERVANTS hurry away in different directions. MR and MRS HARDCASTLE are left. TONY rushes in, struggling into his coat.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Tony, where are you going, my pretty charmer? Won't you give a little of your company to your poor mother and step-papa?

TONY

I'm in haste, mother, I cannot stay. The "Fur and Feathers" expects me every moment -- there's some fun going forward.

HARDCASTLE

The alehouse -- I guessed as much.

MRS HARDCASTLE

A low, paltry set of fellows. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for this one night at least.

TONY

As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind -- but I can't abide to disappoint myself!

(He hurries off. Musical flourish.)

HARDCASTLE

Insolent puppy! Some schooling might have taught him common courtesy!

MRS HARDCASTLE

Come, Mr Hardcastle, the poor boy was always too sickly -- a school would be his death.

HARDCASTLE

Ay -- the inn and the gaming-table are the only schools he'll ever know. Wife, you and your idiot boy are a pair that do but spoil each other.

MRS HARDCASTLE

Well, no matter -- my son is not to live by his learning. When my dear niece Constance and he at last are married, the ample dowry left to her in jewels by her late parents will see my Tony well provided for.

(She opens her casket and peeks inside.)

And I'm certain, Mr Hardcastle, that Constance and he are not far from the church-door -- they have these past several months been exchanging such sweet and pretty vows!

(Enter KATE. Harpsichord flourish.)

KATE

Ay -- if "nincumpoop" and "harridan" be sweet and pretty vows.

HARDCASTLE (seeing her and rising)

Ah -- thank Providence that our darling Kate at least has a sober head upon her pretty shoulders! Come child, sit with us, for we have news.

KATE

Papa?

HARDCASTLE

Grand news, indeed -- for to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very night.

MRS HARDCASTLE

This "All Fools" night -- and well you know what that may mean, my dear!

HARDCASTLE

Ay -- that the indigent from all about may descend on us in great droves.

(pulls out letter)

I have his father's letter, in which he informs me that his son and a companion are set out, and that he himself intends to follow shortly after.

KATE

Indeed? I wish I had known something of this before. Bless me, how shall I behave? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him.

HARDCASTLE

I never will control your choice, child, depend upon it. But young Mr Charles is the son of my old friend, Sir James Marlow. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar and, I am told, is a fellow not only of noble birth, but possessed of a keen wit.

KATE

Then I believe I shall like him.

MRS HARDCASTLE

Young and brave, they say.

KATE

I'm sure I shall like him.

HARDCASTLE

And very handsome.

KATE

My dear papa, mama! Say no more -- he's mine, I'll have him!

MRS HARDCASTLE

And to crown it all, Kate, he is one of the most bashful, cautious and reserved young fellows in all the world.

HARDCASTLE

Now Dorothy, in the meantime let us go and make ready the servants for his reception. Away, away!

(He leaves.)

MRS HARDCASTLE (taking up the casket)

Ay, ay, my dear!

(She turns affectionately to KATE.)

Ah, pretty Kate Hardcastle -- soon to be pretty Mrs Marlow!

(She follows HARDCASTLE off. KATE is left alone.)

2. "Miss Hardcastle's Wedding -- pre-echo Song (fragment)

KATE (to herself)

Generous ...

(Musical punctuation.)

Young and brave ...

(Again.)

Handsome ...

(Again.)

Well -- Miss Hardcastle is impressed. Yet bashful?

(Musical punctuation -- new.)

Cautious?

(Again.)

Reserved?

(Again.)

These qualities ride roughshod over all the rest ...

(The scene shifts to KATE's boudoir. PIMPLE, her maid, dresses KATE's hair.)

FOR A MAN WHO'S MODEST  
CAN BE GLUM SO THEY SAY  
RESERVE CAN BE  
A TRYING QUIRK  
A TENDENCY TO SHYNESS  
IS A PRETTY MAJOR MINUS  
AND A TRAIT  
IN A MATE  
WHICH IN TIME MAY IRK

SO THIS MISTER MARLOW  
MAY NEED WORK

MISS HARDCASTLE'S FATHER  
HAS HIS EYE ON A MATCH  
A MATCH OF FAMILY AND WEALTH  
YET HISTORY HAS TAUGHT  
THAT THOUGH LOVERS CAN'T BE BOUGHT  
THEY CAN OFTENTIMES BE CAUGHT  
BY STEALTH

(PIMPLE curtsies and leaves, crossing with CONSTANCE.  
KATE turns and sees CONSTANCE.)

KATE

Constance!

CONSTANCE

Cousin!

(They embrace)

3. "Two Gentlemen of London"

Duet

KATE

MY DEAR  
MY DEAR  
COME SIT  
SIT HERE  
FOR A MOMENT OR SO  
COUSIN HOW DO I LOOK?

CONSTANCE (sitting)

Look? Why, well.

KATE

JUST WELL?  
YOU'RE SURE?  
JUST WELL?  
NO MORE?  
WELL IT JUST GOES TO SHOW  
THAT YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK  
BY ITS COVER  
FOR COUSIN  
INSIDE I'M AGLOW

CONSTANCE (gasps)

IT'S A LOVER

KATE

WELL MAYBE  
WELL ALMOST  
WELL NO  
WELL YES  
WELL NO

CONSTANCE

Cousin, you are ambiguous.

KATE

Then let me be plain ...

TWO GENTLEMEN OF LONDON  
OF PLEASING FACE AND GOOD RENOWN  
RIDE OUT THIS DAY FOR NONESUCH  
FROM THE PARLOURS AND PEDDLERS  
OF LONDON TOWN  
THEY'LL BE WITH US BY NIGHTFALL  
AND ONE ON BENDED KNEE  
FOR ONE OF THEM  
INTENDS TO MARRY ME

CONSTANCE

HE DOES?

KATE

INDEED HE DOES

(BOTH utter a shriek. Calm again, KATE continues:)

THAT IS OF COURSE  
ASSUMING I'M STILL FREE

CONSTANCE

Of course. And assuming that he should ask you.

KATE

Ay -- and that he may never do. For Mama and Papa tell me that he is a most timid and diffident fellow.

CONSTANCE

I see ...

AND THE NAME OF YOUR INTENDED?

KATE

I GATHER  
IS MARLOW

CONSTANCE

MY DEAR HOW DIVINE

DO YOU KNOW HIM? KATE

WHY SURELY CONSTANCE

HOW SPLENDID KATE

I'M ASSUMING OF COURSE HE'S DESCENDED  
FROM THE GALLANT SIR JAMES

YES THEY'RE FATHER AND SON  
HENCE THE SIMILAR NAMES

THEN IT'S FIFTY TO ONE  
THAT THE OTHER YOUNG RIDER  
IS HE WHOM I DARE TO CALL MINE

How so, Cousin? KATE

IT'S A HEAVENLY SIGN CONSTANCE

(Music under.)

Is it, Neville? Explain. KATE

Why, your Mr Marlow is the very good friend of my beloved George Hastings, of whom  
you have heard me speak. CONSTANCE

Often. KATE

It can be none other than he who rides with Marlow. Of course -- it's perfect. We shall be  
... friends-in-law! CONSTANCE

How so? KATE

CONSTANCE

It's simple ...

TWO GENTLEMEN OF LONDON  
WE KNOW FOR SURE WHAT ONE INTENDS  
YET TWO ARE BOUND FOR NONESUCH  
I'VE A NOTION I KNOW HOW  
THE STORY ENDS  
MY DEAR IT'S CLEAR AS CRYSTAL  
OH COUSIN CAN'T YOU SEE?  
THE OTHER ONE  
HAS COME TO MARRY ME

KATE

HE HAS?

CONSTANCE

FOR SURE HE HAS

(BOTH utter another shriek. Then:)

KATE

THAT IS OF COURSE  
IF MOTHER WILL AGREE

CONSTANCE

AY THE BAG

KATE

THE HAG

CONSTANCE

YOUR MOTHER

KATE

MY MOTHER

CONSTANCE

SHE'LL NEVER  
ALLOW ME TO WED  
ANY SUITOR  
IN CHRISTENDOM OTHER  
THAN YOUR DRUNKEN HALF-WITTED HALF-BROTHER

KATE

WOULD SHE DIE IF YOU DID?  
WHY NOT TELL HER THE TRUTH?

CONSTANCE  
NO SHE'D SOONER BE RID  
OF THE ONLY GOOD TOOTH  
IN HER NASTY OLD PASTY OLD  
FAT OVER-PAINTED OLD HEAD

KATE  
Dear friend, be comforted.

CONSTANCE  
OH I WISH I WERE DEAD

(Music under.)

KATE  
Were it not for your dowry, she -- your aunt and so-called guardian -- would have no interest in you. And as for her son, he cares only for his beloved barmaid, Bet.

CONSTANCE  
Yet I must daily feign affection for the wretched boy -- and my lover's visit, whatever he purposes, must remain secret from your mother.

KATE  
Do not fear, cousin. Your beloved Hastings will, I know it, remove all obstacles that stand between you and your future joy. Then courage!

CONSTANCE  
Courage, yes.

KATE  
Yes.

BOTH  
Yes!

TWO GENTLEMEN OF LONDON  
THIS HEART OF MINE CAN HARDLY WAIT  
RIDE OUT TONIGHT FOR NONESUCH  
TO FOLLOW THEIR FORTUNES  
IT MUST BE FATE  
TO THINK WE ONCE WERE PLAYMATES  
AND NOW WE'RE BRIDES-TO-BE  
TWO GENTLEMEN  
ONE FOR YOU  
AND ONE FOR ME



(Shriek again, then:)

AND BEFORE MUCH LONGER WE  
SHALL NO LONGER BE BUT BRIDES-TO-BE  
WE'LL BE PART OF THE FAMILY TREE  
OF TWO GENTLEMEN OF LONDON  
TWO GENTLEMEN OF LONDON

(Pose. Blackout. Segue.)

---



Scene Two

(The "Fur and Feathers" public house. BET BOUNCER, MRS BOUNCER & ENSEMBLE.

Noise and activity. BET & MRS BOUNCER weave among the PATRONS, distributing ale and pleasantries.)

4. "The Catch Club"

Ensemble

BET  
IF IT'S COMPANY AND LAUGHTER  
THAT A GENTLEMAN BE AFTER  
LET HIM STEP THIS WAY  
AND TASTE SOME RUSTIC CHEER  
FOR WHEN IT COMES TO HEARTY TIPPLING  
WE'VE A BREW THAT'S TRULY CRIPPLING  
AND THE GRANDEST SONGS  
A GENTLEMAN COULD EVER HOPE TO HEAR

ALL  
IN THE PLACE THAT'S KNOWN BY THINKING MEN  
AS MRS BOUNCER'S DRINKING DEN  
SO JOIN US  
YOU SONG-BIRDS YOU  
OH JOIN US  
AND TAKE A PEW  
OH JOIN US  
AT THE NIGHTLY GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE "FUR AND FEATHERS"  
CATCH CLUB

BET  
IF IT'S WATERING AND FEEDING  
THAT A ROARING-BOY BE NEEDING  
MRS BOUNCER'S IS  
A PRINCELY PLACE TO BE

ALL  
FOR AS WELL AS WHOLESOME VICTUALS  
AND THE BESTEST BEER AND SKITTLES  
WE'VE THE RAREST SPORT  
A ROARING-BOY COULD EVER WISH TO SEE  
  
LET HIM MAKE HIMSELF OUR MERRY GUEST  
AND HE'LL BE AMONG THE VERY BEST

SO HEAR ME  
YOU GAMESTERS ALL  
OH HEAR AND  
OBEY THE CALL  
TO JOIN US  
AT THE NIGHTLY GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE "FUR AND FEATHERS"  
CATCH CLUB

PATRON #1  
WE'VE A CATCH IN PRAISE OF PIES

ALL  
TRA-LA

PATRON #2  
WE'VE A CATCH IN PRAISE OF WINE

PATRON #3  
WE'VE A CATCH IN PRAISE  
OF A LADY'S STAYS  
WHICH JAKE SAW ON A WASHING-LINE

PATRON #4  
BUT THE SWEETEST THING  
THAT WE EVER SING  
IS THE CATCH WHICH GREET'S  
OUR CATCH CLUB KING

(TONY has entered. The OTHERS see him and greet him  
with a hero's welcome, singing:)

"HERE'S TO THE SQUIRE  
MY BOYS  
CHEERS TO THE SQUIRE  
MY BOYS" etc

TONY  
IF IT'S THROWING UP AND FIGHTING  
THAT A FELLOW FINDS EXCITING  
THEN IT'S HERE I VOW  
HIS SATISFACTION STARTS  
SO LET HIM BRAVE WHATEVER WEATHERS  
AND APPROACH THE "FUR AND FEATHERS"  
AND HE'LL FIND HE'S IN  
AS FINE AN INN AS ANY IN THESE PARTS

(TONY pulls off his gloves, shakes out his coat and makes himself at home, with pipe and tankard in rustic pose.)

PATRONS

IS IT FINER THAN  
THE "WHIRLIGIG"?

BET & MRS BOUNCER

AY THE "WHIRLIGIG"'S  
ONLY FIT FOR PIGS

PATRONS

IS IT FINER THAN  
THE "FIDDLER'S FARE"?

BET & MRS BOUNCER

AY THE "FIDDLER'S FARE"  
IS A FILTHY LAIR

PATRONS

IS IT FINER THAN  
THE "SUGAR-STICK"?

BET & MRS BOUNCER

AY THE "SUGAR-STICK"'S  
FULL OF WHORES AND HICKS

PATRONS

IS IT FINER THAN  
THE "WEASEL SKIN"?

BET & MRS BOUNCER

AY THE "WEASEL SKIN"  
IS A PISS-POOR INN

ALL

AND THERE'S NONE CAN SING A CATCH  
MY LADS  
OF WHICH THE SMALLEST SNATCH  
MY LADS  
CAN EVER HOPE TO MATCH  
MY LADS  
OR EVEN BE A PATCH  
MY LADS  
ON THE MEN WHO MEET  
TO TAKE THEIR SEAT  
AND DRINK AND EAT

AND GAME AND CHEAT  
AT THE ONE AND ONLY  
RIGHTLY ENVIED  
SLIGHTLY ROWDY  
NIGHTLY GENERAL  
MEETING OF THE  
"FUR AND FEATHERS"  
CATCH CLUB

---

(Codetta. ALL return to their seats and resume their drinking, gaming and conversation. MRS BOUNCER approaches TONY. Music out.)

MRS BOUNCER

Master Tony! Master Tony -- there be two gentlemen in a postchaise at the door. They have lost their way about the woods, and are talking something of a Mr Hardcastle.

(Musical frisson.)

TONY

As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

(Again.)

MRS BOUNCER

That they may be. They look woundily like Frenchmen.

(Again.)

TONY

Then, Mrs Bouncer, desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling.

(She goes off. TONY mutters to himself:)

Step-papa has been calling me sapskull and loggerhead this half-year. Now, if I so pleased, I could have revenge on the old grumbletonian.

(A scream. Wild music. BET BOUNCER runs in pursued by MARLOW, laughing. She runs off. HASTINGS enters, shaking his head, MRS BOUNCER following. ROGER and STINGO, their manservants, also follow. MRS BOUNCER shows the NEWCOMERS to a table. Music out.)

MARLOW

What a tedious, uncomfortable day we have had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore!

(They take off their travelling coats, handing them to ROGER and STINGO.)

HASTINGS

And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way. No such modesty here, man -- more is the shame!

(They sit. MRS BOUNCER brings ale.)

MARLOW

Among girls that wait at table -- no, George. But, alas, among women of my own station, I am little better than a tongue-tied fool.

(TONY approaches.)

TONY

No offence, gentlemen, but I'm told you've been asking for one Mr Hardcastle in these parts. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a handsome young stepson?

HASTINGS

We have not met the gentleman -- but he has the family you mention.

TONY

The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole -- the stepson, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of?

MARLOW

Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful -- the stepson, an awkward booby, weak-brained and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

TONY (after a beat)

And the name of this house -- Nonesuch, is it?

5. "Nonesuch" Song/Ensemble

---

MARLOW

Why, yes, that's it -- Nonesuch!

TONY

Well, then, let me tell you this, my masters ...

YOU'VE A DAMNED DARK DIRTY DINGY  
DANGEROUS PATH AHEAD  
WHAT WITH MIST AND MIRE  
AND BOG AND BRIAR  
YOU COULD VERY WELL WIND UP DEAD  
YOU MAY SPUR YOUR HORSE  
THROUGH DITCH AND GORSE  
HE MAY STRUGGLE WITH ALL HIS MIGHT  
BUT YOU WON'T  
REACH NONESUCH  
TONIGHT

(Music continues under.)

HASTINGS

Ye gods, man -- we were told it was but a little way along the lane from here.

(Muttering from the PATRONS.)

TONY

A little way? D'you hear that, Mrs Bouncer? Lordy, my masters -- some slipgibbet's taken you for a right old Jack Pudding!

MRS BOUNCER

A Jack Pudding -- ay, that they have.

MARLOW

Why, where is this Nonesuch, then? Is it far?

TONY

Far? Well, sir -- now you're asking ...

YOU GO OUT AND BACK  
ALONG THE TRACK  
UNTIL YOU REACH A BRIDGE  
RIGHT?  
YOU GO OVER THAT  
AND SOON YOU'RE AT  
A HILLOCK KNOWN  
AS HANGMAN'S RIDGE

CARRY ON UNTIL  
THIS CRAGGY HILL  
TURNS THICK WITH LOAMY CLAY  
RIGHT?  
THEN IT'S OFF ACROSS  
THE MUD AND MOSS  
AND THAT WILL LEAD THE WAY

TONY & PATRONS

THE WAY  
TO NONESUCH  
THE WAY THAT LEADS  
TO NONESUCH  
IT'S A CRINKUM-CRANKUM  
HARUM-SCARUM  
BOTHERSOME WAY  
TO NONESUCH

WOMEN

A HARUM-SCARUM  
BOTHERSOME WAY  
TO NONESUCH

(STINGO and ROGER attempt to copy down the directions.)

ALL

YOU GO OUT AND BACK  
ALONG THE TRACK  
UNTIL YOU REACH A BRIDGE  
RIGHT?  
YOU GO OVER THAT  
AND SOON YOU'RE AT  
A HILLOCK KNOWN  
AS HANGMAN'S RIDGE

CARRY ON UNTIL  
THIS CRAGGY HILL  
TURNS THICK WITH LOAMY CLAY  
RIGHT?  
THEN IT'S OFF ACROSS  
THE MUD AND MOSS  
AND THAT WILL LEAD THE WAY

THE WAY  
TO NONESUCH  
THE WAY THAT LEADS  
TO NONESUCH  
IT'S A CRINKUM-CRANKUM  
HARUM-SCARUM  
BOTHERSOME WAY  
TO NONESUCH  
TO NONESUCH

(Music under.)

Is it?  
HASTINGS (flatly)

Yes, sir, that it is.  
TONY

Well, we are obliged to you for your information.  
MARLOW

I haven't finished yet.  
TONY

COMING DOWN THE HILL  
YOU'LL PASS A MILL  
ALL EERIE IN THE FOG  
RIGHT?  
THEN THE PATH DESCENDS  
THEN BENDS THEN ENDS  
THEN TURNS INTO A TURDY BOG

A TURDY BOG?  
HASTINGS

A TURDY BOG  
THE OTHERS (emphatically)

THEN IT'S ROUND THE EDGE  
AND THROUGH A HEDGE  
THEN OVER SEVEN STILES  
RIGHT?  
AND UNLESS YOU MAKE  
JUST ONE MISTAKE  
IN UNDER THIRTY MILES  
TONY

TONY & PATRONS

YOU'LL COME  
TO NONESUCH  
THE HOUSE THAT'S KNOWN  
AS NONESUCH

TONY

IT'S A CRINKUM-CRANKUM  
HARUM-SCARUM  
RANTUM-SCANTUM  
FIDDLEDY-FADDLEDY  
BOTHERSOME TROUBLESOME  
HUBBLE-DE-BUBBLESOME  
WAY TO GO  
TO NONESUCH

ALL

IT'S A CRINKUM-CRANKUM  
HARUM-SCARUM  
RANTUM-SCANTUM  
FIDDLEDY-FADDLEDY  
BOTHERSOME TROUBLESOME  
HUBBLE-DE-BUBBLESOME  
WAY TO GO  
TO NONESUCH

(Music under.)

MARLOW

I see.

HASTINGS

What's to be done, Marlow?

MARLOW

Perhaps the landlady can accommodate us here.

MRS BOUNCER

Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole inn -- and that's taken up by three lodgers already.

TONY

I have hit it.

THERE'S A QUIET QUIANT COUNTRY INN A  
MILE UP THE LANE AT MOST  
THOUGH IT'S RATHER QUEER  
IT HAS BARLEY BEER  
AND A VERY CONGENIAL HOST  
FOR A STATELY HALL  
YOU WOULD CALL IT SMALL  
BUT IT'S LARGE FOR A SMALL HOTEL  
AND ITS NAME  
IS NONESUCH  
AS WELL

(Noises of agreement. Music continues.)

HASTINGS

The same name? A strange happenstance.

TONY

Ah, well, your honour, many of the houses hereabout go by the same name. It saves folk from forgetting where they live.

MARLOW

Yet this place is an inn, you say?

TONY

Formerly a fine country hall, your worship. The landlord likes to be thought a gentleman, so he keeps as good beds as any in the county.

MARLOW

And where are we to find this quaint country inn?

TONY

YOU GO OUT THE DOOR  
AND AS BEFORE  
YOU TAKE THE ROAD YOU TOOK

HASTINGS & MARLOW

RIGHT

TONY

THEN GO THROUGH A GATE  
WHICH LEADS YOU STRAIGHT  
ALONG A PATH BESIDE A BROOK

THEN IT TWISTS AND TURNS  
THROUGH FIRS AND FERNS  
BEFORE IT FORKS IN TWO



RIGHT HASTINGS & MARLOW

BUT IT MATTERS NOT TONY  
A TINKER'S JOT  
FOR EITHER PATH WILL DO

(TONY and the PATRONS begin dancing in confusing patterns around HASTINGS and MARLOW.)

TO GET

TO GET EVERYONE ELSE

TO NONESUCH TONY

TO NONESUCH EVERYONE ELSE

TO NONESUCH TONY

TO NONESUCH EVERYONE ELSE

THE OTHER HOUSE TONY  
CALLED NONESUCH

THE OTHER HOUSE EVERYONE ELSE  
CALLED NONESUCH

THE OTHER HOUSE TONY  
CALLED NONESUCH

THE OTHER HOUSE EVERYONE ELSE  
CALLED NONESUCH



IT'S AN EASY-CHEESY  
PUDDING-AND-PEASEY  
MERRY OLD WAY  
TO NONESUCH

TONY

(MARLOW and HASTINGS return to their seats and, with  
ROGER and STINGO, try to put this down on paper.)

SO IT'S OUT THE DOOR?

MARLOW

YES OUT THE DOOR

TONY

THEN PAST THE GATE?

HASTINGS

NO THROUGH THE GATE

TONY

THEN KEEP ON STRAIGHT?

HASTINGS

AY KEEP ON STRAIGHT

TONY

ACROSS THE BROOK?

MARLOW

ALONG THE BROOK

TONY

THEN THROUGH THE FERNS?

MARLOW

THEN THROUGH THE FERNS

TONY

THEN LEFT OR RIGHT

HASTINGS

WHICHEVER

MARLOW

QUITE

TONY

THEN OFF WE GO MARLOW

THEN OFF YOU GO TONY & OTHERS

OFF YOU/WE GO ALL

BEFORE WE GO HASTINGS  
JUST RUN IT THROUGH  
ONCE MORE

BUT SLOW MARLOW

(Reaction.)

GO OUT THE DOOR TONY, MRS BOUNCER (deliberately)  
AND AS BEFORE  
YOU TAKE THE ROAD YOU TOOK  
RIGHT?  
THEN GO THROUGH A GATE  
WHICH LEADS YOU STRAIGHT  
ALONG A PATH BESIDE A BROOK

THEN IT TWISTS AND TURNS  
THROUGH FIRS AND FERNS  
BEFORE IT FORKS IN TWO  
RIGHT?  
BUT IT MATTERS NOT  
A PRINTER'S DOT  
FOR EITHER PATH WILL DO

TO GET TONY, MRS BOUNCER & PATRONS  
TO NONESUCH  
TO NONESUCH  
THE INN THAT'S KNOWN  
AS NONESUCH  
AS NONESUCH

TONY & MRS BOUNCER

IT'S AN EASY-CHEESY  
PUDDING-AND-PEASEY  
MERRY OLD WAY  
TO SPEND A DAY

PATRONS

OR IF IT'S BRIGHT  
A MOONLIT NIGHT

MARLOW

YOU'RE SURE THAT'S ALL  
WE NEED TO KNOW?

TONY

WELL MORE OR LESS

MARLOW

THERE'S MORE?

TONY

WELL YES

(A beat.)

WHEN THE PATH RUNS OUT  
TURN LEFT THEN RIGHT  
THEN RIGHT THEN LEFT  
THEN LEFT THEN RIGHT  
THEN RIGHT

MARLOW & HASTINGS

RIGHT

TONY

THEN IT'S OVER A WEALD  
ACROSS A FEN  
THEN INTO A FIELD  
AND THROUGH A GLEN  
THEN LEFT THEN RIGHT  
THEN RIGHT AGAIN  
AND THEN MY LADS  
AND ONLY THEN  
WILL YOU ARRIVE  
AT NONESUCH

ALL (dancing wildly round)

OH IT'S OVER THE WEALD  
ACROSS THE FEN  
THEN INTO THE FIELD  
AND THROUGH THE GLEN  
TURN LEFT THEN RIGHT  
THEN RIGHT THEN LEFT

(ALL strike a pose.)

MARLOW & HASTINGS

THEN RIGHT THEN LEFT  
THEN LEFT THEN RIGHT  
THEN RIGHT AGAIN

TONY (in triumph)

AND THEN MY LADS  
AND ONLY THEN

ALL

WILL YOU ARRIVE  
AT NONESUCH

(Rousing music. MARLOW, HASTINGS, STINGO and  
ROGER pay and leave, MRS BOUNCER, TONY and BET  
much amused. Blackout. The music continues directly into  
...)

---

|

|  
Scene Three

|  
(Nonesuch. Great Hall. MR & MRS HARDCASTLE,  
CONSTANCE.

|  
Candles have been placed in all the windows. CONSTANCE  
is seated at the spinet. MR & MRS HARDCASTLE stand  
nearby, music manuscripts arranged on a lectern in front of  
them. BOTH hold large handbells.

|  
The THREE are rehearsing, MR & MRS HARDCASTLE  
playing their handbells and singing, CONSTANCE  
accompanying them and, from time to time, singing too.)

6. "Liberty Hall"

Trio

MR & MRS HARDCASTLE  
SET STEEPLE BELLS A-RINGING

(MRS HARDCASTLE plays her bells.)

AND CAROLLERS A-SINGING

(HARDCASTLE plays his bells.)

OH COME ALL YE SCUM BE  
NOT BACKWARD OR COY  
LET UNDERNOURISHED NEIGHBOURS

(Bells, more vigorous.)

TAKE RESPITE FROM THEIR LABOURS

(Again.)

MRS HARDCASTLE  
AND LEND TO OUR FROLICS  
SOME SEMBLANCE OF JOY

HARDCASTLE  
FOR TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT  
WHEN FARMER AND PASTOR  
BOW LOW TO THE LOWLY  
AND MISTRESS AND MASTER

BOTH  
THROW OPEN THEIR PORTALS

(MRS HARDCASTLE's bells.)

TO ORDINARY MORTALS

(HARDCASTLE's bells.)

AND HAWKERS ARE WELCOME TO CALL

ALL THREE

SO WELCOME  
OH WELCOME  
FOR THIS IS LIBERTY HALL  
TONIGHT  
SO WELCOME  
OH WELCOME  
WELCOME TO LIBERTY HALL

(Bells. At the same time, doorbell without. HARDCASTLE calls a halt.)

HARDCASTLE

Wife, wife -- whatever is it now? Read the notes as I have writ them -- control your clappers!

(He points his bell at her. It sounds. She returns the gesture. Her bell sounds, etc.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Sir, look not so angerly on me -- I am blameless, I vow.

HARDCASTLE

Well, no matter. Niece, continue. After two --- one, two, ...

(They resume.)

HARDCASTLE

FOR TONIGHT BURNS A LIGHT  
IN MANSION AND MANOR  
AND PIPER OR PAUPER  
OR TAILOR OR TANNER

BOTH  
DESCENDS FROM HIS GARRET

(Bells.)

TO SHARE A GLASS OF CLARET

(Bells.)

AS NONESUCH SAYS WELCOME TO ALL

ALL THREE

SAYS WELCOME  
AY WELCOME  
FOR HERE BE LIBERTY HALL  
TONIGHT  
SO WELCOME  
OH WELCOME  
WELCOME TO LIBERTY HALL

(Doorbell again. Crossly, HARDCASTLE begins to conduct, his conducting causing more ringing and confusion.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

SO SING SING SING  
A MERRY MADRIGAL

(Coluratura.)

HARDCASTLE

AND DANCE DANCE DANCE  
A JOLLY CONTRADANCE

(Footwork.)

CONSTANCE

OH PLAY PLAY PLAY  
UPON THE VIRGINAL

(Virginal.)

ALL THREE

SO COME SHARE A CRUST TONIGHT  
SING RING-DING-A-DING-DING-A-DING  
BUT REMEMBER IT'S JUST TONIGHT  
SING RING-DING-A-DING-DING-A-DING

(Handbells, doorbells.)

MRS HARDCASTLE  
AND BY THIS TIME TOMORROW  
YOU'LL BE BACK TO YOUR LIFE OF SORROW

ALL THREE  
ENRICHED IN YOUR SOUL  
AS YOU FONDLY RECALL  
THE NIGHT WHEN NONESUCH  
WAS LIBERTY HALL

(Handbells. Very loud and repeated bells without, accompanied by shouting, kerfuffle, barking of dogs etc. It is clear that NONE present is responsible for the additional noise. ALL THREE are puzzled. PERKIN rushes in.)

---

PERKIN  
Mistress, master -- there be two gentlemen waiting without. They seem mightily displeased.

HARDCASTLE (horrified)  
To your posts, everyone -- as sure as can be, it is the young men. Why does no-one attend them? Did none hear them ring?

PERKIN  
We thought 'twas but Your Honour at your hand-music.

HARDCASTLE  
Well, no matter. Constance, with me -- Kate must be told. Wife, to the kitchen! Perkin, to the door -- admit our guests at once! Diggory, attend! Away, away all!

(Codetta -- busy music. ALL hurry away in different directions, the music stand being removed and furniture brought on by SERVANTS, as necessary. Stage bare for a moment. Change of lighting state. PERKIN returns, leading MARLOW and HASTINGS. ROGER and STINGO follow with trunks etc.)

|  
PERKIN  
Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome! This way, this way!

|  
(He leaves. Music out.)

HASTINGS  
After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire.

(They warm themselves. STINGO & ROGER set the trunks down.)

Upon my word, a very well-looking house -- antique, but it has merit.

(HASTINGS & MARLOW look about themselves, pulling off their gloves. STINGO and ROGER sprawl about.)

MARLOW

The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good house-keeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn. How far, George, do you think we are from the scene of our engagement?

HASTINGS

A good day's ride, if that milk-sop is to be credited.

(STINGO essays a little phrase on the spinet. HARDCASTLE enters.)

HARDCASTLE

Gentlemen, you are heartily welcome to Nonesuch!

(MARLOW and HASTINGS nod.)

MARLOW

Ah, George -- I wonder at our quest. Will the victors' laurels be ours?

HASTINGS

Can't say, my dear fellow -- but with such sweet combatants, what choice have we but to don cuirass, steel ourselves and present arms!

(They laugh. HARDCASTLE laughs too. He shakes their hands vigorously. MARLOW & HASTINGS are puzzled.)

HARDCASTLE

I beg, sirs, you'll both be at ease in this house.

(MARLOW and HASTINGS sit, while their MANSERVANTS pull off their MASTERS' travelling boots, HARDCASTLE hovering the while.)

MARLOW

Yet, George, alas -- the very prospect of this encounter strikes horror into my breast, so fettered am I by my foolish diffidence.

(MARLOW & HASTINGS slip into their buckle shoes.)

HARDCASTLE  
Gentlemen, I trust you'll feel no fetters here -- this is Liberty Hall, gentlemen.

(An expansive gesture, met with blank stares.)

Here you may do just as you please.

(Enter DIGGORY, overseeing. He picks up strewn garments, gestures to THOMAS, who enters.)

HASTINGS (to MARLOW)  
Tut, man! These are but mind-forged manacles. In any case, we are in the cannon's mouth -- 'tis too late now to sound a retreat!

(Pause.)

HARDCASTLE  
Your talking of cannons and retreat, sir, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison ...

(SERVANTS exiting with coats, trunks etc.)

MARLOW (interrupting)  
What, my good friend, if you were first to summon a glass of punch -- it would help us to carry on our siege with vigour.

(Hands his muddy boots to HARDCASTLE.)

HARDCASTLE  
Punch, sir?

MARLOW  
Yes, sir, punch! A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable.

(HASTINGS hands his boots to HARDCASTLE.)

HARDCASTLE (to himself)  
This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with.

(He leaves.)

MARLOW (to HASTINGS)  
Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld!

HASTINGS

I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets he's an innkeeper, before he has learned to be a gentleman.

MARLOW

A very impudent fellow -- but he's a character, so let's humour him a little.

(HARDCASTLE re-enters carrying a tray bearing three glasses.)

HARDCASTLE

Was ever such a request made to a man in his own house?

(Distributes the drinks.)

HASTINGS

To victory!

MARLOW

Victory!

(They drink. It is a surprisingly disagreeable experience.)

HARDCASTLE

All your talk of battle, gentlemen, puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade.

MARLOW

Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I believe it's almost time to talk about supper.

HARDCASTLE

Supper, sir?

MARLOW

Yes, sir, supper, sir! What has your generalship got in the house for supper?

HASTINGS

We trust your fare prove easier to stomach than your wine.

MARLOW

Ha, ha!

(HARDCASTLE looks at them in surprise. Music.)

HARDCASTLE

Gentlemen, you are my guests, you have a right to command here.

(calling)

Diggory! Diggory, I say, Diggory, ho!

(DIGGORY enters.)

DIGGORY

So please your worship?

7. "All Fools' Eve -- reprise

Duo (fragment)

HARDCASTLE

RECITE FOR THEM THE BILL OF FARE  
IS THAT TOO GREAT A TASK  
TO ASK?

DIGGORY

No ...

THERE'S SAUSAGE AND SIRLOIN AND BRAINS  
AND BRAWN IN BRINE

HASTINGS (hits him)

Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir, for I don't like them!

MARLOW

Nor I!

(They laugh. DIGGORY frowns. BOTH hit him.)

DIGGORY

THERE'S GIBLETS AND JUNKET AND JUGGED HARE  
AND PEARS IN WINE

HASTINGS

Damn your giblets, I say!

MARLOW

And damn your jugged hare, say I!

DIGGORY  
THERE'S HOTPOT AND HEADCHEESE  
AND TRIPE AND CURDS AND WHEY

(HASTINGS and MARLOW mime vomiting.)

THERE'S MINCE  
AND TONGUE  
AND QUINCE  
AND LUNG  
AND PIE AND STEW  
AND LAMB RAGOUT  
AND HORSE

Horse?!

MARLOW & HASTINGS (appalled)

DIGGORY  
AND THEN OF COURSE

MARLOW (interrupting)  
Confound your bucolic concoctions. I am for good, honest eating.

DIGGORY (hurt)  
THERE'S RHUBARB FOOL

MARLOW & HASTINGS  
UGH RHUBARB FOOL

(They hand their glasses to DIGGORY.)

HASTINGS  
Send us what you please.

---

(Music out. Exit DIGGORY.)

MARLOW  
No, no -- I shall not be easy till I see we are fairly catered for. Come, old man! To the kitchen! Show me wholesome and bountiful fare and I shall show you a bright, shiny penny!

(HASTINGS sits, takes an apple from a bowl.)

HARDCASTLE  
Sir, I entreat you'll put your trust in me.

MARLOW (leaving)  
I protest, sir -- I always look to these things myself.

HARDCASTLE (following)  
I must insist, sir -- you shall not stir a step.

MARLOW (sweeps out)  
You see, sir, I'm resolved on it.

HARDCASTLE (at his heels)  
Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you.

(HASTINGS is alone for a moment. He begins polishing the apple.)

8. "Courting the Lady" Quartet

---

(Unseen by HASTINGS, CONSTANCE appears upstage and tiptoes towards him. She creeps up behind him and covers his eyes with her hands. He seizes a hand, turns and sees her.)

HASTINGS

CONSTANCE  
CAN I TRUST MY OWN EYES?  
WHAT A CHARMING SURPRISE  
WHAT ON EARTH BRINGS YOU HERE?

CONSTANCE

DEAREST  
THOUGH MY HEART IS AFLAME  
AND I'M HAPPY YOU CAME  
I MIGHT VERY WELL ASK YOU THE SAME

HASTINGS

WE NEEDED LODGING FOR THE NIGHT  
A MOST OBLIGING LAD  
EXPLAINED TO US THE WAY WE NEEDED TO GO

CONSTANCE

AND PRAY WOULD I PERCHANCE BE RIGHT  
IN THINKING THAT HE HAD  
A LAZY EYE A BIT LIKE SO?

(Does it.)

HASTINGS  
YES

CONSTANCE  
YES?

HASTINGS  
YES  
DARLING  
HOW IN THE WORLD DID  
YOU KNOW?

CONSTANCE  
TRUTH  
CAN BE STRANGER THAN FICTION  
AND MY PAINFUL CONVICTION  
FROM THE PICTURE I'M  
SEEING HERE IS  
THAT THIS  
IS SOME RUSE OF THAT BUMPKIN  
KNOWN AS ANTHONY LUMPKIN  
ALL THE HALLMARKS ARE HIS

HASTINGS  
YOU MEAN

CONSTANCE  
I MEAN

HASTINGS  
THAT THIS ISN'T AN INN?

CONSTANCE  
IT'S NOT

HASTINGS  
AND THAT WASN'T OUR HOST?

CONSTANCE  
WELL NO

HASTINGS  
THEN THIS HOUSE IS YOUR HOME?

CONSTANCE  
WHICH MEANS

HASTINGS  
THIS IS HARDCASTLE'S HOUSE

CONSTANCE  
BRAVO

HASTINGS  
OH NO  
NO OH NO OH NO OH  
NO

CONSTANCE (kindly)  
DARLING  
WHAT A TERRIBLE BLOW

(Music under.)

HASTINGS  
What are we to do? What am I to tell poor Marlow?

CONSTANCE  
Then it is Mr Marlow who rides with you!

HASTINGS  
Of course -- he is the explanation for my presence.

CONSTANCE  
And the true reason?

HASTINGS  
Why, to steal you away to France just as soon as I may, and there to marry you, if you will have me!

CONSTANCE  
Gladly!

HASTINGS  
The numbskull! I'll kill him!

CONSTANCE  
Who, my dearest?

HASTINGS

LUMPKIN  
IS THAT REALLY HIS NAME?  
HE WHO THREATENS MY CLAIM  
TO YOUR HAND AND YOUR HEART

CONSTANCE

DARLING  
LET'S BE PERFECTLY CLEAR  
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR  
TONY'S PASSIONS ARE FERRETS AND BEER

HASTINGS

HE NEEDS A HIDING NONETHLESS  
FOR DUPING US LIKE THIS  
YOU'RE RIGHT HE TRULY IS A HORRIBLE YOUTH

CONSTANCE

AND MISTER MARLOW I WOULD GUESS  
WILL TAKE IT MOST AMISS  
ONCE HE FINDS OUT THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

HASTINGS

IF

CONSTANCE

WHEN

HASTINGS

IF

CONSTANCE

HASTINGS  
YOU HAVE TO TELL HIM  
THE TRUTH

HASTINGS

TRUE  
BUT WE HAVE TO TREAD LIGHTLY  
IF HE'S THROWN EVEN SLIGHTLY  
MARLOW'S APT TO LOSE  
HEART AND TAKE FLIGHT  
THE TRUTH  
AT THIS STAGE MAY UNNERVE HIM  
SO WE'D BETTER PRESERVE HIM  
FROM IT JUST FOR TONIGHT

Now go, before he returns -- advise Miss Hardcastle that her lover is arrived, and fetch her here. For the sooner they are met, the sooner attention will be turned from us, and the sooner we shall be free!

(She hurries off. MARLOW enters from the other side.)

MARLOW  
NEVER KNOWN SUCH A BLACKGUARD  
IN ALL OF MY LIFE  
NOW HE'S TALKING  
OF DRINKING MULLED WINE WITH US  
EVEN COMING TO DINE WITH US  
WITH HIS HORRID OLD FLEA-RIDDEN WIFE

HASTINGS  
I SAY MARLOW

MARLOW  
WHAT?

HASTINGS  
IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

MARLOW  
WHY? WHAT?

HASTINGS  
YOU WILL NEVER GUESS WHO

MARLOW  
WHO WHAT?

HASTINGS  
SHOULD BE HERE AT THIS INN

MARLOW  
WELL WHO?

HASTINGS  
CONSTANCE

MARLOW  
WHAT?

HASTINGS  
SHE WAS HERE AT MY SIDE

MARLOW  
BUT HOW?

HASTINGS  
AND WITH WHOM DOES SHE RIDE?

MARLOW  
WITH WHOM?

HASTINGS  
BUT YOUR VERY OWN SOON-TO-BE-BRIDE

MARLOW  
YOU MEAN

HASTINGS  
I MEAN

MARLOW  
THAT THEY'RE HERE IN THIS INN?

HASTINGS  
THAT'S RIGHT

MARLOW  
AND NOT THERE AT THEIR HOUSE?

HASTINGS  
QUITE SO

MARLOW  
THEN WE'RE CERTAIN TO MEET

HASTINGS  
WELL YES

MARLOW  
JUST THE LADIES AND US

HASTINGS  
BRAVO

MARLOW  
OH NO  
NO OH NO OH NO OH  
NO

HASTINGS

MARLOW  
I FORBID YOU TO GO

Don't you see? It will be the perfect opportunity to acquaint yourself more fully with Miss Hardcastle, away from the tedious attentions of an overbearing father.

MARLOW (nervously)

Yes, yes, yes ...

THAT'S TRUE  
BUT IN TRUTH I HAD RATHER  
MAKE A FRIEND OF THE FATHER  
SO MY WORTH MAY BE  
FULLY ASSESSED  
AND THEN  
HIS PARENTAL ENDORSEMENT  
WILL PROVIDE REINFORCEMENT  
TO MY MARITAL QUEST

HASTINGS (aside)

THE TRUTH  
WOULD BE BOUND TO CONFUSE HIM  
IF I DO DISABUSE HIM  
THEN HE'LL FLY LIKE A  
BIRD FROM THE NEST  
AND YES  
THOUGH I'M LOATH TO DECEIVE HIM  
TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE MAY GRIEVE HIM  
SO DISCRETION IS BEST

MARLOW

You see?

HASTINGS

You're talking nonsense.

MARLOW

Not at all, not at all ...

TO MEET HER TOMORROW  
WOULD BE BETTER BY FAR  
THAN SOME FURTIVE ENCOUNTER  
IN SOME BACKWATER BAR

HASTINGS

YOUR POINTS ARE FOOLHARDY  
AND RATHER TOO TARDY  
FOR LOOK

MARLOW

WHAT?

HASTINGS

HERE OUR VENUSES ARE

AARRGH  
MARLOW

(CONSTANCE has re-entered with KATE. They observe the MEN. New music.)

REMEMBER  
COURTING THE LADY  
AS BOTH OF US KNOW  
IS MERELY A MATTER  
OF LETTING ONE'S QUALITIES SHOW  
HAVE COURAGE  
AND EROS  
WILL COME TO YOUR AID  
BELIEVE ME  
THERE'S SPORT  
TO BE HAD  
IN COURTING THE LADY

(MARLOW squares his shoulders, turns, trips and recovers himself. The WOMEN advance, smiling. HASTINGS returns the smiles, MARLOW remains frozen. New music.)

COUSIN  
THIS IS MISTER HASTINGS

HASTINGS (bowing to KATE)

MADAM

KATE (courtseying to HASTINGS)

SIR

HASTINGS (to KATE)

YOUR SERVANT  
MADAM  
THIS IS MISTER MARLOW

MARLOW (bowing awkwardly)

MADAM

KATE (courtseying to MARLOW)

SIR

MARLOW (to KATE)

YOUR SLAVE

BEHAVE HASTINGS (to MARLOW)

(ALL FOUR sit. They have arranged themselves in two pairs, HASTINGS and CONSTANCE perhaps slightly upstage of the OTHER PAIR, from where they observe. ALL FOUR carry fans, which they now open, to great effect. Business withal. There is to the tableau an aspect of formal dancing.

MARLOW and KATE gaze about, scouring the air for possible topics of conversation. MARLOW almost catches her eye, and is perturbed.)

MADAM MARLOW (still looking down)

SIR? KATE

(Pause. MARLOW shakes his head: no, nothing. Or it has eluded him. Another pause, finally broken by:)

IT SEEMS TH- KATE & MARLOW (simultaneously)

(Nervous laughter.)

YOU WERE SAYING KATE

NO NO YOU WERE SAYING MARLOW

NO NO NO YOU WERE SAYING KATE  
I RATHER THINK

WHO? MARLOW

YOU KATE

YOU DO? MARLOW

KATE, HASTINGS & CONSTANCE  
YES WE REALLY RATHER DO

MARLOW (uneasily)  
OH  
YES  
AH  
WELL  
YES  
IT SEEMS TH-

(ALL look at him. KATE intervenes.)

KATE  
IT SEEMS THE FASHIONS LATELY FAVOUR GREEN

MARLOW (gratefully, from behind his fan)  
THEY DO INDEED MA'AM  
YES THAT THEY DO

KATE  
AND THAT A POWDERED HEAD IS SELDOM SEEN

MARLOW  
IT SELDOM IS MA'AM  
THAT'S VERY TRUE

KATE  
Yes.

MARLOW  
Yes.

(She looks at him encouragingly. He cannot return the look.)

Yet ... yet ...

KATE (helping again)  
YET WHAT IS FASHION WORTH? I HEAR YOU SAY

MARLOW  
AH THAT YOU DO MA'AM  
YOU DO INDEED

KATE  
WHEN FASHIONS BARELY LAST BUT HALF A DAY

MARLOW  
THEY BARELY DO MA'AM  
AGREED AGREED

(Nervous laughter.)

HASTINGS & CONSTANCE  
WELL DONE WELL DONE  
YOU NEVER SPOKE BETTER  
WELL DONE WELL DONE  
NOT ONE REDUNDANT LETTER

ALL FOUR  
AH AS A RECREATION  
UP AND DOWN THE NATION  
NOTHING TAKES THE PLACE OF  
LIVELY CONVERSATION

TEARS AND TORMENTS SCATTER  
WHEN WE SHARE A PLATTER  
OF OUR FAVOURITE DISH OF  
CHEERY CHITTER-CHATTER

(Polite smiles.)

KATE  
AS YOU WERE SAYING

MARLOW  
NO NO AS YOU WERE SAYING

KATE  
WHO?

MARLOW  
YOU

KATE  
OH  
WELL

(Pause.)

I HEAR THAT JOHNSON'S PEN IS ALL BUT DRY

MARLOW  
AH YES AH YES MA'AM  
HIS WIT GROWS WEAK

KATE  
AND MASTER HOGARTH NOW HAS LOST HIS EYE

MARLOW  
I'VE HEARD IT SAID MA'AM  
WELL SO TO SPEAK

KATE  
Yes.

MARLOW  
Yes. And yet ...

KATE  
What?

MARLOW  
And yet, 'twas ...

KATE  
Yes!  
AND YET 'T WAS EVER THUS YOU DOUBTLESS SAY

MARLOW  
IT EVER WAS MA'AM  
YOU'RE VERY RIGHT

KATE  
THE MUSE MAY VISIT BUT SHE DOES NOT STAY

MARLOW  
SHE NEVER DOES MA'AM  
QUITE SO YES QUITE

HASTINGS & CONSTANCE  
WELL DONE WELL DONE  
SO INCISIVE SO GRITTY  
WELL DONE SUCH FUN  
SO WONDERFULLY WITTY

(Pause. MARLOW looks around for ways of escape. There are none.)

Yes. Yes. After all ...

MARLOW

(She again looks at him encouragingly.)

After all ...

AFTER ALL  
ALL

KATE (again helping)

ALL  
YES

MARLOW

IS VANITY

KATE

ALAS

MARLOW

MODES AND MANNERS  
MERE INANITY

KATE

ALAS

MARLOW

NOUGHT BUT AIRS AND DANCES  
BUT THUS THE WORLD ADVANCES  
VANITY

KATE

ALAS

MARLOW

IS ALL

KATE

YES

MARLOW

Ah, yes ... that's true ... (etc)

ALL (severally)

HASTINGS & CONSTANCE

REMEMBER  
COURTING THE LADY  
WAS EVER THE SAME  
PART TACTICAL PLANNING  
PART ACTUALLY PLAYING THE GAME  
THE TRICK IS  
TO BRAVE IT  
AND BE NOT AFRAID  
IT'S EASY  
IN SHORT  
THERE'S NO ART  
TO COURTING THE LADY

ALL  
KATE

ALL  
YES  
MARLOW

IS VANITY  
KATE

ALAS  
MARLOW

MODES AND MANNERS  
MERE INANITY  
KATE

ALAS  
MARLOW

NOUGHT BUT AIRS AND DANCES  
BUT THUS THE WORLD ADVANCES  
VANITY  
KATE

ALAS  
MARLOW

IS ALL  
KATE & MARLOW

(ALL yawn. The LADIES stand, signalling that the interview

is at an end. The MEN follow suit, bowing. MARLOW flees.  
HASTINGS hurries after him.)

---

KATE

Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview? I'm certain he scarce looked in my face.

CONSTANCE

Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is not ill-framed. If you could but teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service.

KATE

And who is that somebody?

(Music.)

|  
CONSTANCE

That, faith, is a question I can scarce answer.

|  
8A. "Two Gentlemen of London" -- reprise Duetting

---

KATE

OH DEAR  
OH DEAR  
HE'LL FLY  
I FEAR  
HE'LL BE OFF IN A TRICE  
LIKE A TERRIFIED BIRD

CONSTANCE

OH-HO

KATE

OH-HO?

CONSTANCE

AND SO?

KATE

AND SO  
COZ I NEED YOUR ADVICE  
OH IT'S ALL TOO ABSURD

CONSTANCE  
SO IT'S TRUE THEN?  
YOU LIKE HIM?

KATE  
HE'S SWEET I CONFESS

CONSTANCE  
SO HE'LL DO THEN?

KATE  
I THINK SO  
WELL MAYBE  
THAT IS  
I THINK  
WELL YES

CONSTANCE  
I see.

KATE  
Ha!

BOTH  
TWO GENTLEMEN  
OF LONDON  
THE ONE ASSURED THE OTHER NO  
HAVE MADE THEIR WAY TO NONESUCH  
IT WOULD SOMEHOW SEEM WASTEFUL  
TO LET THEM GO

CONSTANCE  
YOUR CASE REQUIRES SOME THINKING

KATE  
A PLAN

CONSTANCE  
A PLOY

KATE  
OR TWO

CONSTANCE  
OR YOURS WON'T HAVE  
THE NERVE TO MARRY YOU



HE WON'T? KATE

INDEED HE WON'T CONSTANCE

(They BOTH utter a short sob. Then, calm again, slower:)

THAT IS UNLESS KATE  
WE SEE TO IT HE DO

BOTH  
BUT WITH SKILL AND FORETHOUGHT HE  
SHOULD SOON NO LONGER BE BUT FANCY-FREE  
HE'LL BE PLANTING THE FAMILY TREE  
OF A GENTLEMAN OF LONDON

(They hurry away. Blackout.)

---



Scene Four

(Another room. Music. Laughter. Enter MRS HARDCASTLE & HASTINGS, dancing. The dance concludes, leaving MRS HARDCASTLE breathless. They sit.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Well! I vow, Mr Hastings, you are vastly entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

(She fans herself.)

HASTINGS

Never there? You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life at Tufnell Park.

MRS HARDCASTLE

Oh, sir! You're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. Who can have a manner, that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens or the Elephant? Pray, how do you like this head, Mr Hastings? I dressed it myself.

(SERVANT enters and presents a tray bearing two glasses.)

HASTINGS

Extremely elegant, upon my word, madam.

MRS HARDCASTLE (taking a glass)

And pray, Mr Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

HASTINGS (likewise)

Some time ago, forty was all the mode -- but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

MRS HARDCASTLE

Seriously? Then I shall be too young for the fashion!

HASTINGS

No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past forty.

MRS HARDCASTLE

Then my niece, Miss Neville, would in a polite circle be considered as a mere child still. Yet she thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels as the oldest of us.

HASTINGS

Your niece, is she?

(Drunken singing off. It is TONY, returned from the inn.)

9. "The Poacher's Stick"

Song

TONY (off)

SING HEIGH-HO AND HUCKLE-MY-BUFF

SING HEIGH-HO SING BARLEY

MRS HARDCASTLE (calling out)

Tony, pretty charmer -- is that you returned?

TONY (entering, bottle in hand)

A STICK A STICK

A POACHER HAD A STICK

HE STRUCK A MAID A BLOW WITHAL

AND ON HER BACK THE MAID DID FALL

SING HEIGH-HO AND HUCKLE-MY-BUFF

SING HEIGH-HO

(recognizing HASTINGS)

SING

(HASTINGS has seen and recognized him.)

SING BARLEY

MRS HARDCASTLE (seizing TONY's hand)

Come, sit with us a little, lovee.

(She drags TONY onto the sofa next to her.)

HASTINGS

And this young gentleman would be a brother of yours, I presume?

MRS HARDCASTLE (pleased)

I protest, sir! He is my son. He and my niece are contracted to each other. Well, Tony child, what soft things have you been saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

TONY

I have not been saying no soft things but to my brave Bet.

(He belches.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Oh, the monster! For shame, Tony! You a man, and behave so!

(She hits him with her fan.)

TONY

If I be a man, then let me marry as I choose.

MRS HARDCASTLE

Poor Con, that you neglect her so! What? Would you have some vile dowry-hunter snatch up sweet niecey's baubles? Ingrate! Is this all the thanks I get for the pains I have taken in providing for my precious boy? Wasn't it all for your good, viper?

TONY

I wish you'd let me and my good alone, then, mother -- for as to sweet Cousin Con, you'll not find a more cantankerous toad in all the county!

A BOW A BOW  
A FIDDLER HAD A BOW  
HE PLAYED A MAID A GIGUE WITHAL  
AND LED HER TO THE FIDDLER'S BALL  
SING HEIGH-HO AND HUCKLE-MY-BUFF  
SING HEIGH-HO SING BARLEY

MRS HARDCASTLE (to HASTINGS, over TONY's singing)

Was ever the like, Mr Hastings? But I see he wants to break his mother's heart, I see he does. Ah -- was ever woman so plagued with such a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy? Well, I must attend to supper. Adieu, good Mr Hastings -- pray, see if you cannot induce some sense into that pretty, wayward skull.

(She stands, as does HASTINGS. She curtsies and totters off -- not before dealing TONY a final blow with her fan. Harpsichord flourish. HASTINGS and TONY are left alone. They eye each other warily.)

HASTINGS

Well, young gentleman -- so this is your fine inn? And mother a landlady, is it?

(No reply.)

Nothing to say, boy? How -- cat got your tongue?

TONY

A GUN A GUN  
A SOLDIER HAD A GUN  
HE SHOT A BRAVE SALUTE WITHAL  
AND MADE A BREACH IN MAIDEN'S WALL  
SING HEIGH-HO AND HUCKLE-MY-BUFF  
HERE'S TO THE WELL-WEARING  
OF MAIDENLY MUFF  
'TIS SNUGGER THAN BADGER  
AND SWEETER THAN SNUFF  
SING HEIGH-HO SING BARLEY

HASTINGS (unimpressed)

Well, aren't you the Merry Andrew. And an admirer of the ladies, I see.

TONY

That's as I find 'em.

HASTINGS

Yet not to her of your mother's choosing.

TONY

That's as may be.

(closing his eyes)

Ah, did you but know Bet Bouncer -- Egad! She has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as red as pulpit cushions. She'd make two of poor Cousin Con!

HASTINGS

And what would you say of a friend that would take this poor Cousin Con off your hands?

(Music, slow at first. TONY opens one eye.)

TONY

Where is there such a friend? For who would take her?

HASTINGS

I am he. If you but assist me, I'll whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

TONY (staggering to his feet)

Assist you? Egad, I will, to the last drop of my blood. For she has a dowry in jewels, the half of which would suit me very nicely, if you understand ...

|  
HASTINGS

If you can procure it, then half that fortune shall be yours, and I shall bear the brunt.

|  
TONY

And I shall clap a pair of horses on your coach that shall trundle you off in a twinkling!

|  
(Music gathers pace.)

|  
HASTINGS

But you must keep up your pretence of loving her.

|  
TONY

Never doubt me, but I'll do it.

|  
HASTINGS

My dear squire! This looks like a lad of mettle!

|  
TONY (exiting)

Come along, then -- and you shall see more of my mettle before you have done with me!

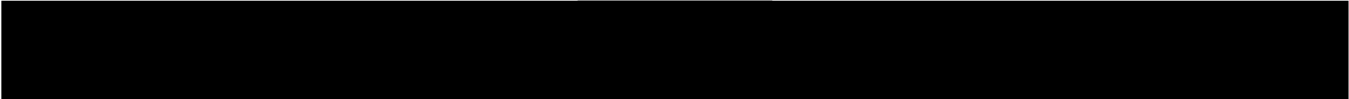
|  
(Music up.)

|  
TONY

AND WHEN AND WHEN  
AND WHEN THESE THREE WERE DONE  
THE POACHER WITH HIS STICK  
THE FIDDLER WITH HIS BOW  
THE SOLDIER WITH HIS GUN  
AND EACH AND EVERY ONE  
HAD HAD HIS FILL OF FUN  
THE MAID WAS FAIRLY SORE  
FOR MAID WAS SHE NO MORE

BOTH (HASTINGS joining in)

SING HEIGH-HO AND HUCKLE-MY-BUFF  
HERE'S TO THE WELL-WEARING  
OF MAIDENLY MUFF  
'TIS SNUGGER THAN BADGER  
AND SWEETER THAN SNUFF



TONY  
THOUGH DAILY YOU TAKE IT  
'TIS NEVER ENOUGH  
SING HEIGH-HO AND HUBBLE-DE-SHUFF

BOTH  
SING HEIGH-HO SING BARLEY

(They run off. Blackout.)

---

Scene Five

(Another room in the house. Music. HARDCASTLE sitting sunk in thought. KATE appears. He looks up morosely. Music out.)

HARDCASTLE  
Kate, my poor Kate! What can a father say?

KATE  
Why, of what?

HARDCASTLE  
Why, of my modest gentleman, Kate -- he whom I recommended to you as a lover. I was never so surprised in all my life!

KATE  
Nor I! Sure, sir, I never saw anyone so modest.

HARDCASTLE  
Can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, brazen, swaggering puppy since I was born!

KATE  
He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

HARDCASTLE  
He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze.

KATE  
One of us must most certainly be mistaken.

HARDCASTLE  
If he be as insolent a cur as he has shown himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

KATE  
And if he be the timid thing I take him for, he shall never have mine.

HARDCASTLE  
In one thing, then, we are agreed -- to reject him.

KATE  
Yes. But upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent and I more presuming -- I don't know -- the fellow is well enough, for a man.

HARDCASTLE

Well, if young Mr Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps.

KATE

And as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries this very night?

HARDCASTLE

Agreed.

(She gives him a kiss.)

But depend on't, I'm in the right.

KATE

And depend on't, I'm not much in the wrong.

(They leave in opposite directions. Harpsichord flourish.  
HASTINGS & TONY hurry in from opposite directions, the  
LATTER carrying a casket.)

HASTINGS

My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for my Constance. Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall be ready to set off for the coast.

TONY

And here's something to bear your charges by the way.

(He hands him the casket.)

Your sweetheart's jewels.

HASTINGS

How did you obtain them from your mother?

TONY (leaving)

An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time. Had I not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do?

(They hurry away. Another flourish. Enter KATE,  
CONSTANCE and BET, who has a bunch of keys attached to  
her apron belt. Laughter.)

KATE

What an unaccountable creature is my half-brother, to send them to this house as an inn!

BET

I thought it only fit, madam, to warn you. For if he conduct himself here as he has at the "Feathers", the which being a true inn, then cry mercy on us all!

CONSTANCE

Why, Bet -- who do you mean?

BET (confidentially)

Us serving-girls, madam. For this same young gentleman made me such propositions as more befitted one of the Drury Lane vestals.

CONSTANCE

I wonder at his impudence!

KATE

Then it is true. With women of one sort he becomes Mr Sorry-for-Myself -- but with those of another hue, the very Ben Beardsplitter! Thanks, Bet, for your news -- though, truth be told, Miss Neville discovered the deception for herself from her beloved.

CONSTANCE

Mr Marlow, though, is himself as yet insensible of his misapprehension.

KATE

And we and Mr Hastings have already conducted a formal tete-a-tete with him!

(to CONSTANCE)

And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

CONSTANCE

Certain of it -- for though we were some time together, yet his fears were such, that he never once looked up during the interview.

KATE

Tut -- then it is decided. If I am to take my prisoner, then it must be as a turncoat. Come, Bet! Cast away your serving-girl's cap and apron. For the next hour, I must make them mine -- and then we'll see what stuff our Mr Marlow is made of.

BET

Madam, it is you who command here -- yet I blush!

KATE

Never fear me -- for you shall have my dress, and play the lady for the present.

(She begins to disrobe, as does BET.)

CONSTANCE

But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

(Chord, sustained through.)

KATE

In the first place, I shall be seen -- and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market.

(Another chord.)

Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance, and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex.

BET

True.

(A third chord.)

KATE

But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and like an invisible champion, examine the giant's weaknesses before I offer combat.

(MARLOW is heard off.)

But he's here! Fly, fly!

BET

As I am a true maid, I never saw the like!

CONSTANCE

Nor I, by my troth.

(Giggling conspiratorially, KATE, CONSTANCE & BET disappear behind one of the screens to complete their dressing. Cadence into ...)

10. Finale

Ensemble

(MARLOW trudges on. At the same time, and unseen by the OTHERS, HARDCASTLE appears, hiding himself behind the other screen. ALL observe MARLOW.)

MARLOW (to HIMSELF)

DEVIL TAKE MY FATHER  
DEVIL TAKE MY FRIEND  
THIS REALLY ISN'T MY IDEA  
OF HOW TO SPEND  
A PASTORAL WEEKEND

I MEAN  
IT'S AN ODD KIND OF INN  
WHERE THEY TREAT YOU LIKE BLOOD KIN  
YET THE LANDLORD TAKES OFFENCE AT EVERY QUIP  
IT'S A RUM SORT OF PUB  
WHERE IT SEEMS TO BE A SNUB  
TO TIP

IT'S A STRANGE STATE OF PLAY  
WHEN THE PLACE YOU'D PLANNED TO STAY  
PROVES ABANDONED BY THE ONES YOU CAME TO WED  
AND THEY BOTH THEN APPEAR  
LIKE TWO NAUGHTY SCHOOLGIRLS HERE  
INSTEAD

AND AS FOR LITTLE MISS SATIRICAL  
THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS  
THOUGH MY FATHER WAXED QUITE LYRICAL  
I'M BLOWED IF I  
CAN FATHOM WHY  
HE KICKED UP SUCH A FUSS

DEVIL TAKE MY FATHER  
DEVIL TAKE MY FRIEND  
DEVIL TAKE DECORUM TOO  
IT'S HIGH TIME I WITHDREW  
AND MADE AN END

(He sits. KATE, by now dressed in BET'S maid's outfit,  
complete with keys, emerges from her hiding-place.  
MARLOW turns and sees her.)

OH SERVING-GIRL

SIR?

KATE (as BET)

MARLOW

SERVING-GIRL  
COULD YOU PREPARE MY BILL?

WHAT LEAVING US? KATE

YES MARLOW

LEAVING US? KATE  
SO SOON SO SOON  
WILL SIR AWAY?  
THIS LOVELY HUNTER'S MOON  
MY LORD  
WITH ALL HER HEART  
SAYS STAY

Does she? MARLOW

Oh, indeed she do, sir. KATE

WELL DO YOU KNOW? MARLOW  
PERHAPS I WILL

BRAVO BRAVO CONSTANCE & BET (behind the screen, sotto voce)  
NOW IT'S IN FOR THE KILL

(MARLOW moves close to KATE.)

BUT HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU MARLOW  
SOMEWHERE BEFORE?

WHO ME? KATE  
WHO ME?  
OH NO SIR

I SEE  
I SEE

MARLOW

(She makes to go.)

AND YET

(She turns back. He is intrigued.)

COME CLOSER

(She stops. He approaches.)

MARLOW  
AND WHERE DO YOU WANDER  
PRETTY LITTLE MISS  
WHERE DO YOU MEAN TO GO?  
TELL ME PRETTY MISS  
OH TELL ME PRETTY MISS  
I WOULD GLADLY KNOW

KATE

THE GARDEN SIR  
IS WHERE I GO  
SINCE YOU WISH TO KNOW

MARLOW  
AND WHAT'S IN THIS GARDEN  
PRETTY LITTLE MISS?  
WHAT FOR A MAN LIKE ME?

KATE

SIR I CANNOT SAY  
SIR I CANNOT SAY  
YOU MUST COME AND SEE

MARLOW  
AND I MAY MEET YOU THERE?

KATE

YOU MAY

MARLOW  
TONIGHT?

(A beat.)

ALL RIGHT  
KATE

THERE WILL I FIND YOU  
PRETTY LITTLE MISS?  
MARLOW

THERE SIR  
WILL I FIND YOU  
KATE

AND WHAT WILL WE DO THERE  
PRETTY LITTLE MISS?  
TELL ME OH TELL ME TRUE  
MARLOW

SIR I CANNOT SAY  
OH SIR I CANNOT SAY  
THAT DEPENDS ON YOU  
KATE

AND IF I WANT A KISS  
OH TELL ME PRETTY MISS  
MARLOW

I SHOULD LIKE THAT TOO  
KATE

BUT UNTIL ANON  
ANON ANON ANON  
BUT TILL THEN ADIEU  
BOTH (canoodling)

(They kiss. HARDCASTLE bursts in and pushes them apart.)

MISTER MARLOW  
I HAVE WITNESSED QUITE ENOUGH  
IF I WERE YOUNGER I SHOULD TAKE YOU  
BY YOUR SILLY SILKEN SCRUFF  
AND CONSIGN YOU TO THE GUTTER  
LIKE THE DOG YOU CLEARLY ARE  
I FEAR MISTER MARLOW  
THIS TIME YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR  
HARDCASTLE

MARLOW

I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW YOU KNOW MY NAME  
BUT YOU MIGHT HAVE THE GOODNESS ALL THE SAME  
TO KEEP YOUR NOSE AWAY FROM MY AFFAIRS  
GOOD SIR  
NOW BACK WITH YOU DOWNSTAIRS

HARDCASTLE

MISTER MARLOW  
YOUR PRESUMPTION IS TOO MUCH  
YOU HAVE THE MORALS OF A RABBIT  
IN AN OVERCROWDED HUTCH  
YOU'VE EXHAUSTED MY FORBEARANCE  
WITH YOUR SORDID LITTLE SHOW  
AND NOW MISTER MARLOW  
I ORDER YOU TO GO

MARLOW

ORDER?

HARDCASTLE

ORDER

MARLOW

ORDER?

HARDCASTLE

ORDER

MARLOW

ORDER?

HARDCASTLE

ORDER

MARLOW

ORDER?

HARDCASTLE

ORDER

MARLOW

ORDER ME?  
THAT'S RICH  
WHEN IT COMES TO ORDERS  
IT IS I THE GUEST  
WHO GETS TO BAWL  
AND YOU MINE HOST  
WHO GETS TO CRAWL  
AFTER ALL SIR  
AS I'M CERTAIN YOU RECALL  
THIS SIR IS LIBERTY HALL

(HARDCASTLE is on the point of striking him when  
HASTINGS strides on, the casket under his arm.)

HASTINGS (to MARLOW, not really noticing the OTHERS)

WHERE THE DEVIL  
IS MISS NEVILLE?  
SHE WAS HERE TWO TICKS AGO  
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU KNOW?

(He sees HARDCASTLE.)

OH HELLO

HARDCASTLE

AND YOU SIR

HASTINGS

ME?

HARDCASTLE

YES YOU SIR  
ARE NO BETTER THAN YOUR FRIEND  
MISS NEVILLE SIR IS SPOKEN FOR  
SHE'S NOT SOME CLAPHAM COMMON WHORE

HASTINGS

BUT IF

HARDCASTLE

NO IFS NO BUTS  
SAVE THOSE FOR YOUR CHEAP CITY SLUTS

You see ...

MISTER HASTINGS  
WHILE IT MAY WELL BE THE VOGUE  
TO BEHAVE IN BOSTON MANOR  
LIKE A BULLY AND A ROGUE  
AND YOU MAY BE MET WITH PLAUDITS  
IN A BAWDY-HOUSE IN BOW  
MY DEAR MISTER HASTINGS  
IN MY HOUSE I SAY NO

(MARLOW pushes aside HASTINGS, who retreats upstage to join KATE. All too aware of the cause of the confusion, they cower in the background.)

\_\_\_\_ YOUR HOUSE? MARLOW

\_\_\_\_ MY HOUSE HARDCASTLE

\_\_\_\_ YOUR HOUSE? MARLOW

\_\_\_\_ MY HOUSE HARDCASTLE

YOUR HOUSE SIR?  
INDEED? MARLOW

WHILE I AND MISTER HASTINGS CHOOSE TO STAY  
AND WHILE I HAVE THE WHEREWITHAL TO PAY  
THIS HOVEL WHICH YOU CHERISH LIKE A SHRINE  
MY FRIEND  
I RATHER THINK IS MINE

WHAT? HARDCASTLE

\_\_\_\_ MY HOUSE MARLOW

WHAT? HARDCASTLE

IT'S MINE  
THIS HOUSE IS MINE

MARLOW

YOURS?

HARDCASTLE

MY HOUSE

MARLOW

YOURS?

HARDCASTLE

IT'S MINE  
IT IS

MARLOW

I SEE  
THEN WHY NOT WHILE YOU'RE HERE  
GIVE IN TO ANY OTHER CRAVINGS?  
TAKE THE CARPETS AND ENGRAVINGS  
I HAVE GARRICK AS KING LEAR  
AND A NEARLY NEW "RAKE'S PROGRESS"  
TAKE THE SERVANTS  
TAKE MY WIFE SIR

HARDCASTLE

TAKE YOUR WIFE SIR?  
TAKE YOUR WIFE SIR?  
THAT OVER-DRESSED OLD OGRESS?  
THANK YOU BUT NO

MARLOW

Go!!!

HARDCASTLE (yells)

OH I WILL SIR  
MY BILL SIR  
IS ALL THAT I REQUIRE

MARLOW (briskly)

YOUR BILL SIR?

HARDCASTLE

MARLOW

YES APART FROM THAT  
THERE'S NOTHING I DESIRE

(He gives a look in KATE's direction, before extending his hand to the bewildered HARDCASTLE.)

WELL SIR I THANK YOU  
SO REFRESHING TO HEAR  
A COMMON OSTLER SPEAK HIS MIND

(Music slows ominously.)

HARDCASTLE

COMMON?  
OSTLER?  
MR MARLOW I ASSURE YOU  
I AM NOTHING OF THE KIND

(HARDCASTLE looms close to MARLOW. Suddenly CONSTANCE rushes in from behind the screen. BET observes.)

CONSTANCE

STOP OH STOP  
STOP EVERYTHING

HARDCASTLE

YE GODS  
WHAT IS IT NOW?

CONSTANCE

I CAN EXPLAIN IT ALL

MARLOW

YOU CAN?

HARDCASTLE

YOU CAN?  
OH REALLY?  
HOW?

KATE & HASTINGS (to EACH OTHER)

PERHAPS WE'VE SPENT TOO LONG IN KEEPING MUM  
PERHAPS THE TIME FOR HONESTY HAS COME

HARDCASTLE  
EXPLAIN AWAY MISS NEVILLE  
DO TAKE CENTRE STAGE  
PRAY GO AHEAD  
I'LL MORE THAN WELCOME ANY LIGHT  
THAT ANYONE CAN SHED

CONSTANCE  
Well ...

(A beat. CONSTANCE is about to begin her address to HARDCASTLE, when we hear a terrible scream off. MRS HARDCASTLE bursts in.)

MRS HARDCASTLE  
ROBBERS

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
WHAT?

MRS HARDCASTLE  
ROBBERS

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
WHAT?

MRS HARDCASTLE  
THERE'S BEEN A DREADFUL THEFT

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
OF WHAT?

MRS HARDCASTLE  
MY DIAMONDS

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
OH

MRS HARDCASTLE  
MY RUBIES

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE (shocked)  
SHIT

MRS HARDCASTLE  
THERE'S NOT ONE FUCKING GARNET LEFT

EVERYONE ELSE (stunned)  
SHE SAID THE F-WORD

MRS HARDCASTLE  
WELL I'M NOT DESCARTES OR ROUSSEAU  
BUT IT DON'T REQUIRE MUCH NOUS  
TO SEE AT A GLANCE  
THERE'S BEEN THIEVING IN THIS HOUSE  
AND THE FATE OF THEM WHO DO SO  
WILL BE CRUELLER THAN THE RACK  
FOR THERE'S NOWT THAT'S AS BASE  
AS A JOKER IN THE PACK

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
A JOKER?

MRS HARDCASTLE  
AY A JOKER

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
OH

MRS HARDCASTLE  
A JOKER AY ALACK

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
THEN WHO IS THE JOKER?  
YES WHO IS THE JOKER?

MRS HARDCASTLE  
IT'S NOT AT ALL AMUSING  
MY POOR NIECE COULD NOT BE BROKER

MARLOW, KATE, HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
HA

MRS HARDCASTLE  
THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN LOSING  
AN EXPENSIVE DIAMOND CHOKER

ALL (in a whisper)

OH JOKER IF YOU'RE NEAR  
AND ASSUMING YOU CAN HEAR  
THEN SEE SOME SENSE  
AND GIVE THAT CASKET BACK  
FOR IF THERE'S ONE THING WE DON'T NEED  
IT'S ANOTHER JOKER IN THE PACK

(HASTINGS manoeuvres MARLOW out-of-earshot of the OTHERS.)

HASTINGS (sotto voce)

AH YES TALKING OF CASKETS  
YOU COULDN'T LOOK AFTER THIS BOX?

MARLOW

THIS MINUTE?  
WELL YES I SUPPOSE  
BUT MAY ONE ENQUIRE WHAT'S IN IT?

HASTINGS

YES NOTHING  
NO WELL CERTAINLY NOT  
THE LANDLADY'S ROCKS

MARLOW

OH

HASTINGS

YOU'RE TOO KIND

MARLOW

SO WHAT DOES IT CONTAIN?

HASTINGS

NEVER MIND

(He pops it into MARLOW's carpet-bag. MRS  
HARDCASTLE sits fanning herself in agitation.)

HARDCASTLE (to MRS HARDCASTLE)

IT COULD WELL BE ONE OF THESE TWO  
THEIR BEHAVIOUR IS WORSE  
THAN OUTLANDISH

MRS HARDCASTLE  
OH HUSBAND DON'T TALK NONSENSE  
THEY'RE NICE BOYS AND THEY'RE BOTH  
SORT OF GRANDISH

(HASTINGS has crossed to her.)

HASTINGS (to MRS HARDCASTLE)  
POOR LADY POOR LADY  
IT'S REALLY VERY SHADY  
TO STEAL FROM ONE SO OLD

(She gives him a look.)

THAT IS FROM ONE SO FRAIL

HARDCASTLE (sitting with her)  
COME COME MY DEAR  
YOU'RE LOOKING AWFUL PALE  
SIT SIT MY PET  
LET OTHERS FRET  
ON YOUR BEHALF  
THEY'LL SOON TURN UP

MRS HARDCASTLE  
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH

(She stands and gives him a majestic glare.)

HUSBAND  
SUMMON THE STAFF

HARDCASTLE  
But, Dorothy ...

MRS HARDCASTLE  
DO AS I SAY  
THE LONGER WE DELAY  
THE LONGER THE THIEVES WILL HAVE TO GET AWAY  
AWAY AWAY

(He plods out. The OTHERS gather round her in consoling formation -- HASTINGS and CONSTANCE in an effort to allay suspicion.)

SOME FOLK BELIEVE IN FAIRIES  
AND SOME IN RAISING SPROGS  
SOME PIN THEIR HOPES ON FRIENDSHIP  
AND SOME ON RACING DOGS  
THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY  
THAT FATE HOLDS SWAY  
WHILE OTHERS SAY LOVE RULES  
BUT I BELIEVE IN JEWELS

OH WHAT OH WHAT WILL NIECEY DO  
NOW DOWRY HAS SHE NONE?  
AND WHAT ABOUT MY POOR MORONIC SON?

AH

SOME FIGHT FOR KING AND COUNTRY  
AND OTHERS FOR THEIR GOD  
SOME LIVE THEIR LIVES FOR OTHERS  
WHICH DOES SEEM BLOODY ODD  
THERE ARE SOME WHOSE HEART  
IS IN THEIR ART  
I CALL THEM ALL DAMNED FOOLS  
FOR I BELIEVE IN JEWELS  
YES I BELIEVE  
BELIEVED THAT IS  
IN JEWELS

MARLOW, KATE, MRS HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE  
(piously)

OH HEAVENLY FATHER  
HEAR OUR SUPPLICATION  
LET NOT THE KNAVE EVADE  
INCARCERATION

MRS HARDCASTLE

HIS DEATH-KNELL IS  
AS GOOD AS RUNG  
LET JUSTICE BLIND  
CUT OUT HIS TONGUE  
OH LET US LIVE TO SEE  
THIS EVIL EVIL VILLAIN HUNG

MARLOW, KATE & CONSTANCE  
AND DRAWN AND QUARTERED

MRS HARDCASTLE  
AND ALL HIS LOVED ONES SLAUGHTERED

MARLOW, KATE, MRS HARDCASTLE & CONSTANCE

WHOEVER IT MAY BE  
HOWEVER POOR OR YOUNG  
OH LET US LIVE TO SEE  
THE VILLAIN WELL

AND TRULY

MRS HARDCASTLE

HUNG

ALL

(They look around for the jewels. Not for long, as they are interrupted by the sound of singing offstage. It is TONY. ALL turn slowly.)

TONY (off)  
SING HEIGH-HO AND HUCKLE-MY-BUFF  
HERE'S TO THE WELL-WEARING  
OF MAIDENLY MUFF  
'TIS SNUGGER THAN BADGER  
AND SWEETER THAN SNUFF  
SING HEIGH-HO AND HUBBLE-DE-SHUFF

(TONY swaggers in. ALL eye him.)

SING HEIGH-HO

(The attention makes him uncomfortable.)

SING BARLEY

(The moment is broken by BET rushing from behind the screen, embracing him. The OTHERS watch with interest, MRS HARDCASTLE with severity.)

TONY

BET

WHAT?

TONY

DARLING

BET

WHAT? MRS HARDCASTLE

MY TURTLE-DOVE IT'S ME BET

OH YES TONY

(MRS HARDCASTLE draws TONY to one side by his ear.)

OH TONY MRS HARDCASTLE

WHAT? TONY

MY POPPET MRS HARDCASTLE

AY? TONY

MRS HARDCASTLE  
TELL MOTHER WHO THIS MINX MIGHT BE  
FOR AN ADDED PIECE OF MISCHIEF  
TO AUGMENT MAMA'S DISTRESS  
IS THE FACT THAT THE JADE  
HAS PURLOINED MY DAUGHTER'S DRESS

(TONY has no explanation for this. KATE and CONSTANCE, out of earshot, do not come to the unfortunate BET'S aid. Instead they signal to her to keep quiet. HASTINGS meanwhile manages to pull TONY over his way.)

HASTINGS  
HAVE A THINK BEFORE YOU ANSWER  
HAVE A GOOD LONG THINK MY LAD  
OR THE NEWS FOR US BOTH COULD  
BE SOMEWHAT WORSE THAN BAD

REMEMBER  
IT'S CONSTANCE YOU LOVE

OH YES TONY (remembering)  
IT'S CONSTANCE I LOVE

(MRS HARDCASTLE yanks TONY back in her direction.  
HASTINGS similarly, BOTH he and MRS HARDCASTLE  
addressing him simultaneously:)

MRS HARDCASTLE

FOR A THIEF WHO COMES TO MY HOUSE  
WILL GET MORE THAN JUST A SMACK  
IF THE DRESS ISN'T HERS  
SHE'S A JOKER IN THE PACK

HASTINGS

HAVE A THINK BEFORE YOU ANSWER  
TAKE A GOOD LONG HEARTY BREATH  
OR IT MEANS FOR US BOTH  
SOMETHING SOMEWHAT CLOSE TO DEATH

IF SHE FINDS THAT WE'RE THE CULPRITS  
WE'LL GET MORE THAN JUST A SMACK  
IF THERE'S ONE THING SHE HATES  
IT'S A JOKER IN THE PACK

MRS HARDCASTLE

HAVE A THINK BEFORE YOU CROSS ME  
TAKE A GOOD LONG HEARTY BREATH  
HE WHO TAKES WHAT IS MINE  
MEETS A MOST UNSIGHTLY DEATH

TONY (loudly)

I TELL YOU  
IT'S CONSTANCE I LOVE

(TONY moves guiltily away. In the background, the  
OTHERS look on uselessly.)

BET (horrified, cries out)

Oh!

(Change of state and music.)

HE SWORE OUR LOVE WOULD NEVER DIE  
HE'D LOVE ME COME WHAT MAY  
AH WHAT A DOTING DOLT WAS I  
TO THINK THAT LOVE COULD NEVER DIE  
OURS BARELY LIVED ONE DAY

MARLOW, KATE, HASTINGS & CONSTANCE

THE SNAKE THE RAT  
TO DO A DIRTY DEED LIKE THAT

BET

AND NOW I AM THE VICTIM  
OF DISSEMBLING LOVE

KATE & CONSTANCE

SHE SEEMS TO BE THE VICTIM  
OF DISSEMBLING LOVE

(KATE, CONSTANCE, MARLOW & HASTINGS group together. BET and TONY take up different parts of the stage.)

BET

HE PROMISED ME THE EARTH AND SKY  
AND BLISS BEYOND COMPARE  
AH WHAT A STUPID FOOL WAS I  
TO DREAM I'D GET THE EARTH AND SKY  
ALL I HAVE NOW IS AIR

TONY (aside)

THOUGH I HATE TO DO THIS  
I MUST  
THOUGH TO PUT HER THROUGH THIS  
IS MORE THAN UNJUST  
THOUGH I'M TRULY LOATH  
AN OATH IS AN OATH  
AND THERE'S HALF A FORTUNE IN JEWELS AT STAKE  
FOR BET AND ME BOTH

MARLOW, KATE, HASTINGS & CONSTANCE

THE CHEAT THE CHURL  
TO SPEAK OF LOVE THEN SPURN THE GIRL

BET

AND NOW I AM THE VICTIM  
OF DISSEMBLING LOVE

KATE & CONSTANCE

SHE SEEMS TO BE THE VICTIM  
OF DISSEMBLING LOVE

(A beat. MRS HARDCASTLE advances on TONY.)

TONY VARLET  
WHO IS THIS  
PERSON PRAY?

MRS HARDCASTLE

(HASTINGS nudges him.)

I'M SURE I COULDN'T SAY

TONY (uncomfortably)

SO TONY VARLET  
SHE'S FIBBING?  
YEA OR NAY?

MRS HARDCASTLE

(HASTINGS nudges him again.)

I'D HAVE TO GO FOR YEA

TONY

THEN HARLOT  
AWAY

MRS HARDCASTLE (to BET, in triumph)

AY AY VILE HARLOT  
AWAY AWAY AWAY  
VIXEN HUSSY

MARLOW, KATE, HASTINGS, CONSTANCE & MRS  
HARDCASTLE

BET (slowly)  
SO NOW TO MY CHAGRIN AND SHAME  
IT SEEMS HE'S RELINQUISHED HIS CLAIM  
AND EVEN FORGOTTEN MY NAME

(She goes up to TONY and shouts:)

It's Bet!

(She kicks him hard and hurries away in tears. Busy music.  
HARDCASTLE returns, marshalling DIGGORY and the other  
SERVANTS. MRS HARDCASTLE claps her hands and  
addresses them.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

GATHER ALL AROUND  
COMMENCE A SEARCH OF HOUSE AND GROUND  
MY NIECE'S JEWELS ARE MISSING  
AND TONIGHT THERE'LL BE NO DANCING  
AND CERTAINLY NO KISSING  
TILL EVERY GEM IS FOUND

SERVANTS

OH

HARDCASTLE

WE CAN'T SAY WHO  
COULD HAVE TAKEN THEM  
BUT IF ONE OF YOU  
SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THEM  
THEN KINDLY PUT THEM BACK

MR & MRS HARDCASTLE

DON'T BE THE JOKER IN THE PACK

ALL

DON'T BE THE JOKER IN THE PACK

(Hunting dance.)

ALL

THE HUNT IS ON  
THE CULPRIT MUST BE CAUGHT  
THE NE'ER-DO-WELLS MUST PAY THE PRICE  
OF LIFTING THIS OLD LADY'S ICE  
OR THINGS COULD WELL GET FRAUGHT

THE HUNT IS ON  
THE THIEF NOW FEELS THE HEAT  
THE CULPRIT MUST BE RUN TO GROUND  
THE SOONER THAT THE GEMS ARE FOUND  
THE SOONER WE CAN EAT

SERVANTS

I'M BEMUSED  
I'M CONFUSED  
I'M NOT USED TO BEING ACCUSED  
I'M DISTRESSED  
I'M DEPRESSED  
IT'S A JEST OR ELSE A TEST

ALL

OH-HO OH-HO  
SO HERE WE GO  
LET'S SEE  
WHAT WE  
CAN DO  
OH LOOK TO YOUR LAURELS  
YOU HOUSE-BREAKERS YOU  
WHATEVER YOU DO  
WE CAN DO TOO

(Tableau. Contrapuntal texture.)

MARLOW

PRAY HEAVEN GRANT  
SOME SWIFT REPRIEVE  
FROM THIS EXHAUSTING  
ALL FOOLS' EVE

HARDCASTLE

A STRANGER NIGHT  
I CAN'T CONCEIVE  
THAN THIS PERPLEXING  
ALL FOOLS' EVE

KATE

THERE'S MUCH I MIGHT  
WELL YET ACHIEVE  
IF I STAY SHARP THIS  
ALL FOOLS' EVE

HASTINGS & CONSTANCE

WE RUN THE GRAVEST RISK I FEAR  
OF GETTING OUR FINGERS BURNED  
THE SOONER THAT WE'RE OUT OF HERE  
THE BETTER FOR ALL CONCERNED  
OH IMAGINE THE SIZE  
OF THE SIGHS  
WE'LL HEAVE  
WHEN WE SAY OUR GOODBYES  
TO NONESUCH  
AND ALL FOOLS' EVE

MRS HARDCASTLE

I DARESAY THEY SAY I'M NAIVE  
BUT WE'LL SEE WHO  
THE REAL FOOL IS  
BEFORE THE END OF THIS  
ALL FOOLS' EVE

TONY

AND THAT  
AS SOMEONE DEAD  
ONCE SAID  
IS THE KIND OF WEB YOU WEAVE  
WHEN YOU PRACTISE TO DECEIVE  
AND THE WEB IS ALWAYS WORSE I FIND  
ON ALL FOOLS' EVE

SERVANTS

HOW COULD THEY THINK  
THAT WE WOULD THINK TO THIEVE?  
IT WOULDN'T BE CLEVER  
WE'D NONE OF US EVER  
AND CERTAINLY NEVER  
ON ALL FOOLS' EVE

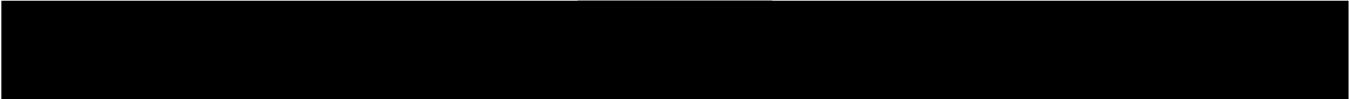
ALL (whispered, advancing)

OH HUNT THE THIEF  
BEFORE THE THIEF HAS FLED  
OH SEEK HIM OUT THIS VERY NIGHT  
AND SEEK HIM OUT BY MORNING LIGHT  
OR NO-ONE GETS TO BED

(crescendo)

THE HUNT IS ON  
THE CULPRIT MUST BE CAUGHT  
THE VILLAIN WILL BE BROUGHT TO HEEL  
AND MADE TO FEEL AS FOXES FEEL

(striking a pose)



AND STILL WE WONDER  
AS WELL WE MIGHT  
WHAT FURTHER SURPRISES  
HAS PUCK TUCKED UP HIS SLEEVE?  
ON THIS MOST DISTURBING  
QUITE PERTURBING  
NIGHT  
WHICH SOME CALL  
ALL FOOLS' EVE

(ALL rush off in different directions. Blackout.)

End of Act One

---



ACT TWO

Scene One

(The garden, Nonesuch. Later the same night.

In the background, we can see the great, gaunt windows of the house, itself etched against the night sky. Through the windows, candles twinkling. Full moon, shrouded in shimmering mist. In the darkness, we half make out the figures of the SERVANTS, lighted torches and lanterns in hand, scouring the grounds.)

11. \_\_\_\_\_ "Moonraking" \_\_\_\_\_ Duet & Chorus

SERVANTS (distantly, dimly seen, maybe behind gauze)

OH OH OH OH  
SEARCH HIGH  
SEARCH LOW  
SEARCH ON  
TILL COCKCROW  
SEARCH EACH  
INCH OF TURF

OH OH OH OH  
SEARCH HERE  
SEARCH THERE  
THEY MUST  
BE SOMEWHERE  
LEAVE NO  
LEAF UNTURNED

(They merge into the darkness, but their torches can still be seen from time to time, flickering, flitting to and fro. Downstage, HASTINGS appears out of the gloom, lantern in hand. On the opposite side of the stage CONSTANCE appears, also carrying a lantern. He sees her.)

HASTINGS (calling in a whisper)

Constance!

(She hurries cautiously across. Music under. The tone of their conversation, sung or spoken, is hushed and conspiratorial.)

Hastings! What news?  
CONSTANCE

HASTINGS  
Marlow will be here shortly with the stash of gems, my darling.

CONSTANCE  
We have no time to spare.

HASTINGS  
We must have patience, Constance.

CONSTANCE  
Patience, yes ...

HASTINGS  
And prudence, Constance.

CONSTANCE  
I see ...

HE'LL BE HERE SOON  
HE SAID?

HASTINGS  
YES

CONSTANCE  
WITHIN THE HOUR  
HE SAID?

HASTINGS  
YES

CONSTANCE  
YOU'RE SURE OF HIM?

HASTINGS  
SURE OF HIM

CONSTANCE  
SURE OF IT?

HASTINGS  
YES

Good. Good. And ...

CONSTANCE

THE JEWELS ARE SAFE  
YOU SAY?

SAFE

HASTINGS

THEY DON'T SUSPECT  
AS YET?

CONSTANCE

NO

HASTINGS

YOU'RE SURE OF THAT?

CONSTANCE

SURE OF IT

HASTINGS

SURE YOU'RE SURE?

CONSTANCE

SURE  
SURE AS I AM  
OF YOU  
SURE AS YOU ARE  
OF ME

HASTINGS

WHICH IS SURE  
AS ANYONE  
HAS EVER BEEN  
OF ANYTHING  
OR EVER  
WILL BE

BOTH

(They embrace.)

AND SOON  
WE WILL BE FAR AWAY AND FREE  
CROSSING A STRANGE UNCERTAIN SEA  
FOR KINDLIER SHORES  
OH MOON  
LEND US A LITTLE OF YOUR GLOW  
SWEETEN OUR JOURNEY AS WE GO  
BRIGHTEN OUR DARKNESS  
LIGHTEN OUR TASK

HASTINGS  
CAST COMFORTING BEAMS

CONSTANCE  
ON ALL OF OUR SCHEMES

BOTH  
THAT'S ALL THAT WE ASK

HASTINGS  
And I'm now to understand that Sir James Marlow is expected here. Do you know something of this?

CONSTANCE  
A little.

HASTINGS  
Then tell me ...

HE'LL BE HERE SOON  
YOU THINK?

CONSTANCE  
YES

HASTINGS  
THIS VERY NIGHT  
YOU THINK?

CONSTANCE  
YES

HASTINGS  
YOU'RE SURE OF THAT?

CONSTANCE  
PRETTY SURE

VERY SURE? HASTINGS

YES CONSTANCE

Damn ... damn ... HASTINGS

HE KNOWS MY FACE  
YOU SEE

AH CONSTANCE

SO HE'LL SUSPECT  
YOU SEE HASTINGS

AH CONSTANCE

YOU'RE SURE IT'S HIM HASTINGS

SURE OF IT CONSTANCE

SURE YOU'RE SURE? HASTINGS

SURE  
SURE AS SKY IS  
OF STARS  
SURE AS GRASS IS  
OF DEW CONSTANCE

SURE AS DUSK  
OF FALLOW-DEER  
AS RIVERBANK  
OF WILLOW-HERB  
AS I AM OF  
OF YOU BOTH

HASTINGS  
SO WE'VE NO TIME TO WASTE

CONSTANCE  
NO WE'D BETTER MAKE HASTE

BOTH  
OR THE HONEST SIR JAMES  
MAY PUT PAID TO OUR GAMES  
AND DISCOVER OUR AIMS  
ALL TOO SOON

(moving together)

ARE WE MOONSTRUCK?  
OR PLAIN MAD?  
ARE YOU SORRY YOU MET ME  
OR GLAD?  
ARE WE CLUTCHING AT STRAWS  
OR CHASING THE SUN?

AND ARE WE DREAM-MAKERS  
BOUND FOR THE STARS  
TAKING THE HIGHROAD  
VIA VENUS AND MARS?  
OR ARE WE MOONRAKERS  
LAUGHING TOO SOON  
FLYING TOO HIGH  
OR COMBING THE LAKE  
TRYING LIKE FOOLS  
TO RAKE  
THE FOOL'S  
FULL MOON?

(The SERVANTS emerge once more from the darkness,  
searching still. HASTINGS and CONSTANCE retreat,  
hiding, to one side, but remaining visible to us.)

BRIDGET  
CATCH A COMET  
IN A THIMBLE  
PATCH A STOCKING  
WITH A FISH  
MAKE A SEESAW  
FROM A CYMBAL  
BREAK A WALNUT  
WITH A WISH

PANSY

FLY TO NORWAY  
IN A LADLE  
TIE A SHOELACE  
WITH A PLOUGH  
CROSS THE OCEAN  
IN A CRADLE  
TOSS A PANCAKE  
WITH A COW

BOTH

PLAY A HORNPIPE  
ON A COBWEB  
SLAY A DRAGON  
WITH A KISS

ALL SERVANTS (following)

ASK US ANYTHING  
OH ANYTHING  
BUT THIS

FOR THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE  
NO THIEF-TAKERS WE  
OH THIS IS A MERRY GAME  
OF RIDDLE-ME-REE  
TO FIND THE UNFINDABLE  
IS NOT A SIMPLE SORT OF TASK  
AND YOU MIGHT AS WELL ASK  
US TO ASK  
THE MAN-IN-THE-MOON  
THE MAN-IN-THE-MOON

HASTINGS & CONSTANCE (together, to EACH OTHER)

AND ARE WE DREAM-MAKERS  
BOUND FOR THE STARS  
TAKING THE HIGHWAY  
VIA VENUS AND MARS?  
OR ARE WE MOONRAKERS  
LAUGHING TOO SOON  
FLYING TOO HIGH  
COMBING THE LAKE  
TRYING LIKE FOOLS  
TO RAKE  
THE FOOL'S  
FULL MOON?

SERVANTS

YES THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE  
FOR HOUSE-BREAKERS FLEE  
SO WHY BOTHER LOOKING WHEN  
THERE'S NOTHING TO SEE?  
TO TELL WHERE THE BOOTY IS  
NEEDS DAYLIGHT AND A WITCH'S SPELL  
OH YOU MIGHT JUST AS WELL  
TRY TO TELL  
THE MAN-IN-THE-MOON  
THE MAN-IN-THE-MOON  
THE MAN-IN-THE-MOON

(resuming their search)

OH OH OH OH

HASTINGS (to CONSTANCE)

Now go, my Constance -- go quickly and prepare for the long journey. Bring only what you can carry. My manservant, Stingo, will attend you.

CONSTANCE

My dear Hastings!

(They embrace again. The SERVANTS disperse and disappear. CONSTANCE hurries off towards the house, HASTINGS retreats into a nearby arbour.)

---

(The stage is empty for a moment. Then light-hearted, Handelian singing off. It is MARLOW.)

MARLOW (off, entering)

CROWN ME WITH LAURELS  
YOU LUSTY YOUNG BOYS  
BLOW ON YOUR TRUMPETS  
MAKE MERRY YOUR NOISE  
HOW HAPPY THE HERO  
WHO GAILY DESTROYS  
EACH OBJECT BEFORE HIM  
WHICH IRKS OR ANNOYS

(HASTINGS re-emerges from the bushes.)

HASTINGS

Marlow! At last! And why this levity, pray?

MARLOW (seeing him)  
Well, George -- it seems that after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women!

HASTINGS  
And what success has your honour's modesty been crowned with now?

MARLOW  
Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing that runs about the inn with a bunch of keys to her girdle?

HASTINGS  
Well, and what then?

MARLOW  
She's mine, you rogue, you. Mine, I tell you!

HASTINGS  
And why are you so sure of her?

MARLOW  
Why, man -- she talked of meeting me this very night and here, in the garden. And we know what such an assignation means among women of a certain sort.

HASTINGS  
Well, Charles, my felicitations. But to other matters.

MARLOW  
Well, be brief. She'll be here presently, and I intend to keep the appointment unattended.

HASTINGS  
Then you have taken care, I hope, of the casket I gave to you to lock up? It's in safety?

MARLOW  
Why, yes! I have taken care of it. Yet, George, I wonder what you could mean by giving me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for you, when you know the only place I have is the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door. And in this of all inns! Why, the servants are even now scouring house and grounds for the landlady's missing gems. I have taken better precautions with your valuables!

(A beat. Musical frisson: "Nonesuch".)

HASTINGS  
And what precautions, Charles? What did you with the casket?

(Another "Nonesuch" frisson.)

MARLOW  
I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

(Again.)

HASTINGS  
To the landlady.

(etc)

MARLOW  
Ay, the landlady.

HASTINGS  
You did?

MARLOW  
I did.

(Beat.)

Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion!

(HASTINGS looks sick.)

You seem a little disconcerted, though, methinks. Sure, nothing has happened?

HASTINGS  
No, nothing. Never was I in better spirits in all my life.

MARLOW  
Why, good.

HASTINGS  
And so -- you left it with the landlady.

MARLOW  
Yes.

HASTINGS  
Who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge.

MARLOW  
Rather too readily, yes -- strange. But it's safe.

HASTINGS

It is, is it?

MARLOW

As a guinea in a Scotsman's purse!

HASTINGS (going)

Well, Charles -- I'll leave you to await your pretty barmaid.

(heavily)

And may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me.

(He leaves, crossing with HARDCASTLE.)

HASTINGS (to HARDCASTLE, dazed)

The landlady -- he left it with the landlady.

(HASTINGS wanders past the baffled HARDCASTLE into the house. Plodding music.)

|

HARDCASTLE (to himself)

I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy, and I'll bear it no longer. Yet, from my respect for his father, I must be calm.

|

(to MARLOW)

|

HARDCASTLE

You must forgive me, sir, my earlier haste. I was too prompt to condemn what was, after all, merely youthful ardour.

|

MARLOW

I see, sir. And it is your place to condone or to condemn the actions of a better, sir?|

HARDCASTLE

Ha, ha -- quite so, quite so. Let us speak no more of it.

|

MARLOW

Sir -- you are civil.

|

HARDCASTLE

Sir.

|

MARLOW

It would be more civil still, were you to chivvy my Lady Abbess to some supper. A want of good service, sir, is the mark of a dull host.

|

HARDCASTLE  
Sir, I am obliged to you for your opinion.  
(aside)  
This fellow is beyond enduring.  
MARLOW  
Now off, man, and see to our supper! I have an assignation here with beauty not with age.  
HARDCASTLE  
You do, do you?  
MARLOW  
Yes, old fellow -- now away!  
(He reverses HARDCASTLE's wig then produces a tiny coin.)  
There -- half-a-hog!  
(He gives it to HARDCASTLE who, stunned, takes it.)  
Will that put wings on Mercury's heels?  
(HARDCASTLE can contain himself no longer. He hurls the coin to the ground. Music out.)  
HARDCASTLE  
Young man -- from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred, modest man, as a visitor here. Yet what I find is no better than a coxcomb and a bully. But he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it.  
(He stalks out. A beat.)  
MARLOW  
My father? My father's letter?  
(He ponders.)

13. "The Decent Thing"

Duet

(KATE enters, still dressed in BET's clothes. MARLOW scarcely sees her. Throughout the following she maintains her SERVING-GIRL persona.)

KATE

HERE I AM SIR  
YOURS AS AGREED  
IS IT HERE SIR  
THAT WE WOULD BE DOING THE DEED?

(He seems preoccupied.)

OH COME COME SIR  
WHY THE LONG FACE?  
WHAT'S BECOME OF SIR'S LUST?  
HAS SOME TRAGEDY JUST  
TAKEN PLACE?

MARLOW (distracted)

NOT AT ALL MISS  
NOTHING SO GRAND  
JUST ONE QUESTION  
AND THEN TO THE MATTER IN HAND

TELL ME THIS MISS  
THEN WE'LL BEGIN  
IF YOU COULD PRETTY MISS

(A beat.)

REASSURE ME THAT THIS

(Another beat.)

IS AN INN

(She laughs. Music under.)

KATE

An inn? Lordy, my master -- some slippgibbet's taken you for a right old Jack  
Pudding!

MARLOW (anticipating)

... Jack Pudding -- ha, ha. I see ...

SO IF

KATE

SO IF

THIS ISN'T AN INN  
MARLOW

WHICH IT'S NOT  
KATE

THEN IT MUST BE A HOUSE  
MARLOW

YES IT IS  
KATE

AND THIS HOUSE IS YOUR HOME?  
MARLOW

WHY YES  
KATE

IT'S NOT HARDCASTLE'S HOUSE?  
MARLOW (horrified)

YES HIS  
KATE

(MARLOW puts his head in his hands)

OH GOD  
OH GOD  
OH GOD  
OH GOD  
MARLOW (groans)

LORDY  
SIR LOOKS AWFULLY ODD  
KATE (kindly)

THEN YOU  
MARLOW (looking up)

THEN I  
KATE

DON'T WORK IN AN INN?  
MARLOW

AS IF  
KATE

MARLOW  
YOU WORK HERE IN THIS HOUSE?

KATE  
I MIGHT

MARLOW  
YOU'RE A SERVING-GIRL HERE?

KATE  
OH NO

MARLOW (still more horrified)  
NOT MISS HARDCASTLE'S MAID?

KATE (smiles)  
THAT'S RIGHT

MARLOW (as before)  
OH WHY?  
OH WHY?  
OH WHY?  
OH WHY?

KATE  
LORDY  
THAT'S NO REASON TO CRY

MARLOW  
LADY  
WHAT THIS MEANS IS GOODBYE

KATE  
Goodbye, sir? But why, sir?

(Sad music. MARLOW gazes at her with longing.)

MARLOW

Why?

IF I STAY LONGER HERE  
I MAY GROW FOND OF YOU  
IF I GROW FOND OF YOU  
WHAT THEN?  
IF I GROW FOND OF YOU  
I'LL BE THE WRETCHEDDEST  
OF WRETCHED MEN

KATE

How so, sir?

MARLOW

How so?

BY GROWING FOND OF YOU  
I'LL WANT TO MARRY YOU  
HOW CAN I MARRY YOU  
UNLESS  
THAT HIGH-BORN FAMILY  
THE MARLOW FAMILY  
AS ONE SAYS YES?

(He takes her hands.)

BOTH

SO FLY AWAY  
MELT LIKE A GHOST  
INTO THE NIGHT  
FORGET THE LIFE WE NEVER  
REALLY KNEW  
AND COME WHAT MAY  
DON'T STOP TO ASK  
DID WE DO RIGHT?

WHEN WE SHOULD  
NEVER HAVE BEGUN  
WHEN CLEARLY  
WHAT I SHOULD HAVE DONE  
WAS TURN AND RUN  
THE MOMENT I RAN INTO YOU  
SO LEAVING NOW  
WOULD BE THE DECENT THING  
TO DO

(This section optional.)

KATE

SO IF YOU LINGERED HERE  
AND SO GREW FOND OF ME  
AND I FELT MUCH THE SAME  
OF YOU  
YOU BEING NOBLY BORN  
ME BEING LOWLY BRED  
IT WOULDN'T DO

MARLOW

IF WE WERE DRAGONFLIES

KATE

IF WE WERE SPARROWHAWKS

MARLOW

WE'D GO WHERE PASSION LED

KATE

NOT SENSE

MARLOW

BUT HIGH SOCIETY

KATE

INSISTS ON PEDIGREE

BOTH

AT LOVE'S EXPENSE

(SO) LET'S FLY AWAY  
SAY OUR FAREWELLS  
WITHOUT REGRET  
DISCARD THE DREAM WE'LL NEVER  
NOW PURSUE  
YET NEVER SAY  
YOU WISH WE TWO  
HAD NEVER MET

FOR ONCE THE  
GODS WEREN'T ON OUR SIDE  
AND WE MIGHT  
JUST AS WELL HAVE TRIED  
TO TURN THE TIDE  
AS MAKE THIS FOOLISH TALE COME TRUE

SO LEAVING NOW  
WOULD BE THE DECENT THING  
TO DO

MARLOW (moving away)

OH IT'S A PRETTY PASS  
WHEN MERE DIFFERENCES IN CLASS  
STAND BETWEEN AN HONEST MASTER AND HIS MISS

KATE

AY IT'S A PRETTY PASS  
WHEN A LOVER AND HIS LASS  
ARE THE VICTIMS OF SUCH PROTOCOL AS THIS

BOTH (moving together)

AND AH TO BE SO NEAR TO  
YET SO FAR AWAY  
FROM UTTER BLISS

SO DON'T ALLOW  
A BACKWARD GLANCE  
TO CLOUD YOUR EYES  
WHAT EARTHLY GOOD DID DAYDREAMS  
EVER BRING?  
AND YEARS FROM NOW  
WE'LL WAKE AND FIND  
TO OUR SURPRISE  
THAT THE WINTER IN OUR HEARTS  
HAS TURNED TO SPRING  
AND THAT THE DEATH OF LOVE HAS LOST  
ITS ICE-LIKE STING  
AND WE'LL KNOW THEN THAT WE DID  
THE DECENT THING

MARLOW

NO DOUBT OF IT

KATE

NO DOUBT OF IT

BOTH

NO DOUBT OF IT  
OH WE'LL KNOW THEN THAT WE DID  
THE DECENT THING

(They leave separately and forlornly. The stage is empty for a moment.)

---

(A cry of rage. CONSTANCE storms on from the house, followed by TONY.)

TONY

Ay -- you may steal for yourselves next time. I have done my duty.

CONSTANCE

Yet she has the jewels again!

TONY

Be glad, at least, that she believes it was a mistake of the servants.

(Sits. With a sigh she joins him.)

CONSTANCE

True -- for if she has the very least inkling of our designs, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my Aunt Verity until I am of age!

TONY

To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things. But what can I do? I have got a pair of horses that will fly like Pegasus, and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face.

(MRS HARDCASTLE heard off.)

CONSTANCE

Here she comes -- we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect.

(They retire to the arbour. MRS HARDCASTLE enters clutching the casket.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune!

(She sees TONY and CONSTANCE, who are locked in bogus embrace.)

Ah -- have I caught you, my pretty doves? A nocturnal tryst? What -- billing, exchanging stolen glances and broken murmurs? Ah!

(They feign embarrassment. STINGO enters bearing a letter.)

STINGO

Where's the Squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

(He hands the letter to TONY under CONSTANCE's nose, then moves away and hovers.)

CONSTANCE (to herself)

Undone, undone! A letter to him from my beloved Hastings -- I know the hand. If my aunt sees it we are ruined!

TONY (to himself, peering at the letter)

A damned cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life!

(MRS HARDCASTLE has moved inquisitively across. CONSTANCE attempts to intercept her.)

Here, mother, do you make it out?

(The letter is again passed under CONSTANCE's nose. This time it is MRS HARDCASTLE who gets it.)

MRS HARDCASTLE (peering at it)

How's this?

(She reads. STINGO looks on, first with interest, then horror.)

"Dear Squire, I am now waiting for Miss Neville at the gates of Nonesuch. I expect you'll assist us with a fresh pair of horses, as you promised. Please steal the jewels for us as you did before. Dispatch is necessary, as the hag, your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Yours, Hastings."

(A terrible silence. STINGO moans and runs away.)

Diggory! Diggory! I shall run distracted!

(to TONY)

You great ill-fashioned oaf -- were you too joined against me?

(Hits him.)

Grant me patience. But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment.

(DIGGORY enters from the house. MRS HARDCASTLE turns to CONSTANCE.)

As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses already, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with me. Your old Aunt Verity will, I warrant, keep you secure these next three years!

(to TONY)

And you, sir, may mount your horse and guard us upon the way.

(Hits him, then fans herself.)

My rage chokes me.

(Sweeps out. DIGGORY takes up the casket and follows her. She wrenches the casket from him and disappears into the house, DIGGORY following. Music: "Beating the Knave" ostinato figure.)

|  
CONSTANCE

So now I'm completely ruined.

|  
TONY

Ay, that's a sure thing.

|  
CONSTANCE

What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool!

|  
(She hits him with her fan. HASTINGS strides in accompanied by STINGO. Music up a notch in pitch.)

|  
HASTINGS (to TONY)

So, sir, I find by my servant, Stingo, that you have shown my letter and betrayed us.

|  
|  
(MARLOW enters. Music up a further notch.)

|  
MARLOW

So, I have been finely used here among you! Rendered contemptible, driven into ill manners, despised, insulted, laughed at!

|

CONSTANCE (indicating TONY)  
And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

Yes! | HASTINGS

Yes! | MARLOW

Yes! | CONSTANCE

(Music pauses. They glare at TONY.)

14. "Beating the Knave"

Trio

MARLOW  
INSTEAD OF HELP  
THIS GORMLESS WHELP  
HAS WROUGHT UNTOLD VEXATION  
ONE STUPID LIE  
HAS LED TO MY  
COMPLETE HUMILIATION  
I CALL ON YOU  
TO PUT HIM THROUGH  
THE SELFSAME DEGRADATION  
LET'S NOT JUST STAND  
AND RANT AND RAVE  
THE TIME HAS COME TO  
BEAT THE KNAVE

(He takes a swipe at TONY.)

HASTINGS  
CONSUMED WITH GREED  
HE GUARANTEED  
HIS DEVIOUS COLLUSION  
YET ALL HE'S DONE  
IS HAVE HIS FUN  
AND FURTHER MY CONFUSION  
I VOTE WE PLACE  
UPON HIS FACE  
A PERMANENT CONTUSION  
WE'LL TEACH THE WRETCH  
TO MISBEHAVE  
LET'S GET TO WORK AND

ALL THREE

BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
LET'S VENT OUR SPLEEN AND  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT HIM HARD  
LEAVE HIM SCARRED  
LET'S TAKE THAT KNAVE APART

(beating TONY with their fans.)

OH BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
FOR THUS WILL WE  
DEFEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
UNTIL HIS BUTTOCKS SMART

CONSTANCE

SINCE I WAS SIX  
HIS KNAVISH TRICKS  
HAVE PUSHED ME TO DISTRACTION  
YOU'D THINK I MIGHT  
HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT  
TO SOME SMALL SATISFACTION  
IT SEEMS TO ME  
UNLESS WE THREE  
RESORT TO SAVAGE ACTION  
HE'LL DRIVE US TO  
AN EARLY GRAVE  
LET'S WASTE NO TIME LET'S  
BEAT THE KNAVE

(During the following contrapuntal section, the beating is so vigorous that SERVANTS emerge from the house in curiosity.)

MARLOW

INSTEAD OF HELP  
THIS GORMLESS WHELP  
HAS WROUGHT UNTOLD VEXATION  
ONE STUPID LIE  
HAS LED TO MY  
COMPLETE HUMILIATION  
I CALL ON YOU  
TO PUT HIM THROUGH  
THE SELFSAME DEGRADATION  
LET'S NOT JUST STAND  
AND RANT AND RAVE  
THE TIME HAS COME TO  
BEAT THE KNAVE

HASTINGS

CONSUMED WITH GREED  
HE GUARANTEED  
HIS DEVIOUS COLLUSION  
YET ALL HE'S DONE  
IS HAVE HIS FUN  
AND FURTHER MY CONFUSION  
I VOTE WE PLACE  
UPON HIS FACE  
A PERMANENT CONTUSION  
WE'LL TEACH THE WRETCH  
TO MISBEHAVE  
LET'S GET TO WORK AND  
BEAT THE KNAVE

CONSTANCE

SINCE I WAS SIX  
HIS KNAVISH TRICKS  
HAVE PUSHED ME TO DISTRACTION  
YOU'D THINK I MIGHT  
HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT  
TO SOME SMALL SATISFACTION  
IT SEEMS TO ME  
UNLESS WE THREE  
RESORT TO SAVAGE ACTION  
HE'LL DRIVE US TO  
AN EARLY GRAVE  
LET'S WASTE NO TIME LET'S  
BEAT THE KNAVE

(The SERVANTS join. They form an arch through which  
TONY is hounded, as he runs an impromptu gauntlet.)

ALL (except TONY)

OH BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS THEN  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
YES INDEED  
LET HIM BLEED  
OH SMITE HIM TILL IT HURTS

(TONY collapses. The OTHERS dance gleefully round.)

OH BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEHEAD AND COOK  
AND EAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
METE OUT HIS JUST DESERTS

(The OTHERS form a line and deliver, one after the other, a succession of blows.)

ALL

OH BEAT THE KNAVE  
BEAT THE KNAVE  
LET'S TREAT OURSELVES  
AND TREAT THE KNAVE  
FROM HIS NOSE  
TO HIS TOES  
TO THE CRUELLEST BLOWS  
WHICH CUDGELS EVER GAVE

(in formation)

AS WE ROUNDLY  
PROFOUNDLY  
AND SOUNDLY

(dealing a final blow)

BEAT THE KNAVE

(Footwork. TONY totters and falls over.)

---

(DIGGORY re-enters, carrying a cloak. The SERVANTS

---

scatter and disappear. Urgent music under.)

DIGGORY (to CONSTANCE)

My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. Your cloak, madam.

(to TONY)

Your worship's horse is saddled up. You are to go thirty miles before morning.

(TONY groans. PANSY hurries in with fan, gloves and muff.)

CONSTANCE

My dear Hastings -- in three years I shall come into my estate. If you have that esteem for me that I am sure you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connexion.

DIGGORY

Your fan, gloves and muff, madam. Quickly, madam! My mistress is impatient.

CONSTANCE

I'm coming!

(to HASTINGS)

Well, constancy -- remember, constancy is the word.

(She kisses HASTINGS and leaves, with a gesture at TONY. DIGGORY follows. HASTINGS mouths "three years".)

MARLOW

You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly.

(New music. TONY awakens from his daze.)

TONY

Egad -- I have it. Your hands. Yours ...

(to MARLOW)

... and yours too, my poor Sulky.

(Music gathers pace. TONY takes their hands, placing his over theirs. He turns to HASTINGS.)

Meet me two hours hence by the mulberry-tree at the bottom of the orchard -- and if Tony Lumpkin does not bring your Constance home to you once more, why he'll give you leave to take Bet Bouncer in her stead -- ay, and my best horse into the bargain. Never doubt me -- you shall see!

|  
(He runs off into the house, calling:)

My boots, ho!

|  
(MARLOW and HASTINGS, look after him then at EACH OTHER, puzzled. Rousing music. Blackout.)

---

Scene Two

(The terrace. Tall French windows leading into the house. The mist has cleared. Starlight. DIGGORY, PIMPLE, ROGER, THOMAS, PERKIN & other SERVANTS emerge or are discovered.)

15. "The Kissing-Dance"

Ensemble

PANSY

WHAT SHALL WE DANCE IN WINTER  
WHEN ROSES ARE WHITE  
AND SNOW FALLS LIKE BLOSSOM  
AND ELM-LOGS BURN BRIGHT?

THOMAS (to her)

SHALL WE DANCE A DANCE AT DAYBREAK  
AS BIRDS FILL THE SKY?  
OH WHEN WILL WE DANCE  
YOU AND I?

BOTH

AND WILL YOU DANCE WITH ME  
MY PRETTY ONE  
AN OLD DANCE OR NEW?

(linking hands)

OR SHALL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

ALL (dancing a few steps)

OR SHALL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

(dancing round)

FOR ALL DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
FROM THE PRINCE OF BEGGARS  
TO THE KING OF FRANCE  
ALL DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
YOUNG AND OLD ARE WORTHY  
OF A SECOND GLANCE

SO IT IS AND EVER WAS  
SINCE ALL THE WORLD BEGAN  
FOR MAN WAS FOR WOMAN MADE  
THERE'S A METHOD IN THIS MADCAP MASQUERADE  
DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
FOR MAID WAS MADE FOR MAN

(Pantomime. PERKIN tries to steal kisses from the GIRLS.  
The OTHERS freeze. PERKIN disappears into the  
darkness.)

PIMPLE  
WHAT SHALL WE DANCE IN SUMMER  
WHEN ROSES ARE RED  
AND SUN STEEPS OUR MEADOWS  
AND EARTH BAKES LIKE BREAD?

BRIDGET (unfreezing)  
LET US DANCE OUR DANCE AT NIGHTFALL  
AS BIRDS HOMEWARD FLY  
OH THEN LET US DANCE  
YOU AND I

ROGER & BRIDGET  
AND WILL YOU STAY WITH ME  
MY PRETTY ONE?  
AND WILL YOU STAY TRUE?

EVERYONE ELSE (quietly)  
WILL YOU STAY TRUE?

(He takes her hands. The OTHERS take their PARTNERS'  
hands.)

AND WILL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

ROGER & BRIDGET

AND WILL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

EVERYONE ELSE

(Blind Man's Buff with DIGGORY.)

AND WILL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

ROGER & BRIDGET

AND WILL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

EVERYONE ELSE

(PERKIN in FOOL's regalia. Dance.)

ALL  
FOR ALL DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
FROM THE PRINCE OF BEGGARS  
TO THE KING OF FRANCE  
ALL DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
YOUNG AND OLD ARE WORTHY  
OF A SECOND GLANCE

LET IT BE AND EVER BE  
LIE NOT ALONE IN BED  
FOR MAN WAS FOR MARRIAGE MADE  
THAT'S THE END IN EVERY EARTHLY ESCAPADE  
DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
SING MAN AND MAID  
WERE MADE TO WED  
OH MAN WAS MADE TO WED

(Chain dance.)

DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE

(Freeze. Dance continues.)

DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE

(Again.)

MAN WAS FOR WOMAN MADE  
IS A RULE EACH AGE HAS LONG OBEYED  
DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
SING MAID WAS MADE FOR MAN

(PERKIN/FOOL casts elfin spell. Bows, curtseys, formal poses between the COUPLES.)

MAID WAS MADE  
FOR MAN

(Tableau. ALL break and move off, softly whistling. Lights fade. They look back then vanish, melting into the house. Lights out or down.)

---

(They have disappeared. Lights up. HASTINGS and STINGO enter.)

HASTINGS

You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say?

STINGO

Yes, your honour. They went off in a post-coach, and the young squire went on horseback. They'll be thirty miles off by this time.

HASTINGS

Then all my hopes are over.

STINGO

Yes, sir.

HASTINGS

And what news else? What of Marlow?

STINGO

Old Sir James is arrived. He and Mr Hardcastle have been laughing at Mr Charles's mistake this half-hour.

(Noises off.)

Hark -- they are coming this way.

---

HASTINGS

Then I must not be seen.

STINGO

Where will your honour go to?

HASTINGS

To my fruitless appointment in the orchard -- this is about the time. Go -- make yourself scarce! Hide!

(They hurry off in opposite directions. Laughter off. Music. SIR JAMES and HARDCASTLE stroll out of the house onto the terrace, glasses in hand. Music out.)

HARDCASTLE (laughing)

The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands.

SIR JAMES

And the horror with which I suppose he treated all your advances.

HARDCASTLE

And yet he might have seen something in me above a common innkeeper, too.

SIR JAMES (laughing)

Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper.

HARDCASTLE

Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of anything but joy. Yes, my friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary -- and though my daughter's fortune is but small ...

SIR JAMES

Small, Dick? Why will you talk of fortune to me? My son wants nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness and his pedigree. If they like each other, as you say they do ...

HARDCASTLE

If, man? I tell you they do like each other -- my daughter as good as told me so.

SIR JAMES

But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

HARDCASTLE

I saw him embrace the lady in the warmest manner myself -- and here he comes to put you out of your ifs, I'll warrant.

(Enter MARLOW dressed in travelling clothes.)

MARLOW

I come, sir, to ask pardon for my strange conduct and to take my leave. Such is my shame, that I cannot stay a moment longer in this house.

(He bows and makes to go. HARDCASTLE stops him.)

HARDCASTLE

Tut, boy, a trifle. You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again. She'll never like you the worse for it.

MARLOW

Sir, I shall always be proud of her approbation.

HARDCASTLE

Approbation is but a cold word, Mr Marlow -- if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

MARLOW

By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment. We had but one interview -- and that was formal, modest and uninteresting, as Miss Neville and Mr Hastings will attest.

SIR JAMES

You never embraced her, nor made any protestations?

MARLOW

As heaven is my witness, I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications.

(Upset, he bows and leaves. Musical flourish.)

SIR JAMES

I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted. Yet I dare pledge my life and honour upon his truth.

HARDCASTLE

Here comes my daughter -- and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

(KATE enters, normally attired, from the opposite side.)

Kate -- come sit, child. Answer us sincerely and without reserve. Has Mr Marlow made you any professions of love?

KATE

The question is very abrupt, sir! But I think he has.

HARDCASTLE (to SIR JAMES)  
You see.

SIR JAMES  
And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

KATE  
Yes, sir, several.

HARDCASTLE (to SIR JAMES)  
You see.

SIR JAMES  
But did he profess any attachment?

KATE  
A lasting one.

HARDCASTLE  
You see.

SIR JAMES  
Did he talk of love?

KATE  
Much, sir.

SIR JAMES  
Amazing!

HARDCASTLE  
Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied.

(standing)

For my part, I must attend to supper preparations. Sad that Dorothy and Miss Neville have seen fit to flit on this of all nights. For tonight, old friend, we eat a festive feast.

(looks up)

A fine night. I'll walk about the garden, then berate the servants.

(Ambles off. SIR JAMES turns to KATE.)

SIR JAMES  
And how did my son behave towards you, madam?

KATE

As most professed admirers do. Said some civil things of my face, talked much of the greatness of my merit, mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech and ended with pretended rapture.

HARDCASTLE (off)

You see.

SIR JAMES (ignoring him)

Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among gentlewomen to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting manner by no means describes him, and I am confident that he never sat for the picture.

(He makes to go.)

KATE

Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity?

SIR JAMES

What?

KATE

If you and my father, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind Signor Gambarotto's statue of the Rape of Lucrece, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

SIR JAMES

Agreed. And if I find him as you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end.

(He goes.)

KATE

And if you don't find him as I describe, I fear my happiness may never have a beginning.

(She goes. Music. Fade to black.)

|

Scene Three

(Music continues. Lights up. The orchard.

Moonlight. HASTINGS, leaning forlornly against a tree, lit by his lantern.)

5. "All in a Garden Green"

Song

HASTINGS

WITH OH SO MUCH TO LOSE  
AND AH SO MUCH TO GAIN  
SUCH WAITING MIGHT WELL DRIVE  
A MAN INSANE  
YET I AM NOT THE FIRST  
NOR SHALL I BE THE LAST  
TO KNOW THE PAIN OF WAITING  
WELL KNOWING THAT THE WAITING  
MIGHT WELL BE ALL IN VAIN

(In the dark we make out a group of RUSTICS, gathered perhaps for the All Fools' festivities. They sit, quietly smoking clay pipes.)

OH ONCE THERE WAS A KEEN YOUNG BLADE  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
WHO WAITED FOR A ROSE-PINK MAID  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
THE BLOOM OF LOVE CONSUMED THEM BOTH  
AND SO THEY'D SWORN A SOLEMN OATH  
TO MEET THAT NIGHT AND PLIGHT THEIR TROTH

HASTINGS & RUSTICS (RUSTICS joining)

ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN

(half-addressing the OTHERS.)

HASTINGS

HIS LONELY WATCH HE KEPT ALL NIGHT  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
ALONE ALONE TILL MORNING LIGHT  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
FOR THOUGH THE LAD WAS MUSTARD-HOT  
TO DANCE THE FEATHER-BED GAVOTTE  
HIS LADY-LOVE IT SEEMED WAS NOT

ALL  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN

HASTINGS (RUSTICS echoing)  
OH CONSTANCE CONSTANCE  
IS THIS TO BE MY FATE?  
OH CONSTANCE  
TO PINE AWAY AMONG THE TREES AND WAIT?  
OR ARE YOU SIMPLY LATE?

RUSTICS  
WHOOPS-A-DIDDLEY-DANDY-DEE

HASTINGS  
AM I TO SHARE  
THE DOOM  
SO GRIM  
OF HIM  
OF WHOM  
I SING?

RUSTICS (rising)  
OOH ER  
WHAT NEXT?

(They add footwork.)

HASTINGS  
FOR FEARING THAT HIS HOPES WERE DEAD  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
A FINAL TEAR THE LOVER SHED  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
OH WEEP AS WELL AS YOU HEAR NOW  
IN HORROR AND IN COUPLETS HOW  
THEY FOUND HIM DANGLING FROM A BOUGH

ALL  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN

RUSTICS (quietly)  
OH  
DEAR  
ME

HASTINGS (alone -- slower, sitting once more)  
AND SO HIS CORPSE WAS LAID TO REST  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
A SPRIG OF YEW UPON HIS BREAST  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN  
A MOSSY GRAVE HIS SORRY LOT  
NO MARBLE STONE ADORNS THE SPOT  
A MULBERRY THICKET MARKS HIS PLOT

ALL  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN

RUSTICS (sadly)  
OH  
DEAR  
ME

HASTINGS (with backing)  
OH CONSTANCE CONSTANCE  
COME CHASE AWAY MY FEARS  
OH CONSTANCE  
IF THIS DELAY BRINGS HASTINGS CLOSE TO TEARS  
HE'D NEVER LAST THREE YEARS

RUSTICS  
NEVER NEVER

HASTINGS  
OH WHY IN THE WORLD DID I EMPLOY  
THE HALF-BAKED WITS OF A HARE-BRAINED BOY  
AND ENTRUST TO HIM MY FUTURE JOY  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN?

RUSTICS  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN

HASTINGS  
ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN

DOO-DE-DOO-DE-DOO

RUSTICS (returning to their original grouping)

ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN

HASTINGS

DOO-DE-DOO-DE-DOO  
DOO

RUSTICS

---

(HASTINGS sits, as do the OTHERS. Whistling off. HASTINGS whistles in reply. Whistling off again. The RUSTICS whistle in reply. HASTINGS walks over to them.)

Piss off.

HASTINGS

(They scuttle off. More whistling. HASTINGS responds. The phrase is answered, and a FIGURE emerges through the trees in muddy riding attire. It is TONY. HASTINGS grasps him by the hand.)

My honest Squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

TONY

Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you but knew it. This riding by night, by the by, is cursedly tiresome.

HASTINGS

But where did you leave the ladies? I die with impatience.

TONY

Why, where should I leave them, but where I found them?

HASTINGS

This is a riddle.

TONY

Riddle me this, then.

(Musical flutter.)

What's that, goes round the house, and round the house, and never touches the house?

(Musical flutter.)

HASTINGS

You took them in a round, while they supposed themselves going forward?

(Again.)

TONY

You have hit it.

(Music continues.)

|

18. "Nonesuch" -- reprise

Song/Duettino

(TONY)

IT'S A DAMNED DARK DIRTY DINGY  
DANGEROUS ROAD BY NIGHT  
WHAT WITH FOG AND FEN  
AND DESPERATE MEN  
IT'S A WONDER WE'RE ALL ALL RIGHT  
WE'VE BEEN UP AND DOWN  
LIKE A HARLOT'S GOWN  
TILL OUR HORSES COULD BARELY CRAWL  
BUT IN FACT  
BEEN NOWHERE  
AT ALL

(Music continues under.)

HASTINGS

So you at last brought them home?

TONY

You shall hear.

WE WENT OFF AND BACK  
ALONG THE TRACK  
UNTIL WE REACHED THE BRIDGE

HASTINGS

RIGHT

TONY

THEN WE CROSSED THE SAME  
UNTIL WE CAME  
UPON THE EDGE  
OF HANGMAN'S RIDGE

THEN WE RODE AND RODE  
AND RODE AND RODE  
UNTIL THE ROAD RAN OUT

RIGHT HASTINGS

BUT IT MATTERED NOT TONY  
A PIDDLER'S POT  
SINCE ALL ROADS HERE ABOUT

END UP  
AT NONESUCH

AT NONESUCH HASTINGS

OH ALL ROADS LEAD TONY  
TO NONESUCH

TO NONESUCH HASTINGS

IT'S AN EASY-CHEESY TONY  
PUDDING-AND-PEASEY  
MERRY OLD WAY  
TO NONESUCH

(Music under.)

Yet the ladies are safe? HASTINGS

Well ... TONY

Well? HASTINGS (concerned)

TONY

Well ...

AS YOU REACH THE TRACK  
WHICH BRINGS YOU BACK  
BEFORE OUR OWN FRONT GATE  
YOU APPROACH A BEND  
AND THEN DESCEND  
AND THAT WE DID BUT TURNED TOO LATE

FOR WE DID DESCEND  
BUT MISSED THE BEND  
NOT SEEING IT FOR FOG

HASTINGS

RIGHT

TONY

AND THEN HAVING MISSED  
THIS CURSED TWIST  
THE COACH FELL IN A TURDY BOG

HASTINGS

A TURDY BOG?

TONY

A TURDY BOG

HASTINGS

I see ...

YOU MEAN

TONY

I MEAN

HASTINGS

THE HORSEPOND?

TONY

THE HORSEPOND  
WE FELL INTO  
THE HORSEPOND

IT'S A HARUM-SCARUM  
BOTHERSOME THING  
TO FALL  
INTO A HORSEPOND  
A HORSEPOND

BOTH

(Dance, soon interrupted by ...)

---

(A burst of melodramatic music. MRS HARDCASTLE's screams off.)

|  
TONY

Here she comes -- vanish! You must hasten to relieve Miss Neville.

|  
HASTINGS

Agreed. You keep the old lady employed, and I promise to take care of the young one.

|  
(He hurries off. MRS HARDCASTLE staggers in, drenched in mud and very dishevelled. Music out.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Oh, Tony, I'm killed. Shook. Battered to death. I shall never survive it. That last jolt that laid us against the quickset hedge has done for me.

(She sneezes.)

TONY

Alack, mama, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

(Owl off.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Oh, I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way. Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

TONY

By my guess, we should be upon Crackskull Common, about forty miles from home.

(Ominous music.)

|

MRS HARDCASTLE

Oh, lud! Oh, lud! The most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

|

TONY

Don't be afraid, mama, don't be afraid.

|

(A FIGURE is seen in the gloom.)

|

MRS HARDCASTLE

Tony -- I see a man coming towards us. If he perceives us, we are undone.

|

(TONY peers through the trees. He starts.)

|

TONY

Ah, it's a highwayman, with pistols as long as my arm!

|

MRS HARDCASTLE

Good heaven defend us! He approaches!

|

(The FIGURE emerges through the mist. It is HARDCASTLE. MRS HARDCASTLE does not recognize him. She runs forward.)

|

Here, good gentleman, vent your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare my child, if you have any mercy.

|

(TONY belches. She prostrates herself.)

|

Take compassion on us, good Mr Highwayman. Take our furs, our jewels, all we have -- take my life, but spare his, good Mr Highwayman.

|

(Music out. MRS HARDCASTLE lies sobbing at his feet.)

|

HARDCASTLE

I believe the woman's out of her senses. What, Dorothy, don't you know me?

|

(She examines his leg.)

|

MRS HARDCASTLE

Mr Hardcastle, as I'm alive!

|

(She hugs the leg.)

My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this

frightful place, so far from home?

HARDCASTLE

Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits? So far from home? When you are within forty yards of the very gates of Nonesuch!

(He helps her up.)

Don't you know the the mulberry-tree? Don't you remember the horse-pond, my dear?

MRS HARDCASTLE

Yes, I shall remember the horse-pond as long as I live -- I have caught my death in it.

(to TONY)

This is one of your old tricks, you graceless varlet! Is it to you I owe all this? Well -- I'll teach you to abuse your mother.

(She hits him.)

TONY

Egad, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't.

(He goes. MRS HARDCASTLE pursues, kicking him.)

MRS HARDCASTLE (exiting)

I'll spoil you, I will.

(She leaves.)

HARDCASTLE (following)

There's morality, however, in his reply.

(Exit. Unsettled music -- "Moonraking". HASTINGS hurries on, carrying CONSTANCE, who carries a bag and is wearing travelling clothes.)

|  
HASTINGS (setting her down)

My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? Let us fly now, my charmer. Perish fortune, ay perish the baubles -- love and content will increase the nothing we possess beyond a monarch's revenue!

|

(HASTINGS)

FOR WHO NEEDS JEWELS?  
SAY I

CONSTANCE

AY

HASTINGS

WHEN I HAVE YOU  
SAY I

CONSTANCE

AY

HASTINGS

WE'RE SURE OF THAT

CONSTANCE

SURE OF IT

HASTINGS

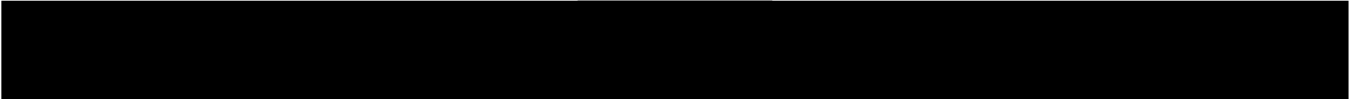
SURE YOU'RE SURE?

CONSTANCE

SURE  
SURE AS I AM  
OF YOU  
SURE  
AS YOU ARE  
OF ME

BOTH

WHICH IS SURE  
AS ANYONE  
HAS EVER BEEN  
OF ANYTHING  
OR EVER  
WILL BE



SOON  
WE WILL BE MILES AWAY FROM HERE  
FREE FROM THE HUNTING-HOUNDS OF FEAR  
WHICH DARKEN OUR HEARTS  
OH MOON  
GIVE US YOUR BLESSING IF YOU CAN  
SMILE ON OUR MOON-BEGOTTEN PLAN  
BRIGHTEN OUR PROSPECTS  
LIGHTEN OUR LOAD

HASTINGS  
AS WELL AS OUR HEARTS

CONSTANCE  
AS WELL AS OUR ROAD

(They hurry away into the darkness. Music continues, as we  
dissolve to ...)

|

---

|



|  
Scene Four  
|

(A formal part of the garden. Stone steps, bushes, an  
arbour. To one side the statue of the Rape of Lucretia.  
|

KATE emerges out of the gloom, dressed once again in  
BET's clothes. She looks around. No-one there.)  
|

20. "Miss Hardcastle's Wedding" |

Song

KATE

KATE KATE  
WAS EVER SUCH A PLOY?  
TO STOOP TO SUCH DECEPTION  
TO ENTRAP A FOOLISH BOY  
A CHILD AMONG THE GIRLS  
A ROGUE AMONG THE MEN  
CAN SUCH A HASTY HART BE CAUGHT?  
IF ALL YOUR PLOTTING COMES TO NOUGHT  
WHAT THEN?

MISS HARDCASTLE'S WEDDING  
WAS HER DREAM AS A GIRL  
A DREAM OF HYACINTHS AND LACE  
AND PROFFERING HIS ARM  
SOME PROUD PARAGON OF CHARM  
AND GRACE

MISS HARDCASTLE'S FANCY  
WAS A HIGH-LIVING EARL  
AN EARL AND NOTHING LESS WOULD DO  
AND NOTHING IT WOULD SEEM  
COULD DEFLECT HER FROM HER SCHEME  
TO ENSURE HER SIMPLE DREAM  
CAME TRUE

THEN ALONG CAME  
MISTER YOU-KNOW-WHO

MISS HARDCASTLE'S SUITOR  
IS A QUEER KIND OF FISH  
AS BOLD AND BUMPTIOUS AS HE'S PRIM  
HALF BILLY-GOAT HALF MOUSE  
WHO COULD EVER MAKE A SPOUSE  
OF HIM?

YET THAT AS IT HAPPENS  
IS MISS HARDCASTLE'S WISH  
TO MAKE THESE OPPOSITES AGREE  
WELL KNOWING SHOULD SHE FAIL  
THAT THE DISCONCERTED MALE  
ALL TOO OFTEN WILL TURN TAIL  
AND FLEE

SO DECEPTION  
IS THE GOLDEN KEY

A MAN SO WINNING  
ISN'T EASILY WON  
A SHEEP SO LOST  
IS HARD TO FIND  
A FELLOW WITH TWO FACES  
HAS TO UNDERSTAND HIS PLACE IS  
BY THE SIDE  
OF A BRIDE  
WITH A SINGLE MIND

AND THIS MISTER MARLOW  
IS THAT KIND

MISS HARDCASTLE'S WEDDING  
COULD TAKE PLACE HERE AND NOW  
AND WITH THAT HAPPY END IN VIEW  
MISS HARDCASTLE'S PLAN  
IS TO DO THE BEST SHE CAN  
TO CREATE THE KIND OF MAN  
WHO'D DO  
AND THEN  
WITH LUCK  
MISS HARDCASTLE'S WEDDING  
MAY BE  
MISTER MARLOW'S WEDDING  
TOO

---

(SIR JAMES and HARDCASTLE appear from the house.  
SIR JAMES approaches KATE.)

SIR JAMES

What a situation am I in. If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

KATE

I am proud of your good opinion -- and to show that I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration.

SIR JAMES

But why, my dear, this simple smock?

KATE

An All Fools' frolic, sir, as you shall shortly see.

(MARLOW heard off.)

But soft -- he comes.

SIR JAMES (to HARDCASTLE, indicating the statue)

Quick -- behind this amorous pair.

HARDCASTLE

Ay, ay, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

SIR JAMES

I'm covered in confusion already.

(The TWO MEN disappear behind the statue. MARLOW enters in travelling clothes, carrying a bag. He sees KATE.)

21. Finale

Ensemble

(They look sadly at EACH OTHER for a moment, then rush into ONE ANOTHER's arms.)

MARLOW

ONE WISH  
IF I HAD ONE WISH  
THEN MY ONE WISH  
WOULD BE  
TO TAKE YOU FAR AWAY FROM HERE  
WITH ME

KATE

ONE LAST WISH  
HAD I ONE LAST WISH  
THEN MY LAST WISH  
WOULD BE  
TO KEEP YOU ALWAYS ALWAYS NEAR  
WITH ME

BOTH

OH IF WISHES WERE HORSES  
HOW GLADLY I'D RIDE  
THROUGH MEADOWS  
THICK WITH CORNFLOWERS  
WITH YOU BY MY SIDE  
BUT WISHES ARE BLOSSOMS  
AND LIVE BUT ONE DAY  
THEN FALL AND FADE AWAY

SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE (to EACH OTHER, aside)

WORDS OF PASSION  
WORDS OF DESIRE  
NOT AT ALL THE KIND OF THING  
A FELLOW SAYS  
WHO SAYS HE HAS NO FIRE

MARLOW & KATE

OH IT'S A PRETTY PASS  
WHEN MERE DIFFERENCES IN CLASS  
STAND BETWEEN AN HONEST MASTER AND HIS MISS  
AND OH TO BE SO NEAR TO  
YET SO FAR AWAY  
FROM UTTER BLISS

MARLOW (kneeling)

BUT OH ONE THING I SWEAR TO  
BE IT ONLY ONE  
I SWEAR TO THIS  
THAT I NEVER WILL FORGET  
WHATEVER ELSE I DO  
THE FACE  
THE GRACE  
THE WONDER  
WHICH WAS YOU

(They kiss. SIR JAMES bursts out of his hiding place,  
followed by HARDCASTLE. KATE rushes away.)

SIR JAMES

MASTER MARLOW  
CAN I TRUST MY SAD OLD EYES?  
EVERY SYLLABLE YOU TOLD ME  
ALL A TAPESTRY OF LIES  
WHAT A FALLING OFF I'VE WITNESSED  
WHAT A SHAMEFUL YARN YOU'VE SPUN  
I BLUSH MASTER MARLOW  
TO OWN YOU AS A SON

MARLOW (embarrassed)

I DON'T UNDERSTAND  
I DON'T UNDERSTAND  
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'VE DONE

SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE (incredulous)

NO?

MARLOW

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND  
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND  
IT'S JUST A BIT OF SERVANT-GIRL FUN

HARDCASTLE (outraged)

SERVANT?

MARLOW (nods)

SERVANT

SIR JAMES

SERVANT?

MARLOW

SERVANT

HARDCASTLE

SERVANT-GIRL?  
INDEED?  
IT'S BAD ENOUGH YOU DUPE YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD  
WITHOUT SMEARING OTHER FOLK WITH MUD  
WHATEVER JOBS MY DAUGHTER MAY HAVE DONE  
MY FRIEND  
TO SERVE HAS NOT BEEN ONE

MARLOW

DAUGHTER?



SIR  
KATE

WELL WELL  
SIR JAMES (amused)

OH HELL  
MARLOW (quietly)

(searching for words)

IT  
SEEMS  
THAT

KATE (mockingly, from behind her fan)

IT SEEMS THAT  
COURTING THE LADDIE  
AS LADIES ALL KNOW  
IS MERELY A MATTER  
OF LETTING HIS QUALITIES SHOW  
BUT SOMETIMES  
SOME CUNNING  
IS CALLED INTO PLAY  
AND THAT'S WHEN  
THERE'S SPORT  
TO BE HAD  
IN COURTING THE LADDIE

MARLOW

DEVIL TAKE YOU LADY  
DAMN YOU EVERMORE  
IF DECORUM WOULD ALLOW  
I'D BARE YOUR CHEEKS RIGHT NOW  
AND SMACK 'EM SORE

(They hug.)

BOTH

OH IT'S A SORRY STATE  
WHEN A MAN CAN'T FIND A MATE  
WITHOUT THE USE OF SUBTERFUGE LIKE THIS

(They kiss.)

HARDCASTLE & SIR JAMES

BUT THEN IT SEEMS IT'S WORTH IT  
FOR THE SWEET REWARD  
OF THAT SWEET KISS

(MRS HARDCASTLE bustles in, followed by TONY. She hugs the casket of jewels.)

HUSSY  
MRS HARDCASTLE

WHAT?  
KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

HUSSY  
MRS HARDCASTLE

WHO?  
KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

THE SHAMELESS LITTLE TWIT  
MRS HARDCASTLE

WHO'S THAT?  
KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

MISS NEVILLE  
MRS HARDCASTLE

WHAT?  
KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

THE VIXEN  
MRS HARDCASTLE

WHY?  
KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

SHE'S ONLY DONE A MOONLIGHT FLIT  
MRS HARDCASTLE

(TONY looks away.)

WELL SOME CHANCE SHE'LL HAVE OF COMFORT  
WHEREVER SHE MAY BE  
FOR HER STASH OF PRECIOUS BAUBLES  
IS SAFE AND SOUND WITH ME

NOT A SINGLE PEARL  
ADORNS THE GIRL  
OH HER BRAINS ARE SOFT AS STOOLS

(brandishing the casket)

FOR SHE FLED WITHOUT  
THE JEWELS

IT LOOKS MIGHTY LIKE ELOPEMENT

ELOPEMENT? KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

MRS HARDCASTLE  
SO I DOUBT WE'LL SEE HER BACK

HER BACK? KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

MRS HARDCASTLE  
BUT I'D STILL LIKE TO KNOW  
WHO'S THE JOKER IN THE PACK

ELOPEMENT? KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

MRS HARDCASTLE  
AY ELOPEMENT

WHO? KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE

MRS HARDCASTLE  
ELOPEMENT AY ALACK

KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE  
WELL WHO IS THE JOKER?  
YES WHO IS THE JOKER?

(in a whisper)

OH JOKING QUITE APART  
THE ASSAILANT OF HER HEART  
MUST BE SOMEONE WHOSE  
OWN HEART IS RAVEN BLACK

MRS HARDCASTLE  
BUT THEN WITHOUT MY NIECE'S GEMS  
THERE'S NO BROKER JOKER IN THE PACK

(HASTINGS and CONSTANCE suddenly appear, hand in hand. SIR JAMES turns and recognizes HASTINGS.)

HASTINGS  
SIR JAMES

CONSTANCE  
KATE (surprised)

HASTINGS  
SIR JAMES (greeting him warmly)

CONSTANCE  
MARLOW, HARDCASTLE, MRS HARDCASTLE, TONY

WE'RE SORRY  
HASTINGS

VERY SORRY  
CONSTANCE

HASTINGS & CONSTANCE  
WE INTENDED TO ELOPE  
BUT ONCE OUTSIDE OF NONESUCH  
WE SAW WE'D NEVER COPE  
AND SO ABANDONED HOPE

SIR JAMES (to HARDCASTLE)  
THIS FELLOW IS GEORGE HASTINGS  
WELL-BRED AND BRAVE  
AS DUTIFUL A GENTLEMAN  
AS EVER BEAT A KNAVE

HASTINGS & CONSTANCE (to HARDCASTLE)  
WE WERE MOONSTRUCK  
WE WERE MAD  
AND WE'RE SORRY FOR BEING  
SO BAD  
WE WERE CLUTCHING AT STRAWS  
AND CHASING THE SUN

(They kneel in supplication.)

HARDCASTLE (kindly)  
YOU WERE JUST DREAM-MAKERS  
BOUND FOR THE STARS

SIR JAMES  
SEEKING ADVENTURE  
LIKE JOLLY JACK-TARS

(The OTHERS look at him.)

SIR JAMES & HARDCASTLE  
THEY WERE JUST MOONRAKERS  
LAUGHING TOO SOON  
FLYING TOO HIGH  
OR COMBING THE LAKE  
TRYING LIKE FOOLS  
TO RAKE  
THE FOOL'S  
FULL MOON

MRS HARDCASTLE (drily)  
AY FOOLS IS RIGHT  
WE'VE FOOLS ENOUGH TONIGHT  
TO LAST AT LEAST A YEAR  
HUSBAND  
THROW THAT BEAU OUT ON HIS EAR

HARDCASTLE  
NOW DOROTHY

MRS HARDCASTLE (aping)  
NOW DOROTHY  
DON'T DOROTHY YOU ME

EVERYONE ELSE (confounded)  
What?

MRS HARDCASTLE  
SHE CAN'T MARRY THE SEDUCER

EVERYONE ELSE  
Why?

MRS HARDCASTLE  
BECAUSE YOU SEE  
SHE ISN'T FREE

WHAT MOTHER MEANS  
IS COUSIN CON AND I  
MUST FIRST REJECT  
EACH OTHER'S HAND

TONY (stepping forward)

AH NOW WE UNDERSTAND

EVERYONE ELSE (apart from MRS HARDCASTLE)

MAMA?

TONY (to MRS HARDCASTLE)

OH RATS 'TIS TRUE

MRS HARDCASTLE

AND SO I HEREBY DO

TONY

AND I DO TOO

CONSTANCE

HURRAH

ALL

(Cries and commotion off. BET BOUNCER and MRS BOUNCER burst in, the LATTER brandishing a farming implement. DIGGORY and the other SERVANTS follow, trying to restrain MOTHER and DAUGHTER.)

AH

MRS BOUNCER

(taking the floor)

STAND AND LISTEN WORTHY FELLOWS  
WHILE A WIDOW WEEPS AND BELLOWS  
THERE'S A GRAVE AND GRIEVOUS  
GRIEVANCE I MUST AIR  
FOR UTTER VILLAINY AND CHEATING  
THERE'S A ROGUE WHO'LL TAKE SOME BEATING

(pointing at TONY with the tool)

AND THE LAD I MEAN  
HAD BEST COME CLEAN  
SINCE HE BE STANDING THERE

(advancing on TONY)

OH DAMN YOU  
YOU GAOL-BIRD YOU

BET (advancing)

AY CURSE YOU  
YOU LOVE-BIRD YOU

BOTH

YOU YOU YOU  
GOD HELP YOU

(DIGGORY moves in and disarms her.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

AND TELL US PRAY WHAT IS IT  
THAT PROMPTS THIS NOISY VISIT?

(MRS BOUNCER produces from her cleavage a bundle of bills.)

MRS BOUNCER

WE'VE A CASE TO BRING AGAINST YOUR SON  
FOR A CATALOGUE OF WRONGS HE'S DONE  
FOR A START THE RAKE HAS GONE AND RUN  
UP A PRINCELY DEBT TO FUND HIS FUN  
FOR THERE'S NINETY-NINE UNPAID FOR BETS  
MAKING FIFTY CROWNS IN GAMBLING DEBTS  
AND THOSE AREN'T THE ONLY BETS HE'S LAID

(tearfully)

TAKE MY DAUGHTER  
NEVERMORE A MAID

(MRS BOUNCER and BET fall on their knees before  
HARDCASTLE.)

MRS BOUNCER & BET

OH HONEST FARMER  
HEAR OUR SUPPLICATION  
LET NOT THE KNAVE EVADE  
PUBLIC CASTRATION

KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES, HARDCASTLE, MRS

HARDCASTLE, HASTINGS, CONSTANCE, DIGGORY &  
SERVANTS

HIS FINAL FLING  
IS ALL BUT FLUNG  
HIS SCRAWNY NECK'S  
AS GOOD AS WRUNG  
HIS REQUIEM  
AS GOOD AS SUNG  
I FEAR WE MAY WELL SEE  
THIS HAPLESS HOPELESS BOOBY HUNG

BET & MRS BOUNCER

AND SLOWLY TORTURED  
THEN BURIED IN THE ORCHARD

(ALL move in on TONY, who climbs up into a tree or  
something.)

TONY

STOP OH STOP  
STOP EVERYTHING  
STAND BACK  
UNHAND ME NOW  
I CAN EXPLAIN IT ALL

BET

YOU CAN?

MRS BOUNCER

YOU CAN?  
OH REALLY?  
HOW?

HARDCASTLE

EXPLAIN AWAY YOU WASTREL  
DO TAKE CENTRE STAGE  
LEAVE NOWT UNSAID  
YOU'VE PRECIOUS LITTLE LEFT TO LOSE  
EXCEPT THAT KNAVISH HEAD

(Sad music.)

TONY  
I PROMISED HER THE EARTH AND SKY  
SMALL WONDER THEY ACCUSE  
BUT MOTHER SAID I HAD TO LIE  
OR I COULD KISS THE JEWELS GOODBYE

(He shrugs.)

NOW THERE'S NO JEWELS TO LOSE

(ALL look at the shamed MRS HARDCASTLE.)

KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES, HARDCASTLE, HASTINGS,  
CONSTANCE, DIGGORY & SERVANTS  
THE CHAMP THE GENT  
HIS FIENDISH DEEDS HAD GOOD INTENT

BET & TONY (poor but happy)  
WE SWORE OUR LOVE WOULD NEVER DIE  
WE'D LOVE COME RAIN OR SHINE  
AH WHAT A HAPPY SOUL AM I  
WE'LL LOVE UNTIL THE DAY WE DIE  
WHICH SUITS MY HEART JUST FINE

KATE, MARLOW, SIR JAMES, HARDCASTLE, HASTINGS,  
CONSTANCE, DIGGORY & SERVANTS  
HOW SWEET HOW GOOD  
HE SHOULD BE HUGGED INDEED HE SHOULD

BET  
AND I'M NO LONGER NOW THE VICTIM  
OF DISSEMBLING LOVE

ALL  
NO LONGER NOW THE VICTIM  
OF DISSEMBLING LOVE

MRS HARDCASTLE  
BUT WHAT OH WHAT WILL TONY DO  
NOW DOWRY HAS HE NONE?  
OH WHAT ABOUT MY POOR MORONIC SON?

ALL  
AH

MRS HARDCASTLE

SOME LIVE BY HONEST LABOUR  
AND OTHERS BY THEIR SKILLS  
BUT HOW WILL TONY LUMPKIN  
CONTEND WITH ALL THESE BILLS?  
OH HE'LL PINE AWAY  
IN HALF A DAY  
OH THE FECKLESS LUCKLESS LAD

(with an accusing look at CONSTANCE)

THOSE JEWELS  
WERE ALL HE HAD

HASTINGS

GENTLE LADY HAVE NO FEAR  
THE BOY'S ANGELIC GUARDIAN  
IS HERE

(He wrests the casket from her and goes over to TONY.)

THIS RENEGADE  
SUPPLIED HIS AID  
WHEN AID WAS BADLY NEEDED  
AND AS AGREED  
THIS HELPFUL DEED  
WILL NOT GO BY UNHEEDED  
FOR GIVEN HOW  
HE'S NEEDY NOW  
IT'S TIME I INTERCEDED  
HE SAW ME THROUGH  
MY CLOSEST SHAVE  
SO I FOR ONE SAY  
PAY THE KNAVE

ALL (apart from TONY)

YES PAY THE KNAVE  
NO LONGER LET US  
FLAY THE KNAVE  
SHARE AND SHARE  
FAIR AND SQUARE  
UNTIL EACH BILL BE PAID

(HASTINGS gives TONY half the contents of the casket.  
The SERVANTS throng round in interest. TONY is  
pleased.)

TONY  
WELL HEIGH-HO AND HUCKLE-MY-BUFF

HASTINGS  
ENOUGH

(He shuts the casket.)

TONY  
GOD BLESS YOU GEORGE HASTINGS  
THIS WAS WORTH A THOUSAND PASTINGS

(He gives a cheerful whistle, EVERYONE ELSE echoing.  
HARDCASTLE steps forward. ALL gather about him.)

HARDCASTLE  
GATHER ALL AROUND  
LET MUSIC SOUND  
THROUGH HOUSE AND GROUND  
AND LET NO FURTHER WORK BE DONE  
TILL MORNING SUN  
COME ONE COME ALL  
MAKE MERRY IN OUR GREAT  
GREAT HALL

(The LOVERS gaze into ONE ANOTHERS' eyes.)

LOVE-BIRDS TAKE YOUR VOWS  
TOMORROW MORNING NOW'S  
NOT THE HOUR  
FOR SADLY WE'VE  
BUT LITTLE TIME TO WHILE AWAY  
WHAT'S LEFT OF ALL FOOLS' EVE

MRS HARDCASTLE  
SIR SIR  
OH HOW CAN YOU CONDONE  
ELOPEMENT  
BREACH OF PROMISE  
AND THE MARRIAGE OF MY SON  
TO ONE  
UNKNOWN?

HARDCASTLE

WIFE BE PACIFIED  
YOUR SON HAS HALF THE JEWELS  
YOUR DAUGHTER IS A BRIDE  
SMILE WIFE  
AND SWALLOW HOLLOW PRIDE

(She essays a smile. Quiet humming under. HARDCASTLE looks across at MARLOW and KATE.)

See -- our daughter and this boy are hand in glove.

(indicating HASTINGS and CONSTANCE)

Your niece and he are matched in love.

(looking at TONY and BET)

Your son and she are sure together -- as rider's rump to saddler's leather.

MRS HARDCASTLE (slyly)

Yet women 'tis lead men through merry hoops -- and she laughs loudest, who to conquer stoops.

(The COUPLES pair off. They and the SERVANTS begin, slowly, to dance.)

PIMPLE, ROGER, THOMAS & other SERVANTS (very quietly)

LET US DANCE OUR DANCE AT NIGHTFALL  
AS BIRDS HOMEWARD FLY  
OH THEN LET US DANCE  
YOU AND I  
AND WILL YOU STAY WITH ME  
MY PRETTY ONE  
AND WILL YOU STAY TRUE?

(Underscoring. SIR JAMES, MRS BOUNCER, HARDCASTLE & MRS HARDCASTLE look on as the OTHERS dance in formal step, holding each other by the hand or the arm, feet rising and falling.)

HARDCASTLE

Fair match?

SIR JAMES

Three fair matches, I'd say!

Three pair of jacks, say I!

MRS HARDCASTLE

(She nudges MRS BOUNCER, who laughs.)

Now wife, we'll brook no jibing here.

HARDCASTLE

(to BOTH, gently)

Come, you womenfolk -- have cheer. Old publican, do you not revel in your daughter's bliss? And Dorothy -- come, give your squire a kiss.

(She gives him a reluctant peck. MRS BOUNCER kisses SIR JAMES.)

AND WILL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

PANSY

AND WILL WE DANCE  
THE KISSING-DANCE  
WE TWO?

DIGGORY, PIMPLE, ROGER, THOMAS, PERKIN &  
OTHER SERVANTS

(SIR JAMES and HARDCASTLE take MRS HARDCASTLE's  
and MRS BOUNCER's hands respectively.)

MR & MRS HARDCASTLE, SIR JAMES & MRS BOUNCER  
FOR ALL DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
FROM THE PRINCE OF BEGGARS TO THE KING OF FRANCE  
DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
YOUNG AND OLD ARE WORTHY OF A SECOND GLANCE  
SO IT IS AND EVER WAS  
SINCE ALL THE WORLD BEGAN

(The dance continues, ROGER and STINGO pairing up.  
The OTHERS form an arch. SIR JAMES, HARDCASTLE,  
MRS HARDCASTLE & MRS BOUNCER process through.)

FOR MAN WAS FOR WOMAN MADE  
THERE'S A METHOD IN THIS MADCAP MASQUERADE  
DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
FOR MAID WAS MADE FOR MAN

(Dance. Whistling. Laughter.)

ALL  
DANCE DANCE THE KISSING-DANCE  
SING MAID WAS MADE FOR MAN

(EVERYONE links arms, pairs off and moves away, in  
stately dance, towards the house.)

ALL FOOLS' EVE  
WHEN SIMPLE MEN  
ARE ONCE AGAIN  
HALF-WILLING TO BELIEVE  
THAT PRAYERS ARE HEARD  
IF YOU BUT SAY THE WORD

(in the distance)

AND MAN AND MAID WHO KISS  
TONIGHT  
MAY FIND OUT SWEETEST BLISS  
TONIGHT

(offstage)

FOR EVER AND A DAY  
OR SO BELIEVERS SAY

(They have left, taking lights with them. Slow fade from  
now till finish. Music continues. In the semi-darkness only  
MR and MRS HARDCASTLE remain, having drifted  
downstage in dancing pose, lit by a single lantern. Only now  
do they notice that they are alone in the garden. They bow  
low to ONE ANOTHER.)

MRS HARDCASTLE

Husband.

HARDCASTLE

Wife.

Your servant, sir.

MRS HARDCASTLE

Your slave ...

HARDCASTLE (resigned)

(He produces a tiny bejewelled clasp. She accepts it joyfully. They move off towards the house, arm in arm. Just before disappearing, they turn in and face one another, as in the first scene. They smile and kiss, then exit.

In the shadows, PERKIN stirs, watching, in FOOL's garb and with his makeshift fools' manikin. He sees the lantern, picks it up and moves silently towards the house. Just before he goes in, he turns downstage and blows out the lantern.

Blackout.)

End of Act Two

---

Appendix

CURTAIN-CALLS

21A. "The Catch Club" Instrumental

COMPANY, PERKIN, PANSY, THOMAS, PIMPLE

STINGO & ROGER  
DIGGORY & BRIDGET

MRS BOUNCER & SIR JAMES

TONY & BET

CONSTANCE & HASTINGS  
MARLOW & KATE

HARDCASTLE & MRS HARDCASTLE

ORCHESTRA

---

EXITS

21B. "Beating the Knave" Instrumental (if needed)