

# **THE AUTHOR'S FARCE**

Henry Fielding

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# THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

Henry Fielding

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THE AUTHOR'S FARCE;

[WITH A PUPPET–SHOW CALLED THE PLEASURES OF THE TOWN.]

FIRST ACTED AT THE HAY–MARKET IN 1729, AND REVIVED SOME YEARS AFTER AT DRURY–LANE, WHEN IT WAS REVISED AND GREATLY ALTERED BY THE AUTHOR, AS NOW PRINTED.

Quis iniquae Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus, ut teneat se? *JUV.* Sat. I.

THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

### PROLOGUE, SPOKEN BY MR JONES

Too long the Tragick Muse hath aw'd the stage,  
And frighten'd wives and children with her rage,  
Too long Drawcansir roars, Parthenope weeps,  
While ev'ry lady cries, and critick sleeps  
With ghosts, rapes, murders, tender hearts they wound,  
Or else, like thunder, terrify with sound  
When the skill'd actress to her weeping eyes,  
With artful sigh, the handkerchief applies,  
How griev'd each sympathizing nymph appears!  
And box and gallery both melt in tears  
Or when, in armour of Corinthian brass,  
Heroick actor stares you in the face,  
And cries aloud, with emphasis that's fit, on  
Liberty, freedom, liberty and Briton!  
While frowning, gaping for applause he stands,  
What generous Briton can refuse his hands?  
Like the tame animals design'd for show,  
You have your cues to clap, as they to bow,  
Taught to commend, your judgments have no share,  
By chance you guess aright, by chance you err.

But, handkerchiefs and Britain laid aside,  
To-night we mean to laugh, and not to chide.

In days of yore, when fools were held in fashion,  
Tho' now, alas! all banish'd from the nation,  
A merry jester had reform'd his lord,  
Who would have scorn'd the sterner Stoick's word

Bred in Democritus his laughing schools,  
Our author flies sad Heraclitus rules,  
No tears, no terror plead in his behalf,  
The aim of Farce is but to make you laugh  
Beneath the tragick or the comick name,  
Farces and puppet shows ne'er miss of fame  
Since then, in borrow'd dress, they've pleas'd the town,  
Condemn them not, appearing in their own

Smiles we expect from the good-natur'd few,  
As ye are done by, ye malicious, do,  
And kindly laugh at him who laughs at you.

### PERSONS IN THE FARCE.

MEN.

*Luckless*, the Author and Master of the Show, ... Mr MULLART.  
*Witmore*, his friend ... Mr LACY.

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*Marplay, sen.*, Comedian ... Mr REYNOLDS,  
*Marplay, jun.*, Comedian ... Mr STOPLER.  
*Bookweight*, a Bookseller ... Mr JONES.  
*Scarecrow*, Scribbler ... Mr MARSHAL,  
*Dash*, ... Mr HALLAM,  
*Quibble*, ... Mr DOVE,  
*Blotpage*, ... Mr WELLS, jun.  
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*Jack*, servant to Luckless ... Mr ACHURCH.  
*Jack-Pudding* ... Mr REYNOLDS.  
*Bantomite* ... Mr MARSHAL.

WOMEN.

*Mrs Moneywood*, the Author's Landlady ... Mrs MULLART.  
*Harriot*, her daughter. ... Miss PALMS.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I. LUCKLESS's *Room in Mrs MONEYWOOD'S House.* Mrs MONEYWOOD, HARRIOT, LUCKLESS.

*Moneywood.* Never tell me, Mr Luckless, of your play, and your play. I tell you I must be paid. I would no more depend on a benefit-night of an unacted play than I would on a benefit-ticket in an undrawn lottery. Could I have guessed that I had a poet in my house! Could I have looked for a poet under laced clothes!

*Luck.* Why not? since you may often find poverty under them: nay, they are commonly the signs of it. And, therefore, why may not a poet be seen in them as well as a courtier?

*Money.* Do you make a jest of my misfortune, sir?

*Luck.* Rather my misfortune. I am sure I have a better title to poverty than you; for, notwithstanding the handsome figure I make, unless you are so good to invite me, I am afraid I shall scarce prevail on my stomach to dine to-day.

*Money.* Oh, never fear that you will never want a dinner till you have dined at all the eating-houses round. No one shuts their doors against you the first time; and I think you are so kind, seldom to trouble them a second.

*Luck.* No. And if you will give me leave to walk out of your doors, the devil take me if ever I come into 'em again,

*Money.* Pay me, sir, what you owe me, and walk away whenever you please.

*Luck.* With all my heart, madam; get me a pen and ink, and I'll give you my note for it immediately.

*Money.* Your note! who will discount it? Not your bookseller; for he has as many of your notes as he has of your works; both good lasting ware, and which are never likely to go out of his shop and his scrutore.

*Har.* Nay, but, madam, 'tis barbarous to insult him in this manner.

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*Money.* No doubt you'll take his part. Pray get you about your business. I suppose he intends to pay me by ruining you. Get you in this instant: and remember, if ever I see you with him again I'll turn you out of doors.

### SCENE II LUCKLESS, Mrs MONEYWOOD

*Luck.* Discharge all your ill-nature on me, madam, but spare poor Miss Harriot.

*Money.* Oh! then it is plain. I have suspected your familiarity a long while. You are a base man. Is it not enough to stay three months in my house without paying me a farthing, but you must ruin my child?

*Luck.* I love her as my soul. Had I the world I'd give it her all.

*Money.* But, as you happen to have nothing in the world, I desire you would have nothing to say to her. I suppose you would have settled all your castles in the air. Oh! I wish you had lived in one of them, instead of my house. Well, I am resolved, when you have gone away (which I heartily hope will be very soon) I'll hang over my door in great red letters, No lodgings for poets. Sure never was such a guest as you have been. My floor is all spoiled with ink, my windows with verses, and my door has been almost beat down with duns.

*Luck.* Would your house had been beaten down, and everything but my dear Harriot crushed under it!

*Money.* Sir, sir

*Luck.* Madam, madam! I will attack you at your own weapons; I will pay you in your own coin.

*Money.* I wish you'd pay me in any coin, sir.

*Luck.* Look ye, madam, I'll do as much as a reasonable woman can require; I'll shew you all I have; and give you all I have too, if you please to accept it. [*Turns his pockets Inside out.*]

*Money.* I will not be used in this manner. No, sir, I will be paid, if there be any such thing as law.

*Luck.* By what law you will put money into my pocket I know not; for I never heard of any one who got money by the law but the lawyers. I have told you already, and I tell you again, that the first money I get shall be yours; and I have great expectations from my play. In the mean time your staying here can be of no service, and you may possibly drive some line thoughts out of my head. I would write a love scene, and your daughter would be more proper company, on that occasion, than you.

*Money.* You would act a love-scene, I believe; but I shall prevent you; for I intend to dispose of myself before my daughter.

*Luck.* Dispose of yourself!

*Money.* Yes, sir, dispose of myself. 'Tis very well known that I have had very good offers since my last dear husband died. I might have had an attorney of New Inn, or Mr Fillpot, the exciseman; yes, I had my choice of two parsons, or a doctor of physick; and yet I slighted them all; yes, I slighted them for for for you.

*Luck.* For me?

*Money.* Yes, you have seen too visible marks of my passion; too visible for my reputation. [*Sobbing.*]

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*Luck.* I have heard very loud tokens of your passion; but I rather took it for the passion of anger than of love.

*Money.* Oh! it was love, indeed. Nothing but love, upon my soul!

*Luck.* The devil! This way of dunning is worse than the other.

*Money.* If thou can'st not pay me in money, let me have it in love. If I break through the modesty of my sex let my passion excuse it. I know the world will call it an impudent action; but if you will let me reserve all I have to myself, I will make myself yours for ever.

*Luck.* Toll, loll, loll!

*Money.* And is this the manner you receive my declaration, you poor beggarly fellow? You shall repent this; remember, you shall repent it; remember that. I'll shew you the revenge of an injured woman.

*Luck.* I shall never repent anything that rids me of you, I am sure.

### SCENE III. LUCKLESS, HARRIOT.

*Luck.* Dear Harriot!

*Har.* I have waited an opportunity to return to you.

*Luck.* Oh! my dear, I am so sick!

*Har.* What's the matter?

*Luck.* Oh! your mother! your mother!

*Har.* What, has she been scolding ever since?

*Luck.* Worse, worse!

*Har.* Heaven forbid she should threaten to go to law with you.

*Luck.* Oh, worse! worse! she threatens to go to church with me. She has made me a generous offer, that if I will but marry her she will suffer me to settle all she has upon her.

*Har.* Generous creature! Sure you will not resist the proposal?

*Luck.* Hum! what would you advise me to?

*Har.* Oh, take her, take her, by all means; you will be the prettiest, finest, loveliest, sweetest couple. Augh! what a delicate dish of matrimony you will make! Her age with your youth, her avarice with your extravagance, and her scolding with your poetry.

*Luck.* Nay, but I am serious, and I desire you would be so. You know my unhappy circumstances, and your mother's wealth. It would be at least a prudent match.

*Har.* Oh! extremely prudent, ha, ha, ha! the world will say, Lard! who could have thought Mr Luckless had had so

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much prudence? This one action will overbalance all the follies of your life.

*Luck.* Faith, I think it will: but, dear Harriot, how can I think of losing you for ever? And yet, as our affairs stand, I see no possibility of our being happy together. It will be some pleasure, too, that I may have it in my power to serve you. Believe me, it is with the utmost reluctance I think of parting with you. For if it was in my power to have you

*Har.* Oh, I am very much obliged to you; I believe you Yes, you need not swear, I believe you.

*Luck.* And can you as easily consult prudence, and part with me? for I would not buy my own happiness at the price of yours.

*Har.* I thank you, sir Part with you intolerable vanity!

*Luck.* Then I am resolved; and so, my good landlady, have at you.

*Har.* Stay, sir, let me acquaint you with one thing you are a villain! and don't think I'm vexed at anything, but that I should have been such a fool as ever to have had a good opinion of you.

[*Crying.*

*Luck.* Ha, ha, ha! Caught, by Jupiter! And did my dear Harriot think me in earnest?

*Har.* And was you not in earnest?

*Luck.* What, to part with thee? A pretty woman will be sooner in earnest to part with her beauty, or a great man with his power.

*Har.* I wish I were assured of the sincerity of your love.

*AIR. Butter'd Pease.*

*Luck.* Does my dearest Harriot ask  
What for love I would pursue?  
Would you, charmer, know what task  
I would undertake for you?

Ask the bold ambitious, what  
He for honours would atchieve?  
Or the gay voluptuous, that  
Which he'd not for pleasure give?

Ask the miser what he'd do  
To amass excessive gain?  
Or the saint, what he'd pursue,  
His wish'd heav'n to obtain?

These I would attempt, and more  
For, oh! my Harriot is to me  
All ambition, pleasure, store,  
Or what heav'n itself can be!



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*Har.* Would my dearest Luckless know  
What his constant Harriot can  
Her tender love and faith to show  
For her dear, her only man?

Ask the vain coquette what she  
For men's adoration would;  
Or from censure to be free,  
Ask the vile censorious prude.

In a coach and six to ride,  
What the mercenary jade,  
Or the widow to be bride  
To a brisk broad—shoulder'd blade.

All these I would attempt for thee,  
Could I but thy passion fix;  
Thy will my sole commander be,  
And thy arms my coach and six.

*Money.* [*within*]. Harriot, Harriot.

*Har.* Hear the dreadful summons! adieu. I will take the first opportunity of seeing you again.

*Luck.* Adieu, my pretty charmer; go thy ways for the first of thy sex.

### SCENE IV. LUCKLESS, JACK.

*Luck.* So! what news bring you?

*Jack.* An't please your honour I have been at my lord's, and his lordship thanks you for the favour you have offered of reading your play to him; but he has such a prodigious deal of business, he begs to be excused. I have been with Mr Keyber too he made me no answer at all. Mr Bookweight will be here immediately.

*Luck.* Jack.

*Jack.* Sir.

*Luck.* Fetch my other hat hither; carry it to the pawnbroker's.

*Jack.* To your honour's own pawnbroker!

*Luck.* Ay and in thy way home call at the cook's shop. So, one way or other, I find my head must always provide for my belly.

### SCENE V. LUCKLESS, WITMORE.

*Luck.* I am surprized! dear Witmore!

*Wit.* Dear Harry!

SCENE IV. LUCKLESS, JACK.

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*Luck.* This is kind, indeed; but I do not more wonder at finding a man in this age who can be a friend to adversity, than that Fortune should be so much my friend as to direct you to me; for she is a lady I have not been much indebted to lately.

*Wit.* She who told me, I assure you, is one you have been indebted to a long while.

*Luck.* Whom do you mean?

*Wit.* One who complains of your unkindness in not visiting her Mrs Lovewood.

*Luck.* Dost thou visit there still, then?

*Wit.* I throw an idle hour away there sometimes. When I am in an ill-humour I am sure of feeding it there with all the scandal in town, for no bawd is half so diligent in looking after girls with an uncracked maidenhead as she in searching out women with cracked reputations.

*Luck.* The much more infamous office of the two.

*Wit.* Thou art still a favourer of the women, I find.

*Luck.* Ay, the women and the muses the high roads to beggary.

*Wit.* What, art thou not cured of scribbling yet?

*Luck.* No, scribbling is as impossible to cure as the gout.

*Wit.* And as sure a sign of poverty as the gout of riches. 'Sdeath! in an age of learning and true politeness, where a man might succeed by his merit, there would be some encouragement. But now, when party and prejudice carry all before them; when learning is decried, wit not understood; when the theatres are puppet-shows, and the comedians ballad-singers; when fools lead the town, would a man think to thrive by his wit? If you must write, write nonsense, write operas, write Hurlothumbos, set up an oratory and preach nonsense, and you may meet with encouragement enough. Be profane, be scurrilous, be immodest: if you would receive applause, deserve to receive sentence at the Old Bailey; and if you would ride in a coach, deserve to ride in a cart.

*Luck.* You are warm, my friend.

*Wit.* It is because I am your friend. I cannot bear to hear the man I love ridiculed by fools by idiots. To hear a fellow who, had he been born a Chinese, had starved for want of genius to have been even the lowest mechanic, toss up his empty noddle with an affected disdain of what he has not understood; and women abusing what they have neither seen nor heard, from an unreasonable prejudice to an honest fellow whom they have not known. If thou wilt write against all these reasons get a patron, be pimp to some worthless man of quality, write panegyrics on him, flatter him with as many virtues as he has vices. Then, perhaps, you will engage his lordship, his lordship engages the town on your side, and then write till your arms ake, sense or nonsense, it will all go down.

*Luck.* Thou art too satirical on mankind. It is possible to thrive in the world by justifiable means.

*Wit.* Ay, justifiable, and so they are justifiable by custom. What does the soldier or physician thrive by but slaughter? the lawyer but by quarrels? the courtier but by taxes? the poet but by flattery? I know none that thrive by profiting mankind, but the husbandman and the merchant: the one gives you the fruit of your own soil, the other brings you those from abroad; and yet these are represented as mean and mechanical, and the others as honourable and glorious.

SCENE IV. LUCKLESS, JACK.

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*Luck.* Well; but prithee leave railing, and tell me what you would advise me to do.

*Wit.* Do! why thou art a vigorous young fellow, and there are rich widows in town.

*Luck.* But I am already engaged.

*Wit.* Why don't you marry then for I suppose you are not mad enough to have any engagement with a poor mistress?

*Luck.* Even so, faith; and so heartily that I would not change her for the widow of a Croesus.

*Wit.* Now thou art undone, indeed. Matrimony clenches ruin beyond retrieval. What unfortunate stars wert thou born under? Was it not enough to follow those nine ragged jades the muses, but you must fasten on some earth-born mistress as poor as them?

*Mar. jun.* [*within*]. Order my chairman to call on me at St James's. No, let them stay.

*Wit.* Heyday, whom the devil have we here?

*Luck.* The young captain, sir; no less a person, I assure you.

### SCENE VI. LUCKLESS, WITMORE, MARPLAY, jun.

*Mar. jun.* Mr Luckless, I kiss your hands Sir, I am your most obedient humble servant; you see, Mr Luckless, what power you have over me. I attend your commands, though several persons of quality have staid at court for me above this hour.

*Luck.* I am obliged to you I have a tragedy for your house, Mr Marplay.

*Mar. jun.* Ha! if you will send it to me, I will give you my opinion of it; and if I can make any alterations in it that will be for its advantage, I will do it freely.

*Wit.* Alterations, sir?

*Mar. jun.* Yes, sir, alterations I will maintain it. Let a play be never so good, without alteration it will do nothing.

*Wit.* Very odd indeed!

*Mar. jun.* Did you ever write, sir?

*Wit.* No, sir, I thank Heaven.

*Mar. jun.* Oh! your humble servant your very humble servant, sir. When you write yourself, you will find the necessity of alterations. Why, sir, would you guess that I had altered Shakspeare?

*Wit.* Yes, faith, sir, no one sooner.

*Mar. jun.* Alack—a-day! Was you to see the plays when they are brought to us a parcel of crude undigested stuff. We are the persons, sir, who lick them into form that mould them into shape. The poet make the play indeed! the colourman might be as well said to make the picture, or the weaver the coat. My father and I, sir, are a couple of

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poetical tailors. When a play is brought us, we consider it as a tailor does his coat: we cut it, sir we cut it; and let me tell you we have the exact measure of the town; we know how to fit their taste. The poets, between you and me, are a pack of ignorant

*Wit.* Hold, hold, sir. This is not quite so civil to Mr Luckless; besides, as I take it, you have done the town the honour of writing yourself.

*Mar. jun.* Sir, you are a man of sense, and express yourself well. I did, as you say, once make a small sally into Parnassus took a sort of flying leap over Helicon; but if ever they catch me there again sir, the town have a prejudice to my family; for, if any play could have made them ashamed to damn it, mine must. It was all over plot. It would have made half a dozen novels: nor was it crammed with a pack of wit-traps, like Congreve and Wycherly, where every one knows when the joke was coming. I defy the sharpest critick of them all to have known when any jokes of mine were coming. The dialogue was plain, easy, and natural, and not one single joke in it from the beginning to the end: besides, sir, there was one scene of tender melancholy conversation enough to have melted a heart of stone; and yet they damned it and they damned themselves; for they shall have no more of mine.

*Wit.* Take pity on the town, sir.

*Mar. jun.* I! No, sir, no. I'll write no more. No more; unless I am forced to it.

*Luck.* That's no easy thing, Marplay.

*Mar. jun.* Yes, sir. Odes, odes, a man may be obliged to write those, you know.

*Luck, and Wit.* Ha, ha, ha! that's true indeed.

*Luck.* But about my tragedy, Mr Marplay.

*Mar. jun.* I believe my father is at the playhouse: if you please, we will read it now; but I must call on a young lady first Hey, who's there? Is my footman there? Order my chair to the door. Your servant, gentlemen. *Caro vien.* [*Exit, singing.*]

*Wit.* This is the most finished gentleman I ever saw; and hath not, I dare swear, his equal.

*Luck.* If he has, here he comes.

### SCENE VII. LUCKLESS, WITMORE, BOOKWEIGHT.

*Luck.* Mr Bookweight, your very humble servant.

*Book.* I was told, sir, that you had particular business with me.

*Luck.* Yes, Mr Bookweight; I have something to put into your hands. I have a play for you, Mr Bookweight.

*Book.* Is it accepted, sir?

*Luck.* Not yet.

*Book.* Oh, sir! when it is, it will be then time enough to talk about it. A play, like a bill, is of no value till it is

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accepted; nor indeed when it is, very often. Besides, sir, our playhouses are grown so plenty, and our actors so scarce, that really plays are become very bad commodities. But pray, sir, do you offer it to the players or the patentees?

*Luck.* Oh! to the players, certainly.

*Book.* You are in the right of that. But a play which will do on the stage will not always do for us; there are your acting plays and your reading plays.

*Wit.* I do not understand that distinction.

*Book.* Why, sir, your acting play is entirely supported by the merit of the actor; in which case, it signifies very little whether there be any sense in it or no. Now, your reading play is of a different stamp, and must have wit and meaning in it. These latter I call your substantive, as being able to support themselves. The former are your adjective, as what require the buffoonery and gestures of an actor to be joined with them to shew their signification.

*Wit.* Very learnedly defined, truly.

*Luck.* Well, but, Mr Bookweight, will you advance fifty guineas on my play?

*Book.* Fifty guineas! Yes, sir. You shall have them with all my heart, if you will give me security for them. Fifty guineas for a play! Sir, I would not give fifty shillings.

*Luck.* 'Sdeath, sir! do you beat me down at this rate?

*Book.* No, nor fifty farthings. Fifty guineas! Indeed your name is well worth that.

*Luck.* Jack, take this worthy gentleman and kick him down stairs.

*Book.* Sir, I shall make you repent this.

*Jack.* Come, sir, will you please to brush?

*Book.* Help! murder! I'll have the law of you, sir.

*Luck.* Ha, ha, ha!

### **SCENE VIII. LUCKLESS, WITMORE, MRS MONEYWOOD.**

*Money.* What noise is this? It is a very fine thing, truly, Mr Luckless, that you will make these uproars in my house.

*Luck.* If you dislike it, it is in your power to drown a much greater. Do you but speak, madam, and I am sure no one will be heard but yourself.

*Money.* Very well, indeed! fine reflexions on my character! Sir, sir, all the neighbours know that I have been as quiet a woman as ever lived in the parish. I had no noises in my house till you came. We were the family of love. But you have been a nuisance to the whole neighbourhood. While you had money, my doors were thundered at every morning at four and five, by coachmen and chairmen; and since you have had none, my house has been

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besieged all day by creditors and bailiffs. Then there's the rascal your man; but I will pay the dog, I will scour him. Sir, I am glad you are a witness of his abuses of me.

*Wit.* I am indeed, madam, a witness how unjustly he has abused you. [JACK *whispers* LUCKLESS.

*Luck.* Witmore, excuse me a moment.

### SCENE IX. Mrs MONEYWOOD, WITMORE.

*Money.* Yes, sir; and, sir, a man that has never shewn one the colour of his money.

*Wit.* Very hard, truly. How much may he be in your debt, pray? Because he has ordered me to pay you.

*Money.* Ay! sir, I wish he had.

*Wit.* I am serious, I assure you.

*Money.* I am very glad to hear it, sir. Here is the bill as we settled it this very morning. I always thought, indeed, Mr Luckless had a great deal of honesty in his principles: any man may be unfortunate; but I knew when he had money I should have it; and what signifies dunning a man when he hath it not? Now that is a way with some people which I could never come in to.

*Wit.* There, madam, is your money. You may give Mr Luckless the receipt.

*Money.* Sir, I give you both a great many thanks. I am sure it is almost as charitable as if you gave it me; for I am to make up a sum to-morrow morning. Well, if Mr Luckless was but a little soberer I should like him for a lodger exceedingly: for I must say, I think him a very pleasant good-humoured man.

### SCENE X. LUCKLESS, WITMORE, MONEYWOOD.

*Luck.* Those are words I never heard out of that mouth before.

*Money.* Ha, ha, ha! you are pleased to be merry: ha, ha!

*Luck.* Why, Witmore, thou hast the faculty opposite to that of a witch, and canst lay a tempest. I should as soon have imagined one man could have stopt a cannon-ball in its full force as her tongue.

*Money.* Ha, ha, ha! he is the best company in the world, sir, and so full of his similitudes!

*Wit.* Luckless, good morrow; I shall see you soon again.

*Luck.* Let it be soon, I beseech you; for thou hast brought a calm into this house that was scarce ever in it before.

### SCENE XI. LUCKLESS, MRS MONEYWOOD, JACK.

*Money.* Well, Mr Luckless, you are a comical man, to give one such a character to a stranger.

*Luck.* The company is gone, madam; and now, like true man and wife, we may fall to abusing one another as fast as we please.

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

*Money.* Abuse me as you please, so you pay me, sir.

*Luck.* 'Sdeath! madam, I will pay you.

*Money.* Nay, sir, I do not ask it before it is due. I don't question your payment at all: if you was to stay in my house this quarter of a year, as I hope you will, I should not ask you for a farthing.

*Luck.* Toll, loll, loll. But I shall have her begin with her passion immediately; and I had rather be the object of her rage for a year than of her love for half an hour.

*Money.* But why did you choose to surprise me with my money? Why did you not tell me you would pay me?

*Luck.* Why, have I not told you?

*Money.* Yes, you told me of a play, and stuff: but you never told me you would order a gentleman to pay me. A sweet, pretty, good-humoured gentleman he is, heaven bless him! Well, you have comical ways with you: but you have honesty at the bottom, and I'm sure the gentleman himself will own I gave you that character.

*Luck.* Oh! I smell you now. You see, madam, I am better than my word to you: did he pay it you in gold or silver?

*Money.* All pure gold.

*Luck.* I have a vast deal of silver, which he brought me, within; will you do me the favour of taking it in silver? that will be of use to you in the shop too.

*Money.* Anything to oblige you, sir.

*Luck.* Jack, bring out the great bag, number one. Please to tell the money, madam, on that table.

*Money.* It's easily told: heaven knows there's not so much on't.

*Jack.* Sir, the bag is so heavy, I cannot bring it in.

*Luck.* Why, then, come and help to thrust a heavier bag out.

*Money.* What do you mean?

*Luck.* Only to pay you in my bed-chamber.

*Money.* Villain, dog, I'll swear a robbery, and have you hanged: rogues, villains!

*Luck.* Be as noisy as you please [*Shuts the door.*] Jack, call a coach; and, d' ye hear? get up behind it and attend me.

## ACT II.

**SCENE I. *The Playhouse.* LUCKLESS, MARPLAY, senior, MARPLAY,  
junior.**

*Luck.* [*Reads.*]

Then hence my sorrow, hence my ev'ry fear;  
No matter where, so we are bless'd together.  
With thee, the barren rocks, where not one step  
Of human race lies printed in the snow,  
Look lovely as the smiling infant spring.

*Mar. sen.* Augh! will you please to read that again, sir?

*Luck.* Then hence my sorrow, hence my ev'ry fear.

*Mar. sen.* Then hence my sorrow. Horror is a much better word. And then in the second line No matter where, so we are bless'd together. Undoubtedly, it should be, No matter where, so somewhere we're together. Where is the question, somewhere is the answer. Read on, sir.

*Luck.* With thee,

*Mar. sen.* No, no, I could alter those lines to a much better idea.

With thee, the barren blocks, where not a bit  
Of human face is painted on the bark,  
Look green as Covent-garden in the spring.

*Luck.* Green as Covent-garden!

*Mar. jun.* Yes, yes; Covent-garden market, where they sell greens.

*Luck.* Monstrous!

*Mar. sen.* Pray, sir, read on.

*Luck.*

LEANDRA: oh, my Harmonio, I could hear thee still;  
The nightingale to thee sings out of tune,  
While on thy faithful breast my head reclines,  
The downy pillow's hard; while from thy lips  
I drink delicious draughts of nectar down,  
Falernian wines seem bitter to my taste.

*Mar. jun.* Here's meat, drink, singing, and lodging, egad.

*Luck.* He answers.

*Mar. jun.* But, sir



THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

*Luck.*

Oh, let me pull thee, press thee to my heart,  
Thou rising spring of everlasting sweets!  
Take notice, Fortune, I forgive thee all!  
Thou'st made Leandra mine. Thou flood of joy  
Mix with my soul, and rush thro' ev'ry vein.

*Mar. sen.* Those two last lines again if you please.

*Luck.* Thou'st made, &c.

*Mar. jun.*

Thou flood of joy,  
Mix with my soul and rush thro' ev'ry vein.

Those are two excellent lines indeed: I never writ better myself: but, Sar

*Luck.*

Leandra's mine, go bid the tongue of fate  
Pronounce another word of bliss like that;  
Search thro' the eastern mines and golden shores,  
Where lavish Nature pours forth all her stores;  
For to my lot could all her treasures fall,  
I would not change Leandra for them all.

There ends act the first, and such an act as, I believe, never was on this stage yet.

*Mar. jun.* Nor never will, I hope.

*Mar. sen.* Pray, sir, let me look at one thing. Falernian wines seem bitter to my taste.

Pray, sir, what sort of wines may your Falernian be? for I never heard of them before; and I am sure, as I keep the best company, if there had been such sorts of wines, I should have tasted them. Tokay I have drank, and Lacrimas I have drank, but what your Falernian is, the devil take me if I can tell.

*Mar. jun.* I fancy, father, these wines grow at the top of Parnassus.

*Luck.* Do they so, Mr Pert? why then I fancy you have never tasted them.

*Mar. sen.* Suppose you should say the wines of Cape are bitter to my taste.

*Luck.* Sir, I cannot alter it.

*Mar. sen.* Nor we cannot act it. It won't do, sir, and so you need give yourself no farther trouble about it.

*Luck.* What particular fault do you find?

*Mar. jun.* Sar, there's nothing that touches me, nothing that is coercive to my passions.

SCENE I. The Playhouse. LUCKLESS, MARPLAY, senior, MARPLAY, junior.

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

*Luck.* Fare you well, sir: may another play be coercive to your passions.

### SCENE II. MARPLAY, senior, MARPLAY, junior.

*Mar. sen.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Mar. jun.* What do you think of the play?

*Mar. sen.* It may be a very good one, for aught I know: but I am resolved, since the town will not receive any of mine, they shall have none from any other. I'll keep them to their old diet.

*Mar. jun.* But suppose they won't feed on't?

*Mar. sen.* Then it shall be crammed down their throats.

*Mar. jun.* I wish, father, you would leave me that art for a legacy, since I am afraid I am like to have no other from you.

*Mar. sen.* 'Tis buff, child, 'tis buff true Corinthian brass; and, heaven be praised, tho' I have given thee no gold, I have given thee enough of that, which is the better inheritance of the two. Gold thou might'st have spent, but this is a lasting estate that will stick by thee all thy life.

*Mar. jun.* What shall be done with that farce which was damned last night?

*Mar. sen.* Give it them again to-morrow. I have told some persons of quality that it is a good thing, and I am resolved not to be in the wrong: let us see which will be weary first, the town of damning, or we of being damned.

*Mar. jun.* Rat the town, I say.

*Mar. sen.* That's a good boy; and so say I: but, prithee, what didst thou do with the comedy which I gave thee t'other day, that I thought a good one?

*Mar. jun.* Did as you ordered me; returned it to the author, and told him it would not do.

*Mar. sen.* You did well. If thou writest thyself, and that I know thou art very well qualified to do, it is thy interest to keep back all other authors of any merit, and be as forward to advance those of none.

*Mar. jun.* But I am a little afraid of writing; for my writings, you know, have fared but ill hitherto.

*Mar. sen.* That is because thou hast a little mistaken the method of writing. The art of writing, boy, is the art of stealing old plays, by changing the name of the play, and new ones, by changing the name of the author.

*Mar. jun.* If it was not for these cursed hisses and catcalls

*Mar. sen.* Harmless musick, child, very harmless musick, and what, when one is but well seasoned to it, has no effect at all: for my part, I have been used to them.

*Mar. jun.* Ay, and I have been used to them too, for that matter.

*Mar. sen.* And stood them bravely too. Idle young actors are fond of applause, but, take my word for it, a clap is a

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

mighty silly, empty thing, and does no more good than a hiss; and, therefore, if any man loves hissing, he may have his three shillings worth at me whenever he pleases. [*Exeunt.*]

### **SCENE III. A Room in BOOKWEIGHT'S house. DASH, BLOTPAGE, QUIBBLE, writing at several tables.**

*Dash.* Pox on't, I'm as dull as an ox, tho' I have not a bit of one within me. I have not dined these two days, and yet my head is as heavy as any alderman's or lord's. I carry about me symbols of all the elements; my head is as heavy as water, my pockets are as light as air, my appetite is as hot as fire, and my coat is as dirty as earth.

*Blot.* Lend me your Bysshe, Mr Dash, I want a rhyme for wind.

*Dash.* Why there's blind, and kind, and behind, and find, and mind: it is of the easiest termination imaginable; I have had it four times in a page.

*Blot.* None of those words will do.

*Dash.* Why then you may use any that end in ond, or and, or end. I am never so exact: if the two last letters are alike, it will do very well. Read the verse.

*Blot.* Inconstant as the seas or as the wind.

*Dash.* What would you express in the next line?

*Blot.* Nay, that I don't know, for the sense is out already. I would say something about inconstancy.

*Dash.* I can lend you a verse, and it will do very well too.

Inconstancy will never have an end.

End rhimes very well with wind.

*Blot.* It will do well enough for the middle of a poem.

*Dash.* Ay, ay, anything will do well enough for the middle of a poem. If you can but get twenty good lines to place at the beginning for a taste, it will sell very well.

*Quib.* So that, according to you, Mr Dash, a poet acts pretty much on the same principles with an oyster-woman.

*Dash.* Pox take your simile, it has set my chaps a watering: but come, let us leave off work for a while, and hear Mr Quibble's song.

*Quib.* My pipes are pure and clear, and my stomach is as hollow as any trumpet in Europe.

*Dash.* Come, the song.

SONG.

AIR. *Ye Commons and Peers.*

SCENE III. A Room in BOOKWEIGHT'S house. DASH, BLOTPAGE, QUIBBLE, writing at several tables.

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

How unhappy's the fate  
To live by one's pate,

And be forced to write hackney for bread!  
An author's a joke  
To all manner of folk, Wherever he pops up his head, his head, Wherever he pops up his head.

Tho' he mount on that hack,  
Old Pegasus' back, And of Helicon drink till he burst,  
Yet a curse of those streams,  
Poetical dreams, They never can quench one's thirst, &c.

Ah! how should he fly  
On fancy so high,  
When his limbs are in durance and hold?  
Or how should he charm,  
With genius so warm,  
When his poor naked body's a cold, &c.

### SCENE IV. BOOKWEIGHT, DASH, QUIBBLE, BLOTPAGE.

*Book.* Fie upon it, gentlemen! what, not at your pens? Do you consider, Mr Quibble, that it is a fortnight since your Letter to a Friend in the Country was published? Is it not high time for an Answer to come out? At this rate, before your Answer is printed, your Letter will be forgot. I love to keep a controversy up warm. I have had authors who have writ a pamphlet in the morning, answered it in the afternoon, and answered that again at night.

*Quib.* Sir, I will be as expeditious as possible: but it is harder to write on this side the question, because it is the wrong side.

*Book.* Not a jot. So far on the contrary, that I have known some authors choose it as the properest to shew their genius. But let me see what you have produced; With all deference to what that very learned and most ingenious person, in his Letter to a Friend in the Country, hath advanced. Very well, sir; for, besides that, it may sell more of the Letter: all controversial writers should begin with complimenting their adversaries, as prize-fighters kiss before they engage. Let it be finished with all speed. Well, Mr Dash, have you done that murder yet?

*Dash.* Yes, sir, the murder is done; I am only about a few moral reflexions to place before it.

*Book.* Very well: then Jet me have the ghost finished by this day se'nnight.

*Dash.* What sort of a ghost would you have this, sir? the last was a pale one.

*Book.* Then let this be a bloody one. Mr Quibble, you may lay by that life which you are about; for I hear the person is recovered, and write me out proposals for delivering five sheets of Mr Bailey's English Dictionary every week, till the whole be finished. If you do not know the form, you may copy the proposals for printing Bayle's Dictionary in the same manner. The same words will do for both.

*Enter* INDEX.

So, Mr Index, what news with you?

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

*Index.* I have brought my bill, sir.

*Book.* What's here? For fitting the motto of Risum teneatis Amici to a dozen pamphlets, at sixpence per each, six shillings; for Omnia vincit Amor, et nos cedamus Amori, sixpence; for Difficile est Satyram non scribere, sixpence. Hum! hum! hum! sum total for thirty-six Latin mottoes, eighteen shillings; ditto English, one shilling and ninepence; ditto Greek, four four shillings. These Greek mottoes are excessively dear.

*Ind.* If you have them cheaper at either of the universities, I will give you mine for nothing.

*Book.* You shall have your money immediately; and pray remember, that I must have two Latin seditious mottoes and one Greek moral motto for pamphlets by to-morrow morning.

*Quib.* I want two Latin sentences, sir one for page the fourth in the praise of loyalty, and another for page the tenth in praise of liberty and property.

*Dash.* The ghost would become a motto very well if you would bestow one on him.

*Book.* Let me have them all.

*Ind.* Sir, I shall provide them. Be pleased to look on that, sir, and print me five hundred proposals and as many receipts.

*Book.* Proposals for printing by subscription a New Translation of Cicero Of the Nature of the Gods, and his Tusculan Questions, by Jeremy Index, Esq. I am sorry you have undertaken this, for it prevents a design of mine.

*Ind.* Indeed, sir, it does not; for you see all of the book that I ever intend to publish. It is only a handsome way of asking one's friends for a guinea.

*Book.* Then you have not translated a word of it, perhaps.

*Ind.* Not a single syllable.

*Book.* Well, you shall have your proposals forthwith: but I desire you would be a little more reasonable in your bills for the future, or I shall deal with you no longer; for I have a certain fellow of a college, who offers to furnish me with second-hand mottoes out of the Spectator for twopence each.

*Ind.* Sir, I only desire to live by my goods; and I hope you will be pleased to allow some difference between a neat fresh piece, piping hot out of the classicks, and old threadbare worn-out stuff that has past through every pedant's mouth and been as common at the universities as their whores.

### **SCENE V. BOOKWEIGHT, DASH, QUIBBLE, BLOTPAGE, SCARECROW.**

*Scare.* Sir, I have brought you a libel against the ministry.

*Book.* Sir, I shall not take anything against them; for I have two in the press already. [*Aside.*]

*Scare.* Then, sir, I have an Apology in defence of them.

*Book.* That I shall not meddle with neither; they don't sell so well.

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

*Scare.* I have a translation of Virgil's Aeneid, with notes on it, if we can agree about the price.

*Book.* Why, what price would you have?

*Scare.* You shall read it first, otherwise how will you know the value?

*Book.* No, no, sir, I never deal that way a poem is a poem, and a pamphlet a pamphlet with me. Give me a good handsome large volume, with a full promising title–page at the head of it, printed on a good paper and letter, the whole well bound and gilt, and I'll warrant its selling. You have the common error of authors, who think people buy books to read. No, no, books are only bought to furnish libraries, as pictures and glasses, and beds and chairs, are for other rooms. Look ye, sir, I don't like your title–page: however, to oblige a young beginner, I don't care if I do print it at my own expence.

*Scare.* But pray, sir, at whose expence shall I eat?

*Book.* At whose? Why, at mine, sir, at mine. I am as great a friend to learning as the Dutch are to trade: no one can want bread with me who will earn it; therefore, sir, if you please to take your seat at my table, here will be everything necessary provided for you: good milk porridge, very often twice a day, which is good wholesome food and proper for students; a translator too is what I want at present, my last being in Newgate for shop–lifting. The rogue had a trick of translating out of the shops as well as the languages.

*Scare.* But I am afraid I am not qualified for a translator, for I understand no language but my own.

*Book.* What, and translate Virgil?

*Scare.* Alas! I translated him out of Dryden.

*Book.* Lay by your hat, sir lay by your hat, and take your seat immediately. Not qualified! thou art as well versed in thy trade as if thou hadst laboured in my garret these ten years. Let me tell you, friend, you will have more occasion for invention than learning here. You will be obliged to translate books out of all languages, especially French, that were never printed in any language whatsoever.

*Scare.* Your trade abounds in mysteries.

*Book.* The study of bookselling is as difficult as the law: and there are as many tricks in the one as the other. Sometimes we give a foreign name to our own labours, and sometimes we put our names to the labours of others. Then, as the lawyers have John–a–Nokes and Tom–a–Stiles, so we have Messieurs Moore near St Paul's and Smith near the Royal Exchange.

### **SCENE VI. *To them*, LUCKLESS.**

*Luck.* Mr Bookweight, your servant. Who can form to himself an idea more amiable than of a man at the head of so many patriots working for the benefit of their country.

*Book.* Truly, sir, I believe it is an idea more agreeable to you than that of a gentleman in the Crown–office paying thirty or forty guineas for abusing an honest tradesman.

*Luck.* Pshaw! that was only jocosely done, and a man who lives by wit must not be angry at a jest.

*Book.* Look ye, sir, if you have a mind to compromise the matter, and have brought me any money

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

*Luck.* Hast thou been in thy trade so long, and talk of money to a modern author? You might as well have talked Latin or Greek to him. I have brought you paper, sir.

*Book.* That is not bringing me money, I own. Have you brought me an opera?

*Luck.* You may call it an opera if you will, but I call it a puppet-show.

*Book.* A puppet-show!

*Luck.* Ay, a puppet show; and is to be played this night at Drury-lane playhouse.

*Book.* A puppet-show in a playhouse!

*Luck.* Ay, why, what have been all the playhouses a long while but puppet-shows?

*Book.* Why, I don't know but it may succeed; at least if we can make out a tolerable good title-page: so, if you will walk in, if I can make a bargain with you I will. Gentlemen, you may go to dinner.

### **SCENE VII. Enter JACK-PUDDING, Drummer, Mob.**

*Jack-P.* This is to give notice to all gentlemen, ladies, and others, that at the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane, this evening, will be performed the whole puppet-show called the Pleasures of the Town; in which will be shewn the whole court of nonsense, with abundance of singing, dancing, and several other entertainments: also the comical and diverting humours of Some-body and No-body; Punch and his wife Joan to be performed by figures, some of them six foot high. God save the King.

[*Drum beats.*]

### **SCENE VIII. WITMORE with a paper, meeting LUCKLESS.**

*Wit.* Oh! Luckless, I am overjoyed to meet you; here, take this paper, and you will be discouraged from writing, I warrant you.

*Luck.* What is it? Oh! one of my play-bills.

*Wit.* One of thy play-bills!

*Luck.* Even so I have taken the advice you gave me this morning.

*Wit.* Explain.

*Luck.* Why, I had some time since given this performance of mine to be rehearsed, and the actors were all perfect in their parts; but we happened to differ about some particulars, and I had a design to have given it over; 'till having my play refused by Marplay, I sent for the managers of the other house in a passion, joined issue with them, and this very evening it is to be acted.

*Wit.* Well, I wish you success.

*Luck.* Where are you going?

## THE AUTHOR'S FARCE

*Wit.* Anywhere but to hear you damned, which I must, was I to go to your puppet-show.

*Luck.* Indulge me in this trial; and I assure thee, if it be successful, it shall be the last.

*Wit.* On that condition I will; but should the torrent run against you, I shall be a fashionable friend and hiss with the rest.

*Luck.* No, a man who could do so unfashionable and so generous a thing as Mr Witmore did this morning

*Wit.* Then I hope you will return it, by never mentioning it to me more. I will now to the pit.

*Luck.* And I behind the scenes.

### SCENE IX. LUCKLESS, HARRIOT.

*Luck.* Dear Harriot!

*Har.* I was going to the playhouse to look after you I am frightened out of my wits I have left my mother at home with the strangest sort of man, who is inquiring after you: he has raised a mob before the door by the oddity of his appearance; his dress is like nothing I ever saw, and he talks of kings, and Bantam, and the strangest stuff.

*Luck.* What the devil can he be?

*Har.* One of your old acquaintance, I suppose, in disguise one of his majesty's officers with his commission in his pocket, I warrant him.

*Luck.* Well, but have you your part perfect?

*Har.* I had, unless this fellow hath frightened it out of my head again; but I am afraid I shall play it wretchedly.

*Luck.* Why so?

*Har.* I shall never have assurance enough to go through with it, especially if they should hiss me.

*Luck.* Oh! your mask will keep you in countenance, and as for hissing, you need not fear it. The audience are generally so favourable to young beginners: but hist, here is your mother and she has seen us. Adieu, my dear, make what haste you can to the playhouse.

[*Exit.*

### SCENE X. HARRIOT, MONEYWOOD.

*Har.* I wish I could avoid her, for I suppose we shall have an alarm.

*Money.* So, so, very fine: always together, always caterwauling. How like a hangdog he stole off; and it's well for him he did, for I should have rung such a peal in his ears. There's a friend of his at my house would be very glad of his company, and I wish it was in my power to bring them together.

*Har.* You would not surely be so barbarous.



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*Money.* Barbarous! ugh! You whining, puling fool! Hussey, you have not a drop of my blood in you. What, you are in love, I suppose?

*Har.* If I was, madam, it would be no crime,

*Money.* Yes, madam, but it would, and a folly too. No woman of sense was ever in love with anything but a man's pocket. What, I suppose he has filled your head with a pack of romantick stuff of streams and dreams, and charms and arms. I know this is the stuff they all run on with, and so run into our debts, and run away with our daughters. Come, confess; are not you two to live in a wilderness together on love? Ah! thou fool! thou wilt find he will pay thee in love just as he has paid me in money. If thou wert resolved to go a-begging, why did you not follow the camp? There, indeed, you might have carried a knapsack; but here you will have no knapsack to carry. There, indeed, you might have had a chance of burying half a score husbands in a campaign; whereas a poet is a long-lived animal; you have but one chance of burying him, and that is, starving him.

*Har.* Well, madam, and I would sooner starve with the man I love than ride in a coach and six with him I hate: and, as for his passion, you will not make me suspect that, for he hath given me such proofs on't.

*Money.* Proofs! I shall die. Has he given you proofs of love?

*Har.* All that any modest woman can require.

*Money.* If he has given you all a modest woman can require, I am afraid he has given you more than a modest woman should take: because he has been so good a lodger, I suppose I shall have some more of the family to keep. It is probable I shall live to see half a dozen grandsons of mine in Grub-street.

### SCENE XI. MONEYWOOD, HARRIOT, JACK.

*Jack.* Oh, madam! the man whom you took for a bailiff is certainly some great man; he has a vast many jewels and other fine things about him; he offered me twenty guineas to shew him my master, and has given away so much money among the chairmen, that some folks believe he intends to stand member of parliament for Westminster.

*Money.* Nay, then, I am sure he is worth inquiring into. So, d'ye hear, sirrah, make as much haste as you can before me, and desire him to part with no more money till I come.

*Har.* So, now my mother is in pursuit of money, I may securely go in pursuit of my lover: and I am mistaken, good mamma, if e'en you would not think that the better pursuit of the two.

In generous love transporting raptures lie,  
Which age, with all its treasures, cannot buy.