

# **Rehearsal at Gotham**

John Gay

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# Rehearsal at Gotham

John Gay

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## THE REHEARSAL AT GOATHAM.

*OLE quid ad te?*

Martial.

### ADVERTISEMENT.

*In the Life of Gines de Passamonte, alias Peter, (a Treatise which Cervantes mentions with great Encomiums) we have this second Adventure of his Puppetsheew: 'Tis there recorded to have happen'd in the Town which liv'd in perpetual Broils with the braying Aldermen. In the following Piece I have related the Story in a Dramatic Way; I have too taken the Liberty to make it conformable to our own Customs, and made England the Scene of the Farce: But (knowing the Captiousness of Guilt) to prevent particular Persons from claiming general Satire, I have chose to place the Adventure in a fictitious Country Town, suppos'd to be remote from the great Scenes of Life. Whoever will be at the Pains to compare it with the Spanish, will find that (excepting these Particulars) I have, in every material Circumstance, faithfully follow'd the Original.*

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Rehearsal at Goatham

Braywell,  
Cackle,  
*Sir Nathaniel Ninny*,  
Drone,  
Slugg,  
*Sir Humphry Humdrum*,  
Cudden,  
*Sir Headstrong Bustle*,  
Drawle,  
Noddipole,  
Pother,  
Oaf,  
Gosling,  
Broach,  
Peter,  
Pickle.  
WOMEN.

*Mrs Braywell*,  
*Mrs Cackle*,  
*Lady Ninny*,  
*Miss Drawle*,  
*Lady Bustle*,  
*Lady Humdrum*,  
*Mrs Cudden*,  
*Mrs Pother*,  
*Miss Slugg*,  
*Miss Noddipole*,  
*Mrs Drone*,  
*Mrs Broach*,  
Betty Broach.

SCENE GOATHAM.

**SCENE I.**

The Great Room of an Inn.

Set out for an Assembly.

*Miss Betty Broach, Jack Oaf, Will Gosling.*

*Gosl.*  
Miss *Betty Broach* is in all her *Airs* to-day.

*Oaf.*  
And rot me, if I don't think her as well-drest and as well-bred as any of our Aldermen's Wives! Now, *Will Gosling*, would not you rather have her than any of them? Pox take me if I would not.

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*Gosl.*

Miss *Betty* hath an Eye, that certain.

*Oaf.*

Ay, Miss *Betty* hath an Eye and a Lip

[*Kisses her rudely.*]

*Betty.*

How can you teaze and haul a body so! I believe, Mr *Oaf*, I value Dress as little as any Woman in *England*; but do but see now, Mr *Gosling*, how frightfully he hath tumbled me, and when the Corporation–feast is at our House to–day, and it falls out too upon Assembly Night, one would methinks appear a little like a Christian.

*Oaf.*

Kissing and Anger apart then, Miss *Betty*, I came hither out of pure stark Love and Kindness to you and your Family. Mr *Broach* at present seems to be in a good thriving Way of Business.

*Betty.*

Bless us all, what's the Matter?

*Gosl.*

Nay, there is no Harm done as yet.

*Betty.*

To be sure my Father hath been particularly oblig'd to Mr *Gosling*, who will condescend to drink at our House, when his Uncle *Cackle* keeps the *Swan* but down the next Street.

*Gosl.*

But after all, Miss *Betty*, how could Mr *Broach* be so ill advis'd to let Master *Peter* and his PuppetsheW into his House.

*Oaf.*

It may seem a Trifle, Madam, but, rot me, if the Thing is not of Consequence. I know it will infallibly turn out to his Ruin. Faith and Troth I am serious about it.

*Betty.*

I don't understand you, Mr *Oaf*. The Shew is for the Amusement and Entertainment of the Town, and in all Likelihood it will rather promote Custom than lessen it.

*Oaf.*

You are out, Miss *Betty*, most damnably out.

*Gosl.*

How comes it to pass that he chuses our Town for his Shew?

*Betty.*

As he chuses any other, to get Money if he can.

*Gosl.*

You make slight of this Matter, Miss *Betty*, I perceive.

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*Oaf.*

I must tell you then, Miss *Betty*, that I know something of this Fellow. The Rascal is brib'd: Not that I think there is much in that, provided it were in a right Cause; but the Dog is brib'd against us. Brib'd to turn the whole Corporation of *Goatham* into Ridicule! This is Matter of Fact, Miss *Betty*. Now pray do you consider what will be the Consequence of your Father's harbouring the Rascal?

*Gosl.*

Nothing alive but Puppets would dare to be so insolent; for we see all well-bred Men now-a-days pay the due Homage to Riches and Power as they ought; and your Father, beyond Dispute, will be look'd upon to be the Confederate of these impudent Creatures. Remember what I tell you. I know he is brib'd, I know he is hir'd.

*Betty.*

And pray who hath hir'd him? Whenever People are ridiculous, you need not purchase Laughters; besides, whenever ridiculous People grow captious and peevish, it only makes the Laugh the stronger and more general. For do what we will, if some Folks will have their Follies and Absurdities, there are others who will have their Laugh. I ask you, Sir, who hath hir'd him?

*Oaf.*

So, you vindicate him then, Madam; if you knew who had hir'd the Fellow, without doubt you would that Instant give him up. You know, Miss *Betty*, the Townsmen of *Assborough* have, time out of mind, had an old Grudge against our Town. Now, who do you think hath set him upon us?

*Gosl.*

If you suffer the Shew to be play'd, you may brew as good strong Beer as you will

*Oaf.*

And you yourself, in all your Airs, Miss *Betty*, may sit in the Bar all day long to lure in Customers. You will not draw one of the Corporation into your House, that I can tell you.

*Gosl.*

Miss *Betty* is fond of a PuppetsheW, to be sure that's the Case.

*Betty.*

I own I am so fond of it, that I would not, because Fools are captious, have the Town loose its Diversion.

*Oaf.*

To suffer *Peter* to come into the Town at all; was not Usage that I expected from the Corporation. After the Theatrical Entertainments I have writ, and I may say without Vanity, writ up to their Tastes. I think the Town ow'd me so much, as not to suffer any Interlopers in a Dramatic Way.

*Betty.*

But, dear Mr *Oaf*, consider this is only a PuppetsheW. Sure you won't mention that and your own Works at the same Time.

*Oaf.*

The Town, you know, is capricious, and one would not have it follow a low, dull, vulgar, spiteful, bitter, satirical Thing. I am concern'd for the Credit of our Town, that's all. I would have it encourage only Things of Taste; and in that View, I own, it would be a mighty mortifying Thing to me, to see this Fellow draw an Audience.

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*Gosl.*

Without doubt it would vex a Man. If the Shew takes. After all, it would draw Custom to the House, and, tho' I like *Betty Broach*, I would not have my Uncle entirely lose all his Business.

*[To Oaf aside.*

*Oaf.*

You see there's nothing to be done with her. But yonder comes *Broach* and his Wife. Let me alone, you shall see how I'll work 'em.

## SCENE II.

*Jack Oaf, Will Gosling, Betty Broach, Mr Broach, Mrs Broach.*

*Mr Broach.*

I would have sworn, Gentlemen, that I had left you drinking a Bottle in the Dining-room with the Corporation. But I might indeed have known you were not among them, they were all so wise and grave.

*Mrs Broach.*

There are very few Jokes that they relish. You, Gentlemen, have the Wit just fitted for 'em, and whenever you speak among 'em, I have observ'd you never want Laughters; now that is being very obliging.

*Betty.*

To be sure *Mr Oaf* and *Mr Gosling* have been always the favourite Wits of our top Men.

*Gosl.*

*Jack Oaf* indeed is so comically profane upon all Occasions, that he makes them all titter and laugh 'till they are ready to burst.

*Oaf.*

You must know, *Mrs Broach*, *Will Gosling* thinks he hath the Crack on his Side for a bawdy Jest. But, for all that, for your double Entendres, you know *Mrs Broach*, there are others may have been as successful as he perhaps.

*Gosl.*

You know we promis'd to go back to 'em.

*Oaf.*

'Twas out of Friendship to you, *Mr Broach*, that we left 'em. We have been talking to Miss *Betty* upon the Subject already.

*Gosl.*

This Puppetsheew, *Mr Broach*, I'm afraid will break you.

*Mrs Broach.*

Break him.

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*Oaf.*

Ay, break him, by *Jupiter*.

*Gosl.*

You are a Mad-man if you suffer it to be play'd in your House.

*Oaf.*

Is it pleasant, d'ye think, to have the whole Corporation upon your Back?

*Broach.*

Now, to my thinking, the Magistrates seem'd fond of it.

*Oaf.*

Dear *Broach*, I beg your Pardon for that. 'Tis the way of our Magistrates not to be what they seem, and give me leave to say, I know 'em better than you. Why, dear *Broach*, you would not have a Man of Consequence say a Thing and do it, or say the Thing he thinks. Tho' we are but a Country Corporation, you must allow us to know a little of the Way of the World. One would have thought, *Broach*, you too might have known a little of the Ways and Manners of Men in Office.

*Broach.*

But what is there then in this Piece that can make it of such dreadful Consequence.

*Oaf.*

Treason, for ought I know. I don't know what we may not make of it.

*Gosl.*

And if it is so, Mr *Broach*, 'tis not the Puppets you will find that will be call'd to Account for it.

*Oaf.*

To be sure you must quit the Town. I know it to be a heavy, biting, stupid, malignant, Satyr upon the whole Corporation. I know too the Fellow was set on by the Town of *Assborough*. If, after this, you suffer it, Mr *Broach*, tho' hitherto I have always thought well of you, I know what I shall think of the Matter.

*Broach.*

I know there are idle Reports about Master *Peter* and his Shew. But have you seen it, Mr *Oaf*? Have you read it, Mr *Gosling*?

*Oaf.*

I cannot say that.

*Gosl.*

But we know enough of the Thing in general.

*Oaf.*

There are Things quoted.

*Gosl.*

Passages, very obnoxious Passages.

*Broach.*

Why then, Gentlemen, I must acquaint you that I have heard it repeated; and I could find out none of those

SCENE II.



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dreadful obnoxious  
Passages. I heard nothing that possibly could give Offence.

*Oaf.*

As they are not levell'd at you, you might very easily overlook them. Believe me, Mr *Broach*, the Fellow hath impos'd upon you.

*Broach.*

You must excuse me, Gentlemen, if I take upon me to believe my own Ears in this Affair.

*Gosl.*

This will never do, *Jack*.

*Oaf.*

But it shall do, before I have done with it. I say it shall not be play'd, and of that I'll bet you fifty Pounds, and I say *done* first.

*Gosl.*

But you forget that we are engag'd in t'other Room.

*Oaf.*

If the Magistrates still stick out, we can set their Wives upon 'em at last, and then they must do it. *Broach*, your Servant. When you have consider'd better of this Affair

*Gosl.*

You will have Reason to thank us.

### SCENE III.

*Broach, Mrs Broach, Betty.*

*Mrs Broach.*

But after all, Husband, you know our Aldermen are a captious sort of Gentry; if they but surmise any thing against a Man, they never fail of doing him all the real Mischief in their Power. I think, in Prudence, you should not venture to disoblige them.

*Betty.*

The whole of the Matter is, *Will Gosling* is afraid the public Shews at our House may make his Uncle's less frequented. The Splutter *Jack Oaf* makes, is the Envy and Rancour of an Author; that's all. I hope my Father knows 'em; if he does, I am sure he does not heed 'em.

*Broach.*

I know that they are the Spies and Buffoons of our Aldermen, and that there lies their whole Merit and Interest; that they have a noisy kind of Impertinence too, which Fools giggle and laugh at for Wit. In short, they are the fulsome Flatterers of Knaves, and (themselves included) the Admiration of Fools. 'Tis true, they have a general Acquaintance, for every body, but Men of Sense and Honesty, like 'em. Know 'em, Girl! Yes, Girl, I know 'em, and would trust 'em with my Money sooner than my Conversation.

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*Mrs Broach.*

My Husband, I find, does know 'em

*Betty.*

To a Hair.

*Mrs Broach.*

Poor Master *Peter* little thinks how many formidable Enemies he hath already, who neither know him, or are known by him. But yonder he comes; he and you may have something to say to one another, so we'll leave you.

### SCENE IV.

Broach, Peter.

*Peter.*

Landlord, your Servant. After the Fatigue of the Day, one requires a little Refreshment; if you will do me the Honour to take a Glass with me, order a Bottle of what you yourself like (for I know I shall like your Taste) into my Room.

*Broach.*

A Bottle of neat into the *Dragon*, presently. I hope, Master *Peter*, the Room I have lett you is for your Purpose.

*Peter.*

Never was any thing more convenient, and every thing is ready against the Evening. Your Town, Landlord, seems to be a pretty polite kind of a Place.

*Broach.*

I am no Townsman born, Sir; a few Years ago only, I purchas'd my Freedom; for 'tis reckon'd a very thriving Place for Public-houses. As for what is reckon'd genteel, Master *Peter*, you would think yourself in a great City. We have our Balls, our Assemblies, and now and then our Plays too: We drink, we game, we whore, we run in Debt; and in all Sorts of Extravagancies are perfectly in the Mode. But, indeed, Sir, I must own, that we do abound in Knaves and Fools; our leading Men have not Sense enough to be honest; and all I fear, is, that they will want Parts to relish your Performance.

*Peter.*

But sure, Sir, your Town by this time must have learnt to be polite enough to encourage what it does not understand.

*Broach.*

As for that Matter, Sir, I should not question your Success, provided there were no such things as Informers, Lyes, and Prejudice. You have Enemies, Sir; particular Enemies I cannot call 'em neither, but People who wish ill to every Creature but themselves. We have such too about our topping Men, who are the only People apt to believe 'em, because they are flatter'd by 'em. I dare not explain myself further. As I am at present a Townsman, you know, 'tis but Prudence in me to keep my Tongue within my Teeth; I am afraid my good Wishes for you, Sir, hath made me to say too much already.

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*Peter.*

After the odd unaccountable things that have happen'd to me, I can wonder at nothing. My Puppet–Shew, to be sure, hath one great Sign of Merit, in its Time it hath suffer'd violent Persecution. My little Actors have still the Wounds and Scars upon 'em that they receiv'd by the Sword of Don *Quixote*. In my own Country I was almost demolish'd by a Mad–man; but I cannot be in such Danger now, for Fools are an innocent kind of People, and not so mischievous.

*Broach.*

By your way of thinking, Master *Peter*, 'tis a Sign you have not liv'd long in our Town. Mischief is the only Spirit Fools have; they look upon it too as the best and chief Privilege of Power, which they every now and then take care to let their Neighbours know, that I can tell you.

*Peter.*

But may not I know my Enemies? who are they, Mr *Broach*?

*Broach.*

Those who are afraid you have Merit; and if ever you make it appear, you at once make all Fools your Enemies. It hath ever been so in all Times, and all Countries. But 'tis high time to leave the Assembly–Room; some Ladies, I see, are coming, and the Bottle, Master *Peter*, stays for us. Over that, Conversation always grows more free and easy.

## SCENE V.

*Mrs Cackle, Lady Ninny, Lady Humdrum, Lady Bustle, Mrs Braywell, Mrs Pother, Mrs Cudden, Mrs Drone, Miss Slugg, Miss Drawle, Miss Noddipole. They enter two or three in a Party as in Conversation.*

L. *Ninny.*

Nay, dear Mrs *Cackle*

Mrs *Cackle.*

Pardon me, Lady *Ninny*, I know my Duty.

L. *Humdrum.*

Because that Creature's Spouse was made a Knight before mine, she always takes occasion to go just before me in all public Places; not that I value Precedence a Rush, but one hates to see any body so perk'd up, and so fond of it; that's all.

Mrs *Cudden.*

As for that Matter, Lady *Humdrum*, to be sure there is no body carries a Title, and does it more Justice than your Ladyship. You have the Presence of a Lady. That, Madam, every body that sees your Ladyship must allow you.

L. *Humdrum.*

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You were always, Mrs *Cudden*, extremely civil. If People of Distinction knew how to behave themselves to one another as well, we should have less ill Blood among us, and there would not be so much Scandal stirring.

Mrs *Braywell*.

To be sure, Madam, Scandal is grown so rise, that if one ever does an imprudent, indiscreet thing, our Neighbours buzz it about, before one can have an Opportunity to find a Friend to communicate it to ones–self. O, dear Lady *Bustle*, I beg ten thousand Pardons. Let me die, if I saw your Ladyship.

L. *Bustle*.

But, dear Mrs *Braywell*, now there is no occasion for all this Fluster. Really it is disagreeable to have a Title, it is so troublesome to one's Friends. Miss *Harriet Noddipole*! Come hither, Child. Don't you think, Mrs *Drone*, the Girl is very genteel To–night?

Mrs *Drone*.

As for that Matter, Madam, I know Miss *Harriet* hath not a Scrap about her, but what is directly from *London*, and (as we all know) she oftener sets us the Fashion than any Girl in Town.

L. *Humdrum*.

I thought, Child, you had drest your own Heads.

Mrs *Cackle*.

I vow 'tis mighty pretty.

L. *Ninny*.

Charming!

Mrs *Braywell*.

Delightful!

Mrs *Cudden*.

Sure never was any thing half so agreeable. Is not this your own Handy–Work, Miss *Harriet*?

*Harriet*.

Excuse me, Madam, I leave Thimbles to Milliners. I hate, what your good Huswives call Work. For those Creatures indeed who do not know how to amuse themselves any other way, 'tis well enough. I can't endure to be able, what they call to do any thing. Now there's Miss *Suky Slugg*, yonder she comes with Mrs *Pother* and Miss *Charlotte Drawle*. Why, now that Girl is very awkward. Every body may see she dresses her own Heads. Miss *Suky*, your Servant.

Mrs *Pother*.

One may know by Miss *Harriet*, that the Men are not come yet.

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*Charlotte.*

Nay for that matter, Mrs *Pother*, I must own myself like her; for whenever there are Men in the Room I hate to converse with Women.

*Mrs Pother.*

To be sure, Miss *Charlotte*, that is very natural at your Time of Life.

*Suky.*

But I wonder how any Girls can have that Assurance to own it. Besides, forward Girls do not always make forward Men.

*Mrs Braywell.*

Beyond all Dispute, Madam, there was never so hard a Case as Lady *Bustle's* last Night. I am afraid it will be too much Trouble to your Ladyship to tell your Game. She hath told it so often, Madam.

*L. Bustle.*

None of these Apologies, I beg you. You must know then, Madam, I play'd without. I play'd in black in Spades; ay, 'twas in Spades. I had five Matadores and two Kings. Now you know, Madam, if I had been Eldest Hand the Matter would have been out of Dispute. You was by, Mrs *Cackle*; pray, Madam, do you remember who Led? Twas let me see Sir *Nathaniel Ninny*. No! it could not be him, for he sate directly over against me. Now I remember it, 'twas Mr *Braywell*. Mr *Braywell* yes 'twas so, led a Diamond; I took it with my King which to my Sorrow was trump. My other King was call'd out of my Hand very unluckily the very next Card; that Sir *Nathaniel* took from me with his only Trump, for you must know all the rest now lay in a Hand. In short, Madam, they drew all the loose Cards out of my Hand 'till I had only the five Matadores. One sees, Madam, the thing is just possible to happen, and that's all.

*Harriet.*

Hath your Ladyship made your Party To-night?

*L. Bustle.*

We still want one, Child. But if *Jack Oaf* is not already engag'd, we may depend upon him. He and *Will Gosling* are always sure Men. But now I think on't, I won't play to Tonight.

*L. Humdrum.*

Now I chose not to engage myself, for nothing upon Earth should keep me from the Puppet-Shew.

*Mrs Cackle.*

Dear Madam, who ever thought of staying from it. The whole Town will be there To-night for certain.

*L. Ninny.*

There is no body more fond of encouraging public Diversions than I am, I would not miss it for the World. Now, would you believe it, Madam, when I was in *London* No I am downright asham'd to tell you how much it cost

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me in Opera's And I have no Ear for Music neither, nor do I understand one Word of *Italian*. I know it sounds odd to say it; but for all that, Madam, without any Affectation, I do think an Opera charming.

### SCENE VI.

*To them, Jack Oaf, Will Gosling. With several Men, who mingle in Conversation with the Ladies, whispering, playing at Cards, &c.*

Mrs *Cudden*.

Nay, for that Matter, Madam, I would not have you think I said any thing against against Miss *Charlotte Drawle's* Understanding. To be sure, that is what all the World must allow her, for there is no Woman alive knows *Quadrille* more thoroughly; and she almost always wins at it too.

Mrs *Pother*.

Why, you don't think the Girl cheats.

Mrs *Cudden*.

I don't say that.

*Suky*.

But, to be sure, Madam, every Lady that plays (for Self-defence) ought to know how.

*Oaf*.

And is your Ladyship really in earnest?

*[To Lady Humdrum, after whispering her.*

*Gosl*.

'Tis downright Madness. L. *Humdrum*.

I tell you, Mr *Oaf*, I will not be of any Party at Cards To-night. For nothing shall keep me from the Shew.

*Oaf*.

Perhaps your Ladyship may like to see your Friends and Relations turn'd into Ridicule.

*Gosl*.

Nay, for aught I know, Ladies, you may hear something of yourselves too. Now, Madam, you know, let the Thing be how it will, all Women have done something or other that they don't care the whole Town should know.

Mrs *Drone*.

To be sure 'tis disagreeable to be put in a Fluster.

*Harriet*.

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But, dear *Jack Oaf*, now, what signifies a Joke or two upon the Aldermen, supposing the Puppets are so impertinent? Don't we, who are their Wives and Daughters, love now and then to laugh at them among ourselves.

L. *Ninny*.

I beg you, Miss *Noddiple* don't be indiscreet, and quote any thing I may accidentally have said.

Mrs *Pother*.

Nay, Miss *Harriet Noddiple* had better hold her Tongue upon this Subject, for to be sure no body hath talk'd freer of her Father and Uncles than she hath done.

L. *Bustle*.

But, dear Mr *Oaf*, I am sure Sir *Headstrong Bustle*, for that matter, is not afraid of any thing a Puppet can say of him. It would be downright ridiculous in us to keep from the Shew. Don't your Ladyship think so?

Mrs *Braywell*.

I am sure I have heard enough already of what Mankind says of my Spouse, to be concern'd at any thing the most audacious Puppet can say.

Mrs *Cackle*.

*Jack Oaf* and *Will Gosling*, to divert themselves, had a mind to put us all in a Fuss; but it won't do.

*Oaf*.

If Alderman *Braywell* and Sir *Headstrong Bustle* had not been called away from Dinner, I am positive, *Will*, we should have carried our Point among the Corporation.

*Gosl*.

Pox take 'em the Women, you see, *Jack*, will not bite.

*Oaf*.

Let us look out for Sir *Headstrong* and Alderman *Braywell*. They are so fair a Hit upon so many Accounts, that you know they are captious upon all Occasions. We must trump up some new Story

*Gosl*.

And I'll vouch it. To be sure, *Jack*, you have a most prevailing Turn that way. Let us about it this Moment.

*Oaf*.

There will be no Cards To-night, I see. So we'll just make a short Visit, and be with you again, Ladies, before before the Shew.

[*Exit Oaf and Gosling*.

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**SCENE VII.**

*To them, enter Alderman Cackle, Sir Nathaniel Ninny, Sir Humphry Humdrum, Mr Cudden, Mr Drone, Mr Slugg, Mr Drawle, Mr Pother, Mr Noddipole.*

*Cudden.*

Now is not this a fine Sight, Alderman *Cackle*?

*Cackle.*

What, to see our Wives squandering and gaming, and running us in Debt! Neighbour *Cudden*!

*Drone.*

'Tis a Sight that I have been so long us'd to, that, for my part, I cannot see where the Fineness of it lies.

*Pother.*

Sir *Nathaniel* here is a sort of a Gamester himself, and goes halves with his Wife in ruining his Family.

*Drone.*

You have been among the Ladies, Mr *Slugg*. Do they know any thing of *Jack Oaf* and *Will Gosling*?

*Slugg.*

They are gone (horridly out of Humour) to make a short Visit. They said they would be back time enough for the Shew.

*Noddipole.*

The Ladies are all a-gog for it.

*Sir H. Humdrum.*

*Jack Oaf* is in the wrong. Indeed he is. I thought *Will Gosling* too had a better Understanding. A Puppet-Shew is an innocent Thing. Mr *Drone*, if I remember, you declar'd your Opinion very frankly upon this Point in t'other Room.

*Drone.*

To be sure, Sir *Humphry*, I am for it in the main. But for all that, after what *Jack Oaf* and *Will Gosling* have said, we must conclude that this Master *Peter* is a very suspicious Person.

*Noddipole.*

After we have seen the Shew, Mr *Drone*, 'tis Time enough to declare our Opinion.

*Sir N. Ninny.*

That, indeed, Mr *Noddipole*, may be Time enough for us who are no Critics; but there is *Oaf* and *Gosling* now are so well acquainted with the Manner and Stile of our Writers, that they no sooner hear an Author's Name, but they decide upon the Performance.

*Noddipole.*

To be sure. For they can scarce be called Critics, who must hear or read a Thing before they will venture to declare their Opinion. Any body can do that.



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Sir *H. Humdrum*.

Would Sir *Headstrong* and Mr *Braywell* had finish'd their Affairs! The Moment they come back, we'll adjourn to the Shew.

Sir *N. Ninny*.

In the mean Time, Sir *Humphry*, suppose we join in the Dance. The Fiddles have struck up, and the Company, you see, are preparing to begin.

[A DANCE.]

*Enter Sir Headstrong Bustle and Mr Braywell.*

Sir *H. Humdrum*.

I am sorry, Sir *Headstrong*, you were not here a little sooner.

Sir *N. Ninny*.

Nay, for that Matter, we could have provided you too, Mr Alderman *Braywell*, with a Partner.

*Enter Pickle. Giving about Bills. Trumpet and Drum without.*

*Pickle*.

Just going to begin, Ladies. We are this Moment going to begin, Gentlemen. Figures almost as large as the Life! They move, walk, and speak as naturally and as well as any of us, Gentlemen. Walk in, Ladies; walk in, Gentlemen, and take your Places.

*L. Humdrum*.

And what is your Shew, I pray you, Sir? What is the Name of it?

*Pickle*.

It hath been the Wonder and Delight of all *Europe*, Ladies! 'Tis the celebrated Dramatic Entertainment, called *Melisendra*. Make room there Make way for the Ladies Pray don't stop up the Way Take Money there I beg you, Gentlemen, make way for the Ladies.

## SCENE VIII.

Jack Oaf, Will Gosling.

*Oaf*.

What's all the Company gone?

SCENE VIII.

## Rehearsal at Goatham

*[To Pickle.*

*Pickle.*

Into the Shew-Room, and we are just going to play away; just going to begin, Gentlemen.

*[Exit Pickle.*

*Gosl.*

To be sure then Sir *Headstrong* and Mr *Braywell* must be there. Mr *Broach*, you know, told us they came into this Room.

*Oaf.*

We have nothing for it but to send a Letter. I can disguise my Hand. Pen, Ink and Paper here.

*[Brought in.*

*Gosl.*

Let a Porter too be ready to carry a Note immediately.

*[Oaf writing, and repeating as he writes.]*

*Oaf.*

At any rate, Sir, put a Stop to the Playing the Puppet-Shew. Alderman *Braywell* is personally and most maliciously abus'd; Sir *Headstrong Bustle* is most inhumanly ridicul'd; nay, the whole Corporation are no better treated. You will be made the common Jest of *Goatham*, and if you do not put a Stop to it, the Town of *Assborough* (for 'twas they set it a-foot) will have their Ends. This, as a Friend, I thought fit to let you know.

*Gosl.*

This will do, *Jack*, I'm sure this must work.

*[Enter Porter.*

*Oaf.*

Deliver this to Alderman *Braywell* immediately you will find him at the Shew. But don't say from whence you came, and there's Hush-money for you You Dog, go. But, to prevent Suspicion, let us get there before him. D'ye hear, don't be long after us.

## SCENE IX.

The Puppet-Shew-Room.

*The whole Corporation and their Wives, &c. To them enter Jack Oaf, Will Gosling, who place themselves among the Audience.*

Sir *N. Ninny.*

Come, the Prologue the Prologue.

*[Porter delivers the Letter, and goes out.*

*Pickle.*

## Rehearsal at Gotham

Courteous Spectators; see with your own Eyes,  
Hear with your Ears; and there's an end of Lies.

*Braywell.*

Hold! Stop, not a Word more, I charge you. Cast your Eye upon that Letter, *Sir Headstrong*  
*[They all rise, some read and shake their Heads; all in Commotion.*

*Sir Headstrong.*

Never was any thing so audacious. A Word more, *Sirrah*, shall lay you by the Heels. Hand it about among the Corporation, *Sir Humphry* .

*Audience.*

The Prologue, the Prologue.

*Sir Headstrong.*

I charge you, Fellow not a Word more.

*Oaf.*

What's the Matter, *Sir Nathaniel*.

*Sir N. Ninny.*

Look you there

*Oaf.*

I was not to be believ'd.

*Sir Headstrong.*

To what End hath a Man Riches and Power, if he cannot crush the Wretches who have the Insolence to expose the Ways by which he got them! This is not to be borne!

## SCENE the Last.

*To them Master Peter.*

*Peter.*

I beg you, Gentlemen, let me know my Offence.

*Braywell.*

We know it, and that is sufficient for us to proceed upon. We are not brought so low to suffer every poultry Fellow to vindicate himself that we think fit to accuse.

*Sir Headstrong.*

Such Liberties are not to be taken. Call us to account for our Actions! Expose us to the Public!

## Rehearsal at Gotham

*Braywell.*

I have been so long of the Corporation indeed to fine Purpose, if at this time of Day I am not above public Censure. Sir *Headstrong* .

I won't be talk'd of at all. Who shall dare to talk of their Betters?

*Cudden.*

You and your Puppets shall be taught better Manners, you impertinent Fellow, you.

*Peter.*

See it, hear it, Gentlemen; you will then find I have been injur'd, and that you have been impos'd upon.

*Braywell.*

Impos'd upon! how impudently the Fellow talks before us!

Sir *N. Ninny*.

This is calling us downright Fools to our Faces! Were you ever impos'd upon, Sir *Humphry*?

*Peter.*

But I hope, Sirs, you will not disappoint the Audience: Consider, Gentlemen, it will be a great Loss to me.

*Cackle.*

And so much the better.

Sir *Headstrong*.

Such audacious Wretches should starve, who, because they are poor, are so insolently honest in every thing they say, that a rich Man cannot enjoy his Property in quiet for 'em.

*Braywell.*

You shall not only dismiss the Audience, Fellow, but return the Money.

*Pother.*

We must keep these Wretches down. 'Tis right to keep Mankind in Dependance.

Sir *Headstrong*.

'Tis the Rascals who live by their Industry, who are so impertinent to us. We should suffer no body in Town to get Money but by our Licence, and then we should never be treated with Disrespect. So I tell you once again, it shall not be play'd.

L. *Humdrum*.

Sir *Headstrong* is horridly provoking now to hinder us of our Diversion, don't you think so, Lady *Ninny*?

L. *Ninny*.

Nay, I can't say but I should have lik'd to have heard it yet, after all, who knows what an impertinent Fellow might have said of any of us? Not that I am afraid of any thing the Fellow can say of me.

SCENE the Last.

## Rehearsal at Gotham

*Harriet.*

But out of Curiosity one would hear a little Sample of it.

*L. Bustle.*

After all, Sir *Headstrong*, I cannot think the Fellow's Request so very unreasonable, to be heard first, and judg'd afterwards.

*Drawle.*

There is, without Doubt, a little too much Compliance in granting it. Yet there have been Men in Authority who have allowed it. My Memory, alack—a-day, is weak, and I cannot remember Precedents.

*Sir Headstrong.*

I have said it, Mr *Drawle*, and I never retract, The Thing shall not be play'd.

*Sir N. Ninny.*

To be sure, Sir *Headstrong*, it can never be expected that one of your good Sense and Resolution should ever retract, or be convinc'd you have been in the Wrong We only ask, that the Fellow may be allow'd to give some short Account of his Shew, or a Rehearsal of some of the Parts of it; there can be no Harm in that sure.

*Cackle.*

Why, we know very well what is in it, Sir *Nathaniel*.

*Sir Headstrong.*

And when a Man is determin'd what to do, what signifies hearing what a Man hath to say for himself?

*L. Bustle.*

Do, dear Sir *Headstrong*, let us hear something of it.

*Sir Headstrong.*

It looks so like Condescension

*L. Bustle.*

Not at all, Sir *Headstrong*; for, right or wrong, you may still abide by your Point.

*Sir Headstrong.*

The Ladies have a Curiosity to hear some of your Impertinence You can soon satisfy them.

*Peter.*

All I ask, is to show and prove myself inoffensive. What I propos'd to represent, Ladies, was the celebrated Dramatic Entertainment, called *Melisendra*; so often play'd in most of the capital Cities of *Europe*.

*Sir N. Ninny.*

SCENE the Last.

Rehearsal at Gotham

Who is *Melisendra*? Who can he mean by *Melisendra*?

*Peter.*

'Tis an antient History, Sir. Sir *H. Humdrum*.

That may be but for all that if my Name began with an *M*, as indeed it doth end with it; I should have a shrewd Suspicion it might mean somebody else.

Sir *N. Ninny*.

Nay, he is very near me; for an *N* is the very next Letter that follows it. My Name is *Ninny*, you know.

*L. Ninny.*

Dear Sir *Nathaniel*, don't interrupt the Fellow.

*Peter.*

There stands my Interpreter. Begin, repeat, *Pickle*. We are not permitted to draw the Curtain; suppose it drawn, and now say away.

*Pickle. Melisendra*, Ladies, Wife to Don *Gayferos*, is imprison'd by the *Moors* in *Spain*; in the Town of *Sansuenna*, now called *Saragosa*.

*Cudden.*

Why in *Spain*? Why must it be in *Spain*? Did not you, Mr *Drone*, sell *Serges* formerly to some Merchant or other who traded to *Spain*? I beg you to recollect yourself. He'll be about some of us presently; that I can see.

*Pickle.*

Pray, Gentlemen, have a little Patience; it will be impossible else to go on. The first Figure, Gallants, we present you is Don *Gayferos*, who is so unmindful of the beautiful Captive *Melisendra*, that you see him playing at Tables. *Charlemaigne*, the suppos'd Father of *Melisendra*, peeps out, chides, and beats him for his Neglect of her. The Emperor, you see, is in a Huff  
Now, mind, Ladies and Gentlemen, how he rates his suppos'd Son-in-law Don *Gayferos*. Pray, Silence, Gentlemen.

At Tables, Don! was ever such a Sot!  
His Money squander'd, and his Wife forgot!  
Haste, rise, reclaim thy poor distressed Beauty:  
This Cudgel else shall ding thee into Duty. Sir *N. Ninny*.

Here's a Rascal now. Hold, you Dog. He might as well have call'd me by my Name. If I did get drunk, and lose my Money at Play, and I have not what you call reclaim'd my Wife, he means, redeem'd some of her Trinkets at the Pawnbrokers. 'Tis plain who you mean by your Don *Gayferos*. Are Family Secrets to be divulg'd, Rascal?

*L. Ninny.*

How can you be so ridiculous, Sir *Nathaniel*? I beg you don't talk of me.

Sir *N. Ninny*.

SCENE the Last.

Rehearsal at Gotham

I was afraid he was going to say somewhat about

L. *Ninny*.

Hold your Tongue, I tell you.

Sir *N. Ninny*.

Did you ever tell any body of this Secret before, my dear?

L. *Ninny*.

No, 'tis you yourself have told every body of it now; you

Sir *N. Ninny*.

What?

L. *Ninny*.

I was going to say, Fool. But you know, my dear, I have a great command of myself before Company. But, dear Sir *Nathaniel*, now don't interpret him Let the Fellow go on.

*Pickle*.

Don *Gayferos* now flings down the Tables, and calls for his Armour; his Man (Punch) brings it to him. Now listen, Gallants. 'Tis Don *Gayferos* that speaks.

Thus clad in Steel I go to risk my Life.

To which his Servant says,

To bring home Peace, Sir?

No, replies Don *Gayferos*.

To bring home my Wife. Sir *H. Humdrum*.

Never was such audacious Impertinence! My Wife and I have our private Wars and Battles as other married Folks have, but what's that to any body else? My Lady and I brought in in a Puppet-Shew! this is intolerable. To be sure we shall hear something of you and Mrs *Pother* by and by for I don't believe you have got the better of her yet.

*Oaf*.

This indeed was too plain, Sir *Humphry*, downright scandalous! the Fellow should not be suffer'd.

*[Lady Humdrum and Sir Humphry seem in a violent Dispute.*

*Pickle*.

The next Figure, Ladies, is his Cousin *Roldan*, who offers to assist him, and in these Words encourages him to the Undertaking:

SCENE the Last.

## Rehearsal at Gotham

Do, Cousin, what all worthy Knights should do;  
Pride, Av'rice, Rapine, every Vice subdued.  
*Sir Head. Bustle.*

Let us have no more of this Speech. You are very insolent, Fellow.

*Gosling.*

Pride, Avarice, Rapine, Vice! Are these Words fit to be mention'd before the Magistrates of our Town? Every Child can tell who he means.

*Sir H. Bustle.*

He hath said his worst of me. I am above Calumny so go on with your Impudence.

*Pickle.*

His Cousin *Roldan* now lends Don *Gayferos* his Sword *Durindana*.

*Sir N. Ninny.*

His Cousin *Roldan!* *Roldan* then ('tis a clear Point) must mean you, Mr *Cudden*, for you are my Cousin, you know, and to be sure there is some very malignant Reflection in this unintelligible Passage that he is afraid to explain, and we shall never find out.

*Drawle.*

'Tis manifest, Sir *Nathaniel*, that it is a most bitter *Inuendo* but indeed I cannot say at what or at whom it is levell'd.

*Peter.*

Pray, Gentlemen, have Patience. Hear it out, and you will find you mistake the thing entirely.

*Pickle.*

Now the Scene changes to the Tower of *Saragosa*. *Melisendra* appears at the Window in a *Moorish* Habit, expecting her Spouse from *Paris*.

*Sir Headstrong.*

*Paris*. That now is at me.

*Braywell.*

No. 'Tis at me.

*Sir Headstrong.*

I won't have *Paris* mention'd.

*Braywell.*

All the World must apply it to me. Do but consider, Sir *Headstrong*, I had a Relation once there who was bubbled, and bubbled me to that most conspicuous Degree, that we were both look'd upon as Fools



## Rehearsal at Gotham

*Oaf.*

Excuse me, Mr Alderman *Braywell*, notwithstanding what you say of your Kinsman, the Thing is manifestly levell'd at Sir *Headstrong*. And there was not so much Folly in the Affair neither; for all the Town agrees that neither Mr *Pother* nor Sir *Headstrong* are a Doit the poorer for all that bubbling Affair.

*Pother.*

And why should we, I pray? for, you know, when one is to do the Corporation Service, one may very freely make use of the Corporation's Money.

*Oaf.*

Take my Advice; forbid the Play at once, and hear no more of it.

*Peter.*

Let him go on, I beg you indeed, Gentlemen, you will find me inoffensive.

*Pickle.*

A *Moor* steals softly behind *Melisendra*, and kisses her. Then in an open Gallery appears the grave *Moorish* Monarch *Marsilius*, King of *Sansuena*. Upon seeing his Kinsman and Favourite so saucy, he sentences him arbitrarily and immediately to be whipt through the public Streets, without Form or Process, or the Shadow of legal Proceeding.

*Sir Headstrong.*

Legal Proceeding! I knew he would have t'other Slap at me. I don't see why I should be twitted in the Teeth upon this Score, for I am sure I am for legal Proceeding upon all Occasions, but when the Corporation's or my own Affairs require that it should be dispens'd withal. You were out, you see, Mr *Oaf*, the *Moor Marsilius* is meant at me. Beyond all Dispute, I am the *Moor*.

*Oaf.*

No doubt on't, tho' you are only a private Man, you are so considerable a Member of the Corporation, that the Rascal would make you as black as ever he could. As you say, Sir, the *Moor Marsilius* must be you.

*Gosl.*

And to be sure every body knows who he means by his Kinsman and Favourite who is so saucy.

*Oaf.*

Mr *Pother* is not so blind but he can see where it is meant.

*Gosl.*

Nay, for that matter, *Jack Oaf*, by the Description, we cannot say which of his Kinsmen or Favourites he means. You cannot positively say that he does mean Mr *Pother*.

*Peter.*

The guilty Person can frequently make Applications that no body can make but himself. Upon my Word, Gentlemen, I am perfectly astonish'd at your Observations. I hate private Slander. As for general Satire; the Satirist is not to be accus'd of Calumny; he that takes it to himself is the Proclaimer and Publisher of his own Folly and Guilt. I protest, Gentlemen, you have told me several Things that I did not know before. Proceed, *Pickle*, proceed.

## Rehearsal at Gotham

*Pickle.*

By this Time, you must know, Don *Gayferos* is arriv'd at *Saragosa*; and there meeting accidentally with some of his own Countrymen and Neighbours

*Drawle.*

Hold, hold, Sir. My Ears very much deceiv'd me, or he mention'd Neighbours.

*Drone.*

You were not mistaken, Mr *Drawle*, I heard it but too plain.

*Cackle.*

Ay. There he is at us all. For you know all of us are Neighbours to some body or other.

*Drawle.*

You are out, Mr Alderman *Cackle*. For he must mean, and can only mean, my worthy Neighbour Sir *Nathaniel Ninny* and myself; for we really are Neighbours, call one another Neighbours, and live next Door to one another.

*Cackle.*

No such Matter, Mr *Drawle*. The Case is plain, he's at all of us.

Sir *H. Humdrum*.

We'll have no more of this Impertinence.

Sir *Headstrong*.

We'll hear no more on't, Neighbours nothing can be more unguarded!

*Braywell.*

Return the Money, Rascal, and dismiss the Audience.

L. *Bustle*.

You are too hasty, Husband. Because you yourself know what you are, you think every body else knows it too. Now that does not always follow.

*Audience.*

The Shew, the Shew. Play away.

Sir *Headstrong*.

Mr *Noddipole*, I charge you, keep the Peace.

*Broach.*

Till now I never believ'd half that was said against them.

Mrs *Broach*.

Indeed, Husband, I thought 'em only Fools.

Rehearsal at Gotham

*Audience.*

The Aldermen Smoak the Aldermem Huzza!

*[Hooting at 'em as they go out.]*

*Peter.*

Because Knaves and Fools are a captious Set of People, I am to be deny'd the common Privileges of Industry.

*Pickle.*

'Tis very hard, 'tis very unlucky. But you have had the Satisfaction, Sir, to see the Fools expose themselves.

*Peter.*

There is nothing to be done here; they have the Power, and we must submit So to-morrow we'll leave the Town.  
This Adventure of ours hath indeed answer'd the main End of a good Play. For

The Drift of Plays, by *Aristotle's* Rules,  
Is, what you've seen Exposing Knaves and Fools.