

# **No Wit, No Help like a Woman's**

Thomas Middleton



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# **No Wit, No Help like a Woman's**

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**Thomas Middleton**

The Actors' Names

SIR OLIVER Twilight, a rich old knight  
PHILIP, his son, servant to Mistress Grace  
SANDFIELD, friend to Philip, servant to Mistress Jane  
Master SUNSET, true father of Mistress Grace  
Master LOW-WATER, a decayed gentleman  
SIR GILBERT Lambston }  
Master WEATHERWISE } suitors to the Lady Goldenfleece  
Master PEPPERTON }  
Master OVERDON }  
Master BEVERIL, brother to Mistress Low-water  
DUTCH MERCHANT  
DUTCH BOY  
SAVORWIT, Sir Oliver's man  
FOOTMAN  
PICKADILLE, Lady Goldenfleece's fool  
[SERVANTS to Sir Oliver, Weatherwise, Lady Goldenfleece]  
[Six TENANTS of Weatherwise]  
LADY TWILIGHT  
LADY [Elizabeth] GOLDENFLEECE, a rich widow  
MISTRESS [Kate] LOW-WATER  
Mistress GRACE, Sunset's daughter, but supposed Twilight's  
Mistress JANE, Twilight's daughter, but supposed Sunset's

The Scene: London

**Prologue**

How is't possible to suffice  
So many ears, so many eyes?  
Some in wit, some in shows  
Take delight, and some in clothes:  
Some for mirth they chiefly come,  
Some for passion, for both some;  
Some for lascivious meetings, that's their arrant;  
Some to detract, and ignorance their warrant.  
How is't possible to please  
Opinion toss'd in such wild seas?  
Yet I doubt it not, if attention  
Seize you above, and apprehension  
You below, to take things quickly,  
We shall both make you sad and tickle ye.

**I.[i. A street]**

Enter Philip, Sir Oliver Twilight's son, with Savorwit, his father's man.

**PHILIP**

I am at my wit's end, Savorwit.

**SAVORWIT**

And I am ev'n following after you as fast as I can, sir.

**PHILIP**

My wife will be forc'd from me, my pleasure!

**SAVORWIT**

Talk no more on't, sir. How can there be any  
Hope i' th' middle when we're both at our  
Wit's end in the beginning? My invention  
Was ne'er so gravel'd since I first set out upon't.

**PHILIP**

Nor does my stop stick only in this wheel,  
Though it be a main vexation, but I'm grated  
In a dear absolute friend, young Master Sandfield—

**SAVORWIT**

Ay, there's another rub too.

**PHILIP**

Who supposes  
That I make love to his affected mistress,  
When 'tis my father works against the peace  
Of both our spirits, and woos unknown to me.  
He strikes out sparks of undeserved anger  
['Twixt] old steel friendship and new stony hate,  
As much forgetful of the merry hours  
The circuits of our youth hath spent and worn  
As if they had not been or we not born.

Enter Sandfield.

**SAVORWIT**

See where he comes.

**SANDFIELD**

Unmerciful in torment!  
Will this disease never forsake mine eye?

**PHILIP**

It must be kill'd first if it grow so painful.  
Work it out strongly at one time that th' anguish

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May never more come near thy precious sight.  
If my eternal sleep will give thee rest,  
Close up mine eyes with opening of my breast.

**SANDFIELD**

I feel thy wrongs at midnight and the weight  
Of thy close treacheries. Thou hast a friendship  
As dangerous as a strumpet's, that will kiss  
Men into poverty, distress, and ruin;  
And to make clear the face of thy foul deeds,  
Thou work'st by seconds.

[Draws his sword.]

**PHILIP**

Then may the sharp point of an inward horror  
Strike me to earth, and save thy weapon guiltless!

**SANDFIELD**

Not in thy father?

**PHILIP**

How much is truth abus'd  
When 'tis kept silent!

[SANDFIELD]

Oh, defend me friendship!

**SAVORWIT**

True, your anger's in an error all this while, sir,  
But that a lover's weapon [ne'er] hears reason;  
'Tis out still like a mad man's. Hear but me, sir:  
'Tis my young master's injury, not yours,  
That you quarrel with him for, and this shows  
As if y' would challenge a lame man the field  
And cut off's head because he has lost his legs.  
His grief makes him dead flesh, as it appear'd  
By off'ring up his breast to you; for believe it, sir,  
Had he not greater crosses of his own,  
Your hilts could not cross him.

**SANDFIELD**

How?

**SAVORWIT**

Not your hilts, sir.  
Come, I must have you friends; a pox of weapons!  
There's a whore gapes for't; put it up i' th' scabbard.

**SANDFIELD**

[Putting up his sword] Thou'rt a mad slave.

I.[i. A street]

**SAVORWIT**

Come, give me both your hands.  
Y'are in a quagmire both: should I release you now,  
Your wits would both come home in a stinking pickle;  
Your father's old nose would smell you out presently.

**PHILIP**

Tell him the secret, which no mortal knows  
But thou and I, and then he will confess  
How much he wrong'd the patience of his friend.

**SAVORWIT**

Then thus the marigold opens at the splendour  
Of a hot constant friendship 'twixt you both.  
'Tis not unknown to your ear some ten years since  
My mistress, his good mother, with a daughter  
About the age of six, crossing to [Jersey],  
Was taken by the Dunkirks, sold both, and separated,  
As the last news brings hot the first and last  
So much discover'd; for in nine years' space  
No certain tidings of their life or death  
Or what place held 'em, earth, the sea, or heaven,  
Came to the old man's ears, the knight my master,  
Till about five months since, a letter came,  
Sent from the mother, which related all  
Their taking, selling, separation,  
And never meeting; and withal required  
Six hundred crowns for ransom, which my old master  
No sooner heard the sound but told the sum,  
Gave him the gold, and sent us both aboard.  
We landing by the way, having a care  
To lighten us of our carriage because gold  
Is such a heavy metal, eas'd our pockets  
In wenches' aprons. Women were made to bear,  
But for us gentlemen, 'tis most unkindly.

**SANDFIELD**

Well, sir?

**PHILIP**

A pure rogue still!

**SAVORWIT**

Amongst the rest, sir,  
'Twas my young master's chance there to dote finely  
Upon a sweet young gentlewoman, but one  
That would not sell her honour for the Indies,  
Till a priest struck the bargain, and then half a crown dispatch'd it.  
To be brief, wedded her and bedded her,  
Brought her home hither to his father's house,

I.[i. A street]



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And with a fair tale of mine own bringing up,  
She passes for his sister that was sold.

**SANDFIELD**

Let me not lose myself in wond'ring at thee.  
But how made you your score even for the mother?

**SAVORWIT**

Pish, easily: we told him how her fortunes  
Mock'd us as they mock'd her. When we were o' th' sea,  
She was o' th' land, and as report was given,  
When we were landed, she was gone to heaven.  
So he believes two lies one error bred:  
The daughter ransom'd and the mother dead.

**SANDFIELD**

Let me admire thee and withal confess  
My injuries to friendship.

**PHILIP**

They're all pardon'd.  
[Embracing him] These are the arms I bore against my friend.

**SAVORWIT**

But what's all this to th' present? This discourse  
Leaves you i' th' bog still.

**PHILIP**

On, good Savorwit!

**SAVORWIT**

For yet our policy has cross'd ourselves;  
For the old knave, my master, little thinking her  
Wife to his son, but his own daughter still,  
Seeks out a match for her--

**PHILIP**

Here I feel the surgeon  
At second dressing.

**SAVORWIT**

And h'as entertain'd  
Ev'n for pure need, for fear the glass should crack  
That is already broken, but well solder'd,  
A mere sot for her suitor, a rank fox,  
One Weatherwise, that woos by the almanac,  
Observes the full and change, an errant moon-calf.  
And yet, because the fool demands no portion  
But the bare down of her smock, the old fellow,  
Worn to the bone with a dry [covetous] itch,  
To save his purse and yet bestow his child,

I.[i. A street]

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Consents to waste [her on] lumps of almanac stuff  
Kned with May-butter. Now as I have thought on't  
I'll spoil him in the baking.

**SANDFIELD**

Prithee, as how, sirrah?

**SAVORWIT**

I'll give him such a crack in one o' th' sides  
He shall quite run out of my master's favour.

**PHILIP**

I should but too much love thee for that.

**SAVORWIT**

Thus, then,  
To help you both at once, and so good night to you.  
After my wit has shipp'd away the fool,  
As he shall part, I'll buzz into the ear  
Of my old master that you, sir, Master Sandfield,  
Dearly affect his daughter and will take her  
With little or no portion. Well stood out in't!  
Methinks I see him caper at that news  
And in the full cry, oh! This brought about  
And wittily dissembled on both parts,  
You to affect his love, he to love yours,  
I'll so beguile the father at the marriage  
That each shall have his own, and both being welcom'd  
And chamber'd in one house, as 'tis his pride  
To have his children's children got successively  
On his forefathers' feather beds, in the day times,  
To please the old man's eyesight, you may dally  
And set a kiss on the wrong lip; no sin in't:  
Brothers and sisters do't, cousins do more,  
But pray take heed you be not kin to them.  
So in the night time nothing can deceive you,  
Let each know his own work, and there I leave you.

**SANDFIELD**

Let me applaud thee.

**PHILIP**

Bless'd be all thy ends  
That mak'st arm'd enemies embracing friends.  
About it speedily.

Exit [with Sandfield].

**SAVORWIT**

I need no pricking.  
I'm of that mettle, so well-pac'd and free,

I.[i. A street]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

There's no good riders that use spur to me.

Enter Grace Twilight.

Oh, are you come?

**GRACE**

Are any comforts coming?

**SAVORWIT**

I never go without 'em.

**GRACE**

Thou sport'st joys that utterance cannot perfect.

**SAVORWIT**

Hark, are they risen?

**GRACE**

Yes, long before I left 'em.

And all intend to bring the widow homeward.

**SAVORWIT**

Depart then, mistress, to avoid suspect:

Our good shall arrive time enough at your heart.

[Exit Grace.]

Poor fools that ever more take a green surfeit  
Of the first fruits of joys. Let a man but shake the tree,  
How soon they'll hold up their laps to receive comfort!  
The music that I struck made her soul dance.  
Peace!

Enter the Lady Widow Goldenfleece with Sir Gilbert Lambston, Master Pepperton, Master Overdon, suitors.  
After them, the two old men, Sir Oliver Twilight and Master Sunset, with their daughters, Grace Twilight [and]  
Jane Sunset.

[Aside] Here comes the Lady Widow, the late wife  
To the deceas'd Sir Avarice Goldenfleece,  
Second to none for usury and extortion,  
As too well it appears on a poor gentleman,  
One Master Low-water, from whose estate  
He pull'd that fleece that makes his widow weight.  
Those are her suitors now, Sir Gilbert Lambston,  
Master Pepperton, Master Overdon.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Nay, good Sir Oliver Twilight, Master Sunset,  
We'll trouble you no farther.

I.[i. A street]

**SUNSET, SIR OLIVER**

No trouble, sweet madam.

**SIR GILBERT**

We'll see the widow at home; it shall be  
Our charge, that.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

It shall be so indeed.  
Thanks, good Sir Oliver, and to you both  
I am indebted for those courtesies  
That will ask me a long time to requite.

**SIR OLIVER**

Ah, 'tis but your pleasant condition to give it out so, madam.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Mistress Grace and Mistress Jane, I wish you both  
A fair contented fortune in your choices,  
And that you happen right.

**[GRACE, JANE]**

Thanks to you, good madam.

**[LADY GOLDENFLEECE]**

[Aside] There's more in that word "right" than you imagine.—  
I now repent, girls, a rash oath I took  
When you were both infants, to conceal a secret.

**GRACE**

What does't concern, good madam?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

No, no.  
Since you are both so well, 'tis well enough.  
It must not be reveal'd; 'tis now no more  
Than like mistaking of one hand for t'other.  
A happy time to you both.

**[GRACE, JANE]**

The like to you, madam.

**GRACE**

[Aside] I shall long much to have this riddle open'd.

**JANE**

[Aside] I would you were so kind to my poor kinswoman  
And the distressed gentleman her husband,  
Poor Master Low-water, who on ruin leans.  
You keep this secret as you keep his means.

l.[i. A street]

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[LADY GOLDENFLEECE]

Thanks, good Sir Oliver Twilight. Welcome, sweet  
Master Pepperton; Master Overdon, welcome.

Exeunt. Manet Sir Oliver with Savorwit.

**SIR OLIVER**

And goes the business well 'twixt those young lovers?

**SAVORWIT**

Betwixt your son and Master Sunset's daughter,  
The line goes even, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

Good lad, I like thee.

**SAVORWIT**

But sir, there's no proportion, height, or evenness  
Betwixt that equinoctial and your daughter.

**SIR OLIVER**

'Tis true, and I'm right glad on't.

**SAVORWIT**

Are you glad, sir?  
There's no proportion in't.

**SIR OLIVER**

Ay, marry, am I, sir.  
I can abide no word that ends in portion;  
I'll give her nothing.

**SAVORWIT**

Say you should not, sir,  
As I'll ne'er urge your worship 'gainst your nature,  
Is there no gentleman, think you, of worth and credit  
Will open's bed to warm a naked maid?  
A hundred gallant fellows, and be glad  
To be so set a-work! Virginitie  
Is no such cheap ware as you make account on  
That it had need with portion be set off,  
For that sets off a portion in these days.

**SIR OLIVER**

Play on, sweet boy!  
Oh, I could hear this music all day long,  
When there's no money to be parted from!  
Strike on, good lad!

**SAVORWIT**

I.[i. A street]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Do not wise men and great often bestow  
Ten thousand pound in jewels that lie by 'em?  
If so, what jewel can lie by a man  
More precious than a virgin? If none more precious,  
Why should the pillow of a fool be grac'd  
With that brave spirits with dearness have embrac'd?  
And then, perhaps, ere the third spring come on,  
Sends home your diamond crack'd, the beauty gone;  
And more to know her, 'cause you shall not doubt her,  
A number of poor sparks twinkling about her.

**SIR OLIVER**

Now thou play'st Dowland's Lachrymae to thy master.

**SAVORWIT**

But shall I dry your eyes with a merry jig now  
And make you look like sunshine in a shower?

**SIR OLIVER**

How, how, my honest boy, sweet Savorwit?

**SAVORWIT**

Young Master Sandfield, gallant Master Sandfield—

**SIR OLIVER**

Ha! What of him?

**SAVORWIT**

Affects your daughter strangely.

**SIR OLIVER**

Brave Master Sandfield! Let me hug thy zeal  
Unto thy master's house. Ha, Master Sandfield!  
But he'll expect a portion.

**SAVORWIT**

Not a whit, sir,  
As you may use the matter.

**SIR OLIVER**

Nay, and the matter fall into my using  
The devil a penny that he gets of me.

**SAVORWIT**

He lies at the mercy of your lock and key, sir;  
You may use him as you list.

**SIR OLIVER**

Say'st thou me so?  
Is he so far in doing?

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**SAVORWIT**

Quite over head and ears, sir.  
Nay, more: he means to run mad and break his neck  
Off some high steeple if he have her not.

**SIR OLIVER**

Now bless the young gentleman's gristles; I hope  
To be a grandfather yet by 'em.

**SAVORWIT**

That may you, sir,  
To, marry, a chopping girl with a plump buttock  
Will hoist a farthingale at five years old,  
And call a man between eleven and twelve  
To take part of a piece of mutton with her.

**SIR OLIVER**

Ha, precious wag! Hook him in finely, do.

**SAVORWIT**

Make clear the way for him first; set the gull going.

**SIR OLIVER**

An ass, an ass! I'll quickly dash his wooing.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Why now the clocks  
Go right again. It must be a strange wit  
That makes the wheels of youth and age so hit;  
The one are dry, worn, rusty, furr'd, and soiled;  
Love's wheels are glib, ever kept clean and oil'd.

Exit.

**SIR OLIVER**

I cannot choose but think of this good fortune:  
That gallant Master Sandfield!

Enter Weatherwise.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] Stay, stay, stay.  
What comfort gives my almanac today?  
Luck, I beseech thee! [Consulting his almanac] Good days, evil days, June, July; speak a good word for me now, and I have her. Let me see: "the fifth day, 'twixt hawk and buzzard; the sixth day, backward and forward." That was beastly to me, I remember. "The seventh day, on a slippery pin; the eighth day, fire and tow; the ninth day, the market is marr'd." That's long of the hucksters, I warrant you; but now "the tenth day." Luck, I beseech thee now before I look into't! "The eleventh day, against the hair." A pox on't! Would that hair had been left out! "Against the hair!" That hair will go nigh to choke me; had it been against anything but that, 'twould not have troubled me because it lies cross i' th' way. Well, I'll try the fortune of a good face yet, though my almanac leave me i' th' sands.

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**SIR OLIVER**

[Aside] Such a match, too. I could not wish a better.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] Mass, here he walks.—Save you, sweet Sir Oliver! Sir Oliver Twilight!

**SIR OLIVER**

Oh, pray come to me a quarter of a year hence; I have a little business now.

**WEATHERWISE**

How, a quarter of a year hence? What, shall I come to you in September?

**SIR OLIVER**

Nor in November neither, good my friend.

**WEATHERWISE**

Y'are not a mad knight; you will not let your daughter hang past August, will you? She'll drop down under tree then. She's no winter fruit, I assure you, if you think to put her in crust after Christmas.

**SIR OLIVER**

Sir, in a word, depart: my girl's not for you;  
I gave you a drowsy promise in a dream,  
But broad awake now, I call't in again.  
Have me commended to your wit; farewell, sir.

[Exit.]

**WEATHERWISE.**

Now the devil run away with you, and some lousy fiddler with your daughter! May Clerkenwell have the first cut of her and Hound's Ditch pick the bones! I'll never leave the love of an open-hearted widow for a narrow-ey'd maid again, go out of the roadway like an ass to leap over hedge and ditch: I'll fall into the beaten path again and invite the widow home to a banquet. Let who list seek out new ways, I'll be at my journey's end before him. My almanac told me true how I should fare;  
Let no man think to speed against the hair.

Exit.

[I.ii. Low-water's house]

Enter Mistress Low-water.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Is there no saving means? No help religious  
For a distressed gentlewoman to live by?  
Has virtue no revenue? Who has all then?  
Is the world's lease from hell, the devil head-landlord?  
Oh, how was conscience, the right heir, put by?  
Law would not do such an unrighteous deed,  
Though with the fall of angels 't had been fee'd.  
Where are our hopes in banks? Was honesty

I.[i. A street]



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A younger sister without portion left?  
No dowry in the Chamber beside wantonness?  
O miserable orphan!  
'Twixt two extremes runs there no blessed mean,  
No comfortable strain that I may kiss it?  
Must I to whoredom or to beggary lean,  
My mind being sound? Is there no way to miss it?  
Is't not injustice that a widow laughs  
And lays her mourning part upon a wife?  
That she should have the garment, I the heart;  
My wealth her uncle left her, and me her grief?  
Yet, stood all miseries in their loathed'st forms  
On this hand of me, thick like a foul mist,  
And here the bright enticements of the world  
In clearest colours, flattery, and advancement,  
And all the bastard glories this frame jets in,  
Horror nor splendour, shadows fair nor foul  
Should force me shame my husband, wound my soul.

Enter Mistress Jane, Sunset's daughter.

Cousin, y'are welcome. This is kindly done of you  
To visit the despis'd.

**JANE**

I hope not so, coz.  
The want of means cannot make you despis'd;  
Love not by wealth but by desert is priz'd.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Y'are pleas'd to help it well, coz.

**JANE**

I am come to you,  
Beside my visitation, to request you  
To lay your wit to mine, which is but simple,  
And help me to untie a few dark words  
Made up in knots—they're of the widow's knitting,  
That ties all sure—for my wit has not strength  
Nor cunning to unloose 'em.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Good, what are they,  
Though there be little comfort of my help?

**JANE**

She wish'd Sir Oliver's daughter and myself  
Good fortune in our choices and repented her  
Of a rash oath she took when we were both infants,  
A secret to conceal; but since all's well,  
She holds it best to keep it unreveal'd.

l.[i. A street]

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Now what this is, heaven knows.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Nor can I guess.  
The course of her whole life and her dead husband's  
Was ever full of such dishonest riddles  
To keep right heirs from knowledge of their own.  
And now I'm put i' th' mind on't, I believe  
It was some [piece] of land or money given  
By some departing friend upon their deathbed,  
Perhaps to yourself, and Sir Oliver's daughter  
May wrongfully enjoy it, and she hired,  
For she was but an hireling in those days,  
To keep the injury secret.

**JANE**

The most likeliest  
That ever you could think on.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Is it not?

**JANE**

Sure, coz. I think you have untied the knot;  
My thoughts lie at more ease. As in all other things,  
In this I thank your help, and may you live  
To conquer your own troubles and cross ends,  
As you are ready to supply your friends.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I thank you for the kind truth of your heart,  
In which I flourish when all means depart.  
[Aside] Sure in that oath of hers there sleeps some wrong  
Done to my kinswoman.

Enter Footman.

**JANE**

Who'd you speak withal?

**FOOTMAN**

The gentlewoman of this house, forsooth.

**JANE**

Whose footman are you?

**FOOTMAN**

One Sir Gilbert Lambston's.

**JANE**

Sir Gilbert Lambston's? There my cousin walks.

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**FOOTMAN**

Thank your good worship.

[Exit Jane.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

How now, whence are you?

**FOOTMAN**

[Handing her a letter] This letter will make known.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Whence comes it, sir?

**FOOTMAN**

From the knight, my master, Sir Gilbert Lambston.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Throwing the letter at him] Return't; I'll receive none on't!

**FOOTMAN**

[Aside] There it must lie then;  
I were as good run to Tyburn afoot and hang myself  
At mine own charges as carry it back again.

Exit.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Life, had he not his answer? What strange impudence  
Governs in man when lust is lord of him?  
Thinks he me mad, 'cause I have no moneys on earth,  
That I'll go forfeit my estate in heaven  
And live eternal beggar? He shall pardon me,  
That's my soul's jointure; I'll starve ere I sell that.  
Oh, is he gone, and left the letter here?  
Yet I will read it, more to hate the writer.  
[Reading] "Mistress Low-water, if you desire to understand your own comfort, hear me out ere you refuse me.  
I'm in the way now to double the yearly means that first I offered you; and to stir you more to me, I'll empty your  
enemy's bags to maintain you, for the rich widow, the Lady Goldenfleece, to whom I have been a longer suitor  
than you [an] adversary, hath given me so much encouragement lately, insomuch that I am perfectly assured the  
next meeting strikes the bargain. The happiness that follows this 'twere idle to inform you of; only consent to my  
desires, and the widow's notch shall lie open to you. Thus much to your heart; I know y'are wise. Farewell. Thy  
friend to his power, and another's, Gilbert Lambston."  
In this poor brief, what volumes has he thrust  
Of treacherous perjury and adulterous lust!  
So foul a monster does this wrong appear  
That I give pity to mine enemy here.  
What a most fearful love reigns in some hearts  
That dare oppose all judgment to get means,  
And wed rich widows only to keep queans.

l.[i. A street]

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What a strange path he takes to my affection,  
And thinks 't the near'st way, 'twill never be,  
Goes through mine enemy's ground to come to me.  
This letter is most welcome; I repent now  
That my last anger threw thee at my feet:  
My bosom shall receive thee.

Enter Sir Gilbert Lambston.

**SIR GILBERT**

[Aside] 'Tis good policy too,  
To keep one that so mortally hates the widow;  
She'll have more care to keep it close herself.  
And look what wind her revenge goes withal:  
The self-same gale whisks up the sails of love.  
I shall [loose] much good sport by that.—  
Now, my sweet mistress!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Sir Gilbert, you change [suits] oft;  
You were here in black but lately.

**SIR GILBERT**

My mind ne'er shifts though.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] A foul mind the whilst—  
But sure, sir, this is but a dissembling glass  
You sent before you; 'tis not possible  
Your heart should follow your hand.

**SIR GILBERT**

Then may both perish!

**MISTRESS [LOW-WATER]**

Do not wish that so soon, sir. Can you make  
A three-months' love to a rich widow's bed,  
And lay her pillow under a quean's head?  
I know you can't, howe'er you may dissemble 't;  
You have a heart brought up better.

**SIR GILBERT**

Faith, you wrong me in't;  
You shall not find it so. I do protest to thee,  
I will be lord of all my promises,  
And ere't be long, thou shalt but turn a key  
And find 'em in thy coffer; for my love,  
In matching with the widow, is but policy  
To strengthen my estate and make me able  
To set off all thy kisses with rewards:  
That the worst weather our delights behold,

l.[i. A street]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

It may hail pearl and shower the widow's gold.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You talk of a brave world, sir.

**SIR GILBERT**

'Twill seem better  
When golden happiness breaks forth itself  
Out of the [east port] of the widow's chamber.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

And here it sets.

**SIR GILBERT**

Here shall the downfall be;  
Her wealth shall rise from her and set in thee.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You men have th' art to overcome poor women.  
Pray give my thoughts the freedom of one day,  
And all the rest take you.

**SIR GILBERT**

I straight obey.  
[Aside] This bird's my own.

Exit Sir Gilbert Lambston.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

There is no happiness but has her season:  
Herein the brightness of her virtue shines.  
The husk falls off in time that long shuts up  
The fruit in a dark prison; so sweeps by  
The cloud of miseries from wretches' eyes  
That yet, though fall'n, at length they see to rise:  
The secret powers work wondrously and duly.

Enter Master Low-water.

**LOW-WATER**

Why, how now, Kate?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Oh, are you come, sir? Husband,  
Wake, wake, and let not patience keep thee poor;  
Rouse up thy spirit from this falling slumber.  
Make thy distress seem but a weeping dream  
And this the opening morning of thy comforts.  
Wipe the salt dew off from thy careful eyes,  
And drink a draught of gladness next thy heart  
T' expel the infection of all poisonous sorrows.

I.[i. A street]

**LOW-WATER**

You turn me past my senses.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Will you but second  
The purpose I intend, I'll be first forward.  
I crave no more of thee but a following spirit;  
Will you but grant me that?

**LOW-WATER**

Why, what's the business  
That should transport thee thus?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Hope of much good,  
No fear of the least ill: take that to comfort thee.

**LOW-WATER**

Yea?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Sleep not on't; this is no slumbering business.  
'Tis like the sweating sickness: I must keep  
Your eyes still wake; y'are gone if once you sleep.

**LOW-WATER**

I will not rest then till thou hast thy wishes.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Peruse this love paper as you go.

**LOW-WATER**

A letter?

Exeunt.

[L.iii. Sir Oliver's house]

Enter Sir Oliver Twilight, with Master Sandfield, Philip, and Savorwit.

**SIR OLIVER**

Good Master Sandfield, for the great affection  
You bear toward my girl, I am well pleas'd  
You should enjoy her beauty. Heaven forbid, sir,  
That I should cast away a proper gentleman  
So far in love with a sour mood or so.  
No, no,  
I'll not die guilty of a lover's neck-cracking.  
Marry, as for portion, there I leave you, sir,  
To the mercy of your destiny again;

I.[i. A street]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

I'll have no hand in that.

**SANDFIELD**

Faith, something, sir;  
Be 't but t' express your love.

**SIR OLIVER**

I have no desire, sir,  
To express my love that way, and so rest satisfied.  
I pray take heed in urging that too much  
You draw not my love from me.

**SANDFIELD**

Fates foresee, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

Faith, then you may go; seek out a high steeple  
Or a deep water: there's no saving of you.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] How naturally he plays upon himself!

**SIR OLIVER**

Marry, if a wedding dinner, as I told you,  
And three years' board, well lodg'd in mine house,  
And eating, drinking, and a sleeping portion  
May give you satisfaction, I am your man, sir;  
Seek out no other.

**SANDFIELD**

I am content to embrace it, sir,  
Rather than hazard languishment or ruin.

**SIR OLIVER**

I love thee for thy wisdom; such a son-in-law  
Will cheer a father's heart. Welcome, sweet Master Sandfield.

[Philip and Savorwit begin to leave with Sandfield.]

Whither away, boys? Philip?

**PHILIP**

To visit my love, sir,  
Old Master Sunset's daughter.

**SIR OLIVER**

That's my Philip.  
Ply 't hard, my good boys both, put 'em to't finely.  
One day, one dinner and one house shall join you.

**PHILIP, SANDFIELD**

I.[i. A street]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

That's our desire, sir.

Exeunt.

**SIR OLIVER**

Pish! Come hither, Savorwit.  
Observe my son and bring me word, sweet boy,  
Whether h'as a speeding wit or no in wooing.

**SAVORWIT**

That will I, sir. [Aside] That your own eyes might tell you.  
I think it speedy: your girl has a round belly.

Exit Savorwit.

**SIR OLIVER**

How soon the comfortable shine of joy  
Breaks through a cloud of grief!  
The tears that I let fall for my dead wife  
Are dried up with the beams of my girl's fortunes.  
Her life, her death, and her ten years' distress  
Are ev'n forgot with me; the love and care  
That I ought her, her daughter [sh' owes] it all:  
It can but be bestow'd, and there 'tis well.

Enter Servant.

**SIR OLIVER**

How now, what news?

**SERVANT**

There's a Dutch merchant, sir,  
That's now come over desires some conference with you.

**SIR OLIVER**

How? A Dutch merchant? Pray send him in to me.

[Exit Servant.]

What news with him, trow?

Enter Dutch Merchant with a little Dutch Boy in great slops.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Sir Oliver Twilight?

**SIR OLIVER**

That's my name indeed, sir.  
I pray be covered, sir; y'are very welcome.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

I.[i. A street]



No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

This is my business, sir. I took into my charge  
A few words to deliver to yourself  
From a dear friend of yours that wonders strangely  
At your unkind neglect.

**SIR OLIVER**

Indeed! What might  
He be, sir?

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Nay, y'are i' th' wrong gender now;  
'Tis that distressed lady, your good wife, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

What say you, sir? My wife?

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Yes, sir, your wife!  
This strangeness now of yours seems more to harden  
Th' uncharitable neglect she tax'd you for.

**SIR OLIVER**

Pray give me leave, sir. Is my wife alive?

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Came any news to you, sir, to th' contrary?

**SIR OLIVER**

Yes, by my faith, did there.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Pray, how long since, sir?

**SIR OLIVER**

'Tis now some ten weeks.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Faith, within this month, sir,  
I saw her talk and eat; and those in our calendar  
Are signs of life and health.

**SIR OLIVER**

Mass, so they are in ours.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

And these were the last words her passion threw me:  
"No grief," quoth she, "sits to my heart so close  
As his unkindness and my daughter's loss."

**SIR OLIVER**

You make me weep and wonder, for I swear

I.[i. A street]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

I sent her ransom, and that daughter's here.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Here! That will come well to lighten her of one grief.  
I long to see her for the piteous moan  
Her mother made for her.

**SIR OLIVER**

That shall you, sir. Within there!

[Enter Servant.]

**SERVANT**

Sir?

**SIR OLIVER**

Call down my daughter.

**SERVANT**

Yes, sir.

[Exit.]

Here's strange budgelling! I tell you, sir,  
Those that I put in trust were near me, too;  
A man would think they should not juggle with me:  
My own son, and my servant, no worse people, sir.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

And yet, oftentimes, sir, what worse knave to a man  
Than he that eats his meat?

**SIR OLIVER**

Troth, you say true, sir.  
I sent 'em simply, and that news they brought,  
My wife had left the world; and with that [sum]  
I sent to her, this brought his sister home.

Enter Grace.

Look you, sir, this is she.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

If my eye sin not, sir,  
Or misty error falsify the glass,  
I saw that face at Antwerp in an inn  
When I set forth first to fetch home this boy.

**SIR OLIVER**

How? In an inn?

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No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**GRACE**

[Aside] Oh, I am betray'd, I fear!

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

How do you, young mistress?

**GRACE**

Your eyes wrong your tongue, sir,  
And makes you sin in both; I am not she.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

No? Then I never saw face twice. Sir Oliver Twilight,  
I tell you my free thoughts: I fear y'are blinded.  
I do not like this story; I doubt much  
The sister is as false as the dead mother.

**SIR OLIVER**

Yea! Say you so, sir? I see nothing lets me,  
But to doubt so too then.  
So, to your chamber; we have done with you.

**GRACE**

[Aside] I would be glad you had. Here's a strange storm.--  
Sift it out well, sir; till anon I leave you, sir.

[Exit.]

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Business commands me hence, but as a pledge  
Of my return, I'll leave my little son with you,  
Who yet takes little pleasure in this country  
'Cause he can speak no English, all Dutch he.

**SIR OLIVER**

A fine boy; he's welcome, sir, to me.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Where's your leg and your thanks to the gentleman?  
War es you neighgen an you thonkes you?

**DUTCH BOY**

[Bowling] Ick donck you, ver ew edermon vrendly kite.

**SIR OLIVER**

What says he, sir?

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

He thanks you for your kindness.

**SIR OLIVER**

Pretty knave!

l.[i. A street]

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Had not some business held me by the way,  
This news had come to your ear ten days ago.

**SIR OLIVER**

It comes too soon now, methinks; I'm your debtor.

**DUTCH MERCHANT.**

But I could wish it, sir, for better ware.

Exit.

**SIR OLIVER**

We must not be our own choosers in our fortunes.  
Here's a cold pie to breakfast: wife alive,  
The daughter doubtful, and the money spent!  
How am I juggled withal!

Enter Savorwit.

**SAVORWIT**

It hits i'faith, sir;  
The work goes even.

**SIR OLIVER**

Oh, come, come, come, are you come, sir?

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Life, what's the matter now?

**SIR OLIVER**

There's a new reckoning  
Come in since.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Pox on't! I thought all had been paid;  
I can't abide these after-reckonings.

**SIR OLIVER**

I pray come near, sir; let's be acquainted with you.  
You're bold enough abroad with my purse, sir.

**SAVORWIT**

No more than beseems manners and good use, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

Did not you bring me word some ten weeks since  
My wife was dead?

**SAVORWIT**

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No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Yes, true, sir, very true, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

Pray stay! And take my horse along with you,  
And with the ransom that I sent for her  
That you redeem'd my daughter?

**SAVORWIT**

Right as can be, sir;  
I never found your worship in a false tale yet.

**SIR OLIVER**

I thank you for your good word, sir, but I'm like  
To find your worship now in two at once.

**SAVORWIT**

I should be sorry to hear that.

**SIR OLIVER**

I believe you, sir.  
Within this month my wife was sure alive—  
There's six weeks bated of your ten-weeks' lie—  
As has been credibly reported to me  
By a Dutch merchant, father to that boy,  
But now come over, and the words scarce cold.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Oh, strange!—'Tis a most rank untruth; where is he, sir?

**SIR OLIVER**

He will not be long absent.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] All's confounded.—  
If he were here, I'll tell him to his face, sir;  
He wears a double tongue: that's Dutch and English.  
Will the boy say't?

**SIR OLIVER**

'Las, he can speak no English.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] All the better; I'll gabble something to him.—  
Hoyste kaloiste, kalooskin ee vou, dar sune, alla gaskin?

**DUTCH BOY**

Ick wet neat watt hey zackt; ick unverstion ewe neat.

**SAVORWIT**

Why la, I thought as much.

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No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**SIR OLIVER**

What says the boy?

**SAVORWIT**

He says his father is troubled with an imperfection at one time of the moon and talks like a madman.

**SIR OLIVER**

What? Does the boy say so?

**SAVORWIT**

I knew there was somewhat in't.

Your wife alive! Will you believe all tales, sir?

**SIR OLIVER**

Nay, more, sir: he told me he saw this wench  
Which you brought home at Antwerp in an inn,  
Tell[s] me I'm plainly cozen'd of all hands,  
'Tis not my daughter neither.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] All's broke out.—

How? Not your daughter, sir? I must to't again.

Quisquinikin sadlamare, alla pisse kickin sows-clows, hoff tofte le cumber shaw, bouns bus boxsceeno.

**DUTCH BOY**

Ick an sawth no int hein clappon de heeke, I dinke ute zein zennon.

**SAVORWIT**

Oh, zein zennon! Ah ha! I thought how 'twould prove i' th' end. The boy says they never came near Antwerp: a quite contrary way, round about by Parma.

**SIR OLIVER**

What's the same zein zennon?

**SAVORWIT**

That is, he saw no such wench in an inn. 'Tis well I came in such happy time to get it out of the boy before his father returned again. Pray be wary, sir; the world's subtle: come and pretend a charitable business in policy, and work out a piece of money on you.

**SIR OLIVER**

Mass, art advis'd of that?

**SAVORWIT**

The age is cunning, sir; beside, a Dutchman will live upon any ground and work butter out of a thistle.

**SIR OLIVER**

Troth, thou say'st true in that: they're the best thrivers in turnips, hartichalks, and cabishes; our English are not like them.

**SAVORWIT**

Oh, fie, no, sir!

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**SIR OLIVER**

Ask him from whence they came, when they came hither.

**SAVORWIT**

That I will sir. Culluaron lagooso, lageen, lagan, rufft, punkatee.

**DUTCH BOY**

Nimd aweigh de cack.

**SAVORWIT**

What, what? I cannot blame him then.

**SIR OLIVER**

What says he to thee?

**SAVORWIT**

The poor boy blushes for him; he tells me his father came from making merry with certain of his countrymen and he's a little steep'd in English beer. There's no heed to be taken of his tongue now.

**SIR OLIVER**

Hoyda! How com'st thou by all this? I heard him speak but three words to thee.

**SAVORWIT**

Oh, sir, the Dutch is a very wide language. You shall have ten English words even for one, as for example, Gullder–goose; there's a word for you, master.

**SIR OLIVER**

Why, what's that same Gullder–goose?

**SAVORWIT**

How do you and all your generation.

**SIR OLIVER**

Why, 'tis impossible! How prove you that, sir?

**SAVORWIT**

'Tis thus distinguish'd, sir: Gull, how do you, der, and, goose, your generation.

**SIR OLIVER**

'Tis a most saucy language; how cam'st thou by't?

**SAVORWIT**

I was brought up to London in an eelship;  
There was the place I caught it first by th' [tail].  
[Aside] I shall be tripp'd anon; pox, would I were gone!—  
I'll go seek out your son, sir; you shall hear  
What thunder he'll bring with him.

**SIR OLIVER**

Do, do, Savorwit;

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I'll have you all face to face.

**SAVORWIT**

Cuds me! What else, sir?  
[Aside] And you take me so near the net again,  
I'll give you leave to squat me! I have 'scap'd fairly.  
We are undone in Dutch; all our three-months' roguery  
Is now come over in a butter firkin.

Exit Savorwit.

**SIR OLIVER**

Never was man so toss'd between two tales!  
I know not which to take, not which to trust.  
The boy here is the likeliest to tell truth,  
Because the world's corruption is not yet  
At full years in him; sure he cannot know  
What deceit means: 'tis English yet to him.  
And when I think again, why should the father  
Dissemble for no profit? He gets none,  
Whate'er he hopes for, and I think he hopes not.  
The man's in a good case: being old and weary,  
He dares not lean his arm on his son's shoulder  
For fear he lie i' th' dirt, but must be rather  
Beholding to a stranger for his prop.

Enter Dutchman [Dutch Merchant].

**DUTCH MERCHANT.**

I make bold once again, sir, for a boy here.

**SIR OLIVER**

Oh, sir, y'are welcome. Pray resolve me one thing, sir:  
Did you within this month, with your own eyes,  
See my wife living?

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

I ne'er borrowed any.  
Why should you move that question, sir? Dissembling  
Is no part of my living.

**SIR OLIVER**

I have reason  
To urge it so far, sir, pray be not angry though,  
Because my man was here since your departure,  
Withstands all stiffly, and to make it clearer,  
Question'd your boy in Dutch, who, as he told me,  
Return'd this answer first to him: that you  
Had imperfection at one time o' th' moon  
Which made you talk so strangely.

l.[i. A street]



No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

How, how's this? Zeicke yongon, ick ben ick quelt medien dullek heght, ee untoit van the mon, an koot uram'd?

**DUTCH BOY**

Wee ek, heigh lieght in ze bokkas, dee't site.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Why, la you, sir! Here's no such thing;  
He says he lies in's throat that says it.

**SIR OLIVER**

Then the rogue lies in's throat, for he told me so,  
And that the boy should answer at next question  
That you ne'er saw this wench nor came near Antwerp.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Ten thousand devils! Zeicke hee ewe ek kneeght, yongon, dat wee neeky by Antwarpon ne don cammen no seene  
de doughter dor?

**DUTCH BOY**

Ick hub ham hean sulka dongon he zaut, hei es an skallom an rubbout.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

He says he told him no such matter; he's a knave and a rascal.

**SIR OLIVER**

Why, how am I abus'd? Pray tell me one thing:  
What's Gullder–goose in Dutch?

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

How? Gullder–goose?  
There's no such thing in Dutch; it may be an ass  
In English.

**SIR OLIVER**

Hoyda! Then am I that ass  
In plain English: I am grossly cozen'd, most  
Inconsiderately! Pray let my house receive you  
For one night that I may quit these rascals,  
I beseech you, sir.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

If that may stead you, sir,  
I'll not refuse you.

**SIR OLIVER**

A thousand thanks, and welcome.  
On whom can fortune more spit out her foam:  
Work'd on abroad and play'd upon at home!

Exeunt.

l.[i. A street]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

## II.[i. Weatherwise's house]

Enter Weatherwise, the gull, meeting [Pickadille and] two or three [servants] bringing out a table.

### **WEATHERWISE**

So, set the table ready. The widow's i' th' next room, looking upon my clock with the days and the months and the change of the moon; I'll fetch her in presently.

[Exit.]

### **PICKADILLE**

She's not so mad to be fetch'd in with the moon, I warrant you. A man must go roundlier to work with a widow than to woo her with the hand of a dial, or stir up her blood with the striking part of a clock; I should ne'er stand to show her such things in chamber.

Exeunt [Servants]. Enter Weatherwise with the widow [Lady Goldenfleece], Sir Gilbert Lambston, Master Pepperton, Master Overdon.

### **WEATHERWISE**

Welcome, sweet widow, to a bachelor's house here; a single man I, but for two or three maids that I keep.

### **LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Why, are you double with them then?

### **WEATHERWISE**

An exceeding good mourning wit! Women are wiser than ever they were since they wore doublets. You must think, sweet widow, if a man keep maids, they're under his subjection.

### **LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

That's most true, sir.

### **WEATHERWISE**

They have no reason to have a lock but the master must have a key to't.

### **LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

To him, Sir Gilbert. He fights with me at a wrong weapon now.

### **WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] Nay, and Sir Gilbert strike, my weapon falls;  
I fear no thrust but his. Here are more shooters,  
But they have shot two arrows without heads;  
They cannot stick i' th' butt yet. Hold out, knight,  
And I'll cleave the black pin i' th' midst o' th' white.

Exit.

### **LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Nay, and he led me into a closet, sir, where he showed me diet drinks for several months, as scurvigrass for April, clarified whey for June, and the like.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**SIR GILBERT**

Oh, madam, he is a most necessary property, an't be but to save our credit, ten pound in a banquet.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Go, y'are a wag, Sir Gilbert.

**SIR GILBERT**

How many there be in the world of his fortunes that prick their own calves with briers to make an easy passage for others, or like a toiling usurer sets his son a—horseback in cloth—of—gold breeches while he himself goes t' th' devil afoot in a pair of old strossers.

But shall I give a more familiar sign?

His are the sweetmeats, but the kisses mine. [Kisses her.]

**OVERDON**

Excellent. [Aside] A pox o' your fortune!

**PEPPERTON**

[Taking Overdon aside] Saucy courting has brought all modest wooing clean out of fashion. You shall have few maids nowadays got without rough handling; all the town's so us'd to't, and most commonly too they're join'd before they're married because they'll be sure to be fast enough.

**OVERDON**

Sir, since he strives t' oppose himself against us,

Let's so combine our friendships in our straits

By all means graceful to assist each other.

For I protest it shall as much glad me

To see your happiness and his disgrace,

As if the wealth were mine, the love, the place.

**PEPPERTON**

And with the like faith I reward your friendship.

I'll break the bawdy ranks of his discourse

And scatter his libidinous whispers straight.—

Madam.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

How cheer you, gentlemen?

**SIR GILBERT**

[Aside] Pox on 'em!

They wak'd me out of a fine sleep; three minutes

Had fasten'd all the treasure in mine arms.

**PEPPERTON**

[Showing her the trenchers] You took no note of this conceit, it seems, madam.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Twelve trenchers, upon every one a month.

January, February, March, April—

**PEPPERTON**

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Ay, and their posies under 'em.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Pray, what says May? She's the spring lady.

[PEPPER-TON]

"Now gallant May in her array,  
Doth make the field pleasant and gay."

**OVERDON**

"This month of June use clarified whey,  
Boil'd with cold herbs, and drink alway."

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Drink't all away, he should say.

**PEPPER-TON**

'Twere much better indeed, and wholesomer for his liver.

**SIR GILBERT**

September's a good one here, madam.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, have you chose your month? Let's hear't, Sir Gilbert.

**SIR GILBERT**

"Now mayst thou physics safely take,  
And bleed, and bathe for thy health's sake.  
Eat figs and grapes and spicery  
For to refresh thy members dry."

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Thus it is still when a man's simple meaning lights among wantons. How many honest words have suffered corruption since Chaucer's days? A virgin would speak those words then that a very midwife would blush to hear now, if she have but so much blood left to make up an ounce of grace. And who is this long on but such wags as you that use your words like your wenches? You cannot let 'em pass honestly by you, but you must still have a flirt at 'em.

**PEPPER-TON**

You have paid some of us home, madam.

Enter Weatherwise.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] If conceit will strike this stroke, have at the widow's plumtree. I'll put 'em down all for a banquet.—Widow and gentlemen, my friends and servants, I make you wait long here for a bachelor's pittance.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, sir, y'are pleas'd to be modest.

**WEATHERWISE**

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

No, by my troth, widow. You shall find it otherwise.

Strike music. Enter banquet and six of his tenants with the twelve signs made like banqueting–stuff: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What, the twelve signs?

**WEATHERWISE**

These are the signs of my love, widow.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Worse meat would have serv'd us, sir. By my faith,  
I'm sorry you should be at such charges, sir,  
To feast us a whole month together here.

**WEATHERWISE**

Widow, thou'rt welcome a whole month, and ever.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

And what be those, sir, that brought in the banquet?

**WEATHERWISE**

Those are my tenants; they stand for fasting days.

**SIR GILBERT**

Or the six weeks in Lent.

**WEATHERWISE**

Y'are i' th' right, Sir Gilbert.  
Sweet widow, take your place at Aries here;  
That's the head sign. A widow is the head  
Till she be married.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What is she then?

**WEATHERWISE**

The middle.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Sitting] 'Tis happy she's no worse.

**WEATHERWISE**

Taurus, Sir Gilbert Lambston, that's for you.  
They say you're a good town–bull.

**SIR GILBERT**

[Sitting] Oh, spare your friends, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

Il.[j. Weatherwise's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

And Gemini for Master Pepperton.  
He had two boys at once by his last wife.

**PEPPERTON**

[Sitting] I hear the widow[s] find no fault with that, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

Cancer the Crab for Master Overdon,  
For when a thing's past fifty, it grows crooked.

[Overdon sits.]

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Now for yourself, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

Take no care for me,  
Widow: I can be anywhere. Here's Leo,  
Heart and back; Virgo, guts and belly.  
I can go lower yet, and yet fare better,  
Since Sagittarius fits me the thighs;  
[Sitting] I care not if I be about the thighs,  
I shall find meat enough.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

But under pardon, sir.  
Though you be lord o' th' feast and the conceit both,  
Methinks it had been proper for the banquet  
To have had the signs all fill'd and no one idle.

**WEATHERWISE**

I know it had, but whose fault's that, widow?  
You should have got you more suitors to have stopp'd  
The gaps.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Nay, sure, they should get us, and not  
We them. There be your tenants, sir; we are  
Not proud; you may bid them sit down.

**WEATHERWISE**

By th' mass,  
It's true too. Then sit down, tenants,  
Once with your hats on, but spare the meat, I charge you,  
As you hope for new leases. I must make  
My signs draw out a month yet, with a bit  
Every morning to breakfast, and at  
Full moon with a whole one; that's restorative.  
Sit round, sit round, and do not speak, sweet tenants.  
You may be bold enough, so you eat but little.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

[Tenants sit.]

How like you this now, widow?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

It shows well, sir;  
And like the good old hospitable fashion.

**PICKADILLE**

[Aside] How! Like a good old hospital! My mistress makes an arrant gull on him.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

But yet methinks there wants clothes for the feet.

**WEATHERWISE**

That part's uncovered yet. Push, no matter for the feet.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Yes, if the feet catch cold, the head will feel it.

**WEATHERWISE**

Why then you may draw up your legs, and lie  
Rounder together.

**SIR GILBERT**

H'as answered you well, madam.

**WEATHERWISE**

And you draw up your legs too, widow, my tenant  
Will feel you there, for he's one of the calves.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Better and better, sir; your wit fattens as he feeds.

**PICKADILLE**

[Aside] Sh'as took the calf from his tenant and put it upon his ground now.

[Enter Servant.]

**WEATHERWISE**

How now, my lady's man, what's the news, sir?

**SERVANT**

Madam, there's a young gentleman below;  
H'as earnest business to your ladyship.

**WEATHERWISE**

Another suitor, I hold my life, widow.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What is he, sir?

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]



**SERVANT**

He seems a gentleman,  
That's the least of him, and yet more I know not.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Under the leave o' th' master of the house here,  
I would he were admitted.

**WEATHERWISE**

With all my heart, widow; I fear him not.  
Come cut and long tail!

**SIR GILBERT**

[Aside] I have the least fear  
And the most firmness; nothing can shake me.

[Exit Servant.]

**WEATHERWISE**

If he be a gentleman, he's welcome;  
There's a sign does nothing, and that's fit  
For a gentleman. The feet will be kept warm  
Enough now for you, widow, for if he be  
A right gentleman, he has his stockings warm'd  
And he wears socks beside, partly for warmth,  
Partly for cleanliness; and if he observe  
Fridays too, he comes excellent well.  
Pisces will be a fine fish dinner for him.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Why then you mean, sir, he shall sit as he comes?

**WEATHERWISE**

Ay, and he were a lord, he shall not sit  
Above my tenants. I'll not have two lords  
To them, so I may go look my rent  
In another man's breeches. I was  
Not brought up to be so unmannerly.

Enter Mistress Low-water as a gallant gentleman, her husband [Low-water] like a serving-man after her.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] I have pick'd out a bold time.--Much good do you,  
Gentlemen.

**WEATHERWISE**

Y'are welcome as I may say, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Pardon my rudeness, madam.

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

No such fault, sir;  
You're too severe to yourself; our judgment quits you.  
Please you to do as we do.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Thanks, good madam.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Make room, gentlemen.

**WEATHERWISE**

Sit still, tenants.  
I'll call in all your old leases and rack you else.

**ALL TENANTS**

Oh, sweet landlord!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Take my cloak, sirrah.

[She gives her cloak to Low-water.]

If any be disturb'd, I'll not sit, gentlemen.  
I see my place.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] A proper woman turn'd gallant!  
If the widow refuse me, I care not  
If I be a suitor to him. I have known  
Those who have been as mad, and given half  
Their living for a male companion.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

How, Pisces! Is that mine? [Sitting] 'Tis a conceited banquet.

**WEATHERWISE**

If you love any fish, pray fall to, sir.  
If you had come sooner, you might have happened  
Among some of the flesh signs, but now they're all taken up;  
Virgo had been a good dish for you, had not  
One of my tenants been somewhat busy with her.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Pray let him keep her, sir; give me meat fresh:  
I'd rather have whole fish than broken flesh.

**SIR GILBERT**

What say you to a bit of Taurus?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

No, I thank you, sir;  
The bull's too rank for me.

**SIR GILBERT**

How, sir?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Too rank, sir.

**SIR GILBERT**

Fie, I shall strike you dumb like all your fellows.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

What, with your heels or horns?

**SIR GILBERT**

Perhaps with both.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

It must be at dead [low water], when I'm dead then.

**LOW-WATER**

[Aside] 'Tis brave, Kate, and nobly spoke of thee.

**WEATHERWISE**

This quarrel must be drown'd. Pickadille, my lady's fool!

**PICKADILLE**

You're your own man, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

Prithee, step in to one o' th' maids.

**PICKADILLE**

That I will, sir, and thank you, too.

**WEATHERWISE**

Nay, hark you, sir: call for my sun-cup presently; I'd forgot it.

**PICKADILLE**

How, your sun-cup? [Aside] Some cup, I warrant, that he stole out o' th' Sun Tavern.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Aside] The more I look on him, the more I thirst for't.  
Methinks his beauty does so far transcend,  
Turns the signs back, makes that the upper end.

**WEATHERWISE**

How cheer you, widow? Gentlemen, how cheer you?  
Fair weather in all quarters!

Il.[j. Weatherwise's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

The sun will peep anon; I have sent one for him.  
In the meantime I'll tell you a tale of these.  
This Libra here that keeps the scale so even  
Was i' th' old time an honest chandler's widow  
And had one daughter which was called Virgo,  
Which now my hungry tenant has deflower'd.  
This Virgo, passing for a maid, was sued to  
By Sagittarius there, a gallant shooter,  
And Aries, his head rival; but her old crabbed  
Uncle Cancer here, dwelling in Crooked Lane,  
Still cross'd the marriage, minding to bestow her  
Upon one Scorpio, a rich usurer.  
The girl, loathing that match, fell into folly  
With one Taurus, a gentleman in Townbull Street,  
By whom she had two twins, those Gemini there,  
Of which two brats she was brought abed in Leo  
At the Red Lion about Tower Hill.  
Being in this distress, one Capricorn,  
An honest citizen, pitied her case and married her  
To Aquarius, an old water-bearer,  
And Pisces was her living ever after;  
At Standard she sold fish where he drew water.

ALL

It shall be yours, sir.

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

Meat and mirth too! Y'are lavish;  
Your purse and tongue has been at cost today, sir.

### SIR GILBERT

You may challenge all comers at these twelve weapons, I warrant you.

Enter clown [Pickadille with the sun-cup, wearing a veil but no doublet].

### PICKADILLE

Your sun-cup call you it! 'Tis a simple voyage that I have made here. I have left my doublet within for fear I should sweat through my jerkin, and thrown a cypress over my face for fear of sun burning.

### WEATHERWISE

How now, [who's] this? Why, sirrah!

### PICKADILLE

Can you endure it, mistress?

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

Endure what, fool?

### WEATHERWISE

Fill the cup, coxcomb.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**PICKADILLE.**

Nay, an't be no hotter, I'll go put on my doublet again.

Exit.

**WEATHERWISE**

What a whoreson sot is this! [Giving the cup to Low-water] Prithee, fill the cup, fellow, and give't the widow.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Sirrah, how stand you? Bestow your service there  
Upon her ladyship.

[He gives the cup to Lady Goldenfleece.]

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What's here? A sun?

**WEATHERWISE**

It does betoken, madam, a cheerful day  
To somebody.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Aside] It rises full in the face of [yon]  
Fair sign, and yet by course he is the last  
Must feel the heat.—Here, gentlemen, to you all,  
For you know the sun must go through the twelve signs.

[Drinks.]

**WEATHERWISE**

Most wittily, widow: you jump with my conceit right;  
There's not a hair between us.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Give it Sir Gilbert.

**SIR GILBERT**

I am the next through whom the golden flame  
Shines when 'tis spent in thy celestial ram;  
The poor feet there must wait and cool a while.

[Drinks.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

We have our time, sir; joy and we shall meet:  
I have known the proud neck lie between the feet.

**WEATHERWISE**

So round it goes.

[Each drinks in turn.] Enter clown [Pickadille].

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

**PICKADILLE**

I like this drinking world well.

**WEATHERWISE**

So fill't him again.

**PEPPERTON**

Fill't me? Why, I drunk last, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

I know you did, but Gemini must drink twice,  
Unless you mean that one of them shall be chok'd.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Aside] Fly from my heart all variable thoughts!  
She that's entic'd by every pleasing object  
Shall find small pleasure, and as little rest.  
This knave hath lov'd me long; he's best and worthiest,  
I cannot but in honour see him requited.--  
Sir Gilbert Lambston!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

How! Pardon me, sweet lady,  
That with a bold tongue I strike by your words:  
Sir Gilbert Lambston?

**SIR GILBERT**

Yes, sir, that's my name.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

There should be a rank villain of that name;  
Came you out of that house?

**SIR GILBERT**

How, sir slave!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Fall to your bull; leave roaring till anon.

**WEATHERWISE**

Yet again! And you love me, gentlemen,  
Let's have no roaring here. If I had thought that,  
I'd have sent my bull to the bear garden.

**PEPPERTON**

Why, so you should have wanted one of your signs.

**WEATHERWISE**

But I may chance want two now, and they fall  
Together by the ears.

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What's the strange fire  
That works in these two creatures? Cold signs both,  
Yet more hot than all their fellows.

**WEATHERWISE**

Ho, Sol in Pisces!  
The sun's in New Fish Street. Here's an end of this course.

**PICKADILLE**

Madam, I am bold to remember your worship for a year's wages and an livery cloak.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

How, will you shame me? Had you not both last week, fool?

**PICKADILLE**

Ay, but there's another year past since that.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Would all your wit could make that good, sir.

**PICKADILLE**

I am sure the sun has run through all the twelve signs since, and that's a year; [these] gentlemen can witness.

**WEATHERWISE**

The fool will live, madam.

**PICKADILLE**

[Aside] Ay, as long as your eyes are open, I warrant him.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Sirrah!

**LOW-WATER**

Does your worship call?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Giving him a letter] Commend my love and service to the widow;  
Desire her ladyship to taste that morsel.

**LOW-WATER**

[Aside] This is the bit I watch'd for all this while,  
But it comes duly.

**SIR GILBERT**

And wherein has this name of mine offended,  
That y'are so liberal of your infamous titles,  
I, but a stranger to thee? It must be known, sir,  
Ere we two part.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Marry, and reason, good sir.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, strike me cold! This should be your hand, Sir Gilbert?

**SIR GILBERT**

Why, make you question of that, madam? 'Tis one of the letters I sent you.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Rising to leave] Much good do you, gentlemen.

**ALL**

How now? What's the matter?

**WEATHERWISE**

Look to the widow; she paints white! Some aqua coelistis for my lady! Run, villain!

**PICKADILLE**

Aqua solister! Can nobody help her case but a lawyer, and so many suitors here?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, treachery unmatch'd, unheard of!

**SIR GILBERT**

How do you, madam?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, impudence as foul! Does my disease  
Ask how I do? Can it torment my heart  
And look with a fresh colour in my face?

**SIR GILBERT**

What's this? What's this?

**WEATHERWISE**

I am sorry for this qualm, widow.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

He that would know a villain when he meets him,  
Let him ne'er go to a conjurer: here's a glass  
Will show him without money, and far truer!  
Preserver of my state, pray tell me, sir,  
That I may pay you all my thanks together,  
What bless'd hap brought that letter to your hand  
From me, so fast lock'd in mine enemy's power?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I will resolve you, madam. I have a kinsman  
Somewhat infected with that wanton pity  
Which men bestow on the distress of women,



No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Especially if they be fair and poor;  
With such hot charity, which indeed is lust,  
He sought t' entice, as his repentance told me,  
Her whom you call your enemy, the wife  
To a poor gentleman, one Low-water---

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Right, right, the same.

**LOW-WATER**

[Aside] Had it been right, 't 'ad now been.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

And, according to the common rate of sinners,  
Offer'd large maintenance, which with her seem'd nothing:  
For if she would consent, she told him roundly,  
There was a knight had bid more at one minute  
Than all his wealth could compass, and withal  
Pluck'd out that letter as it were in scorn;  
Which, by good fortune, he put up in jest  
With promise that the writ should be returnable  
The next hour of his meeting. But, sweet madam,  
Out of my love and zeal, I did so practice  
The part upon him of an urgent wooer  
That neither he nor that return'd more to her.

**SIR GILBERT**

[Aside] Plague o' that kinsman!

**WEATHERWISE**

Here's a gallant rascal!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Sir, you have appear'd so noble in this action,  
So full of worth and goodness, that my thanks  
Will rather shame the bounty of my mind  
Than do it honour. Oh, thou treacherous villain!  
Does thy faith bear such fruit?  
Are these the blossoms of a hundred oaths  
Shot from thy bosom? Was thy love so spiteful  
It could not be content to mock my heart,  
Which is in love a misery too much,  
But must extend so far to the quick ruin  
Of what was painfully got, carefully left me;  
And, 'mongst a world of yielding, needy women,  
Choose no one to make merry with my sorrows  
And spend my wealth on in adulterous surfeits  
But my most mortal enemy? Oh, spiteful!  
Is this thy practice? Follow it, 'twill advance thee!  
Go, beguile on! Have I so happily found  
What many a widow has with sorrow tasted,

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Even when my lip touch'd the contracting cup,  
Even then to see the spider? 'Twas miraculous!  
Crawl with thy poisons hence, and for thy sake  
I'll never covet titles and more riches,  
To fall into a gulf of hate and laughter.  
I'll marry love hereafter; I've enough,  
And wanting that, I have nothing. There's thy way.

### OVERDON

Do you hear, sir? You must walk.

### PEPPERON

Hear't! Thrust him down stairs!

### WEATHERWISE

Out of my house, you treacherous, lecherous rascal!

### SIR GILBERT

All curses scatter you!

### WEATHERWISE

Life, do you thunder here? If you had stayed a little longer, I'd have ripp'd out some of my bull out of your belly again.

### PEPPERON

'Twas a most noble discovery; we must love you forever for't.

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

Sir, for your banquet and your mirth, we thank you;  
You, gentlemen, for your kind company;  
But, you, for all my merry days to come,  
Or this had been the last else.

### MISTRESS LOW-WATER

Love and fortune  
Had more care of your safety, peace, and state, madam.

### WEATHERWISE

[Aside] Now will I thrust in for't.

### PEPPERON

[Aside] I'm for myself now.

### OVERDON

[Aside] What's fifty years? 'Tis man's best time and season.  
Now the [knight's] gone, the widow will hear reason.

### LOW-WATER

[Aside] Now, now! The suitors flatter; hold on, Kate:  
The hen may pick the meat while the cocks prate.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Exeunt.

[II.ii. A street outside Sir Oliver's house]

Enter Master Sandfield; Philip, Sir Oliver Twilight's son; with Savorwit.

**PHILIP**

If thou talk'st longer, I shall turn to marble,  
And death will stop my hearing.

**SANDFIELD**

Horrible fortune!

**SAVORWIT**

Nay, sir, our building is so far defac'd  
There is no stuff left to raise up a hope.

**PHILIP**

Oh, with more patience could my flesh endure  
A score of wounds and all their several searchings  
Than this that thou hast told me!

**SAVORWIT**

Would that Flemish ram  
Had ne'er come near our house! There's no going home  
As long as he has a nest there, and his young one,  
A little Flanders' egg new fledg'd; they gape  
For pork, and I shall be made meat for 'em.

**PHILIP**

'Tis not the bare news of my mother's life,  
May she live long and happy, that afflicts me  
With half the violence that the latter draws,  
Though in that news I have my share of grief,  
As I had share of sin and a foul neglect:  
It is my love's betraying; that's the sting  
That strikes through flesh and spirit, and sense nor wit  
From thee, in whom I ne'er saw ebb till now,  
Nor comforts from a faithful friend can ease me.  
I'll try the goodness of a third companion,  
What he'll do for me.

[Draws his sword.]

**SANDFIELD**

Hold! Why, friend?

**SAVORWIT**

Why, master, is this all your kindness, sir? Offer to steal into another country and ne'er take your leave on's?  
Troth, I take it unkindly at your hands, sir; but I'll put it up for once. [Puts up the sword.] Faith, there was no  
conscience in this, sir: leave me here to endure all weathers, whilst you make your soul dance like a juggler's egg

II.[j]. Weatherwise's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

upon the point of a rapier! By my troth, sir, y'are too blame in't. You might have given us an inkling of your journey; perhaps others would as fain have gone as you.

**PHILIP**

Burns this clay lamp of miserable life  
When joy, the oil that feeds it, is dried up?

Enter his mother [Lady Twilight] new landed; with a gentleman, a scholar [Beveril]; and others.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

He has remov'd his house.

**BEVERIL**

So it seems, madam.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I'll ask that gentleman. Pray, can you tell me, sir,  
Which is Sir Oliver Twilight's?

**PHILIP**

Few can better, gentlewoman.  
It is the next fair house your eye can fix on.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I thank you, sir. [To the others, who then leave] Go on.  
He had a son about some ten years since.

**PHILIP**

That son still lives.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I pray, how does he, sir?

**PHILIP**

Faith, much about my health; that's never worse.  
If you have any business to him, gentlewoman,  
I can cut short your journey to the house.  
I'm all that ever was of the same kind.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Oh, my sweet son! Never fell fresher joy  
Upon the heart of mother! This is he, sir!

**BEVERIL**

My seven years' travel has ev'n worn him out  
Of my remembrance.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Oh, this gear's worse and worse!

**PHILIP**

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

[Kneeling] I am so wonderstruck at your bless'd presence  
That through amaz'd joy, I neglect my duty.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Rise, and a thousand blessings spring up with thee.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] I would we had but one in the meantime;  
Let the rest glow at leisure.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

But know you not this gentleman yet, son?

**PHILIP**

I take it's Master Beveril.

**BEVERIL**

My name's Beveril, sir.

**PHILIP**

[Embracing him] Right welcome to my bosom!

**LADY TWILIGHT**

You'd not think, son,  
How much I am beholding to this gentleman  
As far as freedom; he laid out the ransom,  
Finding me so distress'd.

**PHILIP**

'Twas worthily done, sir,  
And I shall ever rest your servant for't.

**BEVERIL**

You quite forget your worth. 'Twas my good hap, sir,  
To return home that way after some travels  
Where finding your good mother so distress'd,  
I could not but in pity see her releas'd.

**PHILIP**

It was a noble charity, sir; heaven quit you.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] It comes at last.

**BEVERIL**

I left a sister here,  
New married when I last took leave of England.

**PHILIP**

Oh, Mistress Low-water.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**BEVERIL**

Pray, sir, how does she?

**PHILIP**

So little comfort I can give you, sir,  
That I would fain excuse myself for silence.

**BEVERIL**

Why, what's the worst, sir?

**PHILIP**

Wrongs has made her poor.

**BEVERIL**

You strike my heart! Alas, good gentlewoman!

**PHILIP**

Here's a gentleman; you know him: Master Sandfield.

**BEVERIL**

I crave pardon, sir.

**PHILIP**

He can resolve you from her kinswoman.

**SANDFIELD**

Welcome to England, madam.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Thanks, good sir.

**PHILIP**

[Taking Savorwit aside] Now there's no way to 'scape: I'm compass'd round;  
My shame is like a prisoner set with halberds.

**SAVORWIT**

Pish, master, master! 'Tis young flood again,  
And you can take your time now; away quick!

**PHILIP**

Push, thou'st a swimming head.

**SAVORWIT**

Will you but hear me?  
When did you lose your tide when I set forth with you?

**PHILIP**

That's true.

**SAVORWIT**

Regard me then; though you have no feeling,

ll.[i. Weatherwise's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

I would not hang by th' thumbs with a good will.

**PHILIP**

I hang by th' heart, sir, and would fain have ease.

**SAVORWIT**

Then this or none. Fly to your mother's pity,  
For that's the court must help you: y'are quite gone  
At common law; no counselor can hear you.  
Confess your follies and ask pardon for 'em,  
Tell her the state of all things; stand not nicely:  
The meat's too hard to be minc'd now;  
She breeds young bones by this time.  
Deal plainly: heaven will bless thee; turn out all,  
And shake your pockets after it. Beg, weep,  
Kneel, anything; 'twill break no bones, man.  
Let her not rest, take breathing time, nor leave thee  
Till thou hast got her help.

**PHILIP**

Lad, I conceive thee.

**SAVORWIT**

About it then; it requires haste. Do't well:  
There's but a short street between us and hell.

**BEVERIL**

Ah, my poor sister!

**LADY TWILIGHT**

'Las, good gentlewoman  
My heart ev'n weeps for her.

[Philip] shogs his mother.

Nay, son, we'll go now.

**PHILIP**

May I crave one word, madam?

**LADY TWILIGHT**

With me, son?  
The more, the better welcome.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Now, now luck!  
I pray not often: the last prayer I made  
Was nine-year-old last Bartholomew-tide; 'twould have been  
A jolly chopper, and 't 'ad liv'd till this time.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

II.[i. Weatherwise's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Why do your words start back? Are they afraid  
Of her that ever lov'd them?

**PHILIP**

I have a suit to you, madam.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

You have told me that already; pray what is't?  
If't be so great my present state refuse it,  
I shall be abler, then command and use it;  
Whate'er 't be, let me have warning to provide for't.

**PHILIP**

[Kneeling] Provide forgiveness then, for that's the want  
My conscience feels. Oh, my wild youth has led me  
Into unnatural wrongs against your freedom once.  
I spent the ransom which my father sent  
To set my pleasures free, while you lay captive.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] He does it finely, faith.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

And is this all now?  
You use me like a stranger; pray stand up.

**PHILIP**

Rather fall flat; I shall deserve yet worse.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

[Raising him] Whate'er your faults are, esteem me still a friend,  
Or else you wrong me more in asking pardon  
Than when you did the wrong you ask'd it for,  
And since you have prepar'd me to forgive you,  
Pray let me know for what; the first fault's nothing.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] 'Tis a sweet lady, every inch of her.

**PHILIP**

Here comes the wrong then that drives home the rest.  
I saw a face at Antwerp that quite drew me  
From conscience and obedience; in that fray  
I lost my heart, I must needs lose my way:  
There went the ransom, to redeem my mind;  
'Stead of the money, I brought over her,  
And to cast mists before my father's eyes,  
Told him it was my sister, lost so long,  
And that yourself was dead. You see the wrong?

**LADY TWILIGHT**

II.[i. Weatherwise's house]



No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

This is but youthful still. Oh, that word "sister"  
Afflicts me when I think on't. I forgive thee  
As freely as thou didst it. For, alas,  
This may be call'd good dealing to some parts,  
That love and youth plays daily among sons.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] She helps our knavery well; that's one good comfort.

**PHILIP**

But such is the hard plight my state lives in  
That 'twixt forgiveness I must sin again,  
And seek my help where I bestow'd my wrongs.  
Oh, mother, pity once, though against reason,  
'Cause I can merit none; though my wrongs grieve you,  
Yet let it be your glory to relieve me.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Wherein have I given cause yet of mistrust,  
That you should doubt my succour and my love?  
Show me but in what kind I may bestow 'em.

**PHILIP**

There came a Dutchman with report this day  
That you were living.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Came he so lately?

**PHILIP**

Yes, madam.  
Which news so struck my father on the sudden  
That he grows jealous of my faith in both.  
These five hours have I kept me from his sight  
And wish'd myself eternally so hid;  
And surely, had not your bless'd presence quicken'd  
The flame of life in me, all had gone out.  
Now to confirm me to his trust again  
And settle much aright in his opinion,  
Say but she is my sister, and all's well.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

You ask devotion like a bashful beggar  
That pure need urges and not lazy impudence;  
And to express how glad I am to pity you,  
My bounty shall flow over your demand.  
I will not only with a constant breath  
Approve that, but excuse thee for my death.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Why, here's a woman made as a man would wish to have her.

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**PHILIP**

Oh, I am plac'd higher in happiness  
Than whence I fell before!

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] We're brave fellows once again, and we can keep our own. Now, hoffte toffte, our pipes play as loftily!

**BEVERIL**

My sister fled!

**SANDFIELD**

Both fled; that's the news now. Want must obey;  
Oppressions came so thick, they could not stay.

**BEVERIL**

Mean are my fortunes, yet had I been nigh,  
Distress nor wrong should have made virtue fly.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Spoke like a brother, worthy such a sister.

**BEVERIL**

Grief's like a new wound; heat beguiles the sense,  
For I shall feel this smart more three days hence.  
Come, madam, sorrow's rude and forgets manners.

[Exeunt all except Savorwit].

**SAVORWIT**

Our knavery is for all the world like a shifting bankrupt; it breaks in one place, and sets up in another: he tries all trades, from a goldsmith to a tobacco seller, we try all shifts, from an outlaw to a flatterer; he cozens the husband, and compounds with the widow, we cozen my master, and compound with my mistress. Only here I turn o' th' right hand from him: he is known to live like a rascal, when I am thought to live like a gentleman.

[Exit.]

[II.iii. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

Enter Kate [Mistress Low-water] with her man-husband [Low-water, both still disguised].

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I have sent in one to th' widow.

**LOW-WATER**

Well said, Kate,  
Thou ply'st thy business close. The coast is clear yet.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Let me but have warning,  
I shall make pretty shift with them.

II.[j. Weatherwise's house]

**LOW-WATER**

That thou shalt, wench.

[Enter Lady Goldenfleece's Servant.]

**SERVANT**

My lady, sir, commends her kindly to you,  
And for the third part of an hour, sir,  
Desires your patience.  
Two or three of her tenants out of Kent  
Will hold her so long busied.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Thank you, sir.  
'Tis fit I should attend her time and leisure.

[Exit Servant.]

Those were my tenants once, but what relief  
Is there in what hath been or what I was?  
'Tis now that makes the man. A last year's feast  
Yields little comfort for the present humour;  
He starves that feeds his hopes with what is past.

[Enter Low-water.]

How now?

**LOW-WATER**

They're come, newly alighted.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Peace, peace!  
I'll have a trick for 'em; look you second me well now.

**LOW-WATER**

I warrant thee.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I must seem very imperious, I can tell you;  
Therefore, if I should chance to use you roughly,  
Pray forgive me beforehand.

**LOW-WATER**

With all my heart, Kate.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You must look for no obedience in [these] clothes;  
That lies in the pocket of my gown.

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**LOW-WATER**

Well, well, I will not then.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I hear 'em coming; step back a little, sir.

Enter Master Weatherwise, Master Pepperton, and Master Overdon, suitors.

Where be those fellows? Who looks out there? Is there ne'er a knave i' th' house to take those gentlemen's horses? Where wait you today? How stand you like a dreaming goose in a corner? The gentlemen's horses, forsooth!

**LOW-WATER**

Yes, an't like your worship.

[Exit.]

**PEPPERTON**

[Aside to fellow suitors] What's here? A strange alteration!

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside to fellow suitors] A new lord? Would I were upon my mare's back again then.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Pray, gentlemen, pardon the rudeness of these grooms;  
I hope they will be brought to better fashion.  
In the meantime, y'are welcome, gentlemen.

ALL

We thank you, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside to fellow suitors] Life, here's quick work! [Taking out his almanac] I'll hold my life h'as struck the widow i' th' right planet. Venus in cauda! I thought 'twas a lecherous planet that goes to't with a caudle.

[Enter Low-water.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

How now, sir?

**LOW-WATER**

The gentlemen's horses are set up, sir.

**PEPPERTON**

No, no, no, we'll away!

**WEATHERWISE**

We'll away.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

How! By my faith, but you shall not yet, by your leave. Where's Bess? Call your mistress, sir, to welcome these kind gentlemen, my friends.

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[Exit Low-water.]

**PEPPER-TON**

[Aside to fellow suitors] How! Bess?

**OVERDON**

[Aside to fellow suitors] Peg?

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside to fellow suitors] Plain Bess! I know how the world goes then; he has been abed with Bess, i'faith: there's no trust to these widows; a young horsing gentleman carries 'em away clear.

[Enter Low-water.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Now, where's your mistress, sir; how chance she comes not?

**LOW-WATER**

Sir, she requests you to excuse her for a while; she's busy with a milliner about gloves.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Gloves?

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside to fellow suitors] Hoyda! Gloves, too!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Could she find no other time to choose gloves but now when my friends are here?

**PEPPER-TON**

No, sir, 'tis no matter; we thank you for your good will, sir. To say truth, we have no business with her at all at this time, i'faith, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Oh, that's another matter; yet, stay, stay, gentlemen, and taste a cup of wine ere you go.

**OVERDON**

No, thank you, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Master Pepperton, Master Weatherwise, will you, sir?

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside to fellow suitors] I'll see the wine in a drunkard's shoes first, and drink't after he has brew'd it! But let her go; she's fitted, i'faith. A proud, surly sir here, he domineers already, one that will shake her bones and go to dice with her money, or I have no skill in a calendar. Life! He that can be so saucy to call her Bess already will call her prating quean a month hence.

Exeunt [suitors].

**LOW-WATER**

They have given thee all the slip.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

So, a fair riddance.

There's three rubs gone; I've a clear way to th' mistress.

**LOW-WATER**

You'd need have a clear way because y'are a bad pricker.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Yet if my bowl take bank, I shall go nigh

To make myself a saver;

Here's alley room enough: I'll try my fortune.

I am to begin the world like a younger brother;

I know that a bold face and a good spirit

Is all the jointure he can make [a] widow.

An't shall go hard, but I'll be as rich as he,

Or at least seem so, and that's wealth enough;

For nothing kills a widow's heart so much

As a faint, bashful wooer: though he have thousands

And come with a poor water-gruel spirit

And a fish-market face, he shall ne'er speed.

I would not have himself left a poor widower.

**LOW-WATER**

Faith, I'm glad I'm alive to commend thee, Kate. I shall be sure now to see my commendations delivered.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I'll put her to't, i'faith.

**LOW-WATER**

But soft ye, Kate.

How and she should accept of your bold kindness?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

A chief point to be thought on, by my faith.

Marry, therefore, sir, be you sure to step in,

For fear I should shame myself and spoil all.

**LOW-WATER**

Well, I'll save your credit then for once,

But look you come there no more.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Away, I hear her coming.

**LOW-WATER**

I am vanish d.

Exit. Enter Widow [Lady Goldenfleece].

Il.[j]. Weatherwise's house]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

How does my life, my soul, my dear sweet madam?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

I have wrong'd your patience, made you stand too long here.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

There's no such thing, i'faith, madam; y'are pleas'd to say so.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Yes, I confess I was too slow, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Why, you shall make me amends for that then with a quickness in your bed.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

That were a speedy mends, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Why, then you are out of my debt; I'll cross the book and turn over a new leaf with you.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

So with paying a small debt, I may chance run into a greater.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

My faith, your credit will be the better then. There's many a brave gallant would be glad of such fortune, and pay use for't.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Some of them have nothing else to do; they would be idle and 'twere not for interest.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I promise you, widow, were I a setter-up, such is my opinion of your payment, I durst trust you with all the ware in my shop.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

I thank you for your good will; I can have no more.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] Not of me, i'faith, nor that neither, and you know all.—Come, make but short service, widow: a kiss and to bed; I'm very hungry, i'faith, wench.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What are you, sir?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Oh, a younger brother has an excellent stomach, madam, worth a hundred of your sons and heirs that stay their wedding stomachs with a hot bit of a common mistress, and then come to a widow's bed like a flash of lightning. Y'are sure of the first of me, not of the five hundredth of them. I never took physic yet in my life; you shall have the doctor continually with them, or some bottle for his deputy: out flies your moneys for restoratives and

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strength'nings. In me 'tis sav'd in your purse and found in your children: they'll get peevisish pothecaries' stuff, you may weigh 'em by th' ounces; I, boys of war, brave commanders, that shall bear a breadth in their shoulders and a weight in their hips, and run over a whole country with a pound o' beef and a biscuit in their belly. Ho, widow, my kisses are virgins, my embraces perfect, my strength solid, my love constant, my heat comfortable; but to come to the point, inutterable---

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

But soft ye, soft ye; because you stand so strictly  
Upon your purity, I'll put you to't, sir.  
Will you swear here you never yet knew woman?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Never, as man e'er knew her, by this light, widow.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What, what, sir? [Aside] 'Shrew my heart, he moves me much.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Nay, since you love to bring a man on's knees,  
I take into the same oath thus much more,  
That y'are the first widow, or maid, or wife  
That ever I in suit of love did court  
Or honestly did woo. How say you to that, widow?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Marry, I say, sir, you had a good portion of chastity left you, though ill fortune run away with the rest.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

That I kept for thee, widow: she's of fortune and all her strait-bodied daughters; thou shalt have't, widow. [Kisses her.]

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Push, what do you mean?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I cannot bestow 't better.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

I'll call my servants.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

By my troth, you shall not, madam.

Enter Master Low-water.

**LOW-WATER**

Does your worship call, sir?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Ha, pox! Are you peeping?



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Throws somewhat at him. [Exit Low-water.]

[Aside] He came in a good time; I thank him for't.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What do you think of me? You're very forward, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Extremity of love.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

You say y'are ignorant;  
It should not seem so surely by your play:  
For aught I see, you may make one yourself;  
You need not hold the cards to any gamester.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

That love should teach men ways to wrong itself!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Are these the first fruits of your boldness, sir?  
If all take after these, you may boast on 'em.  
There comes few such to market among women;  
Time you were taken down, sir. Within there!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] I've lost my way again.  
There's but two paths that lead to widows' beds,  
That's wealth or forwardness, and I've took the wrong one.

Enter [Lady Goldenfleece's] Servant with the suitors [Weatherwise, Pepperton, and Overdon].

**SERVANT**

[Aside] He marry my lady? Why, there's no such thought yet.

[Exit.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] Oh, here they are all again too!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Are you come, gentlemen? I wish no better men.

**WEATHERWISE**

Oh, the moon's chang'd now!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

See you that gentleman yonder?

**PEPPER TON**

Yes, sweet madam.

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**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Then pray be witness all of you; with this kiss  
I choose him for my husband--

[Kisses Mistress Low-water.]

**ALL SUITORS**

A pox on't!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

And with this parted gold that two hearts join.

[Breaks a piece of gold and gives half to Mistress Low-water.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Never with chaster love than this of mine.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

And those that have the hearts to come to th' wedding,  
They shall be welcome for their former loves.

Exit.

**PEPPERTON**

No, I thank you; y'ave chok'd me already.

**WEATHERWISE**

I never suspected mine almanac 'till now. I believe he plays cogging John with me: I bought it at his shop; it may learn the more knavery by that.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Now indeed, gentlemen, I can bid you welcome;  
Before 'twas but a flourish.

**WEATHERWISE**

Nay, so my almanac told me there should be an eclipse, but not visible in our horizon, but about the western inhabitants of Mexicana and California.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Well, we have no business there, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

Nor we have none here, sir, and so fare you well.

[Exeunt Suitors.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You save the house a good labour, gentlemen; the fool carries them away in a voider. Where be these fellows?

Enter [Low-water, Pickadille, and Lady Goldenfleece's] Servant.

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

**SERVANT**

Sir?

**PICKADILLE**

Here, sir.

**SERVANT**

What['s] your worship['s] pleasure?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Oh, this is something like. [Aside to Low-water] Take you your ease, sir;  
Here are those now more fit to be commanded.

**LOW-WATER**

[Aside] How few women are of thy mind! She thinks it too much to keep me in subjection for one day, whereas some wives would be glad to keep their husbands in awe all days of their lives and think it the best bargain that e'er they made.

[Exit.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[To Servant] I'll spare no cost for th' wedding, some device too,  
To show our thankfulness to wit and fortune;  
It shall be so. Run straight for one o' th' wits.

**PICKADILLE**

How, one o' th' wits? I care not if I run on that account; are they in town think you? [Starts to leave.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Whither runn'st thou now?

**PICKADILLE**

To an ordinary for one of the wits.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Why to an ordinary, above a tavern?

**PICKADILLE**

No, I hold your best wits to be at ordinary, nothing so good in a tavern.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

And why I pray, sir?

**PICKADILLE**

Because those that go to an ordinary dine better for twelve pence than he that goes to a tavern for his five shillings, and I think those have the best wits that can save four shillings, and fare better too.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

So, sir, all your wit then runs upon victuals.

**PICKADILLE**

'Tis a sign 'twill hold out the longer then.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

What were you saying to me?

**SERVANT**

Please your worship,  
I heard there came a scholar over lately  
With old Sir Oliver's lady.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] Is she come?--  
What is that lady?

**SERVANT**

A good gentlewoman,  
Has been long prisoner with the enemy.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] I know't too well, and joy in her release.--  
Go to that house then straight, and in one labour  
You may bid them, and entreat home that scholar.

**SERVANT**

It shall be done with speed, sir.

[Exit.]

**PICKADILLE**

I'll along with you,  
And see what face that scholar has brought over;  
A thin pair of [parbreaking], sea-water green chops,  
I warrant you.

[Exit.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Since wit has pleasur'd me,  
I'll pleasure wit; scholars shall fare the better.  
Oh, my blessing! I feel a hand of mercy  
Lift me up out of a world of waters,  
And now sets me upon a mountain, where  
The sun plays most, to cheer my heart ev'n as  
It dries my limbs. What deeps I see beneath me,  
In whose falls many a nimble mortal toils  
And scarce can feed himself! The streams of fortune  
'Gainst which he tugs in vain still beat him down,  
And will not suffer him, past hand to mouth,  
To lift his arm to his posterity's blessing.  
I see a careful sweat run in a ring

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About his temples, but all will not do,  
For till some happy means relieve his state,  
There he must stick and bide the wrath of fate.  
I see this wrath upon an uphill land;  
Oh, bless'd are they can see their falls and stand!

Enter [Servant with] Beveril.

How now?

**SERVANT**

With much entreating, sir; he's come.

[Exit.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Sir, y'are [aside] my brother! Joys come thick together!—

[Embraces him.] Sir, when I see a scholar, pardon me,

I am so taken with [affection] for him  
That I must run into his arms and clasp him.

**BEVERIL**

Art stands in need, sir, of such cherishers;  
I meet too few: 'twere a brave world for scholars  
If half a kingdom were but of your mind, sir;  
Let ignorance and hell confound the rest.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Let it [suffice], sweet sir; you cannot think  
How dearly you are welcome.

**BEVERIL**

May I live  
To show you service for't.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Your love, your love, sir:  
We go no higher, nor shall you go lower.  
Sir, I'm bold to send for you, to request  
A kindness from your wit, for some device  
To grace our wedding. It shall be worth your pains,  
And something more t' express my love to art;  
You shall not receive all in bare embracements.

**BEVERIL**

Your love I thank; but pray, sir, pardon me,  
I've a heart says I must not grant you that.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

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No? What's your reason, sir?

**BEVERIL**

I'm not at peace  
With the lady of this house; now you'll excuse me:  
Sh'as wrong'd my sister, and I may not do't.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

The widow knows you not.

**BEVERIL**

I never saw her face to my remembrance.  
Oh, that my heart should feel her wrongs so much,  
And yet live ignorant of the injurer!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Let me persuade thee since she knows you not:  
Make clear the weather; let not griefs betray you.  
I'll tell her y'are a worthy friend of mine,  
And so I tell her true, thou art indeed.  
Sir, here she comes.

Enter Widow [Lady Goldenfleece].

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What, are you busy, sir?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Nothing less, lady; here's a gentleman  
Of noble parts, beside his friendship to me.  
Pray, give him liberal welcome.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

He's most welcome.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

The virtues of his mind will deserve largely.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Aside] Methinks his outward parts deserve as much then;  
A proper gentleman it is.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Come, worthy sir.

**BEVERIL**

I follow.

[Exeunt all but Beveril.]

Check thy blood

Il.[i. Weatherwise's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

For fear it prove too bold to wrong thy goodness!  
A wise man makes affections but his slaves;  
Break 'em in time, let 'em not master thee!  
Oh, 'tis my sister's enemy, think of that  
Some speedy grief fall down upon the fire  
Before it take my heart; let it not rise  
'Gainst brotherly nature, judgment, and these wrongs!  
Make clear the weather!  
Oh, who could look upon her face in storms!  
Yet pains may work it out: griefs do but strive  
To will this spark; I'll keep it still alive.

[Exit.]

**III.[i. A street outside Lady Goldenfleece's house]**

Enter the three late suitors, Weatherwise, Pepperton, and Overdon, join'd with Sir Gilbert Lambston.

**WEATHERWISE**

Faith, Sir Gilbert, forget and forgive;  
There's all our hands to a new bargain of friendship.

**PEPPERTON**

Ay, and all our hearts to boot, Sir Gilbert.

[Sir Gilbert refuses their hands.]

**WEATHERWISE**

Why, la, you! There's but four suitors left on's in all th' world, and the fifth has the widow; if we should not be kind to one another, and so few on's, i'faith, I would we were all rak'd up in some hole or other.

**SIR GILBERT**

Pardon me, gentlemen, I cannot but remember  
Your late disgraceful words before the widow,  
In time of my oppression.

**WEATHERWISE**

Puh, Saturn reign'd then, a melancholy, grumbling planet! He was in the third house of privy enemies, and would have bewray'd all our plots; beside there was a fiery conjunction in the dragon's [tail] that spoil'd all that e'er we went about.

**SIR GILBERT**

Dragon or devil, somewhat 'twas I am sure.

**WEATHERWISE**

Why, I tell you, Sir Gilbert, we were all out of our wits in't; I was so mad at that time myself, I could have wish'd an hind-quarter of my bull out of your belly again, whereas now I care not if you had eat tail and all. I am no niggard in the way of friendship; I was ever yet at full moon in good fellowship, and so you shall find if you look into the almanac of my true nature.

**SIR GILBERT**

Well, all's forgiven for once; hands apace, gentlemen.

**WEATHERWISE**

Ye shall have two of mine to do you a kindness; yet when they're both abroad, who shall look to th' house here?

**PEPPERTON, OVERDON**

Not only a new friendship, but a friend.

[They shake hands.]

**SIR GILBERT**

But upon this condition, gentlemen,



No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

You shall hear now a thing worth your revenge.

**WEATHERWISE**

And you doubt that,  
You shall have mine beforehand; I've one ready:  
I never go without a black oath about me.

**SIR GILBERT**

I know the least touch of a spur in this  
Will now put your desires to a false gallop,  
By all means sland'rous in every place,  
And in all companies, to disgrace the widow,  
No matter in what rank, so it be spiteful  
And worthy your revenges; so now I.  
It shall be all my study, care, and pains,  
And we can lose no labour; all her foes  
Will make such use on't that they'll snatch it from us  
Faster than we can forge it, though we keep  
Four tongues at work upon't and never cease.  
Then for the indifferent world, faith, they're apter  
To bid a [slander] welcome than a truth.  
We have the odds of our side; this in time  
May grow so general as disgrace will spread  
That wild dissension may divide the bed.

**WEATHERWISE, PEPPER-TON**

Excellent!

**OVERDON**

A pure revenge; I see no dregs in't.

**SIR GILBERT**

Let each man look to his part now, and not feed  
Upon one dish all four on's, like plain maltmen;  
For at this feast we must have several kickshaws  
And delicate made dishes, that the world  
May see it is a banquet finely furnish'd.

**WEATHERWISE**

Why, then let me alone for one of your kickshaws;  
I have thought on that already.

**SIR GILBERT**

Prithee, how, sir?

**WEATHERWISE**

Marry, sir, I'll give it out abroad that I have lain with the widow myself, as 'tis the fashion of many a gallant to disgrace his new mistress when he cannot have his will of her, and lie with her name in every tavern, though he ne'er came within a yard of her person; so I, being a gentleman, may say as much in that kind as a gallant: I am as free by my father's copy.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**SIR GILBERT**

This will do excellent, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

And moreover, I'll give the world thus much to understand beside, that if I had not lain with the widow in the wane of the moon, at one of my seven stars' houses, when Venus was about business of her own and could give no attendance, she had been brought abed with two roaring boys by this time, and the Gemini being infants, I'd have made away with them like a stepmother, and put mine own boys in their places.

**SIR GILBERT**

Why, this is beyond talk; you out-run your master.

Enter clown [Pickadille].

**PICKADILLE**

[Aside] Whoop! Draw home next time; here are all the old shooters that have lost the game at pricks! What a fair mark had Sir Gilbert on't if he had shot home before the last arrow came in. Methinks these show to me now for all the world like so many lousy beggars turn'd out of my lady's barn, and have ne'er a hole to put their heads in.

**WEATHERWISE**

Mass, here's her ladyship's ass; he tells us anything.

**SIR GILBERT**

Ho, Pickadille!

**PICKADILLE**

What, Sir Gilbert Lambston!  
Gentlemen, outlaws all, how do you do?

**SIR GILBERT**

How! What, dost call us? How goes the world at home, lad?  
What strange news?

**PICKADILLE**

This is the state of prodigals as right as can be;  
When they have spent all their means on brave feasts,  
[They're] glad to scrape to a serving-man for a meal's meat;  
So you that whilom, like four prodigal rivals,  
Could goose or capon, crane or woodcock choose,  
Now're glad to make up a poor meal with news.  
A lamentable hearing!

**WEATHERWISE**

He's in passion, up to the eyebrows for us.

**PICKADILLE**

Oh, Master Weatherwise, I blame none but you.  
You are a gentleman deeply read in Pond's Almanac;  
Methinks you should not be such a shallow fellow.  
You knew this day, the twelfth of June, would come  
When the sun enters into the Crab's room,

III.[i. A street outside Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

And all your hopes would go aside, aside.

**WEATHERWISE**

The fool says true, i'faith, gentlemen. I knew  
'Twould come all to this pass; I'll show't you presently.

[Takes out his almanac.]

**PICKADILLE**

If you had spar'd but four of your twelve signs now,  
You might have gone to a tavern and made merry with 'em.

**WEATHERWISE**

H'as the best moral meaning of an ass that e'er I heard speak with tongue! Look you here, gentlemen. [Reading]  
"Fifth day, neither fish nor flesh."

**PICKADILLE**

No, nor good red herring, and you look again.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Reading] "Sixth day, privily prevented."

**PICKADILLE**

Marry, faugh!

**WEATHERWISE**

[Reading] "Seventh day, shrunk in the wetting."

**PICKADILLE**

Nay, so will the best ware bought for love or money.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Reading] "The eighth day, over head and ears."

**PICKADILLE**

By my faith, he come home in a sweet pickle then.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Reading] "The ninth day, scarce sound at heart."

**PICKADILLE**

What o' pox ail'd it?

**WEATHERWISE**

[Reading] "The tenth day, a courtier's welcome."

**PICKADILLE**

That's a cup of beer, and you can get it.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Reading] "The eleventh day, stones against the wind."

III.[i. A street outside Lady Goldenfleece's house]

**PICKADILLE**

Pox of an ass! He might have thrown 'em better.

**WEATHERWISE**

Now the twelfth day, gentlemen, that was our day. [Reading] "Past all redemption."

**PICKADILLE**

Then the devil go with't.

**WEATHERWISE**

Now you see plainly, gentlemen, how we're us'd:  
The calendar will not lie for no man's pleasure.

**SIR GILBERT**

Push, y'are too confident in almanac posies.

**PEPPERTON**

Faith, so said we.

**SIR GILBERT**

They're mere delusions.

**WEATHERWISE**

How! You see how knavishly they happen, sir.

**SIR GILBERT**

Ay, that's because they're foolishly [believ'd], sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

Well, take your courses, gentlemen, without 'em, and see what will come on't: you may wander like masterless men; there's ne'er a planet will care a half-penny for you. If they look after you, I'll be hang'd, when you scorn to bestow two pence to look after them.

**SIR GILBERT**

How! A device at the wedding say'st thou?

**PICKADILLE**

Why, have none of you heard of that yet?

**SIR GILBERT**

'Tis the first news, i'faith, lad.

**PICKADILLE**

Oh, there's a brave traveling scholar entertain'd into the house o' purpose, one that has been all the world over, and some part of Jerusalem; h'as his chamber, his diet, and three candles allow'd him after supper.

**WEATHERWISE**

By my faith, he need not complain for victuals then, whate'er he be.

**PICKADILLE**

III.[i. A street outside Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

He lies in one of the best chambers i' th' house, bravely matted; and to warm his wits as much, a cup of sack and an aqua vitae bottle stands just at his elbow.

**WEATHERWISE**

He's shrewdly hurt, by my faith, if he catch an ague of that fashion, I'll be hang'd.

**PICKADILLE**

He'll come abroad anon.

**SIR GILBERT**

Art sure on't?

**PICKADILLE**

Why, he ne'er stays a quarter of an hour in the home together.

**SIR GILBERT**

No? How can he study then?

**PICKADILLE**

Pha, best of all, he talks as he goes, and writes as he runs; besides, you know 'tis death to a traveler to stand long in one place.

**SIR GILBERT**

It may hit right, boys! Honest Pickadille,  
Thou wast wont to love me.

**PICKADILLE**

I'd good cause, sir, then.

**SIR GILBERT**

[Giving him money] Thou shalt have the same still; take that.

**PICKADILLE**

Will you believe me now: I ne'er lov'd you better in my life than I do at this present.

**SIR GILBERT**

Tell me now truly; who are the presenters?  
What parsons are employed in the device?

**PICKADILLE**

Parsons? Not any, sir. My mistress will not be at the charge; she keeps none but an old Welsh vicar.

**SIR GILBERT**

Prithee, I mean, who be the speakers?

**PICKADILLE**

Troth, I know none, but those that open their mouths. Here he comes now himself; you may ask him.

Enter Master Beveril.

**WEATHERWISE**

III.[i. A street outside Lady Goldenfleece's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Is this he? By my faith, one may pick a gentleman out of his calves, and a scholar out on's cheeks; one may see by his looks what's in him. I warrant you there has ne'er a new almanac come out these dozen years but he has studied it over and over.

### SIR GILBERT

Do not reveal us now.

### PICKADILLE

Because you shall be sure on't, you have given me a nine-pence here, and I'll give you the slip for't.

Exit.

### SIR GILBERT

Well said; now the fool's pleas'd, we may be bold.

### BEVERIL

[Aside] Love is as great an enemy to wit  
As ignorance to art; I find my powers  
So much employ'd in business of my heart  
That all the time's too little to dispatch  
Affairs within me. Fortune, too remiss,  
I suffer for thy slowness: had I come  
Before a vow had chain'd their souls together,  
There might have been some hope, though ne'er so little;  
Now there's no spark at all, nor e'er can be,  
But dreadful ones struck from adultery.  
And if my lust were smothered with her will,  
Oh, who could wrong a gentleman so kind,  
A stranger made up with a brother's mind?

### SIR GILBERT

[Aside to the others] Peace, peace, enough, let me alone to manage it.—  
A quick invention, and a happy one,  
Reward your study, sir.

### BEVERIL

Gentlemen, I thank you.

### SIR GILBERT

We understand your wits are in employment, sir,  
In honour of this wedding.

### BEVERIL

Sir, the gentleman  
To whom that worthy lady is betroth'd  
Vouchsafes t' accept the power of my good will in't.

### SIR GILBERT

I pray resolve us then, sir,  
For we're friends that love and honour her,  
Whether your number be yet full or no,

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Of those which you make choice of for presenters.

**BEVERIL**

First, 'tis so brief, because the time is so,  
We shall not trouble many; and for those  
We shall employ, the house will yield in servants.

**SIR GILBERT**

Nay, then, under your leave and favour, sir,  
Since all your pains will be so weakly grac'd,  
And wanting due performance lose their lustre,  
Here are four of us gentlemen, her friends,  
Both lovers of her honour and your art,  
That would be glad so to express ourselves,  
And think our service well and worthily plac'd.

**BEVERIL**

My thanks do me no grace for this large kindness;  
You make my labours proud of such presenters.

**SIR GILBERT**

She shall not think, sir, she's so ill belov'd,  
But friends can quickly make that number perfect.

**BEVERIL**

She's bound t' acknowledge it.

**SIR GILBERT**

Only thus much, sir,  
Which will amaze her most: I'd have't so carried,  
As you can do't, that neither she nor none  
Should know what friends we were till all were done.

**WEATHERWISE**

Ay, that would make the sport.

**BEVERIL**

I like it well, sir.  
My hand and faith amongst you gentlemen;  
It shall be so disposed of.

**SIR GILBERT**

We are the men then.

**BEVERIL**

Then look you, gentlemen: the device is single,  
Naked, and plain because the time's so short,  
And gives no freedom to a wealthier sport;  
'Tis only, gentlemen, the four elements  
In liveliest forms: earth, water, air, and fire.

**WEATHERWISE**

Mass, and here's four of us, too!

**BEVERIL**

It fits well, sir.

This the effect: that whereas all those four  
Maintain a natural opposition  
And untruc'd war, the one against the other,  
To shame their ancient envies, they should see  
How well in two breasts all these do agree.

**WEATHERWISE**

That's in the bride and bridegroom; I am quick, sir.

**SIR GILBERT**

In faith, it's pretty, sir; I approve it well.

**BEVERIL**

But see how soon my happiness and your kindness  
Is cross'd together.

**SIR GILBERT**

Cross'd? I hope not so, sir.

**BEVERIL**

I can employ but two of you.

**PEPPERTON**

How comes that, sir?

**BEVERIL**

Air and the fire should be by [men] presented,  
But the two other in the forms of women.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] Nay, then we're gone again; I think these women  
Were made to vex and trouble us in all shapes!

**SIR GILBERT**

Faith, sir, you stand too nicely.

**WEATHERWISE**

So think I, sir.

**BEVERIL**

Yet when we tax ourselves, it may the better  
Set off our errors, when the fine eyes judge 'em;  
But water certainly should be a woman.

**WEATHERWISE**

By my faith, then he is gelded since I saw him last; he was thought to be a man once, when he got his wife with



No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

child before he was married.

**BEVERIL**

Fie, you are fishing in another stream, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

But now I come to yours and you go to that, sir; I see no reason then but fire and water should change shapes and genders.

**BEVERIL**

How prove you that, sir?

**WEATHERWISE**

Why, there's no reason but water should be a man, because fire is commonly known to be a quean.

**BEVERIL**

So, sir, you argue well.

**WEATHERWISE**

Nay, more, sir: water will break in at a little crevice, so will a man if he be not kept out; water will undermine, so will an informer; water will ebb and flow, so will a gentleman; water will search any place, and so will a constable, as lately he did at my seven stars for a young wench that was stole; water will quench fire, and so will Wat the barber; ergo, let water wear a codpiece—point.

**BEVERIL**

Faith, gentlemen, I like your company well.

**WEATHERWISE**

Let's see who'll dispute with me at the full o' th' moon.

**BEVERIL**

No, sir; and you be vainglorious of your talent, I'll put you to't once more.

**WEATHERWISE**

I'm for you, sir, as long as the moon keeps in this quarter.

**BEVERIL**

Well, how answer you this then? Earth and water are both bearers, therefore they should be women.

**WEATHERWISE**

Why, so are porters and peddlers, and yet they are known to be men.

**BEVERIL**

I'll give you over in time, sir; I shall repent the bestowing on't else.

**WEATHERWISE**

If I that have proceeded in five and twenty such books of astronomy should not be able to put down a scholar now in one thousand six hundred thirty and eight, the dominical letter being G, I stood for a goose.

**SIR GILBERT**

III.[i. A street outside Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Then this will satisfy you though that be a woman;  
Oceanus, the sea, that's chief of waters,  
He wears the form of a man, and so may you.

**BEVERIL**

Now I hear reason, and I may consent.

**SIR GILBERT**

And so, though earth challenge a feminine face,  
The matter of which earth consists, that's dust,  
The general soul of earth is of both kinds.

**BEVERIL**

Fit yourselves, gentlemen, I've enough for me.  
Earth, water, air, and fire, part 'em amongst you.

**WEATHERWISE**

Let me play air; I was my father's eldest son.

**BEVERIL**

Ay, but this air never possess'd the lands.

**WEATHERWISE**

I'm but dispos'd to jest with you, sir; 'tis the same my almanac speaks on, is't not?

**BEVERIL**

That 'tis, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

Then leave it to my discretion to fit both the part and the person.

**BEVERIL**

You shall have your desire, sir.

**SIR GILBERT**

We'll agree  
Without your trouble now, sir. We're not factious  
Or envy one another for best parts,  
Like quarrelling actors that have passionate fits;  
We submit always to the writer's wits.

**BEVERIL**

He that commends you may do't liberally,  
For you deserve as much as praise can show.

**SIR GILBERT**

We'll send to you privately.

**BEVERIL**

I'll dispatch you.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**SIR GILBERT**

[Aside] We'll poison your device!

**PEPPERTON**

[Aside] She must have pleasures,  
Shows, and conceits, and we disgraceful doom.

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] We'll make your elements come limping home.

Exeunt [suitors].

**BEVERIL**

How happy am I in this unlook'd-for grace,  
This voluntary kindness from these gentlemen!

Enter Mistress Low-water and her man-husband [Low-water; they remain hidden from Beveril].

'Twill set off all my labours far more pleasing  
Before the widow, whom my heart calls mistress,  
But my tongue dares not second it.

**LOW-WATER**

How say you now, Kate?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I like this music well, sir.

**BEVERIL**

Oh, unfortunate!  
Yet though a tree be guarded from my touch,  
There's none can hinder me to love the fruit.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Nay, now we know your mind, brother, we'll provide for you.

[Exeunt the Low-waters.]

**BEVERIL**

Oh, were it but as free as late times knew it,  
I would deserve, if all life's wealth could do it.

Exit.

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

#### **IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]**

Enter at Sir Oliver's house, himself; old Sunset; his redeemed lady [Lady Twilight]; Master Sandfield; the Dutch Merchant; Philip, Sir Oliver's son; and Savorwit, aloof off; and Servants.

##### **SIR OLIVER**

Oh my reviving joy! Thy quick'ning presence  
Makes the sad night of threescore and ten years  
Sit like a youthful spring upon my blood.  
I cannot make thy welcome rich enough  
With all the wealth of words.

##### **LADY TWILIGHT**

It is express'd, sir,  
With more than can be equall'd; the ill store  
Lies only on my side, my thanks are poor.

##### **SIR OLIVER**

Bless'd be the goodness of his mind forever  
That did redeem thy life; may it return  
Upon his fortunes double! That worthy gentleman,  
Kind Master Beveril, shower upon him, heaven,  
Some unexpected happiness to requite him  
For that my joy unlook'd for! Oh, more kind  
And juster far is a mere stranger's goodness  
Than the sophistic faith of natural sons  
Here's one could juggle with me, take up the ransom,  
He and his loose companion.

##### **SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Say you me so, sir?  
I'll eat hard eggs for that trick.

##### **SIR OLIVER**

Spend the money,  
And bring me home false news, and empty pockets!  
In that young gallant's tongue there you were dead  
Ten weeks before this day, had not this merchant  
Brought first the truth in words, yourself in substance.

##### **LADY TWILIGHT**

Pray let me stay you here ere you proceed, sir.  
Did he report me dead, say you?

##### **SIR OLIVER**

Else you live not.

##### **LADY TWILIGHT**

See now, sir, you may lay your blame too rashly  
When nobody look'd after it; let me tell you, sir,

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

A father's anger should take great advice  
Ere it condemn flesh of so dear a price.  
He's no way guilty yet, for that report  
The general tongue of all the country spread,  
For being remov'd far off, I was thought dead.

**PHILIP**

Can my faith now be taken into favour, sir?  
Is't worthy to be trusted?

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] No, by my troth, is't not;  
'Twould make shift to spend another ransom yet.

**SIR OLIVER**

Well sir, I must confess y'ave here dealt well with me;  
And what is good in you, I love again.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Now am I half ways in, just to the girdle,  
But the worst part's behind.

**SIR OLIVER**

Marry, I fear me, sir,  
This weather is too glorious to hold long.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I see no cloud to interpose it, sir,  
If you place confidence in what I have told you.

**SIR OLIVER**

Nay, 'tis clear sky on that side; would 'twere so  
All over his obedience. I see that,  
And so does this good gentleman.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Do you, sir?

**SIR OLIVER**

That makes his honesty doubtful.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I pray, speak, sir.  
The truth of your last kindness makes me bold with you.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

The knight, your husband, madam, can best speak;  
He truliest can show griefs whose heart they break.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I'm sorry yet for more; pray let me know't, sir,

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

That I may help to chide him, though 'twould grieve me.

**SIR OLIVER**

Why, then prepare for't. You came over now  
In the best time to do't you could pick out;  
Not only spent my money, but to blind me,  
He and his wicked instrument—

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Now he fiddles me!

**SIR OLIVER**

Brings home a minion here, by great chance known,  
Told me she was his sister; she proves none.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

This was unkindly done, sir. Now I'm sorry  
My good opinion lost itself upon you;  
You are not the same son I left behind me;  
More grace took him. Oh, let me end in time  
For fear I should forget myself and chide him!  
Where is [she], sir? Though he beguil'd your eyes,  
He cannot deceive mine; we're now too hard for him.  
For since our first unfortunate separation,  
I've often seen the girl—[aside] would that were true—  
By many a happy accident, many a one,  
But never durst acknowledge her for mine own,  
And therein stood my joys distress'd again.

**SIR OLIVER**

You rehearse miseries, wife. Call the maid down.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] She's been too often down to be now called so;  
She'll lie down shortly and call somebody up.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

He's now to deal with one, sir, that knows truth:  
He must be sham'd or quit; there's no mean saves him.

**SIR OLIVER**

I hear her come.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

[To Philip] You see how hard 'tis now  
To redeem good opinion being once gone;  
Be careful then, and keep it when 'tis won.  
Now see me take a poison with great joy,  
Which but for thy sake, I should swoon to touch.

Enter Grace.

**GRACE**

[Aside] What new affliction? Am I set to sale  
For any one that bids most shame for me?

**SIR OLIVER**

Look you! Do you see what stuff they've brought me home here?

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Oh, bless her, eternal powers! My life, my comforts,  
My nine-years' grief, but everlasting joy now!  
[Embracing Grace] Thrice welcome to my heart; 'tis she indeed.

**SIR OLIVER**

What, is it?

**PHILIP**

I'm unfit to carry a ransom!

**SAVORWIT**

[To Grace] Down on your knees to save your belly harmless;  
Ask blessing, though you never mean to use it,  
But give't away presently to a beggar-wench.

[Grace kneels.]

**PHILIP**

My faith is blemish'd; I'm no man of trust, sir.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

[Raising her] Rise with a mother's blessing.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] All this while  
Sh'as rise with a son's.

**SIR OLIVER**

But soft ye, soft ye, wife:  
I pray take heed you place your blessing right now.  
This honest Dutchman here told me he saw her  
At Antwerp in an inn.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

True, she was so, sir.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Sir, 'tis my quality what I speak once  
I affirm ever: in that inn I saw her;  
That lets her not to be your daughter now.

**SIR OLIVER**

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Oh, sir, is't come to that?

**SUNSET**

Here's joys ne'er dream'd on!

**SIR OLIVER**

Oh, Master Sunset, I am at the rising  
Of my refulgent happiness! Now, son Sandfield,  
Once more and ever!

**SANDFIELD**

I am proud on't, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

Pardon me, boy, I have wrong'd thy faith too much.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Now may I leave my shell and peep my head forth.

**SIR OLIVER**

Where is this Savorwit, that honest whoreson,  
That I may take my curse from his knave's shoulders?

**SAVORWIT**

Oh, sir, I feel you at my very blade here;  
Your curse is ten stone weight and a pound over.

**SIR OLIVER**

Come, thou'rt a witty varlet and a trusty.

**SAVORWIT**

You shall still find me a poor, faithful fellow, sir,  
If you have another ransom to send over  
Or daughter to find out.

**SIR OLIVER**

I'll do thee right, boy.  
I ne'er yet knew thee but speak honest English;  
Marry, in Dutch I found thee a knave lately.

**SAVORWIT**

That was to hold you but in play a little  
Till hither truths came over and I strong.  
You shall ne'er find me a knave in mine own tongue;  
I have more grace in me: I go out of England  
Still when I take such courses; that shows modesty, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

Anything full of wit and void of harm  
I give thee pardon for, so was that now.



**SAVORWIT**

Faith, now I'm quit, I find myself the nimbler  
To serve you so again, and my will's good  
[Aside] Like one that lately shook off his old irons,  
And cuts a purse at bench to deserve new ones.

**SIR OLIVER**

Since it holds all the way so fortunate still,  
And strikes so even with my first belief,  
This is the gentleman, wife, young Master Sandfield here,  
A man of worthy parts, beside his lands,  
Whom I make choice of for my daughter's bed.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] But he'll make choice there of another bedfellow.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I wish 'em both the happiness of love, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

'Twas spoke like a good lady! And your memory  
Can reach it, wife, but 'tis so long ago too,  
Old Master Sunset he had a young daughter  
When you unluckily left England so,  
And much about the age of our girl there,  
For both were nurs'd together.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

'Tis so fresh  
In my remembrance now y'have waken'd it,  
As if twelve years were but a twelve-hours' dream.

**SIR OLIVER**

That girl is now a proper gentlewoman,  
As fine a body, wife, as e'er was measured  
With an indenture cut in farthing steaks.

**SUNSET**

Oh, say not so, Sir Oliver; you shall pardon me, sir.  
I'faith, sir, you are too blame.

**SIR OLIVER**

Sings, dances, plays,  
Touches an instrument with a motherly grace.

**SUNSET**

'Tis your own daughter that you mean that by.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] There's open Dutch indeed, and he could take it!

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**SIR OLIVER**

This wench, under your leave—

**SUNSET**

You have my love in't.

**SIR OLIVER**

Is my son's wife that shall be.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Thus I'd hold with't;  
Is your son's wife that should be Master Sandfield's.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I come in happy time to a feast of marriages.

**SIR OLIVER**

And now you put's i' th' mind, the hour draws on  
At the new-married widow's; there we're look'd for.  
There will be entertainments, sports, and banquets;  
There these young lovers shall clap hands together:  
The seed of one feast shall bring forth another.

**SUNSET**

Well said, Sir Oliver.

**SIR OLIVER**

Y'are a stranger, sir,  
Your welcome will be best.

**DUTCH MERCHANT**

Good sir, excuse me.

**SIR OLIVER**

You shall along, i'faith; you must not refuse me.

[Exeunt.] Manent Mother [Lady Twilight], Sister [Grace], Philip, and Savorwit.

**PHILIP**

Oh, mother, these new joys that sets my soul up,  
Which had no means nor any hope of any,  
Has brought me now so far in debt to you,  
I know not which way to begin to thank you.  
I am so lost in all, I cannot guess  
Which of the two my service most constrains,  
Your last kind goodness or your first dear pains.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Love is a mother's duty to a son,  
As a son's duty is both love and fear.

**SAVORWIT**

I owe you a poor life, madam, that's all:  
Pray call for't when you please; it shall be ready for you.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Make much on't, sir, till then.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] If butter'd sack will.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Methinks the more I look upon her, son,  
The more thy sister's face runs in my mind.

**PHILIP**

Belike she's somewhat like her; it makes the better, madam.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Was Antwerp, say you, the first place you found her in?

**PHILIP**

Yes, madam. Why do you ask?

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Whose daughter were you?

**GRACE**

I know not rightly whose, to speak truth, madam.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] The mother of her was a good twigger the whilst.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

No? With whom were you brought up then?

**GRACE**

With those, madam,  
To whom, I've often heard, the enemy sold me.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

What's that?  
Too often have I heard this piteous story  
Of a distressed mother I had once,  
Whose comfortable sight I lost at sea;  
But then the years of childhood took from me  
Both the remembrance of her and the sorrows.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

[Aside] Oh, I begin to feel her in my blood!  
My heart leaps to be at her. What was that mother?

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**GRACE**

Some said an English lady, but I know not.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

What's thy name?

**GRACE**

Grace.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

May it be so in heaven,  
For thou art mine on earth. [Embracing her] Welcome, dear child,  
Unto thy father's house, thy mother's arms,  
After thy foreign sorrows.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] 'Twill prove gallant.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

What, son! Such earnest work; I bring thee joy now  
Will make the rest show nothing, 'tis so glorious.

**PHILIP**

Why, 'tis not possible, madam, that man's happiness  
Should take a greater height than mine aspires.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

No, now you shall confess it; this shall quit thee  
From all fears present or hereafter doubts  
About this business.

**PHILIP**

Give me that, sweet mother.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Here, take her then, and set thine arms a-work;  
There needs no 'fection, 'tis indeed thy sister.

**PHILIP**

My sister!

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Cuds me, I feel the razor!

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Why, how now, son? How comes a change so soon?

**PHILIP**

Oh, I beseech you, mother, wound me anywhere  
But where you pointed last. That's present death!  
Devise some other miserable torment,

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Though ne'er so pitiless, and I'll run and meet it.  
Some way more merciful let your goodness think on  
May steal away my joys, but save my soul!  
I'll willingly restore back every one  
Upon that mild condition; anything  
But what you spake last will be comfortable.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Y'are troubled with strange fits in England here.  
Your first suit to me did entreat me hardly  
To say 'twas she, to have old wrath appeas'd,  
And now 'tis known your sister, y'are not pleas'd.  
How should I show myself?

**PHILIP**

Say 'tis not she.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Shall I deny my daughter?

**PHILIP**

Oh, you kill me  
Beyond all tortures!

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Why do you deal thus with me?

**PHILIP**

She is my wife! I married her at Antwerp;  
I have known the way unto her bed these three months.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] And that's too much by twelve weeks for a sister.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I understand you now, too soon, too plain.

**PHILIP**

Oh, mother, if you love my peace forever,  
Examine her again, find me not guilty.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

'Tis now too late, her words make that too true.

**PHILIP**

Her words? Shall bare words overthrow a soul?  
A body is not cast away so lightly.  
How can you know 'tis she? Let sense decide it;  
She then so young, and both so long divided.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

She tells me the sad story.

**PHILIP**

Does that throw me?  
Many a distress may have the face of yours  
That never was kin to you.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

But, however, sir,  
I trust you are not married.

**PHILIP**

Here's the witness,  
And all the wealth I had with her; this ring  
That join'd our hearts together.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Oh, too clear now!  
Thou'st brought in evidence to o'erthrow thyself;  
Had no one word been spoke, only this shown,  
'T had been enough to approv'd her for mine own.  
See here, two letters that begun my name  
Before I knew thy father; this I gave her,  
And, as a jewel, fasten'd to her ear.

**GRACE**

Pardon me, mother, that you find it stray;  
I kept it till I gave my heart away.

**PHILIP**

Oh, to what mountain shall I take my flight  
To hide the monster of my sin from sight?

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] I'll to Wales presently; there's the best hills  
To hide a poor knave in.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Oh, heap not desperation upon guilt!  
Repent yet and all's sav'd; 'twas but hard chance:  
Amongst all sins, heaven pities ignorance.  
She's still the first that has her pardon sign'd;  
All sins else see their faults, she's only blind.  
Go to thy chamber, pray, leave off, and win;  
One hour's repentance cures a twelve-month's sin.

**GRACE**

Oh, my distressed husband, my dear brother!  
[Lady Twilight] exit cum filia [Grace].

**PHILIP**

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Oh, Savorwit! Never came sorrow yet  
To mankind like it; I'm so far distress'd,  
I've no time left to give my heart attendance,  
Too little all to wait upon my soul!  
Before this tempest came, how well I stood,  
Full in the beams of blessedness and joy!  
The memory of man could never say  
So black a storm fell in so bright a day.  
I am that man that ev'n life surfeits of;  
Or if to live, unworthy to be seen  
By the savage eyesight! Give's thy hand;  
Commend me to thy prayers.

**SAVORWIT**

Next time I say 'em.

**PHILIP**

Farewell, my honest breast, that cravest no more  
Than possible kindness; that I've found thee large in,  
And I must ask no more: there wit must stay;  
It cannot pass where fate stops up the way.  
Joy thrive with thee; I'll never see thee more.

**SAVORWIT**

What's that, sir?  
Pray come back, and bring those words with you;  
You shall not carry 'em so out of my company.  
There's no last refuge when your father knows it;  
There's no such need on't yet: stay but till then,  
And take one with you that will imitate you  
In all the desperate onsets man dare think on.  
Were it to challenge all the wolves in France  
To meet at one set battle, I'd be your half in't;  
All beasts of venom, what you had a mind to,  
Your part should be took still. For such a day  
Let's keep ourselves in heart, then am I for you.  
In the meantime, to beat off all suspicion,  
Let's to the bridehouse too; here's my petition.

**PHILIP**

Thou hast a learning art when all hopes fly.  
Let one night waste; there's time enough left to die.

**SAVORWIT**

A minute's as good as a thousand year, sir,  
To pink a man's heart like a summer suit.

Exeunt.

[IV.ii. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Enter two or three Servants placing things in order, with Pickadille, the clown, like an overseer.

### PICKADILLE

Bestir your bones nimbly, you ponderous, beef–buttock'd knaves; what a number of lazy hinds do I keep company withal! Where's the flesh–colour, velvet cushion now for my lady's pease–porridge–tawny–satin bum? You attendants upon revels!

### FIRST SERVANT

You can prate and domineer well because you have a privilege[d] place, but I'd fain see you set your hand to't!

### PICKADILLE

Oh, base bone–pickers, I set my hand to't! When did you e'er see a gentleman set his hand to anything unless it were to a sheepskin and receive a hundred pound for his pains?

### SECOND SERVANT

And afterward lie in the Counter for his pleasure.

### PICKADILLE

Why, true, sir; 'tis for his pleasure indeed, for, spite of all their teeths, he may lie i' th' hole when he list.

### FIRST SERVANT

Marry, and should for me.

### PICKADILLE

Ay, thou wouldst make as good a bawd as the best jailor of them all; I know that.

### FIRST SERVANT

How, fool!

### PICKADILLE

Hark! I must call you knave within; 'tis but staying somewhat the longer for't.

Exeunt. Loud music. Enter the new–married widow [Lady Goldenfleece], and Kate [Mistress Low–water], her husband, both changed in apparel, [but Mistress Low–water still disguised,] arm in arm together; after them Sir Oliver Twilight, Master Sunset, and the Dutch Merchant; after them the mother [Lady Twilight]; Grace, the daughter sad; with Jane Sunset; after these, melancholy Philip, Savorwit, and Master Sandfield [and Low–water, still disguised].

### MISTRESS LOW–WATER

This fair assembly is most freely welcome.

### ALL

Thanks to you, good sir.

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

[To Lady Twilight] Come, my long–wish'd–for madam, You and this worthy stranger take best welcome; Your freedom is a second feast to me.

### MISTRESS LOW–WATER

[Taking Low–water aside] How is't with my brother?

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]



**LOW-WATER**

The fit holds him still;  
Nay, love's more violent.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

'Las, poor gentleman!  
I would he had my office without money;  
If he should offer any, I'd refuse it

**LOW-WATER**

I have the letter ready; he's worthy  
Of a place that knows how to use it.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

That's well said.—  
Come ladies, gentlemen; Sir Oliver, good:  
Seat yourselves; shall we be found unreadiest?  
What is yon gentleman with the funeral face there?  
Methinks that look does ill become a bride-house.

**SIR OLIVER**

Who does your worship mean, sir? My son Philip?  
I am sure he had ne'er less reason to be sad.  
Why are you sad, son Philip?

**PHILIP**

How, sir, sad?  
You shall not find it so, sir.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside to Philip] Take heed he do not then.  
You must beware how you carry your face in this company; as far as I can see, that young bridegroom has hawk's eyes: he'll go nigh to spell sister in your face; if your nose were but crooked enough to serve for an S, he'd find an eye presently, and then he has more light for the rest.

**PHILIP**

I'll learn then to dissemble.

**SAVORWIT**

Nay, and you be to learn that now, you'll ne'er sit in a branch'd-velvet gown as long as you live! You should have took that at nurse before your mother wean'd you; so do all those that prove great children and batten well.

Enter Master Beveril with a pasteboard.

Peace, here comes a scholar indeed; he has learn'd it, I warrant you.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Kind sir, you're welcome; you take all the pains, sir.

**BEVERIL**

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

I wish they were but worthy of the grace  
Of your fair presence and this choice assembly.  
Here is an abstract, madam, of what's shown,  
Which I commend to your favour.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Thank you for't, sir.

**BEVERIL**

[Aside] I would I durst present my love as boldly.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] My honest brother!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Look thee here, sweetheart.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

What's there, sweet madam?

**BEVERIL**

Music, and we're ready.

Loud music a while. A thing like a globe opens of one side o' th' stage and flashes out Fire, then Sir Gilbert, that presents the part, issues forth with yellow hair and beard intermingled with [streaks] like wild flames, a three-fork'd fire in's hand; and, at the same time, Air [Weatherwise] comes down hanging by a cloud, with a coat made like an almanac, all the twelve moons set in it, and the four quarters--winter, spring, summer, and autumn--with change of weathers--rain, lightning, and tempest, etc. And from under the stage at both ends arises Water [Overdon] and Earth [Pepperton], two persons: Water with green flags upon his head standing up instead of hair, and a beard of the same, with a chain of pearl; Earth with a number of little things like trees, like a thick grove, upon his head, and a wedge of gold in his hand, his garment of a clay colour. The Fire speaking first, the scholar [Beveril] stands behind, gives him the first word, which he now follows.

**BEVERIL**

[Whispering his cue] The flame of zeal--

**SIR GILBERT** [as Fire]

The wicked fire of lust,  
Does now spread heat through water, air, and dust.

**BEVERIL**

[Aside] How! He's out in the beginning! [To Sir Gilbert] The wheel of time--

**WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] The devil set fire o' th' distaff.

**SIR GILBERT**

I that was wont in elder times to pass  
For a bright angel, so they call'd me then,  
Now so corrupted with the upstart fires  
Of avarice, luxury, and inconstant heats,

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Struck from the bloods of cunning, clap-fall'n daughters,  
Night-walking wives, but, most, libidinous widows,  
That I, that purify ev'n gold itself,  
Have the contemptible dross thrown in my face,  
And my bright name walk common in disgrace.  
How am I us'd o' late that I am so handled,  
Thrust into alleys, hospitals, and tubs!  
I was once a name of comfort, warm'd great houses  
When charity was landlord; I have given welcome  
To forty russet yeomen at a time  
In a fair Christmas-hall. How am I chang'd!  
The chimneys are swept up, the hearth as cold  
As the forefathers' charity in the [son].  
All the good hospitable heat now turns  
To my young landlord's lust, and there it burns.  
Rich widows, that were wont to choose by gravity  
Their second husbands, not by tricks of blood,  
Are now so taken with loose Aretine flames  
Of nimble wantonness and high-fed pride  
They marry now but the third part of husbands,  
Boys, smooth-fac'd catamites, to fulfill their bed,  
As if a woman should a woman wed.  
These are the fires o' late: my brightness darks  
And fills the world so full of beggarly sparks.

### BEVERIL

[Aside] [Heart]! How am I disgrac'd! What rogue should this be?

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

By my faith, Monsieur Fire, y'are a hot whoreson!

### MISTRESS LOW-WATER

[Aside] I fear my brother is beside his wits;  
He would not be so senseless to rail thus else.

### WEATHERWISE as Air

After this heat, you madams fat and fair,  
Open your casements wide and take in air;  
But not that air false women make up oaths with,  
No, nor that air gallants perfume their clothes with:  
I am that air that keeps about the clouds.  
None of my kindred was smelt out in crowds;  
Not any of our house was ever tainted  
When many a thousand of our foes have fainted.  
Yet some there are that be my chief polluters,  
Widows that falsify their faith to suitors  
And will give fair words when the sign's in Cancer,  
But, at the next remove, a scurvy answer;  
Come to the poor men's houses, eat their banquet,  
And at night with a boy toss'd in a blanket.  
Nay, shall I come more near? Perhaps at noon,

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

For here I find a spot full in the moon.  
I know youth's trick; what's she that can withstand it  
When Mercury reigns, my lady's chamber planet?  
He that believes a widow's words shall fail  
When Venus' gown-skirts sweeps the Dragon's tail.  
Fair weather the first day she makes to any,  
The second cloudy, and the third day rainy;  
The fourth day a great storm, lightning and thunder:  
A bolt strikes the suitor, a boy keeps her under.

### **BEVERIL**

[Aside] Life! These are some counterfeit slaves crept in their rooms,  
A' purpose for disgrace; they shall all share with me.  
Heart! Who the devil should these be?

Exit Beveril.

### **LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

My faith, gentlemen,  
Air has perfum'd the room well!

### **SIR OLIVER**

So methinks, madam.

### **SAVORWIT**

[Aside] A man may smell her meaning two rooms off,  
Though his nose wanted reparations  
And the bridge left at Shoreditch as a pledge  
For rosa solis, in a bleaking-house.

### **MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Life! What should be his meaning in't?

### **LOW-WATER**

I wonder.

### **OVERDON as Water**

Methinks this room should yet retain such heat  
Struck out from the first ardour and so glow yet,  
You should desire my company, wish for water,  
That offers here to serve your several pipes  
Without constraint of mill or death of water house.  
What if I sprinkled on the widow's cheeks  
A few cool drops to lay the guilty heat  
That flashes from her conscience to her face;  
Would't not refresh her shame? From such as she  
I first took weakness and inconstancy;  
I sometimes swell above my banks and spread.  
They're commonly with child before they're wed;  
In me the sirens sing before they play,  
In her more witchcraft, for her smiles betray.

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Where I'm least seen, there my most danger lies,  
So in those parts hid most from a man's eyes:  
Her heart, her love, or what may be more close.  
I know no mercy, she thinks that no loss.  
In her, poor gallants! Pirates thrive in me;  
I help to cast away, and so does she.

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

Nay, and you can hold nothing, sweet sir Water,  
I'll wash my hands a' you ever hereafter.

### PEPPERTON as Earth

Earth stands for a full point: me you should hire  
To stop the gaps of water, air, and fire.  
I love muck well, but your first husband better:  
Above his soul he lov'd it, as his end  
Did fearfully witness it; at his last gasp  
His spirit flam'd, as it forsook his breast,  
And left the sparkles quarreling 'bout his lips.  
Now of such metal the devil makes him whips;  
He shall have gold enough to glut his soul:  
And as for earth, I'll stop his crane's throat full.  
The wealth he left behind him, most men know,  
He wrung inconscionably from the rights  
Of poor men's livings; he drunk dry their brows.  
That liquor has a curse, yet nothing sweeter;  
When your posterity drinks, then 'twill taste bitter.

### SIR GILBERT

And now to vex, 'gainst nature, form, rule, place,  
See once four [warring] elements all embrace.

[They embrace.] Enter four [including Beveril] at several corners, address'd like the four winds, with wings, etc., and dance all to the drum and fife. The four Elements seem to give back and stand in amaze. The South Wind has a great red face, the North Wind a pale bleach one, the Western Wind one cheek red and another white, and so the Eastern Wind. At the end of the dance, the Winds shove off the disguises of the other four [the Elements], which seem to yield and almost fall of themselves at the coming of the Winds; so all the four old suitors are discovered. Exeunt all the Winds but one, which is the scholar [Beveril] in that disguise; so shows all.

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

How! Sir Gilbert Lambston, Master Overdon!  
All our old suitors! You have took pains, my masters.

### SIR GILBERT

We made a vow we'd speak our minds to you.

### WEATHERWISE

And I think we're as good as our words, though it cost some of our purses: I owe money for the clouds yet, I care not who knows it; the planets are sufficient enough to pay the painter, and I were dead.

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Who are you, sir?

**BEVERIL**

[Removing his disguise] Your most unworthy servant.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Pardon me, is't you, sir?

**BEVERIL**

My disgrace urg'd my wit to take some form  
Wherein I might both best and properliest  
Discover my abusers and your own,  
And show you some content before y' had none.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Sir, I owe much both to your care and love,  
And you shall find your full requital worthy.  
[To suitors] Was this the plot now your poor envy works out?  
I do revenge myself with pitying on you.  
[To Low-water] Take Fire into the buttery, he has most need on't;  
Give Water some small beer, too good for him;  
Air, you may walk abroad like a fortune-teller;  
But take down Earth and make him drink i' th' cellar.

[Exeunt Low-water with suitors.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

The best revenge that could be.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I commend you, madam.

**SIR OLIVER**

I thought they were some such sneakers.

**SAVORWIT**

The four suitors! And here was a mess of mad elements!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Lights, more lights there! Where be these blue-coats?

[Enter servants with lights.]

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

You know your lodgings, gentlemen, tonight.

**SIR OLIVER**

'Tis bounty makes bold guests, madam.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

IV.[i. Sir Oliver's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

[To Lady Twilight] Good rest, lady.

**SIR OLIVER**

A most contentful night begin a health, madam,  
To your long joys, and may the years go round with't.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

As many thanks as you have wish'd 'em hours, sir,  
Take to your lodging with you.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

A general rest to all.

Exeunt [all the guests save Philip and Savorwit].

**PHILIP**

[Aside to Savorwit] I'm excepted.

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside to Philip] Take in another to you then; there's room enough  
In that exception, faith, to serve us both.  
The dial of my sleep goes by your eyes.

[Exeunt.] Manent Widow [Lady Goldenfleece] and Mistress Low-water.

**V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]**

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Now, like a greedy usurer alone,  
I sum up all the wealth this day has brought me,  
And thus I hug it.

[Embraces her.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Prithee!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Thus, I kiss it. [Kisses her.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I can't abide these kissings.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

How, sir? Not?  
I'll try that sure; I'll kiss you out of that humour.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Push, by my troth, I cannot.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What cannot you, sir?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Not toy, nor bill and imitate house pigeons;  
A married man must think of other matters.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

How, other matters, sir? What other matters?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Why, are there no other matters that belong to't?  
Do you think y'have married only a cock-sparrow  
And fit but for one business like a fool?  
You shall not find it so.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

You can talk strangely, sir.  
Come, will you to bed?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

No, faith, will not I.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What, not to bed, sir?



**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

And I do, hang me! Not to bed with you!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

How, not to bed with me! Sir, with whom else?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Why, am not I enough to lie with myself?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Is that the end of marriage?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

No, by my faith,  
'Tis but the beginning, yet death is the end on't,  
Unless some trick come i' th' middle and dash all.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Were you so forward lately and so youthful  
That scarce my modest strength could save me from you,  
And are you now so cold?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I've thought on't since.  
It was but a rude part in me, i'faith,  
To offer such bold tricks to any woman,  
And by degrees I shall well break myself from't;  
I feel myself well chasten'd since that time,  
And not the third part now so loosely minded.  
Oh, when one sees their follies, 'tis a comfort!  
My very thoughts take more staid years upon 'em.  
Oh, marriage is such a serious divine thing!  
It makes youth grave and sweetly nips the spring.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

If I had chose a gentleman for care  
And worldly business, I had ne'er took you;  
I had the offers of enough more fit  
For such employment: I chose you for love,  
Youth, and content of heart, and not for troubles;  
You are not ripe for them. After y'have spent  
Some twenty years in dalliance, youth's affairs,  
Then take a book in your hand and sum up cares;  
As for wealth now, you know that's got to your hands.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

But had I known 't had been so wrongfully got,  
As I heard since, you should have had free leave  
To have made choice of another master for't.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Why, can that trouble you?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

It may too soon. But go;  
My sleeps are sound: I love not to be started  
With an ill conscience at the fall of midnight,  
And have mine eyes torn ope with poor men's curses.  
I do not like the fate on't: 'tis still apt  
To breed unrest, dissension, wild debate,  
And I'm the worst at quarrels upon earth,  
Unless a mighty injury should provoke me.  
Get you to bed, go.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Not without you, in troth, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

If you could think how much you wrong yourself  
In my opinion of you, you would leave me now  
With all the speed you might; I like you worse  
For this fond heat, and drink in more suspicion of you.  
You high-fed widows are too cuing people  
For a poor gentleman to come simply to.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What's that, sir?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You may make a youth on him;  
'Tis at your courtesy, and that's ill trusted.  
You could not want a friend beside a suitor  
To sit in your husband's gown and look over your writings.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What's this?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I say there is a time when women  
Can do too much and understand too little.  
Once more, to bed; I'd willingly be a father  
To no more noses than I got myself,  
And so good night to you.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Aside] Now I see the infection.  
A yellow poison runs through the sweet spring  
Of his fair youth already; 'tis distracted,  
Jealous of that which thought yet never acted.—  
[Kneeling] Oh, dear sir! On my knees, I swear to thee—

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I prithee use them in thy private chamber  
As a good lady should; spare 'em not there,  
'Twill do thee good. Faith, none 'twill do thee here.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Rising, aside] Have I yet married poverty and [miss'd] love?  
What fortune has my heart? That's all I crav'd,  
And that lies now a-dying; it has took  
A speeding poison, and I'm ignorant how:  
I never knew what beggary was till now.  
My wealth yields me no comfort in this plight;  
Had want but brought me love, I'd happen'd right.

Exit Widow [Lady Goldenfleece].

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

So, this will serve now for a preparative  
To ope the [pores] of some dislike at first;  
The physic will pay't home.

Enter Low-water.

How dost thou, sir?  
How goes the work?

**LOW-WATER**

Your brother has the letter.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I find no stop in't then; it moves well hitherto.  
Did you convey it closely?

**LOW-WATER**

He ne'er set eye of me.

[Enter Beveril with a letter] above.

**BEVERIL**

I cannot read too often.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[To Low-water] Peace, to your office.

**BEVERIL**

What blessed fate took pity of my heart,  
But with her presence to relieve me thus?  
All the large volumes that my time hath master'd  
Are not so precious to adorn my spirit  
As these few lines are to enrich my mind.

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

I thirst again to drink of the same fountain.

[Reading] "Kind Sir, I found your care and love so much in the performance of a little, wherein your wit and art had late employment, that I dare now trust your bosom with business of more weight and eminence. Little thought the world that since the wedding dinner all my mirth was but dissembled, and seeming joys but counterfeit. The truth to you, sir, is, I find so little signs of content in the bargain I made i' th' morning that I began to repent before evening prayer, and to show some fruits of his willful neglect and wild disposition, more than the day could bring forth to me, h'as now forsook my bed; I know no cause for't."

### **MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] But I'll be sworn I do.

### **BEVERIL**

[Reading] "Being thus distress'd, sir, I desire your comfortable presence and counsel, whom I know to be of worth and judgment, that a lady may safely impart her griefs to you, and commit 'em to the virtues of commiseration and secrecy. Your unfortunate friend, The Widow-wife. I have took order for your private admittance with a trusty servant of mine own, whom I have plac'd at my chamber door to attend your coming."  
He shall not wait too long and curse my slowness!

### **LOW-WATER**

[Aside] I would you'd come away then.

### **BEVERIL**

How much am I beguil'd in that young gentleman!  
I would have sworn had been the perfect abstract  
Of honesty and mildness; 'tis not so.

### **MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

[Aside] I pardon you, sweet brother; there's no hold  
Of what you speak now: you're in Cupid's pound.

### **BEVERIL**

Bless'd be the secret hand that brought thee hither;  
But the dear hand that writ it, ten times bless'd!

[Exit above.]

### **LOW-WATER**

That's I still; h'as bless'd me now ten times at twice.  
Away; I hear him coming.

### **MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Strike it sure now.

Exit.

### **LOW-WATER**

I warrant thee, sweet Kate; choose your best---

Enter Master Beveril.

### **BEVERIL**

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Who's there?

**LOW-WATER**

Oh sir, is't you? Y'are welcome then;  
My lady still expects you, sir.

**BEVERIL**

Who's with her?

**LOW-WATER**

Not any creature living, sir.

**BEVERIL**

[Giving him money] Drink that;  
I've made thee wait too long.

**LOW-WATER**

It does not seem so now, sir.  
Sir, if a man tread warily as any  
Wise man will, how often may he come  
To a lady's chamber and be welcome to her!

**BEVERIL**

Thou giv'st me learned counsel for a closet.

**LOW-WATER**

Make use on't, sir, and you shall find no loss in't.

[Exit Beveril.]

So, you are surely in, and you must under.

Enter Kate [Mistress Low-water] with all the guests: Sir Oliver, Master Sunset, Wife [Lady Twilight], Daughter [Grace], Philip, Sandfield, [Jane, Dutch Merchant,] and Savorwit.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Pardon my rude disturbance, my wrongs urge it;  
I did but try the plainness of her mind,  
Suspecting she dealt cunningly with my youth,  
And told her the first night I would not know her;  
But minding to return, I found the door  
Warded suspiciously, and I heard a noise,  
Such as fear makes, and guiltiness at th' approaching  
Of an unlook'd-for husband.

ALL

This is strange, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Behold, it's barr'd; I must not be kept out!

**SIR OLIVER**

There is no reason, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I'll be resolv'd in't.

If you be sons of honour, follow me!

Break open door; rush in.

**SAVORWIT**

Then must I stay behind, for I think I was begot i' th' woodyard, and that makes everything go so hard with me.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER** within

That's he! Be sure on him!

Enter confusedly [Mistress Low-water] with the widow [Lady Goldenfleece], and her brother [Beveril] the scholar [and the others].

**SIR OLIVER**

Be not so furious, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

She whispered to him to slip into her closet.

What, have I taken you? Is not my dream true now?

Unmerciful adulteress, the first night!

**SIR OLIVER**

Nay, good sir, patience!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Give me the villain's heart,

That I may throw 't into her bosom quick;

There let the lecher pant!

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Nay, sweet sir!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Pardon me; his life's too little for me.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

How am I wrongfully sham'd! Speak your intent, sir,

Before this company; I pursue no pity.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

This is a fine, thievish juggling, gentlemen.

She asks her mate that shares in guilt with her.

Too gross, too gross!

**BEVERIL**

[Aside] Rash mischief!

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Treacherous sir,  
Did I for this cast a friend's arm about thee,  
Gave thee the welcome of a worthy spirit,  
And lodg'd thee in my house, nay, entertain'd thee  
More like a natural brother than a stranger,  
And have I this reward? Perhaps the pride  
Of thy good parts did lift thee to this impudence.  
Let her make much on 'em; she gets none of me.  
Because thou'rt deeply read in most books else,  
Thou wouldst be so in mine; (indicating Lady Goldenfleece) there it stands for thee:  
Turn o'er the leaves, and where you left, go forward;  
To me, it shall be like the book of fate,  
Ever clasp'd up.

**SIR OLIVER**

Oh, dear sir, say not so.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Nay, I'll swear more: forever I refuse her;  
I'll never set a foot into her bed,  
Never perform the duty of man to her  
So long as I have breath.

**SIR OLIVER**

What an oath was there, sir! Call't again.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I knew by amorous sparks struck from their eyes  
The fire would appear shortly in a blaze,  
And now it flames indeed. Out of my house,  
And take your gentleman of good parts along with you!  
That shall be all your substance; he can live  
In any emperor's court in Christendom!  
You know what you did, wench, when you chose him  
To thrust out me; you have no politic love!  
You are to learn to make your market, you!  
You can choose wit, a burden light and free,  
And leave the grosser element with me,  
Wealth, foolish trash, I thank you. Out of my doors!

**SIR OLIVER**

Nay, good sir, hear her.

**LADY TWILIGHT, SUNSET**

Sweet sir!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Pray, to your chambers, gentlemen; I should be here  
Master of what is mine.

**SIR OLIVER**

Hear her but speak, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

What can she speak but woman's common language?  
She's sorry and asham'd for't; that helps nothing.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Sir, since it is the hard hap of my life  
To receive injury where I plac'd my love—

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Why, la, I told you what escapes she'd have!

**SIR OLIVER**

Nay, pray, sir, hear her forward.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Let our parting  
Be full as charitable as our meeting was,  
That the pale, envious world, glad of the food  
Of others' miseries, civil dissensions,  
And nuptial strifes, may not feed fat with ours;  
But since you are resolv'd so willfully  
To leave my bed and ever to refuse me,  
As by your rage I find it your desire,  
Though all my actions deserve nothing less,  
Here are our friends, men both of worth and wisdom,  
Place so much power in them to make an evenness  
Between my peace and yours. All my wealth within doors  
In gold and jewels lie in those two caskets  
I lately led you to, the value of which  
Amounts to some five thousand apiece;  
Exchange a charitable hand with me,  
And take one casket freely. Fare thee well, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

How say you to that now?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Troth, I thank her, sir.  
Are not both mine already? You shall wrong me  
And then make satisfaction with mine own?  
I cannot blame you, a good course for you.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

I know 'twas not my luck to be so happy;  
My miseries are no starters: when they come,  
Stick longer by me.



**SIR OLIVER**

Nay, but give me leave, sir;  
The wealth comes all by her.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

So does the shame,  
Yet that's most mine; why should not that be too?

**SIR OLIVER**

Sweet sir, let us rule so much with you:  
Since you intend an obstinate separation,  
Both from her bed and board, give your consent  
To some agreement reasonable and honest.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Must I deal honestly with her lust?

**LADY TWILIGHT**

Nay, good sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Why, I tell you, all the wealth her husband left her  
Is not of power to purchase the dear peace  
My heart has lost in these adulterous seas;  
Yet, let her works be base, mine shall be noble.

**SIR OLIVER**

That's the best word of comfort I heard yet.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Friends may do much. Go, bring those caskets forth.

[Exit servants.]

I hate her sight; I'll leave her, though I lose by't.

**SIR OLIVER**

Spoke like a noble gentleman, i'faith!  
I'll honour thee for this.

**BEVERIL**

[Aside] Oh, cursed man!  
Must thy rash heat force this division?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You shall have free leave now, without all fear;  
You shall not need oil'd hinges, privy passages,  
Watchings, and whisperings: take him boldly to you.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Oh, that I had that freedom, since my shame  
Puts by all other fortunes, and owns him  
A worthy gentleman. If this cloud were past him,  
I'd marry him, were 't but to spite thee only,  
So much I hate thee now.

Enter servants with two caskets, and the suitors [Sir Gilbert, Weatherwise, Pepperton, and Overdon].

**SIR OLIVER**

Here come the caskets, sir; hold your good mind now,  
And we shall make a virtuous end between you.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Though nothing less she merit but a curse,  
That might still hang upon her and consume her still,  
As 't has been many a better woman's fortune  
That has deserv'd less vengeance and felt more,  
Yet my mind scorns to leave her shame so poor.

**SIR OLIVER**

Nobly spoke still.

**SIR GILBERT**

This strikes me into music; ha, ha!

**PEPPERTON**

Parting of goods before the bodies join?

**WEATHERWISE**

This 'tis to marry beardless, domineering boys! I knew 'twould come to this pass. Well fare a just almanac yet, for now is Mercury going into the second house near unto Ursa Major, that great hunks, the Bear at the bridge-foot in heaven, which shows horrible bear baitings in wedlock; and the sun near ent'ring into th' Dog sets 'em all together by th' ears.

**SIR OLIVER**

[Opening the caskets] You see what's in't?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I think 'tis as I left it.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Then do but gage your faith to this assembly  
That you will ne'er return more to molest me,  
But rest in all revenges full appeas'd  
And amply satisfied with that half my wealth,  
And take 't as freely as life wishes health.

**SIR OLIVER**

La, you, sir; come, come, faith, you shall swear that.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Nay, gentlemen, for your sakes, now I'll deal fairly with her.

**SIR OLIVER**

I would we might see that, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I could set her free,  
But now I think on't, she deserves it not.

**SUNSET**

Nay, do not check your goodness; pray, sir, on with't.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I could release her ere I parted with her,  
But 'twere a courtesy ill plac'd, and set her  
At as free liberty to marry again,  
As you all know she was before I knew her.

**SIR OLIVER**

What, couldst thou, sir?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

But 'tis too good a blessing for her.  
Up with the casket, sirrah!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, sir, stay!

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I have nothing to say to you.

**SIR OLIVER**

Do you hear, sir?  
Pray, let's have one word more with you for our money.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Since y'have expos'd me to all shame and sorrow  
And made me fit but for one hope and fortune  
Bearing my former comforts away with you,  
Show me a parting charity but in this:  
For all my losses, pay me with that freedom,  
And I shall think this treasure as well given  
As ever 'twas ill got.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I might afford it you  
Because I never mean to be more troubled with you;  
But how shall I be sure of the honest use on't,  
How you'll employ that liberty? Perhaps sinfully,  
In wantonness unlawful, and I answer for't;  
So I may live a bawd to your loose works still

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

In giving 'em first vent. Not I, shall pardon me;  
I'll see you honestly join'd ere I release you.  
I will not trust you for the last trick you play'd me;  
Here's your old suitors.

**PEPPERTON**

Now we thank you, sir.

**WEATHERWISE**

My almanac warns me from all cuckoldy conjunctions.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Be but commander of your word now, sir,  
And before all these gentlemen, our friends,  
I'll make a worthy choice.

**SUNSET**

Fly not ye back now.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I'll try thee once. I am married to another;  
There's thy release!

**SIR OLIVER**

Hoyda! There's a release with a witness!  
Thou'rt free, sweet wench.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Married to another!  
Then in revenge to thee,  
To vex thine eyes, cause thou hast mock'd my heart,  
And with such treachery repaid my love,  
This is the gentleman I embrace and choose.

[Embraces Beveril.]

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Oh, torment to my blood, mine enemy!  
None else to make thy choice of but the man  
From whence my shame took head?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

'Tis done to quit thee.  
Thou that wrong'st woman's love, her hate can fit thee.

**SIR OLIVER**

Brave wench, i'faith! Now thou hast an honest gentleman,  
Rid of a swaggering knave, and there's an end on't.  
A man of good parts, this t'other had nothing.  
Life, married to another!

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

**SIR GILBERT**

Oh, brave rascal with two wives!

**WEATHERWISE**

Nay, and our women be such subtle animals, I'll lay wait at the carrier's for a country chambermaid and live still a bachelor. When wives are like almanacs, we may have every year a new one, then I'll bestow my money on 'em; in the meantime, I'll give 'em over and ne'er trouble my almanac about 'em.

**SIR GILBERT**

I come in a good time to see you hang'd, sir,  
And that's my comfort. Now, I'll tickle you, sir.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You make me laugh indeed.

**SIR GILBERT**

Sir, you remember  
How cunningly you chok'd me at the banquet  
With a fine bawdy letter?

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Your own fist, sir.

**SIR GILBERT**

I'll read the statute book to you now for't.  
Turn to the act in Anno Jac. primo:  
There lies a halter for your windpipe.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

Fie, no!

**SIR OLIVER**

Faith, but you'll find it so, sir, an't be followed.

**WEATHERWISE**

So says my almanac, and he's a true man.  
Look you: [reading] "The thirteenth day, work for the hangman."

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

The fourteenth day, make haste; 'tis time you were there then!

**WEATHERWISE**

How, is the book so saucy to tell me so?

**BEVERIL**

Sir, I must tell you now, but without gall,  
The law would hang you if married to another.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

You can but put me to my book, sweet brother,  
And I've my neck-verse perfect, here and here.

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

[She removes her disguise, revealing her bosom.]

Heaven give thee eternal joy, my dear, sweet brother!

[Embraces Beveril; Low-water removes his disguise.]

ALL  
Who's here?

**SIR GILBERT**

[Aside] Oh, devil! Herself! Did she betray me?  
A pox of shame, nine coaches shall not stay me!

Exit Sir Gilbert.

**BEVERIL**

I've two such deep healths in two joys to pledge,  
Heaven keep me from a surfeit!

**SIR OLIVER**

Mistress Low-water!  
Is she the jealous cuckold all this coil's about?  
And my right worshipful serving-man, is it you, sir?

**LOW-WATER**

A poor, wrong'd gentleman, glad to serve for his own, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

By my faith, y'have serv'd the widow a fine trick between you.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

No more my enemy now, my brother's wife,  
And my kind sister.

**SIR OLIVER**

There's no starting now from't;  
'Tis her own brother, did not you know that?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

'Twas never told me yet.

**SIR OLIVER**

I thought you'd known't.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

What matter is't? 'Tis the same man was chose still,  
No worse now than he was. I'm bound to love you;  
Y'have [exercis'd] in this a double charity,  
Which, to your praise, shall to all times be known,

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Advanc'd my brother and restor'd mine own.  
Nay, somewhat for my wrongs, like a good sister,  
For well you know the tedious suit did cost  
Much pains and fees; I thank you, 'tis not lost.  
You wish'd for love, and, faith, I have bestow'd you  
Upon a gentleman that does dearly love you;  
That recompense I've made you. And you must think, madam,  
I lov'd you well, though I could never ease you,  
When I fetch'd in my brother thus to please you.

### **SIR OLIVER**

Here's unity forever strangely wrought!

### **LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

I see too late there is a heavy judgment  
Keeps company with extortion and foul deeds,  
And like a wind which vengeance has in chase,  
Drives back the wrongs into the injurer's face.  
My punishment is gentle, and to show  
My thankful mind for't, thus I'll revenge this  
With an embracement here, and here a kiss.

[Embraces Mistress Low-water and kisses Beveril.]

### **SIR OLIVER**

Why, now the bells they go trim, they go trimly!  
[To Beveril] I wish'd thee, sir, some unexpected blessing  
For my wife's ransom, and 'tis fall'n upon thee.

### **WEATHERWISE**

[Aside] A pox of this! My almanac ne'er gull'd me till this hour. "The thirteenth day, work for the hangman," and there's nothing toward it; I'd been a fine ass, if I'd given twelve pence for a horse to have rid to Tyburn tomorrow. But now I see the error, 'tis false figured; it should be "thirteen days and a half, work for the hangman," for he ne'er works under thirteen pence half-penny. Beside, Venus being a spot in the sun's garment shows there should be a woman found in hose and doublet.

### **SIR OLIVER**

Nay, faith, sweet wife, we'll make no more hours on't now; 'tis as fine a contracting time as ever came amongst gentlefolks. Son Philip, Master Sandfield, come to the book here!

### **PHILIP**

[Aside to Savorwit] Now I'm waked into a thousand miseries and their torments.

### **SAVORWIT**

[To Philip] And I come after you, sir, drawn with wild horses; there will be a brave show on's anon if this weather continue.

### **SIR OLIVER**

Come, wench, where be these young [gentlemen's] hands now?

### **LADY TWILIGHT**

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

[Aside] Poor gentleman, my son!—  
Some other time, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

I'll have 't now, i'faith, wife.

[Puts Philip's hand into Jane's and Sandfield's into Grace's.]

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

What are you making here?

**SIR OLIVER**

I have sworn, sweet madam,  
My son shall marry Master Sunset's daughter,  
And Master Sandfield, mine.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

So you go well, sir;  
[Gesturing to Jane] But what make you this way then?

**SIR OLIVER**

This? For my son.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, back, sir, back! This is no way for him.

**SUNSET, SIR OLIVER**

How?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Oh, let me break an oath to save two souls,  
Lest I should wake another judgment greater!  
You come not here for him, sir.

**SIR OLIVER**

What's the matter?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Either give me free leave to make this match  
Or I'll forbid the banes.

**SIR OLIVER**

Good madam, take it.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

[Giving Jane to Sandfield] Here, Master Sandfield, then—

**SIR OLIVER**

Cuds bodkins!

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]



No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

Take you this maid.

**SANDFIELD**

You could not please me better, madam.

**SIR OLIVER**

Hoyda! Is this your hot love to my daughter, sir?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Come hither, Philip; here's a wife for you.

[Gives Grace to Philip.]

**SIR OLIVER**

Zunes, he shall ne'er do that! Marry his sister?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Had he been rul'd by you, he had married her,  
But now he marries Master Sunset's daughter,  
And Master Sandfield, yours; I've sav'd your oath, sir.

**PHILIP**

Oh, may this blessing hold!

**SAVORWIT**

[Aside] Or else all the liquor runs out.

**SIR OLIVER**

What riddle's this, madam?

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

A riddle of some fourteen years of age now.  
You can remember, madam, that your daughter  
Was put to nurse to Master Sunset's wife.

**LADY TWILIGHT**

True, that we talk'd on lately.

**SIR OLIVER**

I grant that, madam.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Then you shall grant what follows. At that time  
You likewise know old Master Sunset here  
Grew backward in the world, till his last fortunes  
Rais'd him to this estate.

**SIR OLIVER**

Still this we know too.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

## No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

His wife, then nurse both to her own and yours,  
And both so young, of equal years, and daughters,  
Fearing the extremity of her fortunes then  
Should fall upon her infant, to prevent it,  
She chang'd the children, kept your daughter with her,  
And sent her own to you for better fortunes.  
So long, enjoin'd by solemn oath unto't  
Upon her death bed, I have conceal'd this;  
But now so urg'd, here's yours, and this is his.

### SAVORWIT

[Whoop], the joy is come of our side!

### WEATHERWISE

Hay, I'll cast mine almanac to the moon too, and strike out a new one for next year!

### PHILIP

It wants expression, this miraculous blessing!

### SAVORWIT

Methinks I could spring up and knock my head  
Against yon silver ceiling now for joy!

### WEATHERWISE

By my faith, but I do not mean to follow you there, so I may dash out my brains against Charles' Wain and come down as wise as a carman.

### SIR OLIVER

I never wonder'd yet with greater pleasure.

### LADY TWILIGHT

What tears have I bestow'd on a lost daughter  
And left her behind me!

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

This is Grace,  
This Jane; now each has her right name and place.

### SUNSET

I never heard of this.

### LADY GOLDENFLEECE

I'll swear you did not, sir.

### SIR OLIVER

How well I have kept mine oath against my will!  
Clap hands, and joy go with you. Well said, boys!

### PHILIP

[To Grace] How art thou bless'd from shame and I from ruin!

**SAVORWIT**

I, from the baker's ditch, if I'd seen you in.

**PHILIP**

Not possible the whole world to match again  
Such grief, such joy, in minutes lost and won.

**BEVERIL**

Whoever knew more happiness in less compass?  
Ne'er was poor gentleman so bound to a sister  
As I am for the [wittiness] of thy mind;  
Not only that thy due, but all our wealth  
Shall lie as open as the sun to man  
For thy employments, so the charity  
Of this dear bosom bids me tell thee now.

**MISTRESS LOW-WATER**

I am her servant for't.

**LADY GOLDENFLEECE**

Hah, worthy sister!  
The government of all I bless thee with.

**BEVERIL**

Come, gentlemen, on all perpetual friendship.  
Heaven still relieves what misery would destroy;  
Never was night yet of more general joy.

[Exeunt.]

Epilogue

[WEATHERWISE]

Now let me see what weather shall we have now.  
[Takes out his almanac.]  
Hold fair now, and I care not. Mass, full moon, too,  
Just between five and six this afternoon!  
This happens right: [reading] "The sky for the best part clear,  
Save here and there a cloud or two dispers'd."  
That's some dozen of panders and half a score  
Pickpockets; you may know them by their whistle,  
And they do well to use that while they may,  
For Tyburn cracks the pipe and spoils the music.  
What says the destiny of the hour this evening?  
Hah! [Reading] "Fear no colours!" By my troth, agreed then:  
The red and white looks cheerfully. For know ye all,  
The planet's Jupiter: you should be jovial;  
There's nothing lets it but the sun i' th' Dog:  
Some bark in corners that will fawn and cog,  
Glad of my fragments for their ember week.  
The sign's in Gemini too: both hands should meet;

V.[i. Lady Goldenfleece's house]

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's

There should be noise i' th' air if all things hap,  
Though I love thunder when you make the clap.  
Some faults perhaps have slipp'd, I am to answer;  
And if in anything your revenge appears,  
Send me in with all your fists about mine ears.

Finis.