

The Scornful Lady

by

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Persons Represented in the Play.

Elder Loveless, a Sutor to the Lady.

Young Loveless, a Prodigal.

Savil, Steward to Elder Loveless.

Lady and Martha, Two Sisters.

Younglove, or Abigail, a waiting Gentlewoman.

Welford, a Sutor to the Lady.

Sir Roger, Curate to the Lady.

Captain, Travailer, Poet and Tabaco-man, Hangers on to Young Loveless.

Wenches.

Fidlers.

Morecraft, an Usurer.

A Rich Widow.

Attendants.

Act I

Enter the two Lovelesses, Savil the Steward, and a Page.

Elder Love. Brother, is your last hope past to mollifie Morecrafts heart about your Morgage?

Young Love. Hopelesly past: I have presented the Usurer with a richer draught than ever Cleopatra swallowed; he hath suckt in ten thousand pounds worth of my Land, more than he paid for at a gulp, without Trumpets.

El. Lo. I have as hard a task to perform in this house.

Yo. Lo. Faith mine was to make an Usurer honest, or to lose my Land.

El. Lo. And mine is to perswade a passionate woman, or to leave the Land. Make the boat stay, I fear I shall begin my unfortunate journey this night, though the darkness of the night and the roughness of the waters might easily dissuade an unwilling man.

Savil. Sir, your Fathers old friends hold it the sounder course for your body and estate to stay at home and marry, and propagate and govern in our Country, than to Travel and die without issue.

El. Lo. Savil, you shall gain the opinion of a better servant, in seeking to execute, not alter my will, howsoever my intents succeed.

Yo. Lo. Yonder's Mistres Younglove, Brother, the grave rubber of your Mistresses toes.

Enter Mistres Younglove the waiting woman.

El. Lo. Mistres Younglove.

Young. Master Loveless, truly we thought your sails had been hoist: my Mistres is perswaded you are Sea-sick ere this.

El. Lo. Loves she her ill taken up resolution so dearly? Didst thou move her from me?

Young. By this light that shines, there's no removing her, if she get a stiffe opinion by the end. I attempted her to day when they say a woman can deny nothing.

El. Lo. What critical minute was that?

Young. When her smock was over her ears: but she was no more pliant than if it hung about her heels.

El. Lo. I prethee deliver my service, and say, I desire to see the dear cause of my banishment; and then for France.

Young. I'll do't: hark hither, is that your Brother?

El. Lo. Yes, have you lost your memory?

Young. As I live he's a pretty fellow. [Exit.

Yo. Lo. O this is a sweet Brache.

El. Lo. Why she knows not you.

Yo. Lo. No, but she offered me once to know her: to this day she loves youth of Eighteen; she heard a tale how Cupid struck her in love with a great Lord in the Tilt-yard, but he never saw her; yet she in kindness would needs wear a Willow-garland at his Wedding. She lov'd all the Players in the last Queens time once over: she was struck when they acted Lovers, and forsook some when they plaid Murthers. She has nine Spur-royals, and the servants say she hoards old gold; and she her self pronounces angerly, that the Farmers eldest son, or her Mistres Husbands Clerk shall be, that Marries her, shall make her a joynture of fourscore pounds a year; she tells tales of the serving-men.

El. Lo. Enough, I know her Brother. I shall intreat you only to salute my Mistres, and take leave, we'll part at the Stairs.

Enter Lady and waiting women.

Lady. Now Sir, this first part of your will is performed: what's the rest?

El. Lo. First, let me beg your notice for this Gentleman my Brother.

Lady. I shall take it as a favour done to me, though the Gentleman hath received but an untimely grace from you, yet my charitable disposition would have been ready to have done him freer courtesies as a stranger, than upon those cold commendations.

Yo. Lo. Lady, my salutations crave acquaintance and leave at once.

Lady. Sir I hope you are the master of your own occasions.

[Exit Yo. Lo. and Savil.

El. Lo. Would I were so. Mistris, for me to praise over again that worth, which all the world, and you your self can see.

Lady. It's a cold room this, Servant.

El. Lo. Mistris.

La. What think you if I have a Chimney for't, out here?

El. Lo. Mistris, another in my place, that were not tyed to believe all your actions just, would apprehend himself wrong'd: But I whose vertues are constancy and obedience.

La. Younglove, make a good fire above to warm me after my servants Exordiums.

El. Lo. I have heard and seen your affability to be such, that the servants you give wages to may speak.

La. 'Tis true, 'tis true; but they speak to th' purpose.

El. Lo. Mistris, your will leads my speeches from the purpose. But as a man--

La. A Simile servant? This room was built for honest meaners, that deliver themselves hastily and plainly, and are gone. Is this a time or place for Exordiums, and Similes and Metaphors? If you have ought to say, break into't: my answers shall very reasonably meet you.

El. Lo. Mistris I came to see you.

La. That's happily dispatcht, the next.

El. Lo. To take leave of you.

La. To be gone?

El. Lo. Yes.

La. You need not have despair'd of that, nor have us'd so many circumstances to win me to give you leave to perform my command; is there a third?

El. Lo. Yes, I had a third had you been apt to hear it.

La. I? Never apter. Fast (good servant) fast.

El. Lo. 'Twas to intreat you to hear reason.

La. Most willingly, have you brought one can speak it?

El. Lo. Lastly, it is to kindle in that barren heart love and forgiveness.

La. You would stay at home?

El. Lo. Yes Lady.

La. Why you may, and doubtlesly will, when you have debated that your commander is but your Mistris, a woman, a weak one, wildly overborn with passions: but the thing by her commanded, is to see Dovers dreadful cliffe, passing in a poor Water-house; the dangers of the merciless Channel 'twixt that and Callis, five long hours sail, with three poor weeks victuals.

El. Lo. You wrong me.

La. Then to land dumb, unable to enquire for an English hoast, to remove from City to City, by most chargeable Post-horse, like one that rode in quest of his Mother tongue.

El. Lo. You wrong me much.

La. And all these (almost invincible labours) performed for your Mistris, to be in danger to forsake her, and to put on new allegiance to some French Lady, who is content to change language with your laughter, and after your whole year spent in Tennis and broken speech, to stand to the hazard of being laught at, at your return, and have tales made on you by the Chamber-maids.

El. Lo. You wrong me much.

La. Louder yet.

El. Lo. You know your least word is of force to make me seek out dangers, move me not with toyes: but in this banishment, I must take leave to say, you are unjust: was one kiss forc't from you in publick by me so unpardonable? Why all the hours of day and night have seen us kiss.

La. 'Tis true, and so you told the company that heard me chide.

Elder Lov. Your own eyes were not dearer to you than I.

Lady. And so you told 'em.

Elder Lo. I did, yet no sign of disgrace need to have stain'd your cheek: you your self knew your pure and simple heart to be most unspotted, and free from the least baseness.

Lady. I did: But if a Maids heart doth but once think that she is suspected, her own face will write her guilty.

Elder Lo. But where lay this disgrace? The world that knew us, knew our resolutions well: And could it be hop'd that I should give away my freedom; and venture a perpetual bondage with one I never kist? or could I in strict wisdom take too much love upon me, from her that chose me for her Husband?

Lady. Believe me; if my Wedding-smock were on,
Were the Gloves bought and given, the Licence come,
Were the Rosemary-branches dipt, and all
The Hipochrist and Cakes eat and drunk off,
Were these two armes incompast with the hands
Of Bachelors to lead me to the Church,
Were my feet in the door, were I John, said,
If John should boast a favour done by me,
I would not wed that year: And you I hope,
When you have spent this year commodiously,
In atchieving Languages, will at your return
Acknowledge me more coy of parting with mine eyes,
Than such a friend: More talk I hold not now
If you dare go.

Elder Lo. I dare, you know: First let me kiss.

Lady. Farewel sweet Servant, your task perform'd,
On a new ground as a beginning Sutor,
I shall be apt to hear you.

Elder Lo. Farewel cruel Mistres. [Exit Lady.]

Enter Young Loveless, and Savil.

Young Lo. Brother you'l hazard the losing your tide to Gravesend: you have a long half
mile by Land to Greenewich?

Elder Lo. I go: but Brother, what yet unheard of course to live, doth your imagination
flatter you with? Your ordinary means are devour'd.

Young Lo. Course? why Horse-coursing I think. Consume no time in this: I have no
Estate to be mended by meditation: he that busies himself about my fortunes may
properly be said to busie himself about nothing.

Elder Lo. Yet some course you must take, which for my satisfaction resolve and open; if
you will shape none, I must inform you that that man but perswades himself he means to
live, that imagines not the means.

Young Lo. Why live upon others, as others have lived upon me.

Elder Lo. I apprehend not that: you have fed others, and consequently dispos'd of 'em:
and the same measure must you expect from your maintainers, which will be too heavy
an alteration for you to bear.

Young Lo. Why I'll purse; if that raise me not, I'll bet at Bowling-alleyes, or man Whores; I would fain live by others: but I'll live whilst I am unhang'd, and after the thought's taken.

Elder Love. I see you are ty'd to no particular imploiment then?

Young Lo. Faith I may choose my course: they say nature brings forth none but she provides for them: I'll try her liberality.

Elder Lo. Well, to keep your feet out of base and dangerous paths, I have resolved you shall live as Master of my House. It shall be your care Savil to see him fed and cloathed, not according to his present Estate, but to his birth and former fortunes.

Young Lo. If it be refer'd to him, if I be not found in Carnation Jearsie-stockins, blew devils breeches, with the gards down, and my pocket i'th' sleeves, I'll n'er look you i'th' face again.

Sa. A comelier wear I wuss it is than those dangling slops.

Elder Lo. To keep you readie to do him all service peaceably, and him to command you reasonably, I leave these further directions in writing, which at your best leasure together open and read.

Enter Younglove to them with a Jewell.

Abig. Sir, my Mistress commends her love to you in this token, and these words; it is a Jewell (she sayes) which as a favour from her she would request you to wear till your years travel be performed: which once expired, she will hastily expect your happy return.

Elder Lo. Return my service with such thanks, as she may imagine the heart of a suddenly over-joyed man would willingly utter, and you I hope I shall with slender arguments perswade to wear this Diamond, that when my Mistris shall through my long absence, and the approach of new Suitors, offer to forget me; you may cast your eye down to your finger, and remember and speak of me: She will hear thee better than those allied by birth to her; as we see many men much swayed by the Grooms of their Chambers, not that they have a greater part of their love or opinion on them, than on others, but for that they know their secrets.

Abi. O' my credit I swear, I think 'twas made for me: Fear no other Suitors.

Elder Love. I shall not need to teach you how to discredit their beginning, you know how to take exception at their shirts at washing, or to make the maids swear they found plasters in their beds.

Abi. I know, I know, and do not you fear the Suitors.

Elder Lo. Farewell, be mindfull, and be happie; the night calls me.

[Exeunt omnes praeter Younglove.

Abi. The Gods of the Winds befriend you Sir; a constant and a liberal Lover thou art, more such God send us.

Enter Welford.

Wel. Let'em not stand still, we have rid.

Abi. A suitor I know by his riding hard, I'll not be seen.

Wel. A prettie Hall this, no Servant in't? I would look freshly.

Abi. You have delivered your errand to me then: there's no danger in a handsome young fellow: I'll shew my self.

Wel. Lady, may it please you to bestow upon a stranger the ordinary grace of salutation: Are you the Lady of this house?

Abi. Sir, I am worthily proud to be a Servant of hers.

Wel. Lady, I should be as proud to be a Servant of yours, did not my so late acquaintance make me despair.

Abi. Sir, it is not so hard to atchieve, but nature may bring it about.

Wel. For these comfortable words, I remain your glad Debtor. Is your Lady at home?

Abi. She is no stragler Sir.

Wel. May her occasions admit me to speak with her?

Abi. If you come in the way of a Suitor, No.

Wel. I know your affable vertue will be moved to perswade her, that a Gentleman benighted and strayed, offers to be bound to her for a nights lodging.

Abi. I will commend this message to her; but if you aim at her body, you will be deluded: other women of the household of good carriage and government; upon any of which if you can cast your affection, they will perhaps be found as faithfull and not so coy.

[Exit Younglove.

Wel. What a skin full of lust is this? I thought I had come a wooing, and I am the courted partie. This is right Court fashion: Men, Women, and all woo, catch that catch may. If

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