

The Man of Mode, Act III, scene I

Busy. Dear madam! Let me set that curl in order.

Harriet. Let me alone, I will shake 'em all out of order.

Busy. Will you never leave this wildness?

Harriet. Torment me not.

Busy. Look! there's a knot falling off.

Harriet. Let it drop.

Busy. But one pin, dear madam.

Harriet. How do I daily suffer under thy officious fingers!

Busy. Ah, the difference that is between you and my Lady Dapper! How uneasy she is if the least thing be amiss about her!

Harriet. She is indeed most exact. Nothing is ever wanting to make her ugliness remarkable.

Busy. Jeering people say so.

Harriet. Her powdering, painting, and her patching never fail in public to draw the tongues and eyes of all the men upon her.

Busy. She is indeed a little too pretending.

Harriet. That women should set up for beauty as much in spite of nature as some men have done for wit!

Busy. I hope, without offence, one may endeavour to make oneself agreeable.

Harriet. Not when 'tis impossible. Women then ought to be no more fond of dressing than fools should be talking Hoods and modesty, masks and silence, things that shadow and conceal; they should think of nothing else.

Busy. Jesu, madam! What will your mother think is become of you? For heaven's sake, go in again.

Harriet. I won't.

Busy. This is the extravagant'st thing that ever you did in your life, to leave her and a gentleman who is to be your husband.

Harriet. My husband! Hast thou so little wit to think I spoke what I meant when I overjoyed her in the country with a low curtsey and "What you please, madam, I shall ever be obedient"?

Busy. Nay, I know not, you have so many fetches.

Harriet. And this was one to get her up to London; nothing else, I assure thee.

Busy. Well, the man, in my mind, is a fine man.

Harriet. The man indeed wears his clothes fashionably, and has a pretty negligent way with him, very courtly and much affected. He bows, and talks, and smiles so agreeably as he thinks.

Busy. I never saw anything so genteel.

Harriet. Varnished over with good breeding many a blockhead makes a tolerable show.

Busy. I wonder you do not like him.

Harriet. I think I might be brought to endure him, and that is all a reasonable woman should expect in a husband; but there is duty i' the case—and like the haughty Merab, I

"Find much aversion in my stubborn mind,"

which

"Is bred by being promised and design'd." (1)

Busy. I wish you do not design your own ruin. I partly guess your inclinations, madam. That Mr. Dorimant --

Harriet. Leave your prating, and sing some foolish song or other.

Busy. I will—the song you love so well ever since you saw Mr. Dorimant.

Song

When first Amintas charm'd my heart,

My heedless sheep began to stray;

The wolves soon stole the greatest part,
And all will now be made a prey.
Ah! let not love your thoughts possess,
'Tis fatal to a shepherdess;
The dangerous passion you must shun,
Or else, like me, be quite undone.

Harriet. Shall I be paid down by a covetous parent for a purchase? I need no land. No, I'll
lay myself out all in love. It is decreed.

Enter Young Bellair .

Young Bellair. What generous resolution are you making, madam?

Harriet. Only to be disobedient, sir.

Young Bellair. Let me join hands with you in that.

Harriet. With all my heart. I never thought I should have given you mine so willingly.
Here.

They join hands.

I, Harriet --

Young Bellair. And I, Harry --

Harriet. Do solemnly protest --

Young Bellair. And vow --

Harriet. That I with you --

Young Bellair. And I with you --

Young Bellair

and Harriet. Will never marry.

Harriet. A match!

Young Bellair. And no match! How do you like this indifference now?

Harriet. You expect I should take it ill, I see.

Young Bellair. 'Tis not unnatural for you women to be a little angry, you miss a conquest though you would slight the poor man were he in your power.

Harriet. There are some, it may be, have an eye like Bartholomew, big enough for the whole fair, but I am not of the number, and you may keep your gingerbread. 'Twill be more acceptable to the lady whose dear image it wears, sir.

Young Bellair. I must confess, madam, you came a day after the fair

Harriet. You own then you are in love.

Young Bellair. I do.

Harriet. The confidence is generous, and in return I could almost find in my heart to let you know my inclinations.

Young Bellair. Are you in love?

Harriet. Yes, with this dear town, to that degree I can scarce endure the country in landscapes and in hangings.

Young Bellair. What a dreadful thing 'twould be to be hurried back to Hampshire!

Harriet. Ah, name it not.

Young Bellair. As for us, I find we shall agree well enough. Would we could do something to deceive the grave people!

Harriet. Could we delay their proceeding, 'twere well. A reprieve is a good step towards the getting of a pardon.

Young Bellair. If we give over the game we are undone. What think you of playing it on booty?

Harriet. What do you mean?

Young Bellair. Pretend to be in love with one another. 'Twill make some dilatory excuses

we may feign pass the better.

Harriet. Let us do't, if it be but for the dear pleasure of dissembling.

Young Bellair. Can you play your part?

Harriet. I know not what 'tis to love, but I have made pretty remarks by being now and then where lovers meet. Where did you leave their gravities?

Young Bellair. I' th' next room. Your mother was censuring our modern gallant.

Enter Old Bellair and Lady Woodvill.

Harriet. Peace, here they come. I will lean against this wall and look bashfully down upon my fan, while you like an amorous spark modishly entertain me.

Lady Woodvill. [to Old Bellair] Never go about to excuse 'em. Come, come, it was not so when I was a young woman.

Old Bellair. Adod, they're something disrespectful.

Lady Woodvill. Quality was then considered, and not rallied by every leering fellow.

Old Bellair. Youth will have its jest, adod it will.

Lady Woodvill. 'Tis good breeding now to be civil to none but players and Exchange women. They are treated by 'em as much above their condition as others are below theirs.

Old Bellair. Out, a pize on 'em! Talk no more: the rogues ha' got an ill habit of preferring beauty, no matter where they find it.

Lady Woodvill. See your son and my daughter, they have improved their acquaintance since they were within.

Old Bellair. Adod, methinks they have! Let's keep back and observe.

Young Bellair. [to Harriet] Now for a look and gestures that may persuade 'em I am saying all the passionate things imaginable.

Harriet. Your head a little more on one side, ease yourself on your left leg, and play with your right hand.

Young Bellair. Thus, is it not?

Harriet. Now set your right leg firm on the ground, adjust your belt, then look about you.

Young Bellair. A little exercising will make me perfect.

Harriet. Smile, and turn to me again very sparkish.

Young Bellair. Will you take your turn and be instructed?

Harriet. With all my heart.

Young Bellair. At one motion play your fan, roll your eyes, and then settle a kind look upon me.

Harriet. So.

Young Bellair. Now spread your fan, look down upon it, and tell the sticks with a finger.

Harriet. Very modish.

Young Bellair. Clap your hand up to your bosom, hold down your gown. Shrug a little, draw up your breasts, and let 'em fall again gently, with a sigh or two, etc.

Harriet. By the good instructions you give, I suspect you for one of those malicious observers who watch people's eyes and from innocent looks make scandalous conclusions.

Young Bellair. I know some, indeed, who, out of mere love to mischief, are as vigilant as jealousy itself, and will give you an account of every glance that passes at a play and i' th' circle.

Harriet. 'Twill not be amiss now to seem a little pleasant.

Young Bellair. Clap your fan then in both your hands, snatch it to your mouth, smile, and with a lively motion fling your body a little forwards. So! Now spread it; fall back on the sudden, cover your face with it, and break out in to a loud laughter; take up! Look grave, and fall a-fanning of yourself. Admirably well acted.

Harriet. I think I am pretty apt at these matters.

Old Bellair. [to Lady Woodvill] Adod, I like this well.

Lady Woodvill. This promises something.

Old Bellair. Come! there is love i' th' case, adod there is, or will be.[to Harriet] What say you, young lady?

Harriet. All in good time, sir. You expect we should fall to and love, as gamecocks fight, as soon as we are set together. Adod, you're unreasonable!

Old Bellair. Adod, sirrah, I like thy wit well.