

Setting the scene: Quack is the doctor who has been spreading the word that Horner is impotent. As the scene opens, Quack is wondering how well it has worked -- that is, how Horner has been doing with his plan to use his reputation as a eunuch to get into bed with wives whose husbands believe he's incapable of cuckolding them (and who become complicit in keeping his secret in order to protect their own "honour"). Part of the game is that everyone seems to believe that a man who is impotent must therefore be ugly and repellent to women -- though Horner quite obviously is neither.

ACT IV
SCENE 3
(Horner's Lodging)
(That Afternoon)

(Quack and Horner revealed)

Quack: Well Sir, how fadges the new design? Have you not the luck of all your brother Projectors to deceive only yourself at last?

Horner: No, good Domine Doctor, I deceive you, it seems, and others too, for the grave Matrons and old rigid Husbands think me as unfit for love as they are. But their Wives, Sisters and Daughters know better things already.

Quack: Already!

Horner: Already, I say. Last night I was drunk with half a dozen of your people of Honor, and so was made free of their Society.

Quack: You have made use of your time, Sir.

Horner: I tell thee, I am now no more interruption to them when they sing or talk bawdy than a little squab French Page who speaks no English.

Quack: But do civil persons and women of Honor drink and sing bawdy Songs?

Horner: O amongst Friends, for your Bigots in Honor, are just like those in Religion. They fear the eye of the world more than the eye of Heaven. *(Enter servant leading my Lady Fidget, looking about her. Exit Servant.)* Now we talk of women of Honor, here comes one. Step behind the Screen here and but observe if I have not particular privileges with the women of reputation already, Doctor.

Lady Fidget: Well Horner, am not I a woman of Honor? You see I'm as good as my word.

Horner: And you shall see, Madam, I'll not be behind hand with you in honor, and I'll be as good as my word too, if you please but to withdraw into the next room.

Lady Fidget: But first, my dear Sir, you must promise to have a care of my dear Honor.

Horner: If you talk a word more of your Honor, you'll make me incapable to wrong it.

Lady Fidget: But you can't blame a Lady of my reputation to be chary.

Horner: Chary---I have been chary of it already, by the report I have caused of myself.

Lady Fidget: Ay, but if you should ever let other women know that dear secret, it would come out. Nay, you must have a great care of your conduct, for my acquaintance are so censorious and detracting that perhaps they'll talk to the prejudice of my Honor.

Horner: Nay Madam, rather than they shall prejudice your Honor, I'll prejudice theirs. And to serve you, I'll lie with them all, make the secret their own, and then they'll keep it.

Lady Fidget: A secret is better kept, I hope, by a single person than a multitude, therefore pray do not trust anybody else with it, dear, dear Mr. Horner. (*Embracing him.*)

(*Enter servant leading in Sir Jaspar Fidget. Exit Servant.*)

Sir Jaspar: How now!

Lady Fidget: (*Aside*) O my Husband! What shall I say? (*Aloud*) Sir Jaspar, come hither, I am trying if Mr. Horner were ticklish, and he's as ticklish as can be. I love to torment the confounded Toad. Let you and I tickle him.

Sir Jaspar: No, your Ladyship will tickle him better without me, I suppose, but is this your buying China? I thought you had been at the China House?

Horner: (*Aside*) China-House? That's my Cue, I must take it. (*Aloud*) A Pox, can't you keep your impertinent Wives at home? I'd have you to know since I cannot be your Journeyman by night, I will not be your drudge by day to squire your wife about.

Sir Jaspar: heh, he, he, be not angry Horner.

Lady Fidget: No, 'tis I have more reason to be angry, who am left by you to go abroad indecently alone, or to pin myself upon such ill bred people of your acquaintance as this is.

Sir Jaspar: Nay, prithee what has he done?

Lady Fidget: Nay, he has done nothing.

Sir Jaspar: But what do you take ill, if he has done nothing?

Lady Fidget: Why, the unmannerly toad knows China very well and has himself very good, but will not let me see it, lest I should beg some. But I will find it out and have what I came for yet.

(Exit Lady Fidget and locks the door, followed by Horner to the door.)

Horner: (Apart to Lady Fidget.) Lock the door Madam. *(Aloud)* So, she has got into my chamber and locked me out. Oh, the impertinency of woman-kind!

Sir Jaspar: (Aside) Hah, ha, he, at my first coming in, and finding her arms about him, tickling him it seems, I was half jealous, but now I see my folly. *(Aloud)* Heh, he, he, poor Horner.

Horner: Oh women, more impertinent, more cunning and more mischievous than their Monkeys, and to me almost as ugly---now is she throwing my things about and rifling all I have, but I'll get into her the back way, and so rifle her for it---

Sir Jaspar: Hah, ha, ha, poor angry Horner.

Horner: Stay here a little. I'll ferret her out to you presently, I warrant.

(Exit Horner at the other door.)

Sir Jaspar: (Sir Jaspar calls through the door to his Wife, she answers from within.) Wife, my Lady Fidget, Wife, he is coming into you the back way.

Lady Fidget: Let him come and welcome, which way he will.

Sir Jaspar: He'll catch you and use you roughly and be too strong for you.

Lady Fidget: Don't you trouble yourself, let him if he can.

Quack: (Behind screen) This indeed, I could not have believed from him, nor any but my own eyes.

(Enter Servant leading Mistress Squeamish. Exit Servant)

Squeamish: Where's this Woman-hater, this Toad, this ugly, greasy, dirty Sloven? Where is the odious Beast?

Sir Jaspar: He's within in his chamber with my Wife. She's playing the wag with him.

Squeamish: Is she so? He's a clownish beast, he'll give her no quarter, he'll play the wag with her again, let me tell you. Come, let's go help her---What, the door's locked?

Sir Jaspar: Ay, my Wife locked it.

Squeamish: Did she so, let us break it open then!

Sir Jaspar: No, no, he'll do her no hurt.

Squeamish: No---(Exit *Squeamish* at another door.) But is there no other way to get into them? Whither goes this? I will disturb them.

(Enter *Servant* leading *old Lady Squeamish*. Exit *Servant*)

Old L. Squeamish: Where is this Harlotry, this Impudent Baggage, this rambling Tomrigg? O Sir Jaspar, I'm glad to see you here. Did you not see my vild Grandchild come in hither just now?

Sir Jaspar: Yes.

Old L. Squeamish: Ay, but where is she then? Where is she? Lord, Sir Jaspar I have rattled myself to pieces in pursuit of her, but can you tell what she makes here? They say below no woman lodges here.

Sir Jaspar: No, nor no man neither. This is Mr. Horner's Lodging.

Old L. Squeamish: Is it so are you sure?

Sir Jaspar: Yes, yes.

Old L. Squeamish: So then there's no hurt in it, I hope. But where is he?

Sir Jaspar: He's in the next room with my Wife.

Old L. Squeamish: Nay if you trust him with your wife, I may with my Biddy. They say he's a merry harmless man now.

(Enter *Mrs. Squeamish*)

Squeamish: I can't find them---Oh are you here, Grandmother? I followed my Lady Fidget hither. 'Tis the prettiest lodging, and I have been staring on the prettiest Pictures.

(Enter *Lady Fidget* with a piece of China in her hand, and *Horner* following.)

Lady Fidget: And I have been toiling and moiling for the prettiest piece of China, my Dear.

Horner: Nay, she has been too hard for me, do what I could.

Squeamish: Oh Lord I'll have some China too, good Mr. Horner. Don't think to give other people China and me none. Come in with me too.

Horner: Upon my honor I have none left now.

Squeamish: Nay, nay I have known you deny your China before now, but you shan't put me off so, come . . .

Horner: This Lady had the last there.

Lady Fidget: Yes indeed, Madam, to my certain knowledge he has no more left.

Squeamish: O but it may be he may have some you could not find.

Lady Fidget: What do you think if he had had any left, I would not have had it too? For we women of quality never think we have China enough.

Horner: Do not take it ill. I cannot make China for you all, but I will have a Roll-wagon for you too, another time.

Old L. Squeamish: Poor Mr. Horner, he has enough to do to please you all, I see. *Horner:* Ay Madam, you see how they use me.

Old L. Squeamish: Poor Gentleman, I pity you.

Horner: I thank you Madam, I could never find pity but from such reverend Ladies as you are. The young ones will never spare a man.

Squeamish: Come come, Beast, and go dine with us, for we shall want a man at Hombre after dinner.

Horner: That's all their use of me, Madam, you see.

Squeamish: Come Sloven, I'll lead you to be sure of you. *(Pulls him by the Cravat.)*

Old L. Squeamish: Alas, poor man, how she tugs him. Kiss, kiss her. That's the way to make such nice women quiet.

Horner: No Madam, they know I dare suffer any thing rather than do it.

Old L. Squeamish: Prithee, kiss her and I'll give you her Picture that you admired so last night.

Horner: Well, nothing but that could bribe me. I love a woman only in Effigy. I'll do it.

(Kisses Mrs. Squeam.)

Squeamish: Foh, you filthy Toad, nay now I've done jesting.

Old L. Squeamish: Ha, ha, ha, I told you so.

Squeamish: Foh a kiss of his---

Sir Jaspar: Has no more hurt in it than one of my Spaniels.

Quack: (Behind screen) I will now believe anything he tells me.