

GAMESTER



BEVERLEY.— CAN YOU FORGIVE ME, LUCY.  
ACT V. SCENE II.

# THE GAMESTER;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By EDWARD MOORE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY Mrs. INCHBALD.

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## REMARKS.

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This tragedy is accounted of high moral tendency, as it paints the pernicious consequences of gaming, in their blackest colours.

The author's design has been a proper one, and he has produced a very affecting and ingenious drama from his materials. Yet surely its power of deterring one single gamester from his visionary pursuits, seems as improbable, as the converting to reason the strayed minds of Moor Fields, by the force of argument.

Gaming is no passion—it is a disease—It cannot be called avarice, for the prodigal, of all others, delights in it—It is not ambition, for the careless, and the vile, resort to it—It is not love, for it predominates over all tender affections.

Still, it may be urged that gaming inspires ardent hope; but anxious hope of winning money, and agonizing fear of losing money, without the love of money, is a contrariety in sentiment, that is produced by some latent defect in the brain, which neither plays nor sermons can ever remedy.

This tragedy is calculated to have a very different effect upon the stage, and in the closet. An auditor,



deluded into pity by the inimitable acting of a Mrs. Siddons and a Mr. Kemble, in Mr. and Mrs. Beverley, weeps with her; sighs with him; and conceives them to be a most amiable, though unfortunate, pair. But a reader, blessed with the common reflection which reading should give, calls the husband a very silly man, and the wife a very imprudent woman:—and as a man without sense, and a woman without prudence, degrade both the masculine and the feminine character, the punishment of the author is rather expected with impatience, than lamented as severe.

Stukely is so outrageously wicked, that his character can hardly comprise either moral, or example—yet, Stukely has temptations for his crimes; he is in love, and disappointed. But Beverley possesses all that he pretends to hold dear upon earth—though, like other weak characters, he does not understand his own inclinations; for it is most certain, he has long preferred bad company, and the delights of the dice, to the charms of his elegant and affectionate wife. In taste, therefore, Stukely has the advantage of his friend.

The only reasonable persons in this play, the author has, very unjustly, made the only insipid ones. Lewson and Charlotte have both excellent understandings, and yet, when brought upon the stage, they are mere foils to the knaves and fools of their acquaintance. It seems scarcely possible how a woman of Charlotte's good sense could endure to be the constant companion of another woman like her sister-in-

law, egregiously impassioned by conjugal love, and obstinately resolved not to make use of it for mutual preservation. When Mrs. Beverley gives up her last resort, her jewels, to her husband, an audience mostly supposes, that she performs an heroic action as a wife; but readers call to mind, she is a mother; and that she breaks through the dearest tie of nature, by thus yielding up the sole support of her infant child, to gratify the ideal honour of its duped and frantic father.

The reception of this play when first performed, was by no means favourable; and it was said that the love of gaming had formed conspirators to drive it from the stage. But as the author meant his gamester to be an object of pity, not of detestation—and, in general, his design has been fulfilled—it appears that he has pleaded an apology for the vice, rather than set all hearts against it. Ridicule had been the best means by which to have accomplished its extirpation.

Had Beverley, in the beginning of the play, been seen with architects and masons around him, busy in laying the first stone of a castle which was to be constructed with his intended winnings—the sight of this foundation in every act, rising no higher in its structure, and his own snug house gradually falling down, in the mean time, for want of repairs; and in the last scene, tumbling with pantomime crash, so as to break his shallow pate; whilst all the by-standers had laughed and hooted—this had been the surest moral for a gamester.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	COVENT GARDEN.
BEVERLEY	<i>Mr. Pope.</i>	<i>Mr. Kemble.</i>
LEWSON	<i>Mr. C. Kemble.</i>	<i>Mr. C. Kemble.</i>
STUKELY	<i>Mr. Barrymore.</i>	<i>Mr. Cooke.</i>
JARVIS	<i>Mr. Packer.</i>	<i>Mr. Murray.</i>
BATES	<i>Mr. Powell.</i>	<i>Mr. Waddy.</i>
DAWSON	<i>Mr. Caulfield.</i>	<i>Mr. Claremont.</i>
WAITER	<i>Mr. Webb.</i>	<i>Mr. Field.</i>
MRS. BEVERLEY	<i>Mrs. Pope.</i>	<i>Mrs. Siddons.</i>
CHARLOTTE	<i>Mrs. Powell.</i>	<i>Miss Brunton.</i>
LUCY	<i>Miss Tidswell.</i>	<i>Miss Waddy.</i>



# THE GAMESTER.

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## ACT THE FIRST.

### SCENE I.

#### BEVERLEY'S Lodgings.

*Enter* MRS. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

*Mrs. Bev.* Be comforted, my dear ; all may be well yet. And now, methinks, the lodging begins to look with another face. Oh, sister ! sister ! if these were all my hardships ; if all I had to complain of were no more than quitting my house, servants, equipage, and show, your pity would be weakness.

*Char.* Is poverty nothing then ?

*Mrs. Bev.* Nothing in the world, if it affected only me. While we had a fortune, I was the happiest of the rich : and now 'tis gone, give me but a bare subsistence and my husband's smiles, and I'll be the happiest of the poor. Why do you look at me ?

*Char.* That I may hate my brother.

*Mrs. Bev.* Don't talk so, Charlotte.

*Char.* Has he not undone you ?—Oh, this pernicious vice of gaming ! But, methinks his usual hours

of four or five in the morning might have contented him. Need he have staid out all night?—I shall learn to detest him.

*Mrs. Bev.* Not for the first fault. He never slept from me before.

*Char.* Slept from you! No, no, his nights have nothing to do with sleep. How has this one vice driven him from every virtue!—Nay, from his affections, too!—The time was, sister——

*Mrs. Bev.* And is. I have no fear of his affections. 'Would I knew that he were safe!

*Char.* From ruin and his companions.—But that's impossible. His poor little boy, too! What must become of him?

*Mrs. Bev.* Why, want shall teach him industry. From his father's mistakes he shall learn prudence, and from his mother's resignation, patience. Poverty has no such terrors in it as you imagine. There's no condition of life, sickness and pain excepted, where happiness is excluded. The husbandman, who rises early to his labour, enjoys more welcome rest at night for't. His bread is sweeter to him; his home happier; his family dearer; his enjoyments surer. The sun, that rouses him in the morning, sets in the evening to release him. All situations have their comforts, if sweet contentment dwell in the heart. But my poor Beverley has none. The thought of having ruined those he loves, is misery for ever to him. 'Would I could ease his mind of that!

*Char.* If he alone were ruined, 'twere just he should be punished. He is my brother, 'tis true; but when I think of what he has done; of the fortune you brought him; of his own large estate too, squandered away upon this vilest of passions, and among the vilest of wretches! Oh, I have no patience! My own little fortune is untouched, he says. Would I were sure on't.



*Mrs. Bev.* And so you may—'twould be a sin to doubt it.

*Char.* I will be sure on't—'twas madness in me to give it to his management. But I'll demand it from him this morning. I have a melancholy occasion for it.

*Mrs. Bev.* What occasion?

*Char.* To support a sister.

*Mrs. Bev.* No; I have no need on't. Take it, and reward a lover with it.—The generous Lewson deserves much more.—Why won't you make him happy?

*Char.* Because my sister's miserable.

*Mrs. Bev.* You must not think so. I have my jewels left yet. And when all's gone, these hands shall toil for our support. The poor should be industrious—Why those tears, Charlotte?

*Char.* They flow in pity for you.

*Mrs. Bev.* All may be well yet. When he has nothing to lose, I shall fetter him in these arms again; and then what is it to be poor?

*Char.* Cure him but of this destructive passion, and my uncle's death may retrieve all yet.

*Mrs. Bev.* Ay, Charlotte, could we cure him! But the disease of play admits no cure but poverty; and the loss of another fortune would but increase his shame and his affliction. Will Mr. Lewson call this morning?

*Char.* He said so last night. He gave me hints too, that he had suspicions of our friend Stukely.

*Mrs. Bev.* Not of treachery to my husband? That he loves play, I know, but surely he's honest.

*Char.* He would fain be thought so; therefore I doubt him. Honesty needs no pains to set itself off.

*Enter LUCY.*

*Mrs. Bev.* What now, Lucy?

*Lucy.* Your old steward, madam. I had not the



heart to deny him admittance, the good old man begged so hard for't.

[Exit LUCY.]

*Enter* JARVIS.

*Mrs. Bev.* Is this well, Jarvis? I desired you to avoid me.

*Jar.* Did you, madam? I am an old man, and had forgot. Perhaps, too, you forbid my tears; but I am old, madam, and age will be forgetful.

*Mrs. Bev.* The faithful creature! how he moves me!

[To CHARLOTTE.]

*Char.* Not to have seen him had been cruelty.

*Jar.* I have forgot these apartments too. I remember none such in my young master's house; and yet I have lived in't these five and twenty years. His good father would not have dismissed me.

*Mrs. Bev.* He had no reason, Jarvis.

*Jar.* I was faithful to him, while he lived, and when he died, he bequeathed me to his son. I have been faithful to him too.

*Mrs. Bev.* I know it, I know it, Jarvis.

*Jar.* I have not a long time to live. I asked but to have died with him, and he dismissed me.

*Mrs. Bev.* Pr'ythee no more of this! 'Twas his poverty that dismissed you.

*Jar.* Is he indeed so poor, then?—Oh! he was the joy of my old heart—But must his creditors have all?—And have they sold his house too? His father built it when he was but a prating boy. The times that I have carried him in these arms! And, Jarvis, says he, when a beggar has asked charity of me, why should people be poor? You shan't be poor, Jarvis; if I were a king, nobody should be poor. Yet he is poor. And then he was so brave!—Oh, he was a brave little boy! And yet so merciful, he'd not have killed the gnat that stung him.

*Mrs. Bev.* Speak to him, Charlotte; for I cannot.

*Jar.* I have a little money, madam; it might have

been more, but I have loved the poor. All that I have is yours.

*Mrs. Bev.* No, Jarvis; we have enough yet. I thank you, though, and I will deserve your goodness.

*Jar.* But shall I see my master? And will he let me attend him in his distresses; I'll be no expense to him; and 'twill kill me to be refused. Where is he, madam?

*Mrs. Bev.* Not at home, Jarvis. You shall see him another time.

*Char.* To-morrow, or the next day—Oh, Jarvis! what a change is here?

*Jar.* A change indeed, madam! my old heart aches at it. And yet, methinks——But here's somebody coming.

*Enter LUCY, with STUKELY.*

*Lucy.* Mr. Stukely, madam. [Exit.

*Stuke.* Good morning to you, ladies. Mr. Jarvis, your servant. Where's my friend, madam?

*[To MRS. BEVERLEY.*

*Mrs. Bev.* I should have asked that question of you. Have you seen him to-day?

*Stuke.* No, madam.

*Char.* Nor last night?

*Stuke.* Last night! Did he not come home, then?

*Mrs. Bev.* No. Were you not together?

*Stuke.* At the beginning of the evening; but not since. Where can he have staid?

*Char.* You call yourself his friend, sir; why do you encourage him in this madness of gaming?

*Stuke.* You have asked me that question before, madam; and I told you my concern was that I could not save him; Mr. Beverley is a man, madam; and if the most friendly entreaties have no effect upon him, I have no other means. My purse has been his, even to the injury of my fortune. If that has been encou-



agement, I deserve censure; but I meant it to retrieve him.

*Mrs. Bev.* I don't doubt it, sir; and I thank you—But where did you leave him last night?

*Stuke.* At Wilson's, madam, if I ought to tell; in company I did not like. Possibly he may be there still. Mr. Jarvis knows the house, I believe.

*Jar.* Shall I go, madam?

*Mrs. Bev.* No, he may take it ill.

*Char.* He may go as from himself.

*Stuke.* And, if he pleases, madam, without naming me. I am faulty myself, and should conceal the errors of a friend. But I can refuse nothing here.

[*Bowing to the LADIES.*]

*Jar.* I would fain see him, methinks.

*Mrs. Bev.* Do so, then; but take care how you upbraid him—I have never upbraided him.

*Jar.* Would I could bring him comfort! [*Exit.*]

*Stuke.* Don't be too much alarmed, madam. All men have their errors, and their times of seeing them. Perhaps my friend's time is not come yet. But he has an uncle; and old men don't live for ever. You should look forward, madam; we are taught how to value a second fortune by the loss of a first.

[*Knocking at the Door.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* Hark!—No—that knocking was too rude for Mr. Beverley. Pray Heaven he be well!

*Stuke.* Never doubt it, madam. You shall be well, too—Every thing shall be well. [*Knocking again.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* The knocking is a little loud, though—Who waits there? Will none of you answer?—None of you, did I say?—Alas, what was I thinking of! I had forgot myself.

*Char.* I'll go, sister—But don't be alarmed so.

[*Exit.*]

*Stuke.* What extraordinary accident have you to fear, madam?



*Mrs. Bev.* I beg your pardon; but 'tis ever thus with me in Mr. Beverley's absence. No one knocks at the door, but I fancy it is a messenger of ill news.

*Stuke.* You are too fearful, madam; 'twas but one night of absence; and if ill thoughts intrude (as love is always doubtful), think of your worth and beauty, and drive them from your breast.

*Mrs. Bev.* What thoughts? I have no thoughts that wrong my husband.

*Stuke.* Such thoughts indeed would wrong him. The world is full of slander; and every wretch, that knows himself unjust, charges his neighbour with like passions; and by the general frailty hides his own—If you are wise, and would be happy, turn a deaf ear to such reports. 'Tis ruin to believe them.

*Mrs. Bev.* Ay, worse than ruin. 'Twould be to sin against conviction. Why was it mentioned?

*Stuke.* To guard you against rumour. The sport of half mankind is mischief; and for a single error they make men devils. If their tales reach you, disbelieve them.

*Mrs. Bev.* What tales? By whom? Why told? I have heard nothing—or if I had, with all his errors, my Beverley's firm faith admits no doubt—It is my safety, my seat of rest and joy, while the storm threatens round me. I'll not forsake it. [*STUKELY sighs, and looks down.*] Why turn you, sir, away? and, why that sigh?

*Stuke.* I was attentive, madam; and sighs will come, we know not why. Perhaps I have been too busy—If it should seem so, impute my zeal to friendship, that meant to guard you against evil tongues. Your Beverley is wronged, slandered most vilely—My life upon his truth.

*Mrs. Bev.* And mine too. Who is't that doubts it? But no matter—I am prepared, sir—Yet why this caution?—You are my husband's friend; I think you

mine too; the common friend of both. [*Pauses.*] I had been unconcerned else.

*Stuke.* For Heaven's sake, madam, be so still! I meant to guard you against suspicion, not to alarm it.

*Mrs. Bev.* Nor have you, sir. Who told you of suspicion? I have a heart it cannot reach.

*Stuke.* Then I am happy—I would say more—but am prevented.

*Enter CHARLOTTE.*

*Char.* What a heart has that Jarvis!—A creditor, sister. But the good old man has taken him away—“Don't distress his wife—Don't distress his sister,” I could hear him say. “'Tis cruel to distress the afflicted”—And when he saw me at the door, he begged pardon that his friend had knocked so loud.

*Stuke.* I wish I had known of this. Was it a large demand, madam?

*Char.* I heard not that; but visits, such as these, we must expect often—Why so distressed, sister? This is no new affliction.

*Mrs. Bev.* No, Charlotte; but I am faint with watching—quite sunk and spiritless—Will you excuse me, sir? I'll to my chamber, and try to rest a little.

*Stuke.* Good thoughts go with you, madam. My bait is taken then. [*Aside.*]—Poor Mrs. Beverley! How my heart grieves to see her thus?

*Char.* Cure her, and be a friend then.

*Stuke.* How cure her, madam?

*Char.* Reclaim my brother.

*Stuke.* Ay, give him a new creation, or breathe another soul into him. I'll think on't, madam. Advice, I see, is thankless.

*Char.* Useless I am sure it is, if through mistaken friendship, or other motives, you feed his passion with your purse, and sooth it by example. Physicians, to cure fevers, keep from the patient's thirsty lip the cup

that would inflame him. You give it to his hands. [*A Knocking.*] Hark, sir!—These are my brother's desperate symptoms—Another creditor!

*Stuke.* One not so easily got rid of—What, Lewson!

*Enter LEWSON.*

*Lew.* Madam, your servant—Yours, sir. I was inquiring for you at your lodgings.

*Stuke.* This morning! You had business, then?

*Lew.* You'll call it by another name, perhaps. Where's Mr. Beverley, madam?

*Char.* We have sent to inquire for him.

*Lew.* Is he abroad then? He did not use to go out so early.

*Char.* No, nor stay out so late.

*Lew.* Is that the case? I am sorry for it. But Mr. Stukely, perhaps, may direct you to him.

*Stuke.* I have already, sir. But what was your business with me?

*Lew.* To congratulate you upon your late successes at play. Poor Beverley!—But you are his friend; and there's a comfort in having successful friends.

*Stuke.* And what am I to understand by this?

*Lew.* That Beverley's a poor man, with a rich friend; that's all.

*Stuke.* Your words would mean something, I suppose. Another time, sir, I shall desire an explanation.

*Lew.* And why not now? I am no dealer in long sentences. A minute or two will do for me.

*Stuke.* But not for me, sir. I am slow of apprehension, and must have time and privacy. A lady's presence engages my attention. Another morning I may be found at home.

*Lew.* Another morning, then, I'll wait upon you.

*Stuke.* I shall expect you, sir. Madam, your servant.

[*Exit.*]



*Char.* What mean you by this?

*Lew.* To hint to him that I know him.

*Char.* How know him? Mere doubt and supposition!

*Lew.* I shall have proof soon.

*Char.* And what then? Would you risk your life to be his punisher?

*Lew.* My life, madam! Don't be afraid. And yet I am happy in your concern for me. But let it content you that I know this Stukely——'Twould be as easy to make him honest as brave.

*Char.* And what do you intend to do?

*Lew.* Nothing, till I have proof. Yet my suspicions, are well grounded—But, methinks, madam, I am acting here without authority. Could I have leave to call Mr. Beverley brother, his concerns would be my own. Why will you make my services appear officious?

*Char.* You know my reasons, and should not press me. But I am cold, you say; and cold I will be, while a poor sister's destitute—My heart bleeds for her; and till I see her sorrows moderated, love has no joys for me. But let us change this subject—Your business here this morning is with my sister. Misfortunes press too hard upon her; yet, till to-day, she has borne them nobly.

*Lew.* Where is she?

*Char.* Gone to her chamber. Her spirits failed her.

*Lew.* I hear her coming. Let what has passed with Stukely be a secret—She has already too much to trouble her.

*Enter MRS. BEVERLEY.*

*Mrs. Bev.* Good morning, sir; I heard your voice, and, as I thought, inquiring for me. Where's Mr. Stukely, Charlotte?

*Char.* This moment gone—You have been in tears, sister; but here's a friend shall comfort you.

*Lew.* Or, if I add to your distresses, I'll beg your pardon, madam. The sale of your house and furniture was finished yesterday.

*Mrs. Bev.* I know it, sir; I know too your generous reason for putting me in mind of it. But you have obliged me too much already.

*Lew.* There are trifles, madam, which I know you have set a value on; those I have purchased, and will deliver. I have a friend too, that esteems you—He has bought largely, and will call nothing his, till he has seen you. If a visit to him would not be painful, he has begged it may be this morning.

*Mrs. Bev.* Not painful in the least. My pain is from the kindness of my friends. Why am I to be obliged beyond the power of return?

*Lew.* You shall repay us at your own time. I have a coach waiting at the door—Shall we have your company, madam? [To CHARLOTTE.]

*Char.* No; my brother may return soon; I'll stay and receive him.

*Mrs. Bev.* He may want a comforter, perhaps. But don't upbraid him, Charlotte. We shan't be absent long. Come, sir, since I must be so obliged.

*Lew.* 'Tis I that am obliged. An hour, or less, will be sufficient for us. We shall find you at home, madam? [To CHARLOTTE.—Exit with MRS. BEVER-

LEY.

*Char.* Certainly.

[Exit.



## SCENE II.

## STUKELY'S Lodgings.

*Enter STUKELY.*

*Stuke.* That Lewson suspects me, 'tis too plain. Yet why should he suspect me?—I appear the friend of Beverley as much as he. But I am rich, it seems; and so I am, thanks to another's folly, and my own wisdom. To what use is wisdom, but to take advantage of the weak? This Beverley's my fool; I cheat him, and he calls me friend. But more business must be done yet—His wife's jewels are unsold; so is the reversion of his uncle's estate: I must have these too. And then there's a treasure above all—I love his wife—Before she knew this Beverley I loved her; but, like a cringing fool, bowed at a distance, while he stepped in and won her—Never, never will I forgive him for it. Those hints this morning were well thrown in—Already they have fastened on her. If jealousy should weaken her affections, want may corrupt her virtue—These jewels may do much—He shall demand them of her; which when mine, shall be converted to special purposes—What now, Bates?

*Enter BATES.*

*Bates.* Is it a wonder then to see me? The forces are all in readiness, and only wait for orders. Where's Beverley?

*Stuke.* At last night's rendezvous, waiting for me. Is Dawson with you?

*Bates.* Dressed like a nobleman; with money in his pocket, and a set of dice, that shall deceive the devil.

*Stuke.* That fellow has a head to undo a nation; but for the rest, they are such low mannered, ill-looking dogs, I wonder Beverley has not suspected them.

*Bates.* No matter for manners and looks. Do you supply them with money, and they are gentlemen by profession—The passion of gaming casts such a mist before the eyes, that the nobleman shall be surrounded with sharpers, and imagine himself in the best company.

*Stuke.* There's that Williams too. It was he, I suppose, that called at Beverley's with the note this morning. What directions did you give him?

*Bates.* To knock loud, and be clamorous. Did not you see him?

*Stuke.* No, the fool sneaked off with Jarvis. Had he appeared within doors, as directed, the note had been discharged. I waited there on purpose. I want the women to think well of me; for Lewson's grown suspicious; he told me so himself.

*Bates.* What answer did you make him?

*Stuke.* A short one—That I would see him soon, for farther explanation.

*Bates.* We must take care of him. But what have we to do with Beverley? Dawson and the rest are wondering at you.

*Stuke.* Why, let them wonder. I have designs above their narrow reach. They see me lend him money, and they stare at me. But they are fools. I want him to believe me beggared by him.

*Bates.* And what then?

*Stuke.* Ay, there's the question; but no matter;



at night you may know more. He waits for me at Wilson's.—I told the women where to find him.

*Bates.* To what purpose?

*Stuke.* To save suspicion. It looked friendly, and they thanked me.—Old Jarvis was dispatched to him.

*Bates.* And may entreat him home——

*Stuke.* No; he expects money from me; but I'll have none. His wife's jewels must go—Women are easy creatures, and refuse nothing, where they love. Follow to Wilson's—Come, sir.

Let drudging fools by honesty grow great;  
The shorter road to riches is deceit. [Exeunt.

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## ACT THE SECOND.

### SCENE I.

*A Gaming House, with a Table, Box, Dice, &c.*

*BEVERLEY discovered sitting.*

*Ber.* Why, what a world is this! The slave, that digs for gold, receives his daily pittance, and sleeps contented: while those for whom he labours, convert their good to mischief, making abundance the means of want. What had I to do with play?—I wanted nothing—My wishes and my means were equal.—

The poor followed me with blessings, love scattered roses on my pillow, and morning waked me to delight—Oh, bitter thought, that leads to what I was, by what I am! I would forget both—Who's there?

*Enter a WAITER.*

*Wait.* A gentleman, sir, inquires for you.

*Bev.* He might have used less ceremony. Stukely, I suppose?

*Wait.* No, sir, a stranger.

*Bev.* Well, show him in. [*Exit WAITER.*] A messenger from Stukely then; from him that has undone me! yet all in friendship—And now he lends me his little, to bring back fortune to me.

*Enter JARVIS.*

Jarvis!—Why this intrusion?—Your absence had been kinder.

*Jar.* I came in duty, sir. If it be troublesome—

*Bev.* It is—I would be private—hid even from myself. Who sent you hither?

*Jar.* One that would persuade you home again. My mistress is not well—her tears told me so.

*Bev.* Go with thy duty there then—Pr'ythee, be gone—I have no business for thee.

*Jar.* Yes, sir; to lead you from this place. I am your servant still. Your prosperous fortune blessed my old age: If that has left you, I must not leave you.

*Bev.* Not leave me! Recall past time, then; or, through this sea of storms and darkness, show me a star to guide me.—But what canst thou?

*Jar.* The little that I can, I will. You have been generous to me—I would not offend you, sir—but—

*Bev.* No. Think'st thou I'd ruin thee too? I have enough of shame already—My wife! my wife! Wouldst thou believe it, Jarvis? I have not seen her all this long night—I, who have loved her so,



that every hour of absence seemed as a gap in life ! But other bonds have held me—Oh, I have played the boy ! dropping my counters in the stream, and reaching to redeem them, lost myself !

*Jar.* For pity's sake, sir !—I have no heart to see this change.

*Bev.* Nor I to bear it—How speaks the world of me, Jarvis ?

*Jar.* As of a good man dead.—Of one, who, walking in a dream, fell down a precipice. The world is sorry for you.

*Bev.* Ay, and pities me—Says it not so ? But I was born to infamy. I'll tell thee what it says ; it calls me villain, a treacherous husband, a cruel father, a false brother, one lost to nature and her charities ; or, to say all in one short word, it calls me—gamester. Go to thy mistress—I'll see her presently.

*Jar.* And why not now ? Rude people press upon her ; loud, bawling creditors ; wretches, who know no pity—I met one at the door—he would have seen my mistress : I wanted means of present payment, so promised it to-morrow : But others may be pressing, and she has grief enough already.—Your absence hangs too heavy on her.

*Bev.* Tell her I'll come then. I have a moment's business. But what hast thou to do with my distresses ? Thy honesty has left thee poor ; and age wants comfort.—Keep what thou hast for cordials, lest between thee and the grave, misery steal in. I have a friend shall counsel me—This is that friend.

*Enter STUKELEY.*

*Stuke.* How fares it, Beverley ? Honest Mr. Jarvis, well met ; I hoped to find you here. That viper, Williams ! Was it not he that troubled you this morning ?

*Jar.* My mistress heard him then ; I am sorry that she heard him.

*Bev.* And Jarvis promised payment.

*Stuke.* That must not be. Tell him I'll satisfy him.

*Jar.* Will you, sir? Heaven will reward you for it.

*Bev.* Generous Stukeley! Friendship like yours, had it ability like will, would more than balance the wrongs of fortune.

*Stuke.* You think too kindly of me—Make haste to Williams; his clamours may be rude else.

[*To* JARVIS.

*Jar.* And my master will go home again—Alas! sir, we know of hearts there breaking for his absence.

[*Exit.*

*Bev.* 'Would I were dead!

*Stuke.* Ha! ha! ha! Pr'ythee, be a man, and leave dying to disease and old age. Fortune may be ours again; at least we'll try for't.

*Bev.* No; it has fooled us on too far.

*Stuke.* Ay, ruined us; and therefore we'll sit down contented. These are the despondings of men without money; but let the shining ore chink in the pocket, and folly turns to wisdom. We are fortune's children—True, she's a fickle mother; but shall we droop because she's peevish?—No; she has smiles in store, and these, her frowns, are meant to brighten them.

*Bev.* Is this a time for levity?—But you are single in the ruin, and, therefore, may talk lightly of it: with me, 'tis complicated misery.

*Stuke.* You censure me unjustly; I but assumed these spirits to cheer my friend. Heaven knows, he wants a comforter.

*Bev.* What new misfortune?

*Stuke.* I would have brought you money, but lenders want securities. What's to be done? All, that was mine, is yours already.

*Bev.* And there's the double weight that sinks me. I have undone my friend too; one who, to save a

drowning wretch, reached out his hand, and perished with him.

*Stuke.* Have better thoughts.

*Bev.* Whence are they to proceed? I have nothing left.

*Stuke.* [*Sighing.*] Then we're indeed undone—What! nothing? No moveables, nor useless trinkets?—Bawbles locked up in caskets, to starve their owners? I have ventured deeply for you.

*Bev.* Therefore this heart-ache; for I am lost beyond all hope.

*Stuke.* No; means may be found to save us.—Jarvis is rich—Who made him so? This is no time for ceremony.

*Bev.* And is it for dishonesty? The good old man? Shall I rob him too? My friend would grieve for't.—No; let the little that he has, buy food and clothing for him.

*Stuke.* Good morning then. [*Going.*]

*Bev.* So hasty! Why, then, good morning.

*Stuke.* And when we meet again, upbraid me—Say it was I that tempted you—Tell Lewson so, and tell him, I have wronged you—He has suspicions of me, and will thank you.

*Bev.* No; we have been companions in a rash voyage, and the same storm has wrecked us both: Mine shall be self upbraidings.

*Stuke.* And will they feed us? You deal unkindly by me. I have sold, and borrowed, for you, while land or credit lasted; and now, when fortune should be tried, and my heart whispers me success, I am deserted—turned loose to beggary, while you have hoards.

*Bev.* What hoards? Name them, and take them.

*Stuke.* Jewels.

*Bev.* And shall this thriftless hand seize them too? My poor, poor wife! Must she lose all? I would not wound her so.



*Stuke.* Nor I, but from necessity. One effort more, and fortune may grow kind.—I have unusual hopes.

*Bev.* Think of some other means then.

*Stuke.* I have; and you rejected them.

*Bev.* Pr'ythee, let me be a man.

*Stuke.* Ay, and your friend a poor one—But I have done: And for these trinkets of a woman, why, let her keep them, to deck out pride with, and show a laughing world, that she has finery to starve in.

*Bev.* No; she shall yield up all—My friend demands it. But need we have talked lightly of her? The jewels, that she values, are truth and innocence—Those will adorn her ever; and, for the rest, she wore them for a husband's pride, and to his wants will give them. Alas! you know her not.—Where shall we meet?

*Stuke.* No matter; I have changed my mind—Leave me to a prison; 'tis the reward of friendship.

*Bev.* Perish mankind first—Leave you to a prison! No! fallen as you see me, I'm not that wretch; Nor would I change this heart, o'ercharged as 'tis with folly and misfortune, for one most prudent, and most happy, if callous to a friend's distress.

*Stuke.* You are too warm.

*Bev.* In such a cause, not to be warm, is to be frozen. Farewell—I'll meet you at your lodgings.

*Stuke.* Reflect a little.—The jewels may be lost—Better not hazard them—I was too pressing.

*Bev.* And I ungrateful. Reflection takes up time—I have no leisure for't—Within an hour expect me.

[*Exit.*

*Stuke.* The thoughtless, shallow prodigal! We shall have sport at night, then—but hold—The jewels are not ours yet—The lady may refuse them—The husband may relent too—'Tis more than probable—I'll write a note to Beverley, and the contents shall spur him to demand them—But am I grown this rogue through avarice? No; I have warmer motives, love,

and revenge—Ruin the husband, and the wife's virtue may be bid for.

*Enter BATES.*

Look to your men, Bates; there's money stirring.—We meet to-night, upon this spot.—Hasten, and tell them.—Hasten, I say, the rogues will scatter else.

*Bates.* Not till their leader bids them.

*Stuke.* Come on, then—Give them the word, and follow me; I must advise with you—This is a day of business. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

BEVERLEY'S Lodgings.

*Enter BEVERLEY and CHARLOTTE.*

*Char.* Your looks are changed too;—there's wildness in them. My wretched sister! How will it grieve her to see you thus!

*Bev.* No, no; a little rest will ease me. And for your Lewson's kindness to her, it has my thanks; I have no more to give him.

*Char.* Yes; a sister, and her fortune. I trifle with him, and he complains—My looks, he says, are cold upon him. He thinks too——

*Bev.* That I have lost your fortune—He dares not think so.

*Char.* Nor does he—you are too quick at guessing—He cares not if you had. That care is mine—I lent it you to husband, and now I claim it.

*Bev.* You have suspicions then?

*Char.* Cure them, and give it me.

*Bev.* To stop a sister's chidings?

*Char.* To vindicate her brother.

*Bev.* How if he needs no vindication?

*Char.* I would fain hope so.

*Bev.* Ay, would and cannot—Leave it to time, then; 'twill satisfy all doubts.

*Char.* Mine are already satisfied.

*Bev.* 'Tis well. And when the subject is renewed, speak to me like a sister, and I will answer like a brother.

*Char.* To tell me I'm a beggar.—Why, tell it now. I, that can bear the ruin of those dearer to me—the ruin of a sister and her infant, can bear that too.

*Bev.* No more of this—you wring my heart.

*Char.* 'Would that the misery were all your own! But innocence must suffer—Unthinking rioter!—whose home was heaven to him! an angel dwelt there, and a little cherub, that crowned his days with blessings.—How he has lost this heaven, to league with devils!

*Bev.* Forbear, I say; reproaches come too late;—they search, but cure not. And, for the fortune you demand, we'll talk to-morrow on't—our tempers may be milder.

*Char.* Or, if 'tis gone, why, farewell all. I claimed it for a sister.—But I'll upbraid no more. What Heaven permits, perhaps, it may ordain.—Yet, that the husband, father, brother, should be its instruments of vengeance!—'Tis grievous to know that!

*Bev.* If you're my sister, spare the remembrance—it wounds too deeply. To-morrow shall clear all; and when the worst is known, it may be better than your fears. Comfort my wife; and for the pains of absence, I'll make atonement. The world may yet go well with us.

*Char.* See where she comes!—Look cheerfully upon her—Affections such as hers are prying, and lend those eyes that read the soul.



*Enter* MRS. BEVERLEY *and* LEWSON.

*Mrs. Bev.* My life!

*Bev.* My love! how fares it? I have been a truant husband.

*Mrs. Bev.* But we meet now, and that heals all—Doubts and alarms I have had; but in this dear embrace I bury and forget them. My friend, here, [*Pointing to LEWSON.*] has been indeed a friend. Charlotte, 'tis you must thank him: your brother's thanks and mine are of too little value.

*Bev.* Yet what we have we'll pay. I thank you, sir, and am obliged. I would say more, but that your goodness to the wife upbraids the husband's follies. Had I been wise, she had not trespassed on your bounty.

*Lew.* Nor has she trespassed. The little I have done, acceptance overpays.

*Char.* So friendship thinks——

*Mrs. Bev.* And doubles obligations by striving to conceal them—We'll talk another time on't—You are too thoughtful, love.

*Bev.* No, I have reason for these thoughts.

*Char.* And hatred for the cause—'Would you had that too!

*Bev.* I have——The cause was avarice.

*Char.* And who the tempter?

*Bev.* A ruined friend—ruined by too much kindness.

*Lew.* Ay, worse than ruined; stabbed in his fame, mortally stabbed—riches can't cure him.

*Bev.* Or, if they could, those I have drained him of. Something of this he hinted in the morning—that Lewson had suspicions of him——Why these suspicions? [*Angrily.*]

*Lew.* At school we knew this Stukely. A cunning, plodding boy he was, sordid and cruel, slow at his

task, but quick at shifts and tricking. He schemed out mischief, that others might be punished; and would tell his tale with so much art, that for the lash he merited, rewards and praise were given him. Show me a boy with such a mind, and time, that ripens manhood in him, shall ripen vice too—I'll prove him, and lay him open to you—Till then be warned—I know him, and therefore shun him.

*Bev.* As I would those that wrong him.—You are too busy, sir.

*Mrs. Bev.* No, not too busy—Mistaken, perhaps—That had been milder.

*Lew.* No matter, madam. I can bear this, and praise the heart that prompts it—Pity such friendship should be so placed!

*Bev.* Again, sir! But I'll bear too—You wrong him, Lewson, and will be sorry for't.

*Char.* Ay, when 'tis prov'd he wrongs him. The world is full of hypocrites.

*Bev.* And Stukely one—so you would infer, I think.—I'll hear no more of this—my heart aches for him—I have undone him.

*Lew.* The world says otherwise.

*Bev.* The world is false, then—I have business with you, love. [*To MRS. BEVERLEY.*] We'll leave them to their rancour. [*Going.*]

*Char.* No; we shall find room within for't.—Come this way, sir. [*To LEWSON.*]

*Lew.* Another time my friend will thank me; that time is hastening too.

[*Exeunt LEWSON and CHARLOTTE.*]

*Bev.* They hurt me beyond bearing—Is Stukely false! Then honesty has left us! 'Twere sinning against Heaven to think so.

*Mrs. Bev.* I never doubted him.

*Bev.* No; you are charity. Meekness and ever-during patience live in that heart, and love that knows no change.—Why did I ruin you?

*Mrs. Bev.* You have not ruined me, I have no wants when you are present, nor wishes in your absence, but to be blest with your return. Be but resigned to what has happened, and I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

*Bev.* My generous girl!—But memory will be busy; still crowding on my thoughts, to sour the present by the past. I have another pang too.

*Mrs. Bev.* Tell it, and let me cure it.

*Bev.* That friend—that generous friend, whose fame they have traduced—I have undone him too. While he had means, he lent me largely; and now a prison must be his portion.

*Mrs. Bev.* No; I hope otherwise.

*Bev.* To hope must be to act. The charitable wish feeds not the hungry—Something must be done.

*Mrs. Bev.* What?

*Bev.* In bitterness of heart he told me, just now he told me, I had undone him. Could I hear that, and think of happiness? No; I have disclaimed it, while he is miserable.

*Mrs. Bev.* The world may mend with us, and then we may be grateful. There's comfort in that hope.

*Bev.* Ay; 'tis the sick man's cordial, his promised cure; while, in preparing it, the patient dies—What now?

*Enter Lucy.*

*Lucy.* A letter, sir. [*Delivers it, and exit.*]

*Bev.* The hand is Stukely's.

[*Opens it, and reads it to himself.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* And brings good news—at least I'll hope so—What says he, love?

*Bev.* Why this—too much for patience. Yet he directs me to conceal it from you. [*Reads.*] *Let your haste to see me be the only proof of your esteem for me. I have determined, since we parted, to bid adieu to England; chusing rather to forsake my country, than owe*



*my freedom in it to the means we talked of. Keep this a secret at home, and hasten to the ruined*

R. STUKELY.

Ruined by friendship!—I must relieve or follow him.

*Mrs. Bev.* Follow him, did you say? Then I am lost, indeed!

*Bev.* Oh, this infernal vice! how has it sunk me! A vice, whose highest joy was poor to my domestic happiness. Yet how have I pursued it! turned all my comforts to bitterest pangs, and all my smiles, to tears.—Damned, damned infatuation!

*Mrs. Bev.* Be cool, my life! What are the means the letter talks of? Have you—have I those means? Tell me, and ease me. I have no life while you are wretched.

*Bev.* No, no; it must not be. 'Tis I alone have sinned; 'tis I alone must suffer. You shall reserve those means, to keep my child and his wronged mother from want and wretchedness.

*Mrs. Bev.* What means?

*Bev.* I came to rob you of them—but cannot—dare not—Those jewels are your sole support—I should be more than monster to request them.

*Mrs. Bev.* My jewels! Trifles, not worth speaking of, if weighed against a husband's peace; but let them purchase that, and the world's wealth is of less value.

*Bev.* Amazing goodness! How little do I seem before such virtues!

*Mrs. Bev.* No more, my love. I kept them till occasion called to use them; now is the occasion, and I'll resign them cheerfully.

*Bev.* Why, we'll be rich in love then. But this excess of kindness melts me. Yet for a friend one would do much—He has denied me nothing.

*Mrs. Bev.* Come to my closet—But let him manage wisely. We have no more to give him.

*Bev.* Where learnt my love this excellence? 'Tis

Heaven's own teaching : that Heaven, which to an angel's form has given a mind more lovely. I am unworthy of you, but will deserve you better.

Henceforth my follies and neglects shall cease,  
And all to come be penitence and peace ;  
Vice shall no more attract me with her charms,  
Nor pleasure reach me, but in these dear arms.

[*Exeunt.*]

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## ACT THE THIRD.

### SCENE I.

#### STUKELY'S Lodgings.

*Enter STUKELY and BATES.*

*Stuke.* So runs the world, Bates. Fools are the natural prey of knaves ; Nature designed them so, when she made lambs for wolves. The laws, that fear and policy have framed, Nature disclaims : she knows but two, and those are force and cunning. The nobler law is force ; but then there's danger in't ; while cunning, like a skilful miner, works safely and unseen.

*Bates.* And therefore wisely. Force must have nerves and sinews ; cunning wants neither. The dwarf that has it shall trip the giant's heels up.

*Stuke.* And bind him to the ground. Why, we'll

erect a shrine for Nature, and be her oracles. Conscience is weakness; fear made it, and fear maintains it. The dread of shame, inward reproaches, and fictitious burnings swell out the phantom. Nature knows none of this; her laws are freedom.

*Bates.* Sound doctrine, and well delivered!

*Stuke.* We are sincere, too, and practise what we teach. Let the grave pedant say as much.—But now to business—The jewels are disposed of: and Beverley again worth money. If my design succeeds, this night we finish with him—Go to your lodgings, and be busy—You understand conveyances, and make ruin sure.

*Bates.* Better stop here. The sale of this reversion may be talked of—There's danger in it.

*Stuke.* No, 'tis the mark I aim at. We'll thrive and laugh. You are the purchaser, and there's the payment. [*Giving a Pocket Book.*] He thinks you rich; and so you shall be. Inquire for titles, and deal hardly; 'twill look like honesty.

*Bates.* How if he suspects us.

*Stuke.* Leave it to me. I study hearts, and when to work upon them. Go to your lodgings; and if we come, be busy over papers. Talk of a thoughtless age, of gaming and extravagance; you have a face for't.

*Bates.* A feeling too that would avoid it. We push too far; but I have cautioned you. If it ends ill, you'll think of me—and so, adieu. [*Exit.*]

*Stuke.* This fellow sins by halves; his fears are conscience to him. I'll turn these fears to use. Rogues that dread shame, will still be greater rogues to hide their guilt—Lewson grows troublesome—We must get rid of him—He knows too much. I have a tale for Beverley; part of it truth, too—He shall call Lewson to account—If it succeeds, 'tis well; if not, we must try other means—But here he comes—I must dissemble.



*Enter BEVERLEY.*

Look to the door there!—*[In a seeming Fright.]*—  
My friend!—I thought of other visitors.

*Bev.* No; these shall guard you from them—*[Offering Notes.]* Take them, and use them cautiously—  
The world deals hardly by us.

*Stuke.* And shall I leave you destitute? No: your wants are the greatest. Another climate may treat me kinder. The shelter of to-night takes me from this.

*Bev.* Let these be your support then—Yet is there need of parting? I may have means again; we'll share them, and live wisely.

*Stuke.* No: I should tempt you on. Habit is nature in me: ruin can't cure it. Even now I would be gaming. Taught by experience as I am, and knowing this poor sum is all that's left us, I am for venturing still—And say I am too blame—Yet will this little supply our wants? No, we must put it out to usury. Whether 'tis madness in me, or some restless impulse of good fortune, I yet am ignorant; but—

*Bev.* Take it, and succeed then. I'll try no more.

*Stuke.* 'Tis surely impulse; it pleads so strongly—But you are cold—We'll e'en part here then. And for this last reserve, keep it for better uses; I'll have none on't. I thank you though, and will seek fortune singly—One thing I had forgot—

*Bev.* What is it?

*Stuke.* Perhaps, 'twere best forgotten. But I am open in my nature, and zealous for the honour of my friend—Lewson speaks freely of you.

*Bev.* Of you, I know he does.

*Stuke.* I can forgive him for't; but, for my friend, I'm angry.

*Bev.* What says he of me?

*Stuke.* That Charlotte's fortune is embezzled—He talks on't loudly.

*Bev.* He shall be silenced, then—How heard you of it?

*Stuke.* From many. He questioned Bates about it. You must account with him, he says.

*Bev.* Or he with me—and soon, too.

*Stuke.* Speak mildly to him. Cautions are best.

*Bev.* I'll think on't—But whither go you?

*Stuke.* From poverty and prisons—No matter whither. If fortune changes, you may hear from me.

*Bev.* May these be prosperous, then. [*Offering the Notes, which he refuses.*] Nay, they are yours—I have sworn it, and will have nothing—Take them, and use them.

*Stuke.* Singly I will not—My cares are for my friend; for his lost fortune and ruined family. All separate interests I disclaim. Together we have fallen; together we must rise. My heart, my honour, and affections, all will have it so.

*Bev.* I am weary of being fooled.

*Stuke.* And so am I—Here let us part, then—These bodings of good fortune shall all be stifled; call them folly, and forget them—farewell.

*Bev.* No; stay a moment—How my poor heart's distracted! I have the bodings too; but whether caught from you, or prompted by my good or evil genius, I know not—The trial shall determine—And yet, my wife.

*Stuke.* Ay, ay, she'll chide.

*Bev.* No; my chidings are all here.

[*Pointing to his Heart.*]

*Stuke.* I'll not persuade you.

*Bev.* I am persuaded; by reason too; the strongest reason; necessity. Oh, could I but regain the height I have fallen from, Heaven should forsake me in my latest hour, if I again mixed in these scenes, or

sacrificed the husband's peace, his joy, and best affections, to avarice and infamy.

*Stuke.* I have resolved like you; and since our motives are so honest, why should we fear success?

*Bev.* Come on, then—Where shall we meet?

*Stuke.* At Wilson's—Yet if it hurts you, leave me: I have misled you often.

*Bev.* We have misled each other—But come! Fortune is fickle, and may be tired with plaguing us—There let us rest our hopes.

*Stuke.* Yet think a little—

*Bev.* I cannot—thinking but distracts me.

When desperation leads, all thoughts are vain;  
Reason would lose what rashness may obtain.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

BEVERLEY'S Lodgings.

*Enter* MRS. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

*Char.* 'Twas all a scheme, a mean one; unworthy of my brother.

*Mrs. Bev.* No, I am sure it was not—Stukely is honest too; I know he is—This madness has undone them both.

*Char.* My brother irrecoverable—You are too spiritless a wife—A mournful tale, mixed with a few kind words; will steal away your soul. The world's too subtle for such goodness. Had I been by, he should have asked your life sooner than those jewels.

*Mrs. Bev.* He should have had it, then. [*Warmly.*]



I live but to oblige him. She, who can love, and is beloved like me, will do as much. Men have done more for mistresses, and women for a base deluder: and shall a wife do less? Your chidings hurt me, Charlotte.

*Char.* And come too late; they might have saved you else. How could he use you so?

*Mrs. Bev.* 'Twas friendship did it. His heart was breaking for a friend.

*Char.* The friend, that has betrayed him.

*Mrs. Bev.* Pr'ythee don't think so.

*Char.* To-morrow he accounts with me.

*Mrs. Bev.* And fairly—I will not doubt it.

*Char.* Unless a friend has wanted—I have no patience—Sister! sister! we are bound to curse this friend.

*Mrs. Bev.* My Beverley speaks nobly of him.

*Char.* And Lewson truly—But I displease you with this talk.—To-morrow will instruct us.

*Mrs. Bev.* Stay till it comes then—I would not think so hardly.

*Char.* Nor I, but from conviction—Yet we have hope of better days. My uncle is infirm, and of an age that threatens hourly—Or if he lives, you never have offended him; and for distresses so unmerited he will have pity.

*Mrs. Bev.* I know it, and am cheerful.

*Char.* My Lewson will be kind too. While he and I have life and means, you shall divide with us—And see, he's here!

*Enter LEWSON.*

We were just speaking of you.

*Lew.* 'Tis best to interrupt you then. Few characters will bear a scrutiny; and where the bad outweighs the good, he's safest, that's least talked of. What say you, madam? [To CHARLOTTE.

*Char.* That I hate scandal, though a woman—therefore talk seldom of you.

*Mrs. Bev.* Or, with more truth, that, though a woman, she loves to praise—Therefore talks always of you. I'll leave you to decide it. *[Exit.*

*Lew.* How good and amiable! I came to talk in private with you; of matters that concern you. 'Tis now a tedious twelvemonth, since, with an open and kind heart, you said you loved me.

*Char.* So tedious, did you say?

*Lew.* And when in consequence of such sweet words, I pressed for marriage, you gave a voluntary promise that you would live for me.

*Char.* You think me changed, then? *[Angrily.*

*Lew.* I did not say so. A thousand times I have pressed for the performance of this promise: but private cares, a brother's and a sister's ruin, were reasons for delaying it.

*Char.* I had no other reasons.—Where will this end?

*Lew.* It shall end presently.

*Char.* Go on, sir.

*Lew.* A promise, such as this, given freely, not extorted, the world thinks binding; but I think otherwise.

*Char.* And would release me from it?

*Lew.* You are too impatient, madam.

*Char.* Cool, sir—quite cool—Pray go on.

*Lew.* Time and a near acquaintance with my faults may have brought change—if it be so; or for a moment, if you have wished this promise were unmade, here I acquit you of it—This is my question then; and with such plainness as I ask it, I shall entreat an answer.—Have you repented of this promise?

*Char.* Stay, sir. The man, that can suspect me, shall find me changed—Why am I doubted?

*Lew.* My doubts are of myself. I have my faults, and you have observation. If from my temper, my words or actions, you have conceived a thought against

me, or even a wish for separation, all that has passed is nothing.

*Char.* You startle me—But tell me—I must be answered first. Is it from honour you speak this? Or do you wish me changed?

*Lew.* Heaven knows I do not.—Life and my Charlotte are so connected, that to lose one, were loss of both. Yet for a promise, though given in love, and meant for binding; if time or accident, or reason, should change opinion—with me that promise has no force.

*Char.* Why, now I'll answer you. Your doubts are prophecies—I am really changed.

*Lew.* Indeed!

*Char.* I could torment you now, as you have me; but it is not in my nature.—That I am changed, I own: for what at first was inclination, is now grown reason in me; and from that reason, had I the world, nay, were I poorer than the poorest, and you too wanting bread, with but a hovel to invite me to—I would be yours, and happy.

*Lew.* My kindest Charlotte! [*Taking her Hand.*] Thanks are too poor for this—and words too weak! But if we love so, why should our union be delayed?

*Char.* For happier times. The present are too wretched.

*Lew.* I may have reasons, that press it now.

*Char.* What reasons?

*Lew.* The strongest reasons; unanswerable ones.

*Char.* Be quick and name them.

*Lew.* First promise, that to-morrow, or the next day, you will be mine for ever.

*Char.* I do—though misery should succeed.

*Lew.* Thus then I seize you! And with you every joy on this side heaven!

*Char.* Now, sir, your secret.

*Lew.* Your fortune's lost.



*Char.* My fortune lost!—I'll study to be humble then. But was my promise claimed for this? How nobly generous! Where learned you this sad news?

*Lew.* From Bates, Stukely's prime agent. I have obliged him, and he's grateful—He told it me in friendship, to warn me from my Charlotte.

*Char.* 'Twas honest in him, and I'll esteem him for it.

*Lew.* He knows much more than he has told.

*Char.* For me it is enough. And for your generous love, I thank you from my soul. If you'd oblige me more, give me a little time.

*Lew.* Why time? It robs us of our happiness.

*Char.* I have a task to learn first. The little pride this fortune gave me must be subdued. Once we were equal; and might have met obliging and obliged. But now 'tis otherwise; and for a life of obligations, I have not learned to bear it.

*Lew.* Mine is that life. You are too noble.

*Char.* Leave me to think on't.

*Lew.* To-morrow then you'll fix my happiness?

*Char.* All, that I can, I will.

*Lew.* It must be so; we live but for each other. Keep what you know a secret; and when we meet to-morrow, more may be known.—Farewell. [*Exit.*

*Char.* My poor, poor sister! how would this wound her! But I'll conceal it, and speak comfort to her.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*A Room in the Gaming-House.*

*Enter BEVERLEY and STUKELY.*

*Bev.* Whither would you lead me? [*Angrily.*

*Stuke.* Where we may vent our curses.

*Bev.* Ay, on yourself, and those damned counsels that have destroyed me. A thousand fiends were in that bosom, and all let loose to tempt me—I had resisted else.

*Stuke.* Go on, sir—I have deserved this from you.

*Bev.* And curses everlasting—Time is too scanty for them——

*Stuke.* What have I done?

*Bev.* What the arch-devil of old did—soothed with false hopes, for certain ruin.

*Stuke.* Myself unhurt; nay, pleased at your destruction—So your words mean. Why, tell it to the world. I am too poor to find a friend in't.

*Bev.* A friend! What's he? I had a friend.

*Stuke.* And have one still.

*Bev.* Ay; I'll tell you of this friend. He found me happiest of the happy. Fortune and honour crowned me; and love and peace lived in my heart. One spark of folly lurked there; that too he found; and by deceitful breath blew into flames, that have consumed me. This friend were you to me.

*Stuke.* A little more, perhaps—The friend, who gave his all to save you; and not succeeding, chose ruin with you. But no matter, I have undone you, and am a villain.

*Bev.* No; I think not—The villains are within.

*Stuke.* What villains?

*Bev.* Dawson and the rest—We have been dupes to sharpers.

*Stuke.* How know you this? I have had doubts as well as you; yet still as fortune changed I blushed at my own thoughts.—But you have proofs, perhaps.

*Bev.* Ay, damned ones. Repeated losses—Night after night, and no reverse—Chance has no hand in this.

*Stuke.* I think more charitably; yet I am peevish in my nature, and apt to doubt—The world speaks

fairly of this Dawson; so it does of the rest. We have watched them closely too. But 'tis a right usurped by losers, to think the winners knaves—We'll have more manhood in us.

*Bev.* I know not what to think.—This night has stung me to the quick—Blasted my reputation too—I have bound my honour to these vipers; played meanly upon credit, till I tired them; and now they shun me, to rifle one another. What's to be done?

*Stuke.* Nothing. My counsels have been fatal.

*Bev.* By Heaven I'll not survive this shame—Traitor! 'tis you have brought it on me. [*Taking hold of him.*] Show me the means to save me, or I'll commit a murder here, and next upon myself.

*Stuke.* Why, do it then, and rid me of ingratitude.

*Bev.* Pr'ythee forgive this language—I speak I know not what—Rage and despair are in my heart, and hurry me to madness. My home is horror to me—I'll not return to it. Speak quickly; tell me, if in this wreck of fortune, one hope remains? Name it, and be my oracle.

*Stuke.* To vent your curses on—You have bestowed them liberally. Take your own counsel; and should a desperate hope present itself, 'twill suit your desperate fortune. I'll not advise you.

*Bev.* What hope? By Heaven I'll catch at it, however desperate. I am so sunk in misery, it cannot lay me lower.

*Stuke.* You have an uncle.

*Bev.* Ay, what of him?

*Stuke.* Old men live long by temperance; while their heirs starve on expectation.

*Bev.* What mean you?

*Stuke.* That the reversion of his estate is yours; and will bring money to pay debts with—Nay, more, it may retrieve what's past.

*Bev.* Or leave my child a beggar.

*Stuke.* And what's his father? A dishonourable one;



engaged for sums he cannot pay——That should be thought of.

*Bev.* It is my shame——The poison, that inflames me. Where shall we go? To whom? I'm impatient till all's lost.

*Stuke.* All may be yours again——Your man is Bates——He has large funds at his command, and will deal justly by you.

*Bev.* I am resolved——Tell them within we'll meet them presently; and with full purses, too——Come, follow me.

*Stuke.* No. I'll have no hand in this; nor do I counsel it——Use your discretion, and act from that. You'll find me at my lodgings.

*Bev.* Succeed what will, this night I'll dare the worst.

'Tis loss of fear, to be completely curs'd. [*Exit.*

*Stuke.* Why, lose it then for ever——Fear is the mind's worst evil: and 'tis a friendly office to drive it from the bosom——Thus far has fortune crowned me——Yet Beverley is rich; rich in his wife's best treasure, her honour and affections. I would supplant him there too. Charlotte is sometimes absent. The seeds of jealousy are sown already. If I mistake not, they have taken root too. Now is the time to ripen them, and reap the harvest. The softest of her sex, if wronged in love, or thinking that she's wronged, becomes a tigress in revenge——I'll instantly to Beverley's——No matter for the danger——When beauty leads us on, 'tis indiscretion to reflect, and cowardice to doubt.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

## BEVERLEY'S Lodgings.

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY and LUCY.

*Mrs. Bev.* Did Charlotte tell you any thing?

*Lucy.* No, madam.

*Mrs. Bev.* She looked confused, methought; said she had business with her Lewson; which, when I pressed to know, tears only were her answer.

*Lucy.* She seemed in haste too—Yet her return may bring you comfort.

*Mrs. Bev.* No, my kind girl; I was not born for it—But why do I distress thee? Thy sympathizing heart bleeds for the ills of others—What pity that thy mistress can't reward thee! But there's a Power above, that sees, and will remember all. [*Knocking.*] Hark! there's some one entering.

*Lucy.* Perhaps 'tis my master, madam. [*Exit.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* Let him be well too, and I am satisfied. [*Goes to the Door, and listens.*] No, 'tis another's voice.

Enter LUCY and STUKELY.

*Lucy.* Mr. Stukely, madam. [*Exit.*]

*Stuke.* To meet you thus alone, madam, was what I wished. Unseasonable visits, when friendship warrants them, need no excuse—therefore I make none.

*Mrs. Bev.* What mean you, sir? And where is your friend?

*Stuke.* Men may have secrets, madam, which their

best friends are not admitted to. We parted in the morning, not soon to meet again.

*Mrs. Bev.* You mean to leave us then—to leave your country too? I am no stranger to your reasons, and pity your misfortunes.

*Stuke.* Your pity has undone you. Could Beverley do this? That letter was a false one; a mean contrivance to rob you of your jewels—I wrote it not.

*Mrs. Bev.* Impossible! Whence came it then?

*Stuke.* Wronged as I am, madam, I must speak plainly.

*Mrs. Bev.* Do so, and ease me.—Your hints have troubled me. Reports, you say, are stirring—Reports of whom? You wished me not to credit them.—What, sir, are these reports?

*Stuke.* I thought them slander, madam; and cautioned in friendship, lest from officious tongues the tale had reached you with double aggravation.

*Mrs. Bev.* Proceed, sir.

*Stuke.* It is a debt due to my fame; due to an injured wife too.—We are both injured.

*Mrs. Bev.* How injured? And who has injured us?

*Stuke.* My friend—your husband.

*Mrs. Bev.* You would resent for both then; But know, sir, my injuries are my own, and do not need a champion.

*Stuke.* Be not too hasty, madam. I come not in resentment, but for acquittance. You thought me poor; and to the feigned distresses of a friend, gave up your jewels.

*Mrs. Bev.* I gave them to a husband.

*Stuke.* Who gave them to a——

*Mrs. Bev.* What? whom did he give them to?

*Stuke.* A mistress.

*Mrs. Bev.* No; on my life he did not.

*Stuke.* Himself confessed it, with curses on her avarice.



*Mrs. Bev.* I'll not believe it—He has no mistress ; or if he has, why is it told to me ?

*Stuke.* To guard you against insults. He told me, that, to move you to compliance, he forged that letter, pretending I was ruined, ruined by him too. The fraud succeeded ; and what a trusting wife bestowed in pity, was lavished on a wanton.

*Mrs. Bev.* Then I am lost indeed ! His follies I have borne without upbraiding, and saw the approach of poverty without a tear—My affections, my strong affections, supported me through every trial.

*Stuke.* Be patient, madam.

*Mrs. Bev.* Patient ! The barbarous, ungrateful man ! And does he think that the tenderness of my heart is his best security for wounding it ? But he shall find that injuries such as these, can arm my weakness, for vengeance and redress.

*Stuke.* Ha ! then I may succeed. [*Aside.*] Redress is in your power.

*Mrs. Bev.* What redress ?

*Stuke.* Forgive me, madam, if, in my zeal to serve you, I hazard your displeasure. Think of your wretched state. Already want surrounds you—Is it in patience to bear that ? To see your helpless little one robbed of his birthright ? A sister too, with unavailing tears, lamenting her lost fortune ? No comfort left you, but ineffectual pity from the few, outweighed by insults from the many.

*Mrs. Bev.* Am I so lost a creature ?—Well, sir, my redress ?

*Stuke.* To be resolved is to secure it. The marriage-vow, once violated, is, in the sight of Heaven, dissolved—Start not, but hear me. 'Tis now the summer of your youth : time has not cropped the roses from your cheek, though sorrow long has washed them : Then use your beauty wisely, and, freed by injuries, fly from the cruellest of men, for shelter with the kindest.

*Mrs. Bev.* And who is he ?

*Stuke.* A friend to the unfortunate ; a bold one too, who, while the storm is bursting on your brow, and lightning flashing from your eyes, dares tell you, that he loves you.

*Mrs. Bev.* 'Would that these eyes had Heaven's own lightning, that, with a look, thus I might blast thee ! Am I then fallen so low ? Has poverty so humbled me, that I should listen to a hellish offer, and sell my soul for bread ? Oh, villain ! villain !—But now I know thee, and thank thee for the knowledge.

*Stuke.* If you are wise, you shall have cause to thank me.

*Mrs. Bev.* An injured husband too shall thank thee.

*Stuke.* Yet know, proud woman, I have a heart as stubborn as your own ! as haughty and imperious ; and, as it loves, so can it hate.

*Mrs. Bev.* Mean, despicable villain ! I scorn thee and thy threats. Was it for this that Beverley was false ?—that his too credulous wife should, in despair and vengeance, give up her honour to a wretch ? But he shall know it, and vengeance shall be his.

*Stuke.* Why, send him for defiance then—Tell him I love his wife ; but that a worthless husband forbids our union. I'll make a widow of you, and court you honourably.

*Mrs. Bev.* Oh, coward, coward ! thy soul will shrink at him : Yet, in the thought of what may happen, I feel a woman's fears.—Keep thy own secret, and begone.

*Stuke.* I'll not offend you, madam. [Exit.

*Mrs. Bev.* Why opens not the earth, to swallow such a monster ? Be conscience, then, his punisher, till Heaven, in mercy, gives him penitence, or dooms him in his justice. [Exit.

## ACT THE FOURTH.

## SCENE I.

## STUKELY'S Lodgings.

*Enter STUKELY and BATES, meeting.*

*Bates.* Where have you been?

*Stuke.* Fooling my time away—playing my tricks, like a tame monkey, to entertain a woman.—No matter where—I have been vexed and disappointed.—Tell me of Beverley; how bore he his last shock?

*Bates.* Like one, (so Dawson says) whose senses had been numbed with misery. When all was lost, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, and stood some time, with folded arms, stupid, and motionless; then snatching his sword, that hung against the wainscot, he sat him down, and, with a look of fixed attention, drew figures on the floor. At last, he started up, looked wild, and trembled; and, like a woman, seized with her sex's fits, laughed out aloud, while the tears trickled down his face—so left the room.

*Stuke.* Why, this was madness.

*Bates.* The madness of despair.

*Stuke.* We must confine him then—A prison would do well. [*A Knocking at the Door.*] Hark! that knocking may be his—Go that way down. [*Exit BATES.*] Who's there?

*Enter LEWSON.*

*Lew.* An enemy—an open, and avowed one.



*Stuke.* Why am I thus broke in upon? This house is mine, sir, and should protect me from insult and ill-manners.

*Lew.* Guilt has no place of sanctuary; wherever found, 'tis virtue's lawful game. The fox's hold, and tiger's den, are no security against the hunter.

*Stuke.* Your business, sir?

*Lew.* To tell you that I know you.—Why this confusion? That look of guilt and terror? Is Beverley awake, or has his wife told tales? The man, that dares like you, should have a soul to justify his deeds, and courage to confront accusers: not, with a coward's fear, to shrink beneath reproof.

*Stuke.* Who waits there? [*Aloud, and in Confusion.*

*Lew.* By Heaven, he dies, that interrupts us! [*Shutting the Door.*] You should have weighed your strength, sir; and then, instead of climbing to high fortune, the world had marked you for what you are—a little, paltry villain!

*Stuke.* You think I fear you.

*Lew.* I know you fear me—This is to prove it.— [*Pulls him by the Sleeve.*] You wanted privacy—A lady's presence took up your attention.—Now we are alone, sir.—Why, what a wretch! [*Flings him from him.*] The vilest insect in creation will turn, when trampled on; yet has this thing undone a man!—by cunning and mean arts undone him!—But we have found you, sir;—traced you through all your labyrinths. If you would save yourself, fall to confession, no mercy will be shown else.

*Stuke.* First, prove me what you think me; till then, your threatnings are in vain—And for this insult, vengeance may yet be mine.

*Lew.* Infamous coward! why, take it now then— [*Draws, and STUKELY retires.*] Alas, I pity thee!—Yet, that a wretch like this, should overcome a Beverley! It fills me with astonishment!—A wretch, so mean of soul, that even desperation cannot animate

him to look upon an enemy. You should not have thus soared, sir, unless, like others of your black profession, you had a sword, to keep the fools in awe, your villany has ruined.

*Stuke.* Villany! 'Twere best to curb this license of your tongue—for know, sir, while there are laws, this outrage on my reputation will not be borne with.

*Lew.* Laws! Dar'st thou seek shelter from the laws—those laws, which thou and thy infernal crew live in the constant violation of? Talk'st thou of reputation too, when, under friendship's sacred name, thou hast betrayed, robbed, and destroyed?

*Stuke.* Ay, rail at gaming—'tis a rich topic, and affords noble declamation.—Go, preach against it in the city—you'll find a congregation in every tavern. If they should laugh at you, fly to my lord, and sermonize it there: he'll thank you, and reform.

*Lew.* And will example sanctify a vice? No, wretch; the custom of my lord, or of the cit, that apes him, cannot excuse a breach of law, or make the gamester's calling reputable.

*Stuke.* Rail on, I say—But is this zeal for beggared Beverley? Is it for him, that I am treated thus? No; he and his wife might both have groaned in prison, had but the sister's fortune escaped the wreck, to have rewarded the disinterested love of honest Mr. Lewson.

*Lew.* How I detest thee for the thought! But thou art lost to every human feeling. Yet, let me tell thee, and may it wring thy heart, that though my friend is ruined by thy snares, thou hast, unknowingly, been kind to me.

*Stuke.* Have I? It was, indeed, unknowingly.

*Lew.* Thou hast assisted me in love—given me the merit that I wanted; since, but for thee, my Charlotte had not known 'twas her dear self I sighed for, and not her fortune.

*Stuke.* Thank me, and take her then.

*Lew.* And, as a brother to poor Beverley, I will pursue the robber, that has stripped him, and snatch him from his gripe.

*Stuke.* Then know, imprudent man, he is within my gripe; and should my friendship for him be slandered once again, the hand, that has supplied him, shall fall and crush him.

*Lew.* Why, now there's a spirit in thee! This is, indeed, to be a villain! But I shall reach thee yet—Fly where thou wilt, my vengeance shall pursue thee—And Beverley shall yet be saved—be saved from thee, thou monster! nor owe his rescue to his wife's dishonour. [Exit.

*Stuke.* [*Pausing.*] Then ruin has enclosed me.—Curse on my coward heart! I would be bravely villainous; but 'tis my nature to shrink at danger, and he has found me. Yet fear brings caution, and that, security—More mischief must be done, to hide the past—Look to yourself, officious Lewson—there may be danger stirring—How now, Bates?

*Enter BATES.*

*Bates.* What is the matter? 'Twas Lewson, and not Beverley, that left you—I heard him loud—You seem alarmed too.

*Stuke.* Ay, and with reason—We are discovered.

*Bates.* I feared as much, and, therefore, cautioned you; but you were preemptory.

*Stuke.* Thus fools talk ever; spending their idle breath on what is past, and trembling at the future. We must be active; Beverley, at worst, is but suspicious; but Lewson's genius, and his hate to me, will lay all open. Means must be found to stop him.

*Bates.* What means?

*Stuke.* Dispatch him—Nay, start not—Desperate occasions call for desperate deeds—We live but by his death.

*Bates.* You cannot mean it?



*Stuke.* I do, by Heaven!

*Bates.* Good night, then.

[*Going.*

*Stuke.* Stay—I must be heard, then answered.—  
Perhaps the motion was too sudden; and human weakness starts at murder, though strong necessity compels it. I have thought long of this, and my first feelings were like yours; a foolish conscience awed me, which, soon I conquered. The man, that would undo me, nature cries out, undo. Brutes know their foes by instinct; and, where superior force is given, they use it for destruction. Shall man do less? Lewson pursues us to our ruin! and shall we, with the means to crush him, fly from our hunter, or turn, and tear him? 'Tis folly, even to hesitate.

*Bates.* He has obliged me, and I dare not.

*Stuke.* Why, live to shame, then—to beggary and punishment. You would be privy to the deed, yet want the soul to act it.—Nay, more, had my designs been levelled at his fortune, you had stepped in, the foremost—And what is life, without its comforts?—Those, you would rob him of, and, by a lingering death, add cruelty to murder. Henceforth, adieu to half-made villains—There's danger in them. What you have got, is yours—keep it, and hide with it—I'll deal my future bounty to those that merit it.

*Bates.* What's the reward?

*Stuke.* Equal division of our gains. I swear it, and will be just.

*Bates.* Think of the means then.

*Stuke.* He's gone to Beverley's—Wait for him in the street—'Tis a dark night, and fit for mischief—A dagger would be useful.

*Bates.* No more.

*Stuke.* Consider the reward. When the deed's done, I have other business with you. Send Dawson to me.

*Bates.* Think it already done—and so, farewell.

[*Exit.*

*Stuke.* Why, farewell Lewson, then; and farewell to my fears. This night secures me—I'll wait the event within. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.

*The Street. —Stage darkened.*

*Enter BEVERLEY.*

*Bev.* How like an outcast do I wander! Loaded with every curse, that drives the soul to desperation! The midnight robber, as he walks his rounds, sees, by the glimmering lamp, my frantic looks, and dreads to meet me. Whither am I going? My home lies there; all that is dear on earth it holds too; yet, are the gates of death more welcome to me—I'll enter it no more—Who passes there? 'Tis Lewson—He meets me in a gloomy hour; and, memory tells me, he has been meddling with my fame.

*Enter LEWSON.*

*Lew.* Beverley! Well met. I have been busy in your affairs.

*Bev.* So I have heard, sir: and now I must thank you, as I ought.

*Lew.* To-morrow, I may' deserve your thanks.—Late as it is, I go to Bates.—Discoveries are making, that an arch villain trembles at.

*Bev.* Discoveries are made, sir, that you shall tremble at. Where is this boasted spirit, this high demeanour, that was to call me to account? You say I have wronged my sister—Now say as much. But, first be ready for defence, as I am for resentment.

[*Draws.*

*Lew.* What mean you?—I understand you not.

*Bev.* The coward's stale acquaintance! who, when he spreads foul calumny abroad, and dreads just vengeance on him, cries out, "What mean you? I understand you not."

*Lew.* Coward and calumny! Whence are those words? But I forgive, and pity you.

*Bev.* Your pity had been kinder to my fame: But you have traduced it—told a vile story to the public ear, that I have wronged my sister.

*Lew.* 'Tis false! Show me the man, that dares accuse me.

*Bev.* I thought you brave, and of a soul superior to low malice; but I have found you, and will have vengeance. This is no place for argument.

*Lew.* Nor shall it be for violence.—Imprudent man! who, in revenge for fancied injuries, would pierce the heart that loves him! But honest friendship acts from itself, unmoved by slander.—You know me not.

*Bev.* Yes, for the slanderer of my fame—who, under show of friendship, arraigns me of injustice; buzzing in every ear foul breach of trust, and family dishonour.

*Lew.* Have I done this? Who told you so?

*Bev.* The world—'Tis talked of every where.—It pleased you to add threats too—You were to call me to account—Why, do it now, then: I shall be proud of such an arbiter.

*Lew.* Put up your sword, and know me better. I never injured you. The base suggestion comes from Stukely: I see him, and his aims.

*Bev.* What aims? I'll not conceal it—'twas Stukely that accused you.

*Lew.* To rid him of an enemy—Perhaps of two—He fears discovery, and frames a tale of falsehood, to ground revenge and murder on.

*Bev.* I must have proof of this.

*Lew.* Wait till to-morrow then.



*Bev.* I will.

*Lew.* Good night—I go to serve you—Forget what's past, as I do; and cheer your family with smiles—To-morrow may confirm them, and make all happy. *[Exit.*

*Bev.* *[Pausing.]* How vile and how absurd is man! His boasted honour is but another name for pride, which easier bears the consciousness of guilt, than the world's just reproofs! But 'tis the fashion of the times; and in defence of falsehood and false honour, men die martyrs. I knew not that my nature was so bad. *[Stands musing.*

*Enter BATES and JARVIS.*

*Jar.* This way the noise was; and yonder's my poor master.

*Bates.* I heard him at high words with Lewson.—The cause I know not.

*Jar.* I heard him too. Misfortunes vex him.

*Bates.* Go to him, and lead him home.—But he comes this way—I'll not be seen by him. *[Exit.*

*Bev.* *[Starting.]* What fellow's that? *[Seeing JARVIS.]* Art thou a murderer, friend? Come, lead the way—I have a hand as mischievous as thine; a heart as desperate too—Jarvis! To bed, old man—the cold will chill thee.

*Jar.* Why are you wandering at this late hour? Your sword drawn too? For Heaven's sake, sheath it, sir—the sight distracts me.

*Bev.* Whose voice was that? *[Wildly.*

*Jar.* 'Twas mine, sir: Let me entreat you to give the sword to me.

*Bev.* Ay, take it—quickly take it—Perhaps I am not so cursed, but Heaven may have sent thee at this moment, to snatch me from perdition.

*Jar.* Then I am blessed.

*Bev.* Continue so, and leave me—my sorrows are contagious. No one is blessed, that's near me.

*Jar.* I came to seek you, sir.

*Bev.* And now thou hast found me, leave me—  
My thoughts are wild, and will not be disturbed.

*Jar.* Such thoughts are best disturbed. Alas, sir,  
forget your griefs, and let me lead you to her! The  
streets are dangerous.

*Bev.* Be wise, and leave me then. The night's  
black horrors are suited to my thoughts—These  
stones shall be my resting-place. [*Lies down.*] Here  
shall my soul brood o'er its miseries; till, with the  
fiends of hell, and guilty of the earth, I start and trem-  
ble at the morning's light.

*Jar.* Let patience, not despair, possess you—Rise,  
I beseech you—There's not a moment of your ab-  
sence, that my poor mistress does not groan for.

*Bev.* Have I undone her, and is she still so kind?  
[*Starting up.*] It is too much—My brain can't hold  
it.—Oh, Jarvis, how desperate is that wretch's state,  
which, only death or madness can relieve!

*Jar.* Appease his mind, good Heaven, and give  
him resignation! Alas, sir! could beings in the other  
world perceive the events of this, how would your pa-  
rents' blessed spirits grieve for you, even in Heaven!—  
Let me conjure you, by their honoured memories—  
by the sweet innocence of your yet helpless child,  
and by the ceaseless sorrows of my poor mistress, to  
rouse your manhood, and struggle with these griefs!

*Bev.* Thou virtuous, good old man! Thy tears, and  
thy entreaties have reached my heart, through all its  
miseries.

*Jar.* Hark! I hear voices—Come this way: we  
may reach home unnoticed.

*Bev.* Unnoticed, didst thou say? Alas! I dread no  
looks, but of those wretches I have made at home.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III.

## STUKELY'S Lodgings.

*Enter STUKELY and DAWSON.*

*Stuke.* Come hither, Dawson; my limbs are on the rack, and my soul shivers in me, till this night's business be complete.—Tell me thy thoughts; is Bates determined, or does he waver?

*Daw.* At first he seemed irresolute;—wished the employment had been mine; and muttered curses on his coward hand, that trembled at the deed.

*Stuke.* And did he leave you so?

*Daw.* No; we walked together, and, sheltered by the darkness, saw Beverley and Lewson, in warm debate. But soon they cooled, and then I left them, to hasten hither; but not till 'twas resolved Lewson should die.

*Stuke.* Thy words have given me life.—That quarrel too was fortunate; for, if my hopes deceive me not, it promises a grave to Beverley.

*Daw.* You misconceive me.—Lewson and he were friends.

*Stuke.* But my prolific brain shall make them enemies. If Lewson falls, he falls by Beverley—An upright jury shall decree it—Ask me no question; but do as I direct. This writ, [*Takes out a Pocket Book.*] for some days past I have treasured here, till a convenient time called for its use—That time is come;



Take it, and give it to an officer—It must be served this instant. [Gives a Paper.

*Daw.* On Beverley!

*Stuke.* Look at it.—'Tis for the sums that I have lent him.

*Daw.* Must he to prison then?

*Stuke.* I asked obedience, not replies. This night a gaol must be his lodging. 'Tis probable, he's not gone home yet.—Wait at his door, and see it executed.

*Daw.* Upon a beggar!—He has no means of payment.

*Stuke.* Dull, and insensible!—If Lewson dies, who was it killed him? Why, he, that was seen quarrelling with him: and I, that knew of Beverley's intents, arrested him in friendship—A little late, perhaps; but 'twas a virtuous act, and men will thank me for it. Now, sir, you understand me?

*Daw.* Most perfectly; and will about it.

*Stuke.* Haste, then; and when 'tis done, come back, and tell me.

*Daw.* Till then, farewell.

[Exit.

*Stuke.* Now tell thy tale, fond wife! And, Lewson, if again thou canst insult me,

Not avarice now, but vengeance, fires my breast,  
And one short hour must make me curs'd, or bless'd.

[Exit.

## ACT THE FIFTH.

## SCENE I.

STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

*Enter STUKELY, BATES, and DAWSON.*

*Bates.* Poor Lewson!—But I told you enough last night. The thought of him is horrible to me.

*Stuke.* In the street, did you say? And no one near him?

*Bates.* By his own door; he was leading me to his house. I pretended business with him, and stabbed him to the heart, while he was reaching at the bell.

*Stuke.* And did he fall so suddenly?

*Bates.* The repetition pleases you, I see—I told you he fell without a groan.

*Stuke.* What heard you of him this morning?

*Bates.* That the watch found him in their rounds, and alarmed the servants. I mingled with the crowd just now, and saw him dead in his own house.—The sight terrified me.

*Stuke.* Away with terrors, till his ghost rise, and accuse us. We have no living enemy to fear, unless 'tis Beverley; and him we have lodged safe in prison.

*Bates.* Must he be murdered too?

*Stuke.* No; I have a scheme to make the law his murderer. At what hour did Lewson fall?

*Bates.* The clock struck twelve, as I turned, to leave him—'Twas a melancholy bell, I thought, tolling for his death.

*Stuke.* The time was lucky for us—Beverley was arrested at one, you say? [To DAWSON.

*Daw.* Exactly.

*Stuke.* Good. We'll talk of this presently. The women were with him, I think?

*Daw.* And old Jarvis. I would have told you of them last night, but your thoughts were too busy.—'Tis well you have a heart of stone; the tale would melt it else.

*Stuke.* Out with it, then.

*Daw.* I traced him to his lodgings; and, pretending pity for his misfortunes, kept the door open, while the officers seized him. 'Twas a damned deed!—but no matter—I followed my instructions.

*Stuke.* And what said he?

*Daw.* He upbraided me with treachery, called you a villain, acknowledged the sums you had lent him, and submitted to his fortune.

*Stuke.* And the women——

*Daw.* For a few minutes, astonishment kept them silent. They looked wildly at one another, while the tears streamed down their cheeks. But rage and fury soon gave them words; and then, in the very bitterness of despair, they cursed me, and the monster, that had employed me.

*Stuke.* And you bore it with philosophy?

*Daw.* Till the scene changed, and then I melted. I ordered the officers to take away their prisoner. The women shrieked, and would have followed him; but we forbade them. 'Twas then they fell upon their knees, the wife fainted, the sister raving, and both, with all the eloquence of misery, endeavouring to soften us. I never felt compassion till that moment; and, had the officers been moved like me, we had left the business undone, and fled with curses on ourselves. But their hearts were steeled by custom. The tears of beauty, and the pangs of affection, were beneath their pity. They tore him from their arms,



and lodged him in prison, with only Jarvis to comfort him.

*Stuke.* There let him lie, till we have farther business with him—But how to proceed will require time and thought.—Come along with me; the room within is fitted for privacy—But no compassion, sir. [*To DAWSON.*—We want leisure for't—This way.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

BEVERLEY'S Lodgings.

*Enter MRS. BEVERLEY and CHARLOTTE.*

*Mrs. Bev.* No news of Lewson yet?

*Char.* None. He went out early, and knows not what has happened.

*Mrs. Bev.* The clock strikes eight—I'll wait no longer.

*Char.* Stay but till Jarvis comes. He has sent twice, to stop us till we see him.

*Mrs. Bev.* Oh, what a night was last night! I would not pass another such to purchase worlds by it—My poor Beverley too! What must he have felt?—The very thought distracts me!—To have him torn at midnight from me! A loathsome prison his habitation! A cold damp room his lodging! The bleak winds, perhaps, blowing upon his pillow! No fond wife, to lull him to his rest! and no reflections but to wound and tear him!—'Tis too horrible!—I wanted love for him, or they had not forced him from me.—They should have parted soul and body first—I was too tame.

*Char.* You must not talk so.—All that we could

we did; and Jarvis did the rest—The faithful creature will give him comfort. See where he comes!—His looks are cheerful too!

*Enter* JARVIS.

*Mrs. Bev.* Are tears then cheerful? Alas, he weeps! Speak to him, Charlotte.

*Char.* How does your master, Jarvis?

*Jar.* I am old and foolish, madam; and tears will come before my words—But don't you weep; [*To* MRS. BEVERLEY.] I have a tale of joy for you.

*Mrs. Bev.* Say but he's well, and I have joy enough.

*Jar.* All shall be well—I have news for him, that will make his poor heart bound again—Fie upon old age!—How childish it makes me!—I have a tale of joy for you, and my tears drown it.

*Mrs. Bev.* What is it, Jarvis?

*Jar.* Your uncle, madam, died yesterday.

*Mrs. Bev.* My uncle!—Oh, Heavens!

*Char.* How heard you of his death?

*Jar.* His steward came express, madam—I met him in the street, inquiring for your lodgings—I should not rejoice, perhaps—but he was old, and my poor master a prisoner—Now he shall live again—Oh, 'tis a brave fortune!

*Char.* Where left you the steward?

*Jar.* I would not bring him hither, to be a witness of your distresses; and, besides, I wanted, once before I die, to be the messenger of joy to you.

*Char.* I have no joy, till my poor brother shares it with me. How did he pass the night, Jarvis?

*Jar.* Like a man dreaming of death and horrors—When they led him to his cell, he flung himself upon a wretched bed, and lay speechless till day-break. I spoke to him, but he would not hear me; and when I persisted, he raised his hand at me, and knit his brow so—I thought he would have struck me. I

bid him be of comfort—Begone, old wretch, says he—My wife! my child! my sister! I have undone them all, and will know no comfort! Then falling upon his knees, he imprecated curses upon himself.

*Mrs. Bev.* This is too horrible!—But you did not leave him so?

*Jar.* I had not the heart, madam. By degrees, I brought him to himself. A shower of tears came to his relief; and he called me his kindest friend, and begged forgiveness of me like a child.—My heart throbb'd so, I could not speak to him. He turned from me for a minute or two, and suppressing a few bitter sighs, inquired after his wretched family.

*Mrs. Bev.* What a tale is this!—But we have staid too long.

*Jar.* We'll away this moment.

*Mrs. Bev.* To comfort him, or die with him.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III.

#### *A Prison.*

*BEVERLEY is discovered sitting.*

*Bev.* Why, there's an end then; I have judg'd deliberately, and the result is death! How the self-murderer's account may stand, I know not. But this I know—the load of hateful life oppresses me too much—The horrors of my soul are more than I can bear—[*Offers to kneel.*] Father of mercy!—I cannot pray—Despair has laid his iron hand upon me, and sealed me for perdition—Conscience! conscience! thy clamours are too loud!—Here's that shall silence thee. [*Takes a Phial out of his Pocket, and looks at it.*]



Thou art most friendly to the miserable. Come, then, thou cordial for sick minds—Come to my heart. [*Drinks.*] Oh, that the grave would bury memory, as well as body! For, if the soul sees and feels the sufferings of those dear ones it leaves behind, the Everlasting has no vengeance to torment it deeper—I'll think no more on't—Reflection comes too late—Once there was a time for't—but now 'tis past.—Who's there?

*Enter* JARVIS.

*Jar.* One, that hoped to see you with better looks—Why do you turn so from me? I have brought comfort with me. And see who comes, to give it welcome!

*Bev.* My wife and sister! Why, 'tis but one pang more, then, and farewell, world! [*Aside.*]

*Enter* MRS. BEVERLEY and CHARLOTTE.

*Mrs. Bev.* Where is he? [*Runs and embraces him.*] Oh, I have him! I have him! And now they shall never part us more—I have news, love, to make you happy for ever—Alas, he hears us not!—Speak to me, love. I have no heart to see you thus.

*Bev.* This is a sad place!

*Mrs. Bev.* We came to take you from it—to tell you the world goes well again—that Providence has seen our sorrows, and sent the means to help them—Your uncle died yesterday.

*Bev.* My uncle!—No, do not say so!—Oh, I am sick at heart!

*Mrs. Bev.* Indeed!—I meant to bring you comfort.

*Bev.* Tell me he lives, then—If you would bring me comfort, tell me he lives!

*Mrs. Bev.* And if I did—I have no power to raise the dead—He died yesterday.

*Bev.* And I am heir to him?

*Jar.* To his whole estate, sir——But bear it patiently—pray, bear it patiently.

*Bev.* Well, well—[*Pausing.*] Why, fame says I am rich then?

*Mrs. Bev.* And truly so——Why do you look so wildly?

*Bev.* Do I? The news was unexpected. But has he left me all?

*Jar.* All, all, sir—He could not leave it from you.

*Bev.* I am sorry for it.

*Mrs. Bev.* Why are you disturbed so?

*Bev.* Has death no terrors in it?

*Mrs. Bev.* Not an old man's death. Yet, if it troubles you, I wish him living.

*Bev.* And I, with all my heart. For I have a tale to tell, shall turn you into stone; or, if the power of speech remain, you shall kneel down and curse me.

*Mrs. Bev.* Alas! what tale is this? And why are we to curse you?—I'll bless you for ever.

*Bev.* No; I have deserved no blessings. The world holds not such another wretch. All this large fortune, this second bounty of Heaven, that might have healed our sorrows, and satisfied our utmost hopes, in a cursed hour I sold last night.

*Mrs. Bev.* Impossible!

*Bev.* That devil, Stukely, with all hell to aid him, tempted me to the deed. To pay false debts of honour, and to redeem past errors, I sold the reversion—Sold it for a scanty sum, and lost it among villains.

*Char.* Why, farewell all then!

*Bev.* Liberty and life—Come, kneel and curse me.

*Mrs. Bev.* Then hear me, Heaven! [*Kneels.*] Look down with mercy on his sorrows! Give softness to his looks, and quiet to his heart! On me, on me.

if misery must be the lot of either, multiply misfortunes! I'll bear them patiently, so he is happy! These hands shall toil for his support! These eyes be lifted up for hourly blessings on him! And every duty of a fond and faithful wife be doubly done, to cheer and comfort him!—So hear me! So reward me! [*Rises.*]

*Bev.* I would kneel too, but that offended Heaven would turn my prayers into curses. For I have done a deed to make life horrible to you——

*Mrs. Bev.* What deed?

*Jar.* Ask him no questions, madam—This last misfortune has hurt his brain. A little time will give him patience.

*Enter STUKELY.*

*Bev.* Why is this villain here?

*Stuke.* To give you liberty and safety. There, madam, is his discharge. [*Giving a Paper to Mrs. BEVERLEY.*] The arrest last night was meant in friendship; but came too late.

*Char.* What mean you, sir?

*Stuke.* The arrest was too late, I say; I would have kept his hands from blood, but was too late.

*Mrs. Bev.* His hands from blood!—Whose blood?

*Stuke.* From Lewson's blood.

*Char.* No, villain! Yet what of Lewson? Speak quickly.

*Stuke.* You are ignorant then! I thought I heard the murderer at confession.

*Char.* What murderer?—And who is murdered? Not Lewson?—Say he lives, and I'll kneel and worship you.

*Stuke.* In pity, so I would; but that the tongues of all cry murder. I came in pity, not in malice; to save the brother, not kill the sister. Your Lewson's dead,

*Char.* Oh, horrible!

*Bev.* Silence, I charge you—Proceed, sir.



*Stuke.* No. Justice may stop the tale—and here's an evidence.

*Enter BATES.*

*Bates.* The news, I see, has reached you. But take comfort, madam. [*To CHARLOTTE.*] There's one without, inquiring for you.—Go to him, and lose no time.

*Char.* O misery! misery! [*Exit.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* Follow her, Jarvis. If it be true, that Lewson's dead, her grief may kill her.

*Bates.* Jarvis must stay here, madam. I have some questions for him.

*Stuke.* Rather let him fly. His evidence may crush his master.

*Bev.* Why ay; this looks like management.

*Bates.* He found you quarrelling with Lewson in the streets last night. [*To BEVERLEY.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* No; I am sure he did not.

*Jar.* Or if I did——

*Mrs. Bev.* 'Tis false, old man—They had no quarrel; there was no cause for quarrel.

*Bev.* Let him proceed, I say—Oh! I am sick! sick!—Reach a chair. [*He sits down.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* If Lewson's dead, you killed him not.

*Enter DAWSON.*

*Stuke.* Who sent for Dawson?

*Bates.* 'Twas I—We have a witness too you little think of—Without there!

*Stuke.* What witness?

*Bates.* A right one. Look at him.

*Enter LEWSON and CHARLOTTE.*

*Stuke.* Lewson! O villains! villains!

[*To BATES and DAWSON.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* Risen from the dead! Why, this is unexpected happiness!

*Char.* Or is it his ghost? [*To STUKELY.*] That sight would please you, sir.

*Jar.* What riddle's this?

*Bev.* Be quick and tell it—My minutes are but few.

*Mrs. Bev.* Alas! why so? You shall live long, and happily.

*Lew.* While shame and punishment shall rack that viper. [*Pointing to STUKELY.*] The tale is short—I was too busy in his secrets, and therefore doomed to die. Bates, to prevent the murder, undertook it—I kept aloof to give it credit.—

*Char.* And gave me pangs unutterable.

*Lew.* I felt them all, and would have told you—But vengeance wanted ripening. The villain's scheme was but half executed. The arrest by Dawson followed the supposed murder—And now, depending on his once wicked associates, he comes to fix the guilt on Beverley.

*Mrs. Bev.* Oh! execrable wretch!

*Bates.* Dawson and I are witnesses of this.

*Lew.* And of a thousand frauds. His fortune ruined by sharpers and false dice; and Stukely sole contriver and possessor of all. How does my friend?

[*To BEVERLEY.*]

*Bev.* Why, well. Who's he that asks me?

*Mrs. Bev.* 'Tis Lewson, love—Why do you look so at him?

*Bev.* They told me he was murdered. [*Wildly.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* Ay; but he lives, to save us.

*Bev.* Lend me your hand—The room turns round.

*Mrs. Bev.* O Heaven!

*Lew.* This villain here disturbs him. Remove him from his sight—And, for your lives, see that you guard him. [*STUKELY is taken off, by DAWSON and BATES.*] How is it, sir?

*Bev.* 'Tis here—and here. [*Pointing to his Head and Heart.*] And now it tears me!

*Mrs. Bev.* You feel convulsed too——What is't disturbs you? How his eyes flame!

*Bev.* A furnace rages in this heart——Down, restless flames!—[*Laying his Hand on his Heart.*] down to your native hell——There you shall rack me—Oh! for a pause from pain!—Where's my wife?—Can you forgive me, love?

*Mrs. Bev.* Alas! for what?

*Bev.* For meanly dying.

*Mrs. Bev.* No—do not say it.

*Bev.* As truly as my soul must answer it.——Had Jarvis staid this morning, all had been well. But pressed by shame—pent in a prison—tormented with my pangs for you—driven to despair and madness—I took the advantage of his absence, corrupted the poor wretch, he left to guard me, and—swallowed poison.

*Char.* Dreadful and cruel!

*Bev.* Ay, most accursed—And now I go to my account. Bend me, and let me kneel. [*Kneels.*] I'll pray for you too. Thou Power, that madest me, hear me! If for a life of frailty, and this too hasty deed of death, thy justice dooms me, here I acquit the sentence. But if enthroned in mercy where thou sittest, thy pity has beheld me, send me a gleam of hope; that in these last and bitter moments my soul may taste of comfort! and for these mourners here, Oh! let their lives be peaceful, and their deaths happy!—Now I die.

[*They lift him to the Chair.*]

*Mrs. Bev.* Restore him, Heaven! Stretch forth thy arm omnipotent, and snatch him from the grave!—Oh, save him! save him! or let me die too.

*Bev.* No; live, I charge you.—We have a little one.—Though I have left him, you will not leave him.—To Lewson's kindness I bequeath him.—Is not this Charlotte?—We have lived in love, though I have wronged you.—Can you forgive me, Charlotte?

*Char.* Forgive you! Oh, my poor brother!



*Ber.* Oh! for a few short moments, to tell you how my heart bleeds for you—That even now, thus dying as I am, dubious and fearful of hereafter, my bosom pang is for your miseries! Support her, Heaven!—And now I go—Oh, mercy! mercy! [*Dies.*]

*Lew.* Then all is over—How is it, madam!—My poor Charlotte too!

*Char.* Tears! tears! why fall you not—O wretched sister!—Speak to her, Lewson—Her grief is speechless.

*Lew.* Remove her from this sight. Sorrow like hers forbids complaint—Words are for lighter griefs—Some ministering angel bring her peace! [*CHARLOTTE leads her off.*] And thou, poor breathless corpse, may thy departed soul have found the rest it prayed for! Save but one error, and this last fatal deed, thy life was lovely. Let frailer minds take warning; and from example learn, that want of prudence is want of virtue.

THE END.

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