

The School For Scandal by Richard Brinsley Sheridan

DRAMATIS PERSONAE		orig	edit	
Joseph Surface (Ol's nephew)	Jo	176	146	
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1. SI Sk Sv at Sl's

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[Sl drinking chocolate, Sk busy writing letter]

- Sl The paragraphs, Mr Snake, you say, were all inserted?
- Sk They were, Mrs Sneerwell, and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand there can be no suspicion [as to where they came from].
- Sl Did you circulate the report of Lady **Brittle's** intrigue ['--] with Captain **Boastall**?
- Sk That is as fine as your Ladyship could wish. It must reach Mrs Clackit's ears within four-and-twenty hours and then, you know, the business is as good as done.
- Sl Why, truly, Mrs Clackit has a very pretty talent, a great deal of industry for gossip!
- Sk To my knowledge she has been the cause of the breaking off six matches, of three sons being disinherited and [and two divorces] –
- Sl She certainly has talents.
- Sk [bootlicking mode] But she [hasn't got] that delicacy of hint and mellowness of sneer which distinguishes your Ladyship's scandal.
- Sl [flattered] Ah, you [flatter me], Snake.
- Sk Not in the least! Everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with [one] word than many can with [a lot of] detail.
- Sl Yes, my dear Snake, I [do not] deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. [owning up] Wounded myself, in the early part of my life by the [poisonous] tongue of slander, I confess I have since

known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

- Sk But there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I am at a loss to understand your motives.
- Sl You mean with respect to my neighbour, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family.
- Sk Why you should destroy the mutual attachment between his brother **Charles** and Sir Peter's ward, **Maria**?
- Sl Heavens! How dull you are! Can [you] not [see] the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have [hidden] even from you. Must I confess that **Charles**, that extravagant bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that **he** it is for whom to gain I would sacrifice: **everything!**
- Sk But how c[o]me you and his brother Joseph [Surface are] so confidential?
- Sl [cold] For our mutual interest. But I have found [Joseph] out a long time since. Despite being universally well-spoken of, I know him to be artful, selfish and malicious!
- Sk Yet Sir Peter praises him as [hand on heart] a **man of sentiment**.
- Sv Mr Joseph Surface, your ladyship.
- Sl Ah, show him in. This, Mr Snake, is the gentleman I wish to assist [with your effort].
- Sk Ah!

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2. Jo SI Sk [enter Jo]

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- Jo My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do today? Mr Snake! Your most obedient.
- Sk *[servile bow]* Sir!
- Sl Joseph, you must tell me when you last saw your intended mistress, Maria, or indeed your brother, Charles.
- Jo I have not seen either since I left you. But I can inform you that they never meet. *[soft chuckle]* Some of your stories have taken a good effect on [Maria].
- Sl Ah, my dear Snake, the merit of this belongs to you.
- Jo Indeed!
- Sl But do your brother's [problems] increase?
- Jo Every hour. His extravagance exceed[s] anything I have ever heard of.
- Sl Poor Charles!
- Jo One can't help feeling for him. Ah! Poor Charles! *[hand on heart]*
- Sl *[sneering]* O Lord, you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.
- Jo That's true. But it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine who, if he is to be [saved], *[sycophantic]* can be so only by a person of your Ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.
- Sl Shh, here she comes. Snake, you must leave by the other door.
- Sk Your ladyship! *[exit quietly but quickly]*

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3. SI Jo Ma Sv

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- Sl *[enter Ma]* Ah, Maria my dear, [how do you do], what's the matter?
- Ma Oh, here is that disagreeable Sir Benjamin Backbite. [He] has just called at my guardian's with his odious [aunt] Crabtree. So I slipped out and ran [here] to avoid them.
- Sl Is that all?
- Jo *[probing]* If my brother **Charles** had been [there], madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.
- Ma I had (no intention whatsoever ...)
- Sl Joseph, you are too severe. For I dare swear, the truth of the matter is, Maria heard **you** were here. But my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done that you would avoid him so?
- Ma It is what he has **said**. His conversation is a [constant] libel on all his acquaintance.
- Jo *[joyful]* Aye, and the worst of it is, he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend. And his [aunt] is as bad.
- Sl But [–] Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

- Ma For my part, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr Surface?
- Jo Certainly, Madam, *[preaching]* "to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief".
- Sl There's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature. – What's your opinion, Mr Surface?
- Jo To be sure, madam!
- Ma Well, scandal in a man is always contemptible. *[enter Sv]*
- Sv Madam, Mrs Candour is below.
- Sl Beg her to walk in. Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste, for though Mrs Candour is a **little** talkative, everybody allows her to be the best-natured and best sort of woman. Hush! Here she is. *[enter CD]*

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4. SI Jo Ma Cd

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- Cd My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century. Oh, Mr Surface. What news do you hear? [But] indeed it is no matter for I think one hears nothing else but **scandal**.
- Jo Just so, indeed, ma'am.
- Cd Ah, Maria, child. What! Is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I [suppose]. The town talks of nothing else.
- Ma I am very sorry, Ma'am, the town has so little else to do. *[cringe]* Oh, here comes Sir Benjamin now. *[enter CT and BB]*

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5. SI Jo Ma Cd Ct Bb

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- Ct Lady Sneerwell, Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs Candour!
- Cd Mrs Crabtree!
- Ct I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite.
- Bb Your Ladyship!
- Ct Ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too, isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?
- Bb O fie, Aunt!
- Ct Nay, it's true. Has your Ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?
- Jo I believe I have.
- Sl I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything?

Bb To say truth, Ma'am, it is very vulgar to print. However, I have some love-elegies, which, when favoured with **this** lady's smile [*bowing at Ma*] I mean to give to the public. - Maria?

Ma [*very reluctant*] Sir!

Ct But ladies, have you heard the news?

Cd What, Sir, do you mean the report of –

Ct No ma'am that's not it. – Miss **Nicely** is going to be married to her own [servant].

Al [*together*] Impossible!

Ct Ask Sir Benjamin.

Bb It is very true, Ma'am. Everything is fixed.

Ct Ma'am – did you ever hear how Miss **Piper** came to lose her lover **and** her character last summer at Tunbridge? Sir Benjamin you remember it?

Bb Oh, to be sure, the most [curious] circumstance.

Cd I've heard something of it, yes.

Sl [*with a satisfied sneer*] Why to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the reputation of a prudent lady as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions.

Ct Just so, madam.

Cd And Mr Surface, pray, is it true that your uncle Sir Oliver is coming home?

Jo My uncle? Not that I know of indeed, [madam].

Ct He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe. Sad comfort when he returns to hear how your brother has gone on.

Jo [*judicious*] Charles has been imprudent, [madam] to be sure; but I hope he may reform.

Bb To be sure, he may. For my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say.

Ct And [al-]though he has lost all his friends, yet I am told no man lives in greater [luxury].

Bb They tell me when he entertains his friends, he can sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen waiting in the anti-chamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jo This may be entertainment to you, [ladies and] gentlemen. But you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Ma [*to no one in particular*] This malice is intolerable. [*to Sl*] Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning. I am not very well. [*exit MA*]

Cd Oh dear, she changes colour very much!

Sl Do, Mrs Candour, follow her. She may want your assistance.

Cd That I will, with all my soul, ma[d]am. – Poor dear girl! Who knows what her situation may be! [*exit CD*]

Sl It was nothing but that she could not bear to hear **Charles** reflected on .

Bb The young lady's [feelings are] obvious.

Ct But Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that. Follow her and put her into good humour. Repeat some of your verses. Come, I'll assist you...

Bb Mr Surface?

Jo Yes?

Bb I did not mean to hurt you, but depend on it, your brother is utterly **undone**. [*Going*]

Ct Aye, **undone**, as ever man was, can't raise a guinea. [*going*]

Bb And I'm very sorry to hear also some **bad** stories about him. [*going*]

Ct Oh He has done many **mean** things, that's certain!

Bb But however as he is your brother... [*going*]

Ct We'll tell you all another opportunity. [*exeunt*]

Sl Ha! ha! ha! It is very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Jo And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your Ladyship than Maria.

Sl [*calculating*] I believe her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. [*suspicion rising*] But she is dining here this evening with Sir Peter and Lady Teazle. And we shall have an opportunity of observing further. In the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief and **you** [*playful tap on the shoulder*] shall study **sentiment**. [*exeunt*]

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6. Pr RI at Pr's house

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RI Up with your feet, Sir Peter, and I will get your boots off.

Pr I don't know, Rowley. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect?

RI Your feet up, Sir!

Pr It is now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men. And I have been the most miserable dog [ever since that wedding]. Yet I chose with caution: a girl bred wholly in the country who never knew luxury.

RI There's your shoes, Sir.

Pr And now she [wastes] my fortune, and contradicts all my humours. And yet the worst of it is, I still **love** her.

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7. Pr Te (Ma) [enter Te, exit Rl]

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Pr Ah, Lady Teazle.

Te Still not dressed, Sir Peter? Are we [going] to be late in visiting Lady Sneerwell?

Pr I see, you have contradicted me, madam, and got yourself a new bonnet.

Te Aye, what is a husband for, Sir Peter, if he is not to be contradicted?

Pr Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it.

Te You may bear it or not, as you please, but I will have my way in everything. I know very well that women of **fashion** in **London** are accountable to **nobody after** they are **married**.

Pr Very well, ma'am very well! So a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Te If you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me and not married me. – I am sure you were old enough.

Pr Old enough. Aye, there it is! Well, Lady Teazle, although my life may be made **unhappy** by your **temper**, I will not be **ruined** by your **extravagance**!

Te I'm sure, I'm not more **extravagant** than a woman of **fashion** ought to be.

Pr No, no, Madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such luxuries. You spend as much [on] flowers in winter [enough] to turn [St. Paul's Cathedral [- ' -] into a greenhouse.

Te Am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? I wish it was spring all the year round and that roses grew under our feet!

Pr But you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Te [No, no, I don't.] It was a very disagreeable one, or I should **never** have married you.

Pr Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style. But now you must have your [own] coach and three powdered footmen before your chair, and a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington Gardens.

Te Well, for my part, I should think you would like to have a woman of **taste**.

Pr Aye there again, **taste!** Madam, you had no **taste** when you **married** me.

Te [laughs] That's very true indeed, Sir Peter! And after having married **you** I should **never** pretend to **taste** again, I [admit]. – [Pr reacts] But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to Lady Sneerwell's?

Pr Aye! There's a charming set of acquaintance you have made **there!**

Te They are people of **rank** and **fortune** and **reputation**.

Pr Yes, [reputation] with a vengeance, for they don't choose **anybody** should have a character **but themselves!**

Te Well, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. [playful] So, good bye to you. – Ah, Maria.

Ma Your ladyship!

Te We must hurry or we shall be late.

Pr Maria. I wish to discuss with you that amiable young man, Joseph Surface.

Te Oh no, Maria, you shall come with **me**. Make haste, Sir Peter. Come child. [exit]

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8. Pr

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Pr Why does my wife contradict everything I say? Do you see how pleasing she is showing her **contempt** for my **authority**? And yet, though I can't make her **love** me, there is great satisfaction in **quarrelling** with her. And I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me.

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9. Sl Cd Ct Bb Jo [chattering] at Sl's

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Sl Nay, positively, Sir Benjamin, we will hear it.

Jo Yes, yes the epigram by all means.

Bb O plague on it, [Aunt], it is mere nonsense.

Ct No, no; very clever!

Bb But Ladies, you must know that one day last week Lady Betty Curricke desired me to write some verses on her ponies upon which I took out my pocket-book and in one moment produced the following:

'Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;

*Other horses are clowns but these macaronies,
To give them this title, I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim and their tails are so long.*

Ct There, ladies, and [done] on horseback, too.

Jo Indeed, Sir Benjamin.

Bb Oh dear Sir, trifles, trifles. (enter Te, Ma)

Cd I must have a copy.

Bb Certainly, Mrs Candour, of course.

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10. Te Ma Sl Jo Cd (Ct Bb)

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- Sl Lady Teazle.
 Cd Maria.
 Te Lady Sneerwell.
 Sl I do hope we shall see Sir Peter?
 Te I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.
 Sl Maria, my love, you look **grave**. Come, you shall sit down with Mr Surface.
 Ma I take very little pleasure... – However, I'll do as you please.
 Te *[sotto voce]* Joseph, I am surprised you should sit down next to **her** – when you had the opportunity of speaking to **me** –
 Jo *[sotto voce]* But Lady Teazle, if your **husband** should arrive!
 Cd Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, Sir Benjamin and his [aunt] have been so scandalous, I'll forswear their society.
 Te Scandalous, Mrs Candour?
 Cd They will allow good qualities to nobody, not even good nature to my near relation, Marcella. Now I agree, indeed I must, that for her person great allowance is to be made. *[general agreement]* Now let me tell you. A woman labours under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at **six and thirty**.
 Al **Six and thirty**.
 Cd And as to her manner! Well, upon my word, I think it is particularly graceful – considering she never had the least education. *[noises of agreement]* For you know, her mother was a Welsh milliner!
 Al **Oh!**
 Cd – and her father a sugar-baker!
 Al **No!**
 Cd *[delighted]* I am forced to reveal it, I **must!**
[enter Pr]

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11. Pr Cd Te Sl (Ct Bb)

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- Pr And I am forced to reveal, Mrs Candour, that the lady you are abusing is a friend of mine.
 Cd Ah, Sir Peter! You have arrived, I see.
 Pr Arrived, ma'am, to find you all forging tales, coining scandals, clipping reputations.
 Te Sir Peter, you are too peevish.
 Sl [They say] you are the sworn enemy of scandal.
 Te Indeed. My husband would have all gossip put down by Parliament. *[general outburst of indignation]*

- Cd Alas, Sir Peter. Would you deprive us of our privileges?
 Pr Aye, madam. – For no person should be allowed to kill characters and run down reputations. *[addressing present company with a little bow]* – but qualified old maids and disappointed widows!
 Sl Go, you **monster**.
 Cd But surely, you would not be quite as severe on those who only **report** what they hear?
 Pr Yes, Mrs Candour, I would.
 Cd *[taken aback]* Oh!
 Pr Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a need to taste a little [fresh] air. *[exit]*
 Al *[rising, too, giggling and moving to the next room, murmuring]*. Ah! Oh!

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12. Bb Ct Te [following the others]

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- Bb Well, Lady Teazle that lord of yours is a strange being.
 Ct I could tell you some stories of him [that] would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.
 Te O pray don't mind that. Come, do let's hear them.

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13. Jo Ma

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- Jo Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in their society.
 Ma How is it possible I should? To raise malicious smiles at the misfortunes of others...
 Jo Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are. They have no malice at heart.
 Ma Then their conduct [is] still more contemptible.
 Jo But can you, Maria, feel thus for others and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion? –
 Ma Joseph! Why will you distress me?
 Jo Ah! Maria! you would not treat me thus and oppose your guardian's, Sir Peter's, will. *[bit-terly]* But I see that [my] profligate brother **Charles** is still a favoured rival.
 Ma Be assured, I shall not give him up.
 Jo Nay, do not leave me with a frown! By all that's honest, *[on bended knee]* Madam, I **swear** ...
 Ma **No sir!** *[exit]*

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14. Te Jo

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Te [*enter Te, coming forward*] Joseph!

Jo Lady Teazle!

Te What's this, pray? Do you take Maria for me?

Jo Oh, Lady Teazle, the most unlucky circumstance in nature.

Te What?

Jo I was just endeavouring to reason with her when you came in.

Te But you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning. Do you usually argue on your knees?

Jo Oh she's a child! But, Lady Teazle, [*tongue in cheek*] when are you to give me your judgment on my library as you promised ...

Te I begin to think it would be imprudent. And, you know, I admit you as a lover no further than fashion [*allows*].

Jo True, a mere **Platonic** liaison – what every wife is entitled to.

Te [*happy again*] Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so much of my country prejudices left that, although Sir Peter's ill humour may vex me ever so, it shall never provoke me to [*suggestive*] ...

Jo [*equally suggestive*] The only revenge in your power. Well I applaud your moderation.

Te [*tickled pink*] You are an insinuating charmer. [*exit*]

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15. RI OI at Pr's

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OI Ha! ha! ha! My old friend is married, hey?

RI Yes, sir.

OI – a young wife out of the country! ha! ha! That he [*should*] sink into a husband at last!

RI But you must not rally my master on the subject, Sir Oliver – It is a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

OI But you say he has entirely given up my nephew Charles, never sees him, hey?

RI His prejudice against him is astonishing, and greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has been industriously led into by a scandalous society in the neighbourhood. I believe the lady is partial to his brother **Joseph**.

OI Well, I'll not be prejudiced against his brother Charles, I promise you!

RI Ah, Sir, it gives me new life to find that your heart is not turned against him.

OI My brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths, and yet, I believe you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

RI Sir, it is this reflection that gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to the family. Oh, but here comes Sir Peter...

OI Oh, mercy on me, he's greatly altered – one may read **husband** in his face at this distance. –

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16. Pr OI RI [*enter Pr*] at Pr's

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Pr Ha! Sir Oliver, my old friend. Welcome to England, a thousand times!

OI Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter, and I am as glad to find you well, believe me.

Pr Ah! It is a long time since we met.

OI But I find you're married. Hey, my old boy, well, well, it can't be helped. And so I wish you joy with all my heart.

Pr Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. Come, come. Let's have a drink. Yes, I have entered into that happy state, but we'll not talk of that.

OI True, true, Sir Peter, old friends shouldn't begin on grievances at first meeting.

RI [*Take care pray, Sir –*] [*goes to find glasses and open a bottle*]

OI Well, and I hear that one of my nephews is a wild fellow, hey?

Pr Wild! Oh! my old friend! Charles is a **lost** young man indeed. However, his **brother** Joseph is what a youth should be. Everybody in the world speaks well of him.

OI I am sorry to hear it. [*to audience*] He has too good a character to be an honest fellow.

Pr Well, well, you'll be convinced when you know him – he professes the noblest **sentiments**.

OI Ah plague on his sentiments. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter. Before I form my **judgement** of Charles, Rowley and I intend to make a **trial** of his **heart**.

RI [*confidential smile*] Sir?

Pr By what means?

OI I shall present myself to my dissolute nephew as a gentleman from the City. – A money-lender, who goes by the name of – by what name Rowley?

RI **Mr Premium**, Sir. [*glasses and wine ready*]

OI Mr Premium! And in [*this*] disguise, I shall witness Charles in his true character. [*Pr and OI about to drink to each others' health*]

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17. Ch Cl etc. at Ch's, table with bottles

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- Cl Raise your **bumpers**!
- Ch 'Fore Heaven! [*general uproar*] I will tell you what is the great degeneracy of the age! Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness [but] the plague on it they won't **drink**!
- Cl It is so indeed, Charles, they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit.
- Ch For my part I am never so successful as when I'm a little merry. Let me throw on a bottle of Champagne and I never **lose** – at least I never **feel** my losses.
- Cl And **that** I believe.
- Ch And then: what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is [abstinent] of wine? [*pouring wine into glasses*]
- Al Aye!
- Ch It is the test by which the lover knows his own heart. – Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats atop is the maid that has bewitched you.
- Cl Now, now, now then Charles, be honest and give us your real love's name.
- Ch Another drink, then. If I toast her...
- Al Ah!
- Ch Here then! And raise your bumpers. Bumpers! Maria! – MARIA!
- Al **MARIA!!!** [*laughter leading up to singing*]
Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
Here's to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant queen,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.
(Chorus) Let the toast pass,
Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for a glass.
[*sound + light fade out*]

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18. OI RI Tr parlour at Ch's

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- OI Now, Rowley. You feel sure [that] Charles won't recognise me?
- RI Might be Sir. You are rather too smartly dressed to be a money-lender.
- OI Ah!
- RI The great point, I take it, is to be [extreme] in your demands.
- Tr Mr Premium?
- OI Yes?
- Tr I will take you to see my master.
- OI Ah. – Rowley, wait below.

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19. Ch Cl OI Tr etc at Charles's

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- Al [*sound + light fading in*]
(Chorus) Let the toast pass, – Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for a glass.
[*song fades a bit as...*]
- Ch [*catches sight of him*] Stop singing. It's Mr **Premium**. [Gentlemen], Mr Premium. Stop singing.
- Cl Yes, yes! Mr Premium certainly.
- Ch Walk in, walk in. Trip, get the glasses.
- Tr Mr Surface!
- Ch Mr Premium! Yours to command. – Yours to command. You come as expected. Set the chairs, Trip.
- Tr [*doing so*] Sir!
- Ch Now come, Premium. Before business, here's success to usury [and money-lending]. – Careless, fill the gentleman a bumper. – Right! [*raising his glass*] Success to [money-lending]!
- Cl Indeed. [*raising his glass*] Usury [and / or money-lending] deserve [s] to succeed.
- OI [*raising his glass*] Then here is all the success it deserves.
- Al ^{oooo}OH: Success to [money-lending and] usury! [*all drink, appropriate noises*]
- Ch Gentlemen, if you'll be kind enough to leave us.
- Al Well, well. [*exeunt with drinks*]

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20. Ch OI Cl

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- Ch Mr Premium, the plain state of the matter is this.
- OI Sir!
- Ch I am an extravagant young fellow who wants to borrow money. **You** I take to be a prudent old fellow, who has got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give **fifty** per cent sooner than not have it! And **you**, I presume, are rogue enough to take a **hundred** if you can get it.
- OI I see, Sir, you are not a man of many compliments.
- Ch Oh, no, Sir! Plain dealing in business I always think best.
- OI But what **security** could you give? You have no **land**, I suppose?
- Ch Not a mole-hill nor a twig!
- OI Nor any stock, I presume?
- Ch Only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my **connections**?

OI Why, to [tell the] truth, I am.

Ch Then you **must** know that I have a rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

OI [*hesitant*] That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard....

Ch They tell me, I'm a favourite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

OI Indeed! [*aside*] This is the first I've heard of it. [*aloud*] But I might live to a hundred and never see the [money].

Ch Oh, yes, you would! The moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

OI Oh, I have heard he is as (hale and) healthy as any man of his years.

Ch No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver. And [he] is so much altered lately that his nearest relations do not know him.

OI No! Ha! ha! ha! So much altered lately that his nearest relations do not know him! Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Ch Ha! ha! – you're glad to hear that, little Premium?

OI [*aside*] No, no, I'm not. [*aloud*] But, Sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

Ch How do you mean?

OI For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him his library [which] was one of the most valuable and complete.

Ch Yes, yes, so it **was**. [*points to empty walls*]

OI [*slow in getting the message*] So, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Ch Not much, indeed; **unless** you have a mind to the family pictures. If you have a taste for old paintings, you shall have them a bargain!

OI Hey! Surely, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

Ch Every man of them, to the best bidder.

OI [*aside, furious*] Now I give him up!

Ch Nay, my little broker. Don't be angry: [You'll] have your money's worth.

OI [*aside*] Oh, I'll never forgive him this, never! [*enter Cl*]

Ch Careless, come and be auctioneer.

Cl Yes, Charles. [*gets the pulpit and moves it on stage during the following*]

Ch Well, as you can see, these are all stiff and awkward as the originals.

OI [*wistful*] Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Ch I hope not. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr Auctioneer [*pulls in pulpit*]

Cl Aye, aye. Come, begin – [*practising*] A-going, a-going, a-going!

Ch Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a good general in his day.

OI I believe, I have heard of him.

Ch He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars. What say you, Mr Premium? Look at him. There's a hero. What do you bid? Ten pounds?

OI [*aside*] Heaven deliver me! His famous uncle Richard for ten pounds! – [*aloud*] Yes, sir, I take him at that.

Ch Very well. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard. – [*Cl knocks*] Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah. There she is, you see. You shall have her for five pounds ten.

OI [*aside*] Ah! poor Deborah! [*aloud*] Five pounds ten – she's mine.

Ch Knock down my aunt Deborah! [*Cl knocks*]

OI Now sir, what of that portrait there?

Cl What, that ill-looking little fellow over the [couch]?

OI Yes, sir, I mean that; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Ch What, that? Oh, that's my uncle Oliver! It was done before he went to India.

Cl [Your uncle Oliver!] [*contemplating*] An unforgiving eye ...

OI [*sharply*] What?

Cl ... [and] a damned disinheriting countenance! Don't you think so, little Premium?

OI Upon my soul, Sir, I do **not**. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest?

Ch [*pausing*] No, hang it! The old fellow has been very good to me, and, I'll **keep** his picture.

OI [*aside*] Ah, the rogue's my nephew after all! – [*aloud*] But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Ch I'm sorry for it, for you **certainly** will not have it.

OI [*aside*] Oh, I forgive him everything! – [*aloud*] But, Sir, I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Ch Don't tease me, master broker. I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

OI You will **not** let Sir Oliver go?

Ch No! I tell you, once more.

OI Then never mind. I will give you three hundred pounds for the rest of them.

Ch What?

OI But give me your hand on the bargain; you are an honest fellow, Charles – I beg pardon, Sir, for being so free.

Ch [But, hold. Do] send a genteel [transport] for them, for, I assure you, most of them used to ride in their own carriages.
 Ol I will, I will – for all but Oliver.
 Ch Aye, all but the little [millionaire].
 Ol *[aside]* Oh, what a dear extravagant rogue! – *[aloud]* Good day, Sir! *[exit]*
 Cl Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever saw! He's the prince of brokers. Three hundred guineas!
 Ch Careless, I find my ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for!
[lights fade out centre stage]

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21. Ol Ri at Ch's parlour

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Ri Well, Sir Oliver. Did you find your nephew a profligate and a rogue?
 Ol Yeah, but he would not sell my picture.
 Ri Did you find he loves wine and women too much?
 Ol Oh yes, but he wouldn't sell my picture.
 Ri And does he not [gamble too much]?
 Ol Oh yes, Rowley, oh yes. But he would not sell my picture.

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22. Pr Ma Pr's garden

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Pr Ah, Maria. Has **Joseph Surface** returned with you?
 Ma Sir Peter, your interest in that gentleman distresses me extremely.
 Pr **So**, it is Charles whom you would prefer. – It is evident.
 Ma This is unkind, Sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him. – My heart suggests some **pity**.
 Pr Well, well pity Charles, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.
 Ma **Never** to his brother!
 Pr Take care, Madam. You have never yet known what the authority of a **guardian** is.
 Ma I can only say, it is true, by my father's will, I am bound to regard you as his substitute, but I will cease to think you so, if you compel me to be miserable. *[exit]*
 Pr Maria! – Everything [is] conspiring to fret me! – *[enter Te]*

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23. Te Pr garden

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Te Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria?
 Pr Ah! Lady Teazle.
 Te Do be good humoured now – and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?
 Pr Two hundred pounds!
 Te Mmh!
 Pr What? But speak to me thus, and there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it. But seal me a bond for the repayment. *[trying to kiss her on the mouth]*
 Te Oh no. *[struggles briefly, then offers hand instead]* I assure you, *[smiles]* Sir Peter: good nature becomes you. You look now as you did **before** we were married, when you used to ask me if I could love an old fellow who would deny me nothing.
 Pr And you were as kind and attentive –
 Te So I was.
 Pr Indeed!
 Te Aye, and when my cousin Sophie called you a **stiff, peevish**, old **bachelor** and laughed at me for marrying one who might be my father, I **defended** you and said I didn't think you so ugly by any means, and that you would make a very good sort of a husband.
 Pr And you prophesied right. And we shall now be the happiest couple...
 Te And never differ again.
 Pr No, never! *[they enjoy a rare moment of pure bliss]* Though at the same time indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously, for in all our little quarrels, my dear, you always begin first.
 Te I beg your pardon, my **dear** Sir Peter. Indeed, **you** always g[i]ve the provocation.
 Pr Now see, my angel. Take care! Contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.
 Te Then don't you begin it, my love!
 Pr There now, you are going on. You are just doing the very thing, my love, which, you know, always makes me angry.
 Te Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear –
 Pr **There!** Now you want to quarrel again.
 Te No, I am sure I don't. But if you will be so **peevish**...
 Pr There now! Who begins first?
 Te Why, **you** to be **sure**. I said nothing.
 Pr No, no, madam. The fault is in your **own** temper.
 Te Aye! You are just what my cousin Sophie said you would be.
 Pr Your cousin Sophie is just an impertinent gossip.

- Te You are a great **bear**. How dare you abuse my relations!
- Pr Now may all the plagues of marriage be on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more.
- Te So much the better.
- Pr I was a madman to marry you! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful ..., but there's an end of everything, I believe you capable of **anything** that is bad. *[unspoken suspicions]* Yes, Madam. I now **believe** the reports *[about]* you and Charles, Madam ...
- Te Take care Sir Peter! I'll **not** be **suspected** without **cause** I promise you.
- Pr Very well, Madam. Very well! A separate maintenance, as soon as you please. Yes, Madam, or a divorce – Let us **separate**, Madam.
- Te *[seemingly jubilant]* Agreed, agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of **[one]** mind again, *[and]* we may be the **happiest** couple, and never differ again! *[exit]*
- Pr Plague and torture! Can't I make her angry neither?

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24. Jo WI, Jo's library

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- Jo *[book in hand]* William! No letter from Lady Teazle?
- WI No, Sir
- Jo I am surprised she hasn't *[written]* if she is prevented from coming! Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me.
- WI Sir, that must be Lady Teazle now.
- Jo Draw that screen before the window.
- WI Yes!
- Jo That will do. *[to audience]* My opposite neighbour is a maiden of so anxious a temper. *[doing some thinking]* I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my interest in **Maria**. *[enter Te]*

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25. Jo Te (WI)

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- Te O Lord! Joseph!
- Jo *[stern]* Lady Teazle.
- Te Don't pretend to look grave, I couldn't come before.
- Jo *[bowing, kissing her hand]* Your ladyship?
- Te Do you know, Sir Peter is [...] so jealous of your brother Charles. And my friend, Lady Sneerwell, has circulated scandalous tales of me and all without any foundation.

- Jo *[jumping at the opportunity]* But my dear Lady Teazle, it is your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken and she owes it to the **honour of her sex** to outwit him.

Te Indeed. *[seeing the light]* So that if he suspects me without cause it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for it.

Jo Undoubtedly, for your husband *[should]* never be deceived in you.

Te It is very true.

Jo Now, my dear Lady Teazle! If you would but **once** make a *[little]* "faux pas" *[with suggestive smile and leaving the rest to the imagination of both TE and the audience]*

Te *[responding in the same spirit, clearly tempted!]* Do you think so?

Jo O I'm sure *[of]* it. And then you would find all scandal would cease at once.

Te *[warming to it]* Then your prescription is that I must **sin** in my own **defence**, and **part** with my **virtue to secure** my **reputation**.

Jo Exactly so, upon my credit, Ma'am.

Te *[bemused]* Well certainly this is the oddest doctrine.

Jo *[self-righteous]* Heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you **thought** wrong. I have too much **honour** to desire it.

Te *[puzzled]* Don't you think we may as well leave **honour** out of the question? *[backs off]*

Jo *[patronising]* Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Te I believe they do indeed. *[If]* I could be persuaded to do wrong it would be by Sir Peter's *[behaviour]*, sooner than your "honourable logic". *[seems to relent]*

Jo Then by this hand, which he is unworthy of... *[enter WI]* *[irritated]* *(It is)* death, you blockhead, what do you want?

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26. Jo WI Te

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WI I **beg** your pardon Sir, but I thought you wouldn't choose Sir **Peter** to come up without announcing him?

Jo Sir Peter, the Devil!

Te Sir Peter! O Lord! I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

WI Sir, it wasn't I who let him in.

Te O I'm undone! What will become of me now, Mr Logic? He's on the stairs...

Jo *[pointing]* Behind there, Lady Teazle.

Te What?

Jo The screen! *[pushes]*

Te Where? *[being pushed behind the screen]*

Jo *[sits down]* William! Give me that book! *[sits down, trying to look tired. WI pretends to adjust his hair]* *[enter Pr]*

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27. Jo Pr (Te)

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Pr Aye, Mr Surface, Mr Surface! – Joseph?

Jo *[very surprised]* Oh! my dear Sir Peter! I beg your pardon, Sir! *[puts the book away]* I have been dozing over this stupid book! *[passionate]* Books, you know, are the only things *[in which]* I am *[interested in]*. *[exit WI]*

Pr Well, well that's very neat indeed, very neat. Well, well, and you make even your screen a source of knowledge, hung with maps ...

Jo O yes, I find great use in that screen.

Pr Well, I have a little private business.

Jo Here's a chair, Sir Peter. *[patting chair]* Leave the screen and sit, I beg.

Pr There **is** a subject, my friend, which I *[want to tell you about]*. In short, Lady Teazle has made me *[very]* unhappy.

Jo Indeed, I'm very sorry to hear it.

Pr Aye, it is but too plain she has not the least regard for me! But what's worse, *[I suppose that]* she has formed an attachment to **another**.

Jo Indeed! You astonish me.

Pr Yes, and between ourselves, *[closer now]* I think I have discovered the person.

Jo You alarm me exceedingly!

Pr Have you no **guess** who I mean?

Jo It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Pr Oh no. – What *[do you]* say to **Charles**?

Jo My brother? – Impossible!

Pr Oh! my dear friend! The goodness of your own heart misleads you.

Jo I can't but think that Lady Teazle **herself** has too much principle.

Pr Aye, but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Jo That's very true.

Pr Yet that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Jo If it should be proved on Charles, *[with conviction]* he is **no longer a brother of mine**. For the man who can tempt the wife of his

friend, deserves to be branded as the **pest** of society.

Pr What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Jo Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honour.

Pr I'm sure I wish to think well of her. *[producing two sealed documents]* Therefore I have resolved she shall have her own way. Here, my friend are two deeds which I wish to have your opinion *[on]*: By one she will enjoy eight hundred a year while I live.

Te Oooh!

Pr What was that?

Jo Sir?

Pr Behind the screen? *[rising]*

Jo Oh. Sir Peter, I am plagued by pigeons.

Pr Pigeons?

Jo At my window. – You were saying?

Pr *[sitting]* That by this deed my wife would enjoy eight hundred a year, and by the other *[most]* of my fortune after my death.

Te Oooh!

Jo *[cutting in]* This conduct, Sir Peter, is truly generous!

Pr I am determined she shall have no cause to complain. – And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with **Maria**.

Jo *[shocked]* What?

Pr Your interest in Maria, Sir, we must review it. *[Te reacts]*

Jo Oh, no, Sir Peter, another time if you please.

Pr *[I will tell]* Lady Teazle of your passion for Maria. I am sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Te *[soft]* **No!**

Pr Pigeons, you say? *[enter WI]*

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28. Jo Pr WI (Te)

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WI Well, Sir, your brother, Sir, is in the street, and says he knows you're within.

Jo It is death, blockhead. I'm **not** within! I'm out for the day.

Pr No, stay, Joseph. Hold. A thought has struck me: You **shall** be at home.

Jo But, Sir Peter –

Pr *[to WI]* Let him up, let him up.

Jo Well, well, let him up. – *[exit WI]*

Pr Now, my good friend, before Charles comes, let me *[hide]* somewhere. Then you tax him on the virtue of my wife, and his answers may satisfy me at once.

Jo O fie! Sir Peter! Would you have me join in so mean a trick?

Pr You tell me you are sure he is innocent. Come, here behind this screen I will be ...

Jo Sir Peter, I beseech you!

Te Oh!

Pr Hey! What the devil! There seems to be one listener here already. I'll swear I saw a petticoat.

Jo Sir, I –

Pr Who is it? – Well?

Jo I'll tell you, Sir Peter. It is a little French milliner.

Pr Ah, aaah...

Jo Ha! ha! ha!

Pr You rogue, *[worried now]* but she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Jo Oh, it will never go any farther, you may depend on it.

Pr No? Then let her hear it out. Here's a closet *[that]* will do as well.

Jo Well, go in there.

Pr *[chuckling]* Sly rogue!

Jo Ha! ha!

Pr A French milliner? You sly rogue. *[more chuckles]* I'll hide. *[door closing]*

Te *[peeps out]* Joseph? Couldn't I steal off?

Jo Keep close, Lady Teazle!

Pr *[sound of door. peeping]* You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Jo In, in, my good Sir Peter. *[aside]* I wish I had a key to the door. *[enter Ch]*

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29. Jo Ch (Te Pr)

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Ch Hallo! Brother! What has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. *[joking mood]* What [?] Have you a **woman** with you?

Jo *[indignant]* No, Charles.

Ch *[taking seat uninvited]* But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Jo *[dignified]* He **was**, brother. *[reproachful]* But you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Ch Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men.

Jo To be plain with you, brother: *[loudly]* He thinks you are *[trying]* to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Ch Who? – Oh! – Not I, Joseph, upon my word. Ha! So the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?

Jo *[indignant and loudly]* This is no subject to jest on brother. He who can laugh –

Ch Seriously! I've never had the least idea, upon my honour.

Jo *[loudly]* Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

Ch *[aloud]* Besides, you know my attachment to **Maria** – *[on the counter attack now]* But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me by naming Lady Teazle?

Jo Mh?

Cl I've always understood **you** were her favourite!

Jo Oh, for shame, Charles. This is foolish.

Ch Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances –

Jo Nay, nay, Sir, this is no jest!

Ch I'm serious. Don't you remember one day, when I called here –

Jo Nay, prithee, Charles

Ch – and found you together!

Jo Sir, I insist –

Ch And another time when your servant –

Jo *[softly]* Brother, brother a word with you –

Ch Sir?

Jo I beg your pardon. But Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying.

Ch *[loud]* Sir Peter? Where is he?

Jo Softly! *[points]* In the closet. I knew you would clear yourself, or I shouldn't have consented.

Ch *[moving to the closet]* I'll have him **out**. Sir Peter come forth!

Jo No, no –

Ch I say Sir Peter, come into court.

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30. Jo Ch Pr (Te)

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Ch *[pulls in Pr]* What? My old guardian, turned inquisitor?

Pr Give me your hand, Charles. I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph. It was **my** plan.

Ch Indeed!

Pr But I *[have found you not guilty]*. What I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Ch Then it was lucky you didn't hear any more.

Pr That you should name **Joseph** as my wife's favourite!

Jo Aye, aye, **that** was a **joke**.

Ch Indeed.

Pr – and claim they have “exchanged significant glances”!

Al Ha, ha, ha!

Pr Yes, yes, I know [your] honour too well, Joseph, my boy.

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31. Jo Ch Pr (Te) [enter Wl]

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Wl [in a hurry] Sir!

Jo Yes!

Wl A gentleman is waiting downstairs, Sir. A Mr Stanley. Calling on business...

Jo But I can't leave these gentlemen alone.

Ch Oh no, Joseph. Sir Peter and I have much to discuss. [Wl exit]

Jo Erm, erm [sotto voce] Sir Peter! Not a word about the French milliner behind the screen!

Pr Not for the world.

Jo Hah! [exit]

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32. Ch Pr (Te)

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Pr Ah, Charles! Your brother! He is a man of [sentiment].

Ch Pshaw! He is too moral. I suppose he would [rather] let a priest in his house [than] a girl!

Pr No, no! Come, come, you wrong him. No, no, Joseph is no rake but he is no such saint either in that respect.

Ch [surprised] Oh?

Pr [beckons him to come closer] He had a girl with him when I called.

Ch What! Joseph?

Pr [nudging] Hush! A little French milliner. And the best of the jest is, she's in the room now. [points]

Ch Let's unveil her!

Pr No, no! He's coming, you shan't indeed!

Ch Oh, let's throw it down and have a peep at the little milliner!

Pr Here he comes! [Re-enter Jo]

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33. Jo Pr Ch Te

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Jo Charles, no! [Ch throws down the screen]

Ch Lady Teazle! By all that's wonderful!

Pr Lady Teazle! By all that's damnable!

Te [cringing] I, I ...

Ch Well, Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw!

Pr Madam!

Te Sir Peter, I ...

Ch [chuckles] I think I shall leave you to yourselves. Good day. [exit Ch]

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34. Jo Pr Te

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Pr [approaching] Madam!

Te [mortified] Sir Peter, I ...

Jo Sir Peter! Notwithstanding, I confess, that appearances are against us, but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

Pr If you please –

Jo The fact is, Sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward, Maria, [she] called here that I might explain. But [because] of your jealousy, she withdrew [points to screen], and this is the whole truth of the matter.

Pr [reserving judgement] And I dare swear the Lady will vouch for every article of it?

Te For **not one word** of it, Sir Peter.

Pr Don't you think it worthwhile to agree in the lie?

Jo [stepping between the two] Lady Teazle, ...

Te [pushing past him] Good Mr Hypocrite! I will speak for myself.

Pr [facing Jo off] Aye, let her alone, Sir.

Te Hear me, Sir Peter. I came hither, ignorant of this gentlemen's pretensions to Maria, I came, seduced, at least to his pretended passion [but] **not** to sacrifice **your** honour to **his** baseness.

Pr Now, I believe, the truth is coming indeed.

Jo The woman's mad!

Te No Sir! Sir Peter, I do not expect you to [believe] me. But the tenderness you expressed for me has penetrated so to my heart and, had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken my gratitude.

As for this smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his **friend** while he affected [love] for Maria! – I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him. Good-bye to you both. [exit]

Jo Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, heaven knows –

Pr That you are a villain! And so I leave you to your conscience.

Jo You are too rash, Sir Peter! You **shall** hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to ... Sir Peter? – Sir **Peter**, come **back**. [Pr exit]

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35. Jo WI [enter Jo and Sv]

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WI Sir?

Jo What now, you fool?

WI Mr **Stanley** won't be turned away.

Jo I don't know the fellow.

WI He insists, Sir, that he is related to your mother, has been ruined by misfortune and has applied to you by letter for **money**. [exit]

Jo [shouting after him] I am not in the mood to receive poor relations. I have yet to recover myself.

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36. WI Jo OI RI

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OI [entering with RI ⇒ apparently delighted] Mr Surface, [it is such a pleasure to meet you ...]

Jo [cutting off] Mr Stanley. You shall have to excuse me, Sir. [exit]

OI What! does he avoid us?

WI You must forgive my master, Sir. His nerves have suffered something of a shock.

OI Rowley, was that really the man?

RI That was your nephew Joseph all right. [confident] Now, Sir Oliver, I will wait on the stairs and leave **you** to judge his character. [exit]

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37. Jo OI [enter Jo]

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Jo Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons. Mr Stanley, you say.

OI [sounding Irish if possible] Yes indeed, at your service. At your service.

Jo [jovial] I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr Stanley. You were [closely] related to my mother, I think Mr Stanley –

OI I was Sir! So [closely] that my present poverty, I fear ...

Jo Dear Sir, there needs no apology. He that is in distress has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy!

OI [fascinated] Ah!

Jo [wistful] I am sure I wish I had it in my power to offer you even a **small** relief.

OI Oh well, if your uncle, Sir **Oliver** were here –

Jo You should not want an advocate, believe me, Sir.

OI I imagined his [wealth] had enabled **you** to become the agent of his charity.

Jo My dear Sir. You are strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man. But [greed], Mr

Stanley, is the vice of [old] age. What he has done for me has been a mere – **nothing!**

OI What! Has he never [sent] you rupees and [gold] ?

Jo Oh dear Sir! Oh, tea and Indian [fire-] crackers, believe me.

OI [aside] Here's gratitude for **twelve thousand** pounds!

Jo Then my dear, Sir, you have heard, of the extravagance of my brother [Charles]. [sad] What I have done for that unfortunate young man. The sums I have lent him!

OI Then Sir, you cannot assist me?

Jo [sadly shaking his head and gently leading OI to the door] You leave me deeply affected Mr Stanley! – William, be ready to open the door –

OI [trying to resist] Oh, dear Sir, no ceremony.

Jo [pushing more strongly] You may depend on hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

OI Sweet Sir, you are too good!

Jo Sir, yours as sincerely!

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38. OI RI

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RI Well, Sir Oliver?

OI That fellow is a [liar] and a rogue! Rowley, he is no nephew of mine! And I declare [that] his brother **Charles** shall be my **heir**. [sounds like 'air']

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39. Se Cd Bb at Pr's [enter Cd Se]

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Se Indeed Ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

Cd Did you **tell** Lady Teazle it was her **friend**, Mrs Candour?

Se Yes Ma'am, but she begs you will excuse her. [exit]

Cd [in frustration] Oh! [enter Bb] Sir Benjamin you have heard, I suppose –

Bb [drols] [Of] Lady Teazle and Mr Surface –

Cd [drols] And Sir Peter's discovery –

Bb Well, the strangest business to be sure.

Cd Well, I never was so surprised in my life! I am so **sorry** for all parties, indeed.

Bb Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all, he was so [fond of] **Joseph Surface!**

Cd Why, it was with **Charles** [that] Lady Teazle was detected.

Bb No, no, no! I'll tell you: **Joseph** is the gallant [– '–].

- Cd No, no, **Charles** is the man!
 Bb Well, I won't dispute that with you, Mrs Candour. But I hope Sir Peter's **wound** [*long u-sound*] will not ...
 Cd Sir Peter's **wound**? Oh mercy. I did not hear a **word** of their **fight**.
 Bb What? No mention of the **duel**?
 Cd Not a **word**.
 Bb Oh yes! They fought before they left the room.

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40. SI Cd Bb [*enter SI*]

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- SI Pray, let us hear, Sir Benjamin.
 Cd Oh, Mrs Sneerwell. Have you heard ... ?
 SI Sir Benjamin!
 Bb 'Sir', says Sir Peter, immediately after discovering his wife in Joseph's library...
 Cd Mh?
 Bb 'You are a most ungrateful fellow.'
 Cd Aye, to **Charles**!
 Bb No, to **Joseph**! 'And old as I am, Sir, 'says he, 'I insist on immediate satisfaction.'
 Cd Aye, that must have been to **Charles**!
 SI It is very unlikely that **Joseph** should go to fight in his own house.
 Cd Yes!
 Bb Ma'am, not at all. On this, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the rooms, and **Charles** after her calling out for water! Then Madam, they began to fight with **s[w]ords**! [*rhymes with 'boards'*]

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41. SI Cd Bb Ct [*enter Ct*]

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- Ct No, no, no, nephew! With **pistols**, nephew.
 Cd Oh, Mrs Crabtree, then it is all true!
 Ct Too true indeed, Ma'am, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded!
 Bb By a thrust [*miming the fatal strike*] quite through his left side.
 Ct [*pointing at her breast*] [No, no!] By a bullet lodged in the thorax!
 SI [*showing her true colours*] Mercy on me!
 Cd Poor Sir Peter –
 Ct Yes, ladies. Though Charles **would** have avoided the matter if he could!
 Cd I knew **Charles** was the person.
 Bb O my aunt, I see, knows nothing of the matter.
 Ct But Sir Peter and Charles fired together. Sir Peter's missed, but the [bullet] wounded the **postman**, who was just coming to the door.

- AI [*with passion*] Oh!
 Bb My aunt's account is more [detailed] but I believe **mine** is the **true** one for **all** that.
 SI Come, Mrs Candour, we must tell Mrs Clackit immediately.
 Cd Immediately! [*exeunt*]

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42. Bb Ct OI

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- Bb But Aunt, who comes here –
 Ct Oh, this is he, this is the [doctor], depend on it. [*enter OI*] Well, Doctor, what hopes?
 OI Sir?
 Bb Doctor, isn't it a wound with a small sword?
 Ct A bullet lodged in the thorax?
 OI – Are you mad, good people?
 Bb Perhaps, Sir, you are not a doctor. [*OI shakes his head*]
 Ct [*mildly disappointed*] But, Sir, you **must** have heard of this accident.
 OI Not a word!
 Ct Not of his being dangerously wounded?
 OI The devil he is!
 Bb Run through the body?
 Ct Shot in the breast?
 Bb By one Mr Surface?
 Ct Aye, the younger.
 OI [*laughs*] Here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter!

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43. Bb Ct OI Pr [*enter Pr*]

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- OI Sir Peter! We had just given you [up] !
 Bb Aunt, this is the most sudden recovery!
 OI Why, man, what do you do out of bed with a small sword through your body, and a bullet in your thorax?
 Pr Why! What is all this?
 Bb Oh, we rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the **duel** is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your [*with feeling*] other **misfortune**.
 Ct Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly [largely] to blame to marry at **your** years.
 Pr Sir, what business is that of yours?
 Bb However, you must not mind the laughs you will meet with.
 Pr Sir, I insist on being left to myself!
 Ct Well, well, we are going and we'll make the best report of you we can.
 Pr Oh! **Leave my house!**
 Ct And tell how hard you have been treated.
 Pr **LEAVE MY HOUSE!**

Bb And how patiently you bear it.

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44. OI Pr RI

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Pr Fiends! Vipers! Furies! Oh, that their own venom would choke them!

OI Well, Sir Peter. I must tell you that I have seen both my nephews. And I find **Joseph** a model for young men of the age!

Pr Sir Oliver. You know full well that he is a hypocritical villain.

OI Indeed he is, Sir Peter. But I am sure, my friend, that Lady Teazle dearly desires a reconciliation. [*points*] There she goes. Look. – Sir Peter?

Pr [*internal struggle*] [Well,] I'll go to her. [*making to go, then coming back*] When it is **known** that we are reconciled people will laugh ten times more.

RI Let them laugh [and] show them you are happy.

Pr Yes, so I will. And, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country. [*exeunt*]

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45. Jo SI Jo's library

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SI Joseph! This is impossible! Sir Peter will be reconciled to Charles and no longer oppose his [love for] Maria! The thought [makes me mad]!

Jo Can [my] passion, [help] ?

SI No! Oh, I was a fool, to [ally myself] with such a blunderer as you!

Jo Surely, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer. Yet, you see, I bear the accident with calmness.

SI Because you [are] interest[ed] only [in] Maria. Had you felt for **her** what I felt for **Charles**, you would [feel the acute pain].

Jo But why should your reproaches fall on **me** for this disappointment?

SI Are not **you** the cause of it? But you must endeavour to seduce his **wife**!

Jo Well, I admit that I have been to blame. But I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

SI No?

Jo You tell me you have [talked to] **Snake** since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us.

SI I do believe so.

Jo And that he [will] swear and prove that Charles is contracted by **vows** and **honour** [*bows*] to your Ladyship.

SI [*proud*] Indeed.

Jo It is not too late. [*knock on the door*] Retire to that room. We'll consult further.

SI I have [full confidence in] your abilities! [*exit*]

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46. Jo OI (SI) Jo's library

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Jo Come! [Oh no], Mr Stanley.

OI I have heard your uncle Oliver is expected here at any moment.

Jo If my uncle is returning then it is impossible for you to stay, Mr Stanley. [*pushes*]

OI No, Sir Oliver and I must [meet].

Jo Sir, then [I] **insist** on your quitting the room, directly! [*pushing desperately*]

OI Nay, Sir.

Jo Sir, I insist on it. Here! [*shouting down the stairs*] William! Show this gentleman out. [*Pushing on*] [*enter Ch*]

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47. Jo OI Ch (SI) Jo's library

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Ch What's the matter now?

Jo Brother!

Ch What the devil...? Don't hurt little Premium.

Jo So! He has been with you, too, has he?

Ch To be sure he has! [*a thought strikes him*] – But sure[ly], Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Jo Borrowing, no! But, brother, you know Sir **Oliver** is on his way.

Ch Uncle Noll mustn't find the little broker here to be sure.

Jo Yet Mr Stanley insists...

Ch **Stanley**? Why, his name's **Premium**.

Jo No Sir, **Stanley**.

Ch No, no, **Premium**. [*knocking*]

OI Gentlemen! [*bell rings*]

Jo This will be Sir Oliver at the door. Now I **beg**, Mr Stanley –

Ch Aye, aye, **and** I beg, Mr Premium –

OI Gentlemen!

Jo Sir, by heaven you shall go!

Ch Aye, out with him, certainly!

OI Oh, this violence... [*both pushing OI*]

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48. Jo OI Ch Pr Te Ma RI (SI) Jo's library

[*enter Pr Te Ma RI*]

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Pr My old friend, Sir Oliver! Here are dutiful **nephews** [to attack] their **uncle** at his first visit!

Te Indeed, Sir Oliver, it was well we came in to rescue you.

Rl Truly it was, for I [see] Sir Oliver, the character of "old Stanley" was no protection to you.

Jo *[together]* Sir **Oliver!**

Ch *[together]* Sir **Oliver!**

Ol Aye, I am your uncle, you rogues.

Jo **Charles!** *[staring at each other amazed]*

Ch **Joseph!** *[staring at each other amazed]*

Ol Sir Peter, and Rowley, too. Look [at] that Joseph. You know what he has already received from my [wealth] judge then my disappointment in discovering him to [have no] **Truth, Charity, and Gratitude!**

Jo **Uncle!**

Pr Sir Oliver! I have myself found him to be **mean, treacherous** and **hypocritical**.

Te And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these pray let him call **me** to his character.

Pr Then I believe we need add no more.

Jo Sir Oliver! Uncle! Will you honour me with a hearing? *[faced with silent contempt and pity, Jo withdraws, waiting for his chance]*

Ol *[ignoring Jo]* And Charles, **you** could **justify** yourself, **too**, I suppose.

Ch Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Ol Ah, little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose.

Ch True, Sir, but they were family secrets.

Rl *[trying to cut it short, hand on Ol's arm]* Come, Sir Oliver!

Ol Sir Peter, you know the rogue sold me judges and generals, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken [tea cups] !

Ch To be sure, Sir Oliver. But I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Ol Oh, Charles, I believe you! Give me your hand again: the "ill-looking little fellow" over the [couch] has made your peace.

Ch Then Sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Te *[advancing]* Yet I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to: **Maria**.

Ol Oh, I have heard of his attachment there. And, with Maria's pardon ...

Ma *[head modestly bowed]* Sir?

Pr Well child, speak your sentiments!

Ma Sir, I have little to say but that I shall [be happy] to hear that **Charles** is happy. For

me, whatever claim I had to his [love], I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

Ch How, Maria!

Pr What's the mystery now?

Ma His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Ch Lady Sneerwell?

Jo *[having waited for his cue]* Brother, Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed! *[goes to the door] [enter Sl]*

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49. Jo Ol Ch Pr Te Ma RI SI

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Jo Lady Sneerwell.

SI Mr Surface.

Pr So! Another French milliner! He has one in every room in the house, I suppose.

SI You have been too ungrateful, Charles! Well may you be surprised and feel for the [most embarrassing] situation which you ha[ve] forced me into.

Ch Pray, Uncle, is this another plot of yours?

Jo I believe, Sir, there is [only] the evidence of one person **more** necessary to make [it] extremely clear.

Pr And that person, I imagine, is Mr **Snake**. – Rowley, pray, let [him] appear.

Rl Walk in, Mr Snake. *[enter Sk]*

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50. Jo Ol Ch Pr Te Ma RI Sk SI

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Sk Lady Sneerwell, forgive me.

SI You – villain!

Rl However, he comes to **confront** Lady Sneerwell and **not** to support her.

SI Treacherous to me at last! *[like Jesus in the garden]* Speak, have you, too, conspired against me?

Sk I beg your Ladyship ten thousand pardons! You paid me extremely [well] for the **lie** but I, unfortunately, have been offered double to speak the **truth**.

Ol *[contented]* Plot and counter-plot!

SI *[bitter]* Shame and disappointment on you all!

Te Hold, Lady Sneerwell, before you go: Let me thank you for the trouble you and Mr Snake have taken in writing letters from **me** to **Charles** and answering them yourself. And let me also [say that I am leaving] the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform [you] that Lady Teazle, [graduate], return[s] the diploma they gave her, as she kills characters no longer.

Sl *[like Cesar, dying]* You too, madam.
[temper rising] Provoking, insolent! May your
 husband live these **fifty** years! *[exit]*

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51. Jo Ol Ch Pr Te Ma RI Sk

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Pr What a Fury –

Te A **malicious** [- ' - -] creature indeed!

Pr Hey! Not for her last wish?

Te Oh, no!

OI Well Joseph, and what have you to say
 now?

Jo *[seemingly horrified at Sl's scheming]* Sir, to
 find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of
[using] Mr Snake in this manner! – However,
 her revengeful spirit should [**not**] injure my
 brother, [so] I had certainly better follow her
 directly. *[exit]*

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52. Ol Ch Pr Te Ma RI Sk

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Pr Moral [' - -] to the last drop!

OI Aye, and marry [her] Joseph if she can.
[They] will do **well** together.

RI *[taking Sk by the shoulder, ready to lead him
 out]* I believe we have no more occasion for
 Mr Snake at present –

Sk Before I go. I beg pardon for whatever un-
 easiness I have been causing to the [ladies
 and gentlemen] present. *[making to leave]*

Pr *[magnanimous]* Well, well you have [done] a
 good deed at last.

Sk *[coming back, rather anxious]* But I must
[ask you] that it shall **never** be known.

Pr *[astounded]* Hey! Are you ashamed of hav-
 ing done a right thing once in your life?

Sk Ah, Sir, consider! If it were once known that I
 had been betrayed into an honest action, I

should lose every friend I have in the world.
[some compassion for the wretch]

OI Well, well, we'll not [betray] you by saying
 anything in your praise. Never fear!

Sk Sir! *[exit Sk]*

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53. Ol Ch Pr Te Ma RI

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Pr *[looking after him, thoughtfully]* There's a
 precious rogue.

Te See, Sir Oliver, now [you can] reconcile your
 nephew and Maria.

OI Aye, aye, that's as it should be and we'll
 have the wedding to-morrow morning!

Ch Thank you, dear Uncle!

Pr What! Don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Ch Oh, I have done that a long time! A minute
 ago, and she has looked **yes!**

Ma Charles! I protest, Sir Peter, there has not
 been a **word**.

OI Well then, the fewer the better. May your
 love for each other [never end].

Pr And may you live as happily together as
 Lady Teazle and I – intend to do!

Ch Rowley, my old friend! I am sure you con-
 gratulate me and I suspect that I owe you
 much.

OI You do, indeed, Charles!

RI Deserve to be happy.

Pr Aye, honest Rowley always said you would
 reform.

Ch As to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no prom-
 ises! But Maria shall be my gentle guide. *[all
 are visibly moved]* *[Ch declaims]*

Though thou, dear Maid, shouldst [lose] thy
 beauty's sway, –

Thou still must rule, because I will obey:

You can indeed each anxious fear remove,
 For even **scandal** dies if **you** approve.

