

*A Bickerstaff's
Burying*

*Or,
Work for the Upholders*

Susanna Centlivre

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To the Magnificent Company of UPHOLDERS

Dramatis Personæ.

SCENE I

SCENE II

SCENE III

SCENE IV

**A BICKERSTAFF'S
BURYING;**

OR,

Work for the UPHOLDERS.

A FARCE.

BY

SUSANNA CENTLIVRE



Custom has made some Things absolutely necessary, and three Sheets without a Dedication, or a Preface, by Way of Excuse, would be an unpardonable Indecency: To avoid which, I was considering at whose Feet to lay these following Scenes. First I thought of offering it to all those young Wives who had sold themselves for Money, and been inter'd with Misery, from the first Day of their Marriage; but supposing their chief Pleasure to consist in Pride, and that they had rather gratify their Ambition in the Arms of a Fool, of Four-score, then wed a Man of Sense of narrower Fortunes, I concluded 'em unworthy of my Notice.

Then the Race of Old Men presented themselves in my Mind, who, despising Women of their own Years, marry Girls of fifteen, by which they keep open House for all the young Fellows in Town, in order to encrease their Families, and make their Tables flourish like the Vine: But my Aversion to Fools of all Kinds, made me decline them too.

At last, casting my Eyes upon the Title of the Farce, I found it could justly belong to none but the Magnificent Company of Upholders, whom the judicious Censor of Great Britain has so often condescended to mention; to you then, worthy Sirs, whose solemn Train keeps up the pompous State of Beauty, beyond the Limits of a Gasp of Breath, and draws the gazing World to admire, even after Death; to you this Piece I dedicate; 'tis but Reason that you should receive some Tribute from us living, who so truly mourn us dead. What

does not Mankind owe to you? All Ranks and Conditions are obliged to you; the Aged and the Young, the Generous and the Miser, the well descended and the baser born. The Escutcheons garnish out the Hearse, the Streamers and Wax Lights, let us into the Name of a Man, which, all his Life had been hid in Obscurity; and many a Right Honourable would fall unlamented, were it not for your decent Cloaks, and dismal Faces, that look as sorrowfully as the Creditors they leave unpaid. What an immense Sum might be rais'd from your Art to carry on the War, would you, like true Britons, exert your Power? The People being fond of Sights, what might not be gather'd at a Funeral, when the Rooms are clad in Sable, the Body dress'd out with all your skilful Care, the Tapers burning in their Silver-Sockets, the weeping Virgins fixt like Statues round, and aromatic Gums perfume the Chambers. I think it preferable to the Puppet-show, and a Penny a Head for all the Curious, would, I dare be positive, amount to more than the Candle-Tax; and so make Death subservient to the Living.

But this, Gentlemen, I leave to your superior Judgment in Politick Principles; and only beg leave to remind you, that in this croud'd Town, there are a prodigious Number of Mr. Bickerstaff's dead Men, that swarm about Streets; therefore, for the Sakes of the most ingenious Part of Mankind, you ought to take Care to inter them out of the Way, since he that does no Good in his Generation, should not be reckon'd among the Living.

And now to conclude, Gentlemen, I hope you'll pardon this Liberty I have taken, and accept this as a Token of the

Respect I bear your noble Society: I honour you tho' I have no Desire of falling into your Hands, but I think we Poets are in no Danger of that, since our real Estate lies in the Brain, and our personal consists in two or three loose Scenes, a few Couplets for the Tag of an Act, and a slight Sketch for a Song, and as I take it, you are not over-fond of Paper-Credit, where there is no Probability of recovering the Debt: So wishing you better Customers, I expect no Return, but am proud of subscribing myself,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient humble Servant.

MEN.

<i>Mezro,</i>	<i>Mr. Norris.</i>
<i>Captain,</i>	<i>Mr. Bickerstaff.</i>
<i>Boatswain,</i>	<i>Mr. Spiller.</i>
<i>First Sailor,</i>	<i>Mr. Pack.</i>
<i>Second Sailor,</i>	<i>Mr. Miller.</i>

WOMEN.

<i>Lady Mezro,</i>	<i>Mrs. Knight.</i>
<i>Isabinda, her Niece,</i>	<i>Mrs. Cox.</i>
<i>A Lady,</i>	<i>Mrs. Kent.</i>
<i>Officer,</i>	<i>Mr. Carnaby.</i>
<i>Servants,</i>	<i>Mr. Cole, &c.</i>
<i>Lucy,</i>	<i>Mrs. Spiller.</i>

A BICKERSTAFF'S BURYING;

OR,

Work for the UPHOLDERS.

SCENE I.

A working Sea seen at a Distance, with the Appearance of a Head of a Ship bulging against a Rock: Mermaids rise and sing: Thunder and Lightning: Then the Scene shuts.

Enter Lady Mezro, and her Niece Isabinda veil'd.

Isab. Why don't you tell me whither you are going, Aunt, this Morning? I can scarce keep Pace with you. What is it that transports you so? you do not use to be so gay.

Lady M. Oh, my Girl, just now, from my Chamber-Window, I beheld a Ship, by Stress of Weather, driven on our Coast; which, since the last unhappy one that brought me here, I have never seen; pray Heav'n it be *English!*

Isab. So say I, then I shall see the fine Men you have so often talk'd of, Aunt.

Lady M. Ay, and the Country that breeds those Men, Child, if we can handsomly get off.

Isab. With all my Heart; for I hate this Isle of *Cosgar*, and all its barbarous Laws, since you have inform'd me of those of *Great Britain*.

Lady M. Hush, here's some of the Ship's Crew; let's step aside and observe them.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Captain, Boatswain, *and* Sailors.

Capt. Well, how fares the Ship, has she any Damage?

Boat. Only the Leak, which the Carpenter has stop'd, Captain.

Capt. That's well: I can't imagine what this Island produces!

Boat. Monsters, I think; for they stare as if they never had any Commerce with Mankind, or ever saw a Ship in their Lives.

Capt. I question if ever they did, and wish it had not been our Fortune to have improv'd their Knowledge.

1st Sail. I wish so too; I hate making strange Land: Who the Devil knows where to find a Wench now?

Boat. Here's a Dog, that two Hours ago, drown'd his necessary Orders with his Prayers, and now is roaring as loud for a Whore.

1st Sail. 'Tis our Custom, you know; out of Danger the Sailor must be merry, i'Faith; ha, ha.

2d Sail. *Nell*, at the Ship at *Chatham*, shall know this.

1st Sail. I care not a Rope's-End if she does: Why, what the Devil do you think I'll come into a strange Land, and not examine what Commodity it produces? No, no, Faith; *Nick*

must know if the Females here be Fish or Flesh, before he puts off again.

Capt. Ha, ha; Well, well, take Care you han't your Brains beat out: Go, disperse yourselves, and see what Provisions you can get. I just now met a Native of the Country; who tells me, that the Prince is coming this Way: He understands a little of the *Arabian* Tongue, and has promis'd to introduce me to him; that I may endeavour, by some Presents, to gain his Leave to refit our Ship, and supply our Wants.

Boat. Where shall we find you, Master?

Capt. Here, or hereabouts.

[*Exeunt* Boatswain and Sailors.]

Now for this *Cabbacuca*. Adsheart, what a Name's there! If the Prince be as barbarous as his Name, we had as good perish'd in the Storm: But I wonder the Fellow comes not, that is to conduct me to Court; that is, I suppose, to a King sitting under a Palm-tree: What would I give for a Friend there?

Enter Lady Mezro and Isabinda.

Lady M. (*Clapping him on the Shoulder.*) What would you give, Captain?

Capt. Ha! *English!* Nay, then I am not so far out of Knowledge as I imagin'd.

Lady *M.* You are a great Way from the Rose in *Covent-Garden*, I promise you.

Capt. The Rose in *Covent-Garden*! Let me see thy Face, thou dear Angel, or I die.

[*Embraces her.*

Lady *M.* Die! Nay, then you have chang'd your Inclination with the Clime; you never us'd to die for an old Acquaintance.

Capt. Ah! an old Acquaintance, here, Child, is welcomer than old Wine, and the Accident will give it a new Relish.

Lady *M.* Say you so? well, whether you speak Truth or not, I protest this Sight of you pleases me better than the first; and now, Sir, I am your humble Servant.

[*Turns up her Veil.*

Capt. Ha! Mrs. *Take-it!* Why, what Wind blew you hither?

Lady *M.* Just such another as brought you, I fancy; our Ship was bound to *Madrass*.

Capt. So was mine.

Lady *M.* After three Days tempestuous Weather, having lost our Main-mast, and all our Tackle, expecting nothing but Death, when by a sudden Gust our Vessel was driven upon

yon dreadful Rock, which split her into a thousand Pieces, and only I by Providence was sav'd.

Capt. Thank Heav'n, I've not lost one Man; I pity your Misfortune, and yet, by your Appearance, 'tis a Fault to pity you, for it has turn'd to your Advantage. Prithee what Business had you in the *Indies*?

Lady *M.* To get a Husband; you know few Women go there but to make their Fortunes.

Capt. Which I suppose you have done here, Madam.

Lady *M.* An Emir, which is a Lord, you must understand, walking by the Sea-side, spied me on the Rock, and kindly help'd me down, fell in Love, and married me; and I am now one of the greatest Women upon the Place.

Capt. I am glad on't, with all my Soul. Who is this Lady? another of my old Acquaintance too?

Lady *M.* No, I promise you; there's a Face never saw *Covent-Garden*. She's my Husband's Niece, the best humour'd Woman in the World; and for her Beauty, let that speak for itself, (*turns up her Veil*) so, I see by your Eyes you like her.

Isab. Grant, great Prophet, that he may! for I like him, I'm sure. (*Aside.*)

Capt. Like her! E'Gad, if your Island's peopled with such Angels, 'tis certainly the Land of Promise, and every Ship

will put in here for Provision.

Lady *M.* She's the only handsome one in it, I promise you; her Mother was *English*, and cast hither by such another Accident as myself.

Isab. And do you think this Face will do in *Covent-Garden*, Captain?

Capt. In *Covent-Garden*, Madam! Where would it not do? Ha! your Skin's as smooth as the Sea in a Calm, and your Eyes outshine the Sun after a Storm; your Voice as sweet as Syrens Songs; and 'tis greater Pleasure to behold you, than Land after a dangerous Voyage. I'll settle here, I'm resolv'd.

Lady *M.* Ah, the right *London* Strain. (*Aside.*)

Isab. And I'd rather go with him. (*Aside.*)

Capt. Where the Devil is my Ship's Crew? I'll have the Bottom of my Vessel beat out immediately, that I may never put to Sea again.

Isab. I'm afraid, young Gentleman, you'll change your Note if you knew the Custom of this Country.

Lady *M.* Indeed, my *quondam* Spark, you'd be glad to get off in a Cock-Boat if you do, by that Time you have been married half so long as I have been—I'm sure I would.

Capt. Ay! why so? you shine in Jewels.

Lady *M.* I once thought Riches the greatest, but now find them the least Part of Happiness.

Capt. Oh, you want to see dear *England* again, and dazzle the Eyes of your old Acquaintance.

Lady *M.* That's not the Cause.

Capt. Your Husband is old, I suppose?

Lady *M.* True.

Capt. What is that to my Repentance? This Lady is young.

Lady *M.* Then he is as ugly as a Baboon.

Capt. Yet wide; this Lady's as handsome as a Cherubin.

Lady *M.* He's as jealous as a *Spaniard*, as barbarous as a *Turk*, and as ill-natur'd as an old Woman; and I hate him as heartily as one Beauty does another; yet fear him as much as you Merchant-Men do a *French* Privateer.

Capt. Why there's nothing super-natural in all this; Women hate their Husbands all the World over.

Isab. I'm sure I should never hate you, if I had you once.
(*Aside.*) And are not you even with us, Captain?

Capt. I won't answer for the whole Sex; but I'll engage for myself, if thou'lt but try me, Child.

Isab. First hear the Conditions annext to Matrimony; then, if you'll venture—

Capt. Venture! What the Devil dost think I that have fac'd so many Dangers, should be afraid of fresh Water?

Lady M. Have a care what you say, Captain; for six to four but you'll wish yourself unmarried again, as heartily as I do.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Oh Madam! undone! undone! my Lord's just dying.

Lady M. Ah!

Capt. Undone! Pish, Pox, 'tis the best News thou ever brought'st in thy Life, Wench.

Lady M. Ruin'd! past Redemption! Oh, that ever I was born!

Capt. Ha! what's the Meaning of this?

Isab. Oh unhappy Woman!

Capt. Unhappy! Adsheart, I shou'd have guess'd her the happiest Woman in the World, now.

Lady M. Fly, call Physicians strait, here, bribe 'em with Jewels, (*tears off the Jewels*) give 'em a King's Ransom, if they can but save his Life, load 'em with Wealth 'till they sink beneath the Weight. Oh! my latest Hour is come!

Capt. What the Devil can be the Matter? why all this Noise? Here's none but Friends; I don't apprehend that any body can over-hear you; this is something like the *Irish Cry*; I suppose it is the Custom of the Country. (*Aside.*)

Lady M. Oh no! Neither Heaven nor Earth will hear me now! I'm lost, for ever lost! Oh, oh, oh!

Capt. Humph! now I have found it; all the Estate goes with him, I warrant.

Lady M. Estate! sink the Estate! my Life goes with him!

Isab. Oh cruel, oh inhuman Law!

Capt. What a-pox, she wont die for the Man she hates, will she? Did you not wish to be unmarried just now? and are you sorry that your Husband's a-dying? The Woman's distracted sure!

Lady M. Oh, I must be buried with him alive! O dreadful Thought.

[*Runs off.*]

Capt. Ha! how's that? Buried alive! I'm Thunder-struck! Stay, I conjure you, Madam, (*To Isabinda*) and explain to me this Riddle.

Isab. It is, Sir, the barbarous Custom of our Country; first ordain'd from frequent Poisoning here, that which soever of

the married Pair died first, the Survivor is buried with alive, drest, and adorn'd, for a second Nuptial.

Capt. E'gad, it has turn'd my Stomach against the first.
(*Aside.*) Unheard of Barbarity! Is none exempt the Pain of the Country?

Isab. None; all let down a deep hollow Mountain, with some Loaves of Bread, and some Bottles of Water, on which they may feed for some time, and then expire within the loathsome Dungeon. My Mother in her Bloom was with my Father buried: I was but thrice three Moons old; yet I remember even then it rais'd a Horror in me, and as I grew up, fixt a Resolution in me, never to wed in this curst Place.

Capt. Faith, you had Reason, Madam, and I admire that any body does.

Isab. Custom has made it easy to the true *Cosgarian* Race, but I have a *British* Soul.

Capt. You must be rescued from this Imposition; your Aunt too must be sav'd.

Isab. But how? If he dies, the Officers of Justice seize her; nay, 'tis Death for all the Household if Information be not given strait. Upon the Wedding-day, two Coffins are always brought into the Bride-Chamber, as part of the Ceremony.

Capt. E'gad, I should have small Appetite to finish the Ceremony at the Sight of 'em.

Isab. This is the deplorable State of Matrimony in our Country.

Capt. If it were the Custom all over the World, we young Fellows should live deliciously; Women would be as plenty as Blackberries; we might put forth our Hands and take them without Jointures, Settlements, Pin-money, Parson, and so forth. (*Noise.*)

Isab. Hark! I hear a Noise! Oh, my poor Aunt! I must in, and see the Event.

Capt. First promise me that if I contrive a Way to bear you hence, you'll consent to go with me?

Isab. With all my Heart, there's my Hand upon it; we have no Time for Courtship; I'll meet you here again in an Hour.

[*Exit.*

Capt. Now if I can but handsomly carry off these Women, their Jewels will turn to better Account than an *East-India* Voyage.

Enter Boatswain and Sailors.

Well, what Cheer, my Lads? I have seen the Prince, and obtain'd his Leave for every Thing I ask'd.

1st. Sail. Cheer! why Faith, Captain, we sail directly before the Wind; and I want but your Consent to make the richest Port in the Universe.

Capt. What do you mean?

1st Sail. What! why I can have a fine Lady here, with as many Jewels about her as will ballast a Ship, if you'll but give me my Discharge; nay, I won't be ungrateful for it neither, you shall have all my Pay: What say you, Master, will you lend me your Hand to heave me into good Fortune?

2d Sail. Will you be false-hearted then, *Nick*? *Nell* will hang herself in her Garters when she hears it.

1st Sail. Let her, let her, what care I: Odsfish! do you think I'd leave a first Rate for a Frigate; forsake a fine Lady for *Nell*? That's quitting a Bowl of Punch for a Draught of Sea-water. (*Spitting.*)

Boat. I wonder what she saw in that ugly Phiz of thine, that's always as dirty as the Hammock you swing in; and as seldom wash'd as your Shirt, which is not once a Quarter.

2d Sail. Ha, ha! Oh, she fell in Love with his Nose or his Legs.

1st Sail. Why, what Fault can you find with my Nose, *Bob*. Ha! 'tis sound, and perhaps that's more than yours is.

Boat. Nay, nay, don't find Fault with his Nose, it is like the Bowsprit, and his Legs would serve for a Main-mast; I warrant the Jade understands Sailing, and so wisely provides against Stress of Weather, ha, ha.

1st Sail. I'faith, she's a tite Vessel, and I'll man her as titely, I warrant ye, my Lads.

Capt. Ha, ha; hark ye, Sirrah; there's such Conditions entail'd upon this Woman, you are so fond of, that will make you as Wife-sick, as the Sea did in your first Voyage.

1st Sail. Aye, it's no Matter for that, Captain; you must not think to serve me as you do a Whale, fling out an empty Cask till the Substance gets by. Look ye, Master, to fetch up half her Wealth, I'd dive to the Bottom of the Sea, and venture being swallow'd by a Shark, *Nick* would, I'faith, Master.

2d Sail. Well said, *Nick*; E'gad, I warrant you think to be an Ambral now.

1st Sail. Why, why not, if I have Money enough to buy it? And I will be an Ambral too, for all you, and my Master here, shall be my Rear-Ambral.

Capt. Oh, your very humble Servant, Mr. Admiral—but suppose your Wife should die, *Nick*?

1st Sail. Better and better still; her Gold, and precious Stones, won't die too; and E'gad, I'll drink to her good Voyage in a Bowl of Punch, clap my Riches aboard, and hoist Sail for merry *England*.

Capt. Ha, ha. Do you know that the Law of this Island buries the living Husband with the dead Wife?

1st Sail. Ha! the Devil it does!

Capt. 'Tis even so.

Boat. Ambral, I wish you much Joy.

1st Sail. Alive!

2d Sail. What, is the Wind chop'd full in your Teeth, *Nick*?
Ha, ha, ha!

1st Sail. Ay, Faith, and blows so hard, that it shall blow my Head off e're I make the Port of Matrimony in this Island. Buried with her? quotha! E'gad, I always thought the Wedding-sheet the Winding-sheet of Pleasure, after a Month; but to have no Hopes beyond her; Zounds! I had rather sit in the Bilboes all Days of my Life. I'll aboard this Minute. *Boatswain*, you grumbl'd at my good Fortune just now, take her yourself if you will.

Boat. The Devil take me if I do.

Capt. I told you I should take off the Edge of your Appetite: Go, go, try and get the Ship off: I'll be aboard immediately. Have you got any Provisions?

Boat. That we have, good Store.

Capt. Well, well, be gone then.

1st Sail. Ay, with all my Heart; if I get once aboard, I'll stick as close to the Ship as Pitch to a Rope; and sink with

her rather than come ashore again. Buried with a Wife! the Devil!

[*Exeunt* Sailors.]

Capt. Let me consider; what Stratagem shall I use to carry off the Women.

Enter Isabinda.

Isab. There's a sad House within; but hang me if I don't fancy my Uncle counterfeits; for in my Mind his Pulse beats as regular as mine.

Capt. Ha! Say you so? Then I have it. Convey me into the House, where I'll tell you the Plot, to free you from these Apprehensions.

Isab. If you effect it you are a Deity. Come along with me; in this Confusion I can preserve you undiscover'd.

Capt. Along then.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Emir on a Couch, with his Wife weeping by him, and Attendants round about. Table, Couch, 2 Chairs, Gallypots, &c.

Lady. Oh Distraction! Look up my Lord, my Love, my Husband! Oh, you will break my Heart, and I shall go before you! Oh, oh, oh!

Emir. The Stars forbid! Oh, oh! (*Groans.*)

Lady. Ah! Help ye Slaves—Gently bear him up—Rub his Temples—Apply the Hartshorn to his Nose—Oh speak and tell me how you do, my Dear!—Oh, oh, oh!

[*Roars out.*

Emir. Very bad—Oh, oh!

Lady. Are you very bad, my Love? What will become of me? (*Aside.*)

Em. Very bad indeed. Wife—Oh, I shall not live this Day, I doubt.

Lady. Ah! What do I hear? Oh, ye cruel Powers,—Why was I cast upon this Shoar? Curse on these glittering Bawbles, whose bewitching Lustre cheats us of true Happiness. (*Tears off her Jewels.*) A Thirst of Riches drew me from that Land where Widow-hood is happy—to die within a loathsome Dungeon, unpitied and forlorn.

Em. What does she say now?—Prithee, my Dear, don't afflict yourself so much—You'll be sick, my Love—

Lady. But you'll die, my Love—Sick, quotha! Good Heaven! Can I be well when you are dying?

Em. Oh, you think of the Custom of our Country, Wife; you fear to be buried with me, that's all.

Lady. All does he call it— (*Aside.*)

Em. Now, if it had pleas'd Great *Mahomet*, that thou shouldst have gone first, I should have accompanied thee with Pleasure—

Lady. That's more than I shall do you, I'm sure. (*Aside.*) So shall I you, my Dear, as to any Business I have with Life, when thou'rt gone: but the Pain to see thee die, to part with thee for ever, is the Shock that Nature feels—but 'tis unkindly urg'd to think I fear the Custom of the Island—for what Joy could I have when thou art gone?

Em. I doubt she lies—But this is the only Way I could ever find to keep her in Subjection; for as soon as I am well, whip! she's scamper'd, and I have no more Comfort of a Wife than I should have in her Grave: If all *English* Wives are such Gadders, Heaven help their Husbands, I say—

Lady. How dost thou do, Jewel?

Em. I think I am a little better; I believe I could eat a Leg of that Chicken within—

Lady. Fly ye Slaves, and fetch it instantly. Oh, all ye Powers, that protect our Lives, I thank ye; I feel the Springs of Joy recruit; thy Words run thro' my Soul with such exulting Pleasure, that 'tis all one Rapture—Oh, let me hold thee ever in my Arms—Oh! that single Word, Better—has more Harmony in it than the Music of the Spheres—Thus let me kiss it from thy Lips, 'tis the richest Cordial Nature could produce to raise my sinking Hopes. (*Embraces and kisses him in an Extasy.*) Where are you, Slaves, why do you stay so long.

Enter Servants.

Em. Ah, this Wife of mine does but counterfeit this Love to me, I fear—If our Law did not bury the Living with the Dead, here would be no Joy for my Recovery.

Lady. Come, my Dear, shall I cut it for thee?

Em. No, I'll not trouble thee.

[He cuts and eats greedily.

'Tis very good: Won't you eat a Bit of it, Deary?

Lady. No, thou shalt eat it all—He feeds heartily: Ah, if I had him in Old *England*, I should wish it were his last—Oh, the vast Difference between a Widow's Weed and a Winding-Sheet, between the civil Ceremonies of shedding Tears at the Grave, and the barbarous Custom of making one's Bed there.

Em. How pleas'd she is? Ah, wou'd she be in this good Humour always—

Lady. Much good may it do you, my Dear. (*Kisses him.*)

Em. I thank you, my Love—Ah, you little Rogue, how warm your Busses are—(*Rises from the Table*) Od, they infuse new Life into me; and methinks I feel Health pop into my Heart, like a Pop-gun—Another Kiss, my Dearest—(*Kisses her.*) So, so, thou hast done it, thou hast done it, thou dear Rogue—Go, what do you stare at? be gone and leave your Lady and I alone—

[*To the Servants.*]

Lady. Say you so—alone! alas, are you fit to be left alone—leave a dying Man alone—Let them stir if they dare—I shall take better Care of you than that comes to, my Dear.

Em. Pish, Pish, I tell thee I am out of Danger.

Lady. I wish thou wert—

Em. Indeed I am, and thou shall find it so; therefore, prithee let them go—

[*Winking at her.*]

Lady. Alas, I fear you are light-headed, my Dear; Aye, your Pulse is upon the Galop; you are in a raging Fever—Oh, woe is me! Oh, oh, oh! Away, some of ye, and fetch a Doctor.

Em. Psha, psha; I tell thee thou art mistaken; I am in no Fever but what proceeds from thy pretty pouting Lips, and thou art the best Physician, let me kiss them again; ye, ye, ye, ye, dear soft Charmer, ye, ye.

Lady. Are you sure you are well?

Em. Very sure on't, my Dear—Come, let us take a Nap together.

Lady. You know I can't sleep in the Day-time: besides, you ought to return your Prophet Thanks for your Recovery—

Em. Oh, that I'll do To-morrow.

Lady. To-morrow! A Man of your Years ought to be asham'd of deferring Things of that Kind till To-morrow.

Em. Why, Child, upon Occasion one may—

Lady. Occasion! What Occasions have People of your Age for Life, but to pray—

Em. Have Women in your Country no other Business for their Husbands, my Dear?

Lady. No—

Em. Humpth! That was the Reason you left it, I doubt—

Lady. Ah! would I had never left it—

Em. But come, come, you jest but with me. *Lucy*, fetch your Lady's Night-gown—I love to see her in her Night-gown—Ah, those roguish Eyes! Another Kiss and then—

Lady. You love to see me in my Night-gown, I think I shan't consult your Fancy much—Prithee no more Sleeping; your Breath's ready to strike one down, and your Beard's as rough as a Hedge-hog. *Lucy*, fetch me my Veil, I have a Visit to make.

Lucy. Yes, Madam. [*Exit.*

Em. So, she's no Changeling, I find; never Man had such a Wife, certainly—I must always be sick, or she'll always be out of Humour. (*Aside.*) Sure you'll not leave me, Wife.

Lady. Indeed but I shall, Husband.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Here's the Veil, Madam.

[*She puts it on.*

Em. Well, go then, I won't hinder you—*Shaddock*, give me my Cloak; I'll go see the Grand Emir, and pass away the Time a little till your Lady's Return.

Lady. Well, now I like your Humour. You shou'd always let your Wife go, when and where she pleases.

Em. That I resolve for the future—Ha! what ails me—Bless me, I'm very sick o'th' Sudden; oh, oh! pray lead me to my Bed, or I shall die this Moment—

Lady. Ha! what's that, die say you? (*Throws off her Veil.*) Oh wretched me! here, here, here, here, take a little of this, my Lord. Judgment is pronounc'd against my Life, and I must die at last. (*Aside.*)—Away, and call the Physicians: Haste, fly, oh, oh, oh!

Em. No, no, 'twill off again; 'tis only a Fit—thy Kindness is my best Cordial. I'll try to rest a little.

Lady. Withdraw all of you, and separate into Silence. I'll watch by thee. Heaven send my Love a comfortable Nap—What Distractions tear my Breast—Now Hope, then Despair, with alternate Sway, exercise their Power, and no kind Glimpse of Safety offers me Relief.

Enter Isabinda.

Isab. Oh Aunt, the Captain is without, and has a Secret to deliver us from this Place if you'll but help the Design.

Lady. Bring him in: If your Uncle wakes I'll tell him it is a Doctor.

Enter Captain and whispers the Lady.

Isab. Here he is.

Capt. Do you this, and I'll be ready to finish it.

[*Exit.*

Lady. I'll venture. Oh Fortune, be this once propitious, and I'll submit my future Life, without the least Complaint. Ah! my Head turns round! Oh, I faint, I die! (*Swoons.*)

Isab. Ah Help! Help! Where are you? My Aunt's dead. Help! Help!

[*The Emir rises, runs, and catches hold of his Wife.*

Em. I'm Thunder-struck—Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Serv. Ha! Dead! Nay then, where are the Coffins?

[*Exeunt Servants.*

Emir. Oh, woe is me! Speak to me, my Dear; speak to me; speak to me.

Isab. As I suspected: See how nimble he is at the Apprehension of being buried with her. What shall I do? she's breathless quite—

Emir. Oh, oh, oh! (*Roars out.*) Undone, undone, for ever—

Isab. Ay, it is you have been the Cause, oh, wretched Man! Prophet, thou art just.

Emir. Wretched indeed. I confess I did but counterfeit—Oh Alla, (*kneels*) pardon my Deceit, and give me back her Life, and let her cuckold me with every Thing she meets; let her

be the veriest Wife that ever *England* bred, I never will be jealous more! oh, oh! (*Gets up and runs to her, and feels her Pulse, then rubs her Temples, and prays again—*) Is there any Hopes, Niece?

Isab. No, none. Oh distrusting Thought! This comes of your frightening her so.

Emir. Oh forgive me, Niece, for I truly repent: Alas! I did it only to keep her in Subjection. Oh fetch the Cordial which I, like a false Wretch, had no Occasion for! Oh! I do believe she lov'd me now! Oh Niece, try, try, to pour some down her Throat; for I tremble so, I cannot guide it to her Lips.

Isab. Alas! her Teeth are set: She's gone! for ever gone!

Emir. Then I'm gone too!

[*Bursts out again into Tears.*]

Oh, oh, oh!

Enter Servants with two Coffins.

Isab. Oh killing Sight! (*kneels*) Thou glorious Sun assist us now and we are happy. (*Aside.*)

Emir. Ay do, do pray for thy Uncle, Child: Oh, oh, oh!

Isab. I have Occasion for my Prayers myself, at this Time, I thank ye, for I'm afraid we are in the greater Danger at present. (*Aside.*)

Emir. (Turns and sees the Coffins.) Oh, oh, oh, that ever I married! Where shall I hide myself? Oh, oh, oh!

[*Runs off.*]

Serv. Stop him, stop him.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

Isab. Call the Officers of Justice strait; I must be cruel here. So, he's gone, Captain, come forth.

Enter Captain.

Lady. I'm almost choak'd with holding my Breath so long; what's to be done now? Pray Heaven we prosper!

Capt. I warrant you, Madam, come, come, be quick, you must aboard this Minute. Have you any Thing you would take with you?

Isab. I have pack'd up all your Jewels, and every Thing of Value, here, Madam: Mercy on me, how I tremble!

Lady. And I'm ready to sink with Fear: If we are taken we are undone, and you lose your Lives.

Capt. Nothing like a good Courage: Come, let's not stand disputing, and lose the lucky Minute.

Lady. From these curst Laws, oh let me 'scape with Life.

Isab. And make me any Creature but a Wife.

Capt. Your Wealth at any Time decides the Strife.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Cosgarian Lady, dragging in the first Sailor.

Lady. Nay, don't think to leave me, Sir, did you not promise to stay here?

1st Sail. But will you promise not to die before me then? Answer me that: Adsbud, who do you think to chouse? ha!

Lady. What are you afraid to die with her you love?

1st Sail. Love! Zounds! does any body love a Woman well enough to die with her?

Lady. Yes, certainly, with their Wives.

1st Sail. That's a Mistake, d'ye see; for of all the Women in the World we care the least for our Wives, in my Country.

Lady. That's strange. Why, I should rejoice to die with you, pretty *Englishman*.

Ist Sail. Aye, one Way, perhaps, pretty Devil! But to be plain with you, I desire to die no Way with you at all; and so I shear off. (*Going.*)

Lady. Stay. Cannot Gold and Jewels tempt you?

[*Shews Gold and Jewels.*

Ist Sail. No.

Lady. What are you *Englishmen* made on?

Ist Sail. Flesh and Blood, Child: If I can find one of Iron and Steel, I'll recommend him to you.

Lady. Iron and Steel! What kind of Men are they?

Ist Sail. Oh, Things that are so well acquainted with the Earth, that they'll lie twenty Years in it and take no Hurt: Now for my Part, I have as much Antipathy to fresh Mould as fresh Water; and had rather eat Sea-Bisket than a green Sod; and the Wind will as soon blow North and by South, as I be prevail'd upon to turn in with you.

Lady. Faint-hearted Wretch! Take me with you, then, to your World.

Ist Sail. Look ye, I'll have nothing to do with you at all; and there's your Answer; and if you offer to stop me, I shall make use of my Cat of Nine Tails, in troth I shall. Zounds! I never had such an Aversion for a Woman in my Life.

[*Exit* Sailor.]

Lady. Sure this is some Sea-Monster, it cannot be a Man,
and Proof against Gold and Jewels.

The *European's* God is Gold, we *Indians* say,
Then dare they fly from that to which they pray?
When next—
To th' shining Ore thou dost for Mercy sue,
As you've been deaf to me, may that be deaf to you.

[*Exit.*

Enter second Sailor.

2d Sail. Ha! the Woman here that *Nick* should have had; a
faint-hearted Dog! Now have I a Mind to knock her Brains
out, and carry off her Jewels.

Lady. What's here—another of the puny Knaves?

[*A Whistle within.*

2d Sail. Ha! the Boson's Whistle! nay then I must be
speedy; and yet I can't find in my Heart to kill her.

[*Whistle again.*

Adsheart, I shall be left ashoar; I must away.

Lady. You look disorder'd, Sir; are you in Love?

2d Sail. With your rare glist'ning Stones I am; and if your damn'd Fashion did not heave the living Husband o're board with the dead Wife, I did not care if I said I was in love with you.

Lady. Then take me where we may live for ever; for indeed I don't like this Custom amongst us, but must obey it. Come, bear me hence, and I will load thee with Wealth enough to buy thy Country.

[*Whistle and hollow within.*]

2d Sail. Ha! I have no Time to think; come along then; I'll venture to swing in a Hammock with you for once.

Blow gently, *Boreas*, *Neptune's* Rage confound,
And set us safely upon *British* Ground,
Where we will drink and sing till the whole World goes round.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The Emir dragg'd in by Officers, with Servants bringing in Loaves of Bread and Bottles of Water.

Off. What, a Native of *Cosgar*, and tremble at its Laws! when even our Kings are subject to 'em. For Shame, *Emir*, bear yourself like a Man—Come, open the Coffin, and put in the Loaves and Water.

Emir. Ah, I shall have but small Stomach to eat. (*Aside.*) Confound our Laws; I'm inform'd that no Part of the World is curst with such, but only us, the rest live as long as they can: To be buried alive—Oh curs'd Custom! Oh, oh, oh! In perfect Health too! Oh, oh, oh!

Off. In Health! nay my Lord, that you are not; every body expected your Death this Morning; the Fright of which, I suppose, has caus'd your Lady's: I'm sure every body thought you very ill.

Emir. Aye, and may be every body thought me willing to die, but every body was mistaken.

Off. My Lord, we have no Time for Talking; it is not in our Powers to prevent your Fate. Here, lift him into the Coffin. Where are your Cords to let the Coffins down the Mountain?

[*They seize him.*

Emir. I will not go down the Mountain: Unconscionable Rogues! (*struggles with them.*) I hope your Wives will die To-morrow—Hold, hold, let me see my Wife first; she died suddenly, and may come to Life again.

Off. Pish! Pish! This is Trifling, in with him, I say.

Emir. I tell you my Wife was an *English* Wife, and troubled with Vapours, as all that Country's Wives are; she us'd to die and come to Life again ten Times in an Hour, therefore I will see her.

[*Struggling to reach at her Coffin.*]

2d Off. Shall he see her, Brother?

1st Off. No, no.

Emir. Ye Dogs, I will. (*Gets hold on't, and pulls off the Lid.*) By Alla, Sun, Moon and Stars, here's no body! Huzza, here's no body, she's alive.

[*Jumps and dances about.*]

Off. Alive! bring her out then.

Emir. Nay, do you bring her out, if you will; for you shall never bring me in.

Off. My Lord, I shall make you bring her out; you have buried her in your Garden, I suppose; but that shan't serve: Produce her living, or I'll instantly proceed to the Ceremony of Burial with you: Where is she?

Emir. Sir, I told you before she was an *English* Wife, and I believe few Husbands know where to find them.

Off. This shan't serve: Where's Mrs. *Isabinda*, your Niece?

Emir. With her Aunt, for ought I know.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Oh, my Lord, the Ship that was cast here, yesterday, is gone off, and with it your Lady, Niece and Maid, with all your Jewels.

Emir. With all my Soul; and there's something for thy News; a boon Voyage, and a merry Gale to them, say I; it is the most comfortable Loss that ever Man had.

Off. Why, what a Misfortune's this? Here's our Fees lost.
(*Aside.*)

Emir. And if ever you catch me marrying again, I'll give you leave to use your Cords. Dogs! get out of my House, go; troop, Vermin, no going down the Mountain now—Here, kick the Coffins after them, with their Loaves and Water; for there shall never be more Occasion for 'em in this House, I promise you—Come, where are my Servants? Here, let me have Musick and Dancing, to cheer my Spirits.

The Laws of Wedlock all Men think severe;
But 'tis Damnation sure to marry here.

Finis

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Contemporary spelling has generally been retained; this includes contractions now uncommon, such as cou'd and han't, and words that may initially be misunderstood, but become clear from the context.

The abbreviations used for character names are not uniform, and hyphenation is inconsistent.

Some punctuation has been changed or added to improve comprehension. A small number of obvious misprints due to broken or reversed type, or simply human error, have been corrected, specifically:

The word "it" was added in: "Much good may **it** do you, my Dear". And "'s" was added in "troubled with Vapours, as all that Country's Wives are".

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[The end of *A Bickerstaff's Burying; or, Work for the Beholders* by Susanna Centlivre]