

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Mary Roberts Rinehart

Table of Contents

<u>The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse</u>	1
<u>Mary Roberts Rinehart</u>	1
<u>I.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]</u>	3
<u>[II.i.] The three shops open in a rank</u>	18
<u>[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]</u>	38
<u>[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]</u>	66
<u>[V.i. A street]</u>	89

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Mary Roberts Rinehart

"My case is alter'd, I must work for my living."

Dramatis Personae

SIR ALEXANDER Wengrave, and NEATFOOT his man

SIR ADAM Appleton

SIR DAVY Dapper

SIR BEAUTEOUS Ganymede

[SIR THOMAS Long]

LORD NOLAND

Young [SEBASTIAN] Wengrave

JACK Dapper, [son to Sir Davy,] and GULL his page

GOSHAWK

GREENWIT

LAXTON

TILTYARD [a feather-seller]

[MISTRESS TILTYARD]

OPENWORK [a sempster]

[MISTRESS Rosamond OPENWORK]

[Hippocrates] GALLIPOT [an apothecary]

[MISTRESS Prudence GALLIPOT]

MOLL, the Roaring Girl

[Ralph] TRAPDOOR

[TEARCAT]

SIR GUY Fitzallard

MARY Fitzallard, his daughter

CURTILAX, a sergeant, and

HANGER, his yeoman

MINISTRI

[COACHMAN]

[PORTER]

[TAILOR]

[Gentlemen]

[CUTPURSES]

[FELLOW]

To the Comic Play-Readers, Veneries and Laughter

The fashion of play-making I can properly compare to nothing so naturally as the alteration in apparel: for in the time of the great crop-doublet, your huge bombasted plays, quilted with mighty words to lean purposes, was only then in fashion. And as the doublet fell, neater inventions began to set up. Now in the time of spruceness, our plays follow the niceness of our garments: single plots, quaint conceits, lecherous jests, dressed up in hanging sleeves, and those are fit for the times and the termers. Such a kind of light-colour summer stuff, mingled with diverse colours, you shall find this published comedy, good to keep you in an afternoon from dice, at home in your chambers; and for veneries you shall find enough for sixpence, but well couched and you mark it, for Venus being a woman passes through the play in doublet in breeches, a brave disguise and a safe one if the statute untie not her codpiece point. The book I make no question but is fit for many of your companies, as well as the person itself, and may be allowed both galley room at the playhouse, and chamber room at your lodging. Worse things I must needs confess the world has taxed her for than has been written of her; but 'tis the excellency of a writer to leave things better than he finds 'em; though some obscene fellow (that cares not what he writes

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

against others, yet keeps a mystical bawdy-house himself, and entertains drunkards to make use of their pockets and vent his private bottle-ale at midnight), though such a one would have ripped up the most nasty vice that ever hell belched forth and presented it to a modest assembly, yet we rather wish in such discoveries, where reputation lies bleeding, a slackness of truth than a fullness of slander.

Thomas Middleton

- [Act I](#)
- [Act II](#)
- [Act III](#)
- [Act IV](#)
- [Act V](#)

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

Prologus

A play expected long makes the audience look
For wonders, that each scene should be a book,
Compos'd to all perfection; each one comes
And brings a play in's head with him: up he sums
What he would of a roaring girl have writ;
If that he finds not here, he mews at it.
Only we entreat you think our scene
Cannot speak high, the subject being but mean:
A roaring girl whose notes till now never were
Shall fill with laughter our vast theatre;
That's all which I dare promise: tragic passion,
And such grave stuff, is this day out of fashion.
I see attention sets wide ope her gates
Of hearing, and with covetous list'ning waits,
To know what girl this roaring girl should be,
For of that tribe are many. One is she
That roars at midnight in deep tavern bowls,
That beats the watch, and constables controls;
Another roars i' th' daytime, swears, stabs, gives braves,
Yet sells her soul to the lust of fools and slaves.
Both these are suburb roarers. Then there's beside
A civil city roaring girl, whose pride,
Feasting, and riding, shakes her husband's state,
And leaves him roaring through an iron grate.
None of these roaring girls is ours: she flies
With wings more lofty. Thus her character lies;
Yet what need characters, when to give a guess
Is better than the person to express?

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

But would you know who 'tis? Would you hear her name?
She is call'd mad Moll; her life, our acts proclaim.

I.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

Enter Mary Fitzallard disguised like a sempster with a case for bands, and Neatfoot a serving-man with her, with a napkin on his shoulder and a trencher in his hand as from table.

NEATFOOT

The young gentleman our young master, Sir Alexander's son, is it into his ears, sweet damsel emblem of fragility, you desire to have a message transported, or to be transcendent?

MARY

A private word or two, sir, nothing else.

NEATFOOT

You shall fructify in that which you come for: your pleasure shall be satisfied to your full contentation. I will, fairest tree of generation, watch when our young master is erected, that is to say, up, and deliver him to this your most white hand.

MARY

Thanks, sir.

NEATFOOT

And withal certify him that I have culled out for him, now his belly is replenished, a daintier bit or modicum than any lay upon his trencher at dinner. Hath he notion of your name, I beseech your chastity?

MARY

One, sir, of whom he bespake falling bands.

NEATFOOT

Falling bands: it shall so be given him. If you please to venture your modesty in the hall amongst a curl-pated company of rude serving-men, and take such as they can set before you, you shall be most seriously and ingeniously welcome.

MARY

I have [dined] indeed already, sir.

NEATFOOT

Or will you vouchsafe to kiss the lip of a cup of rich Orleans in the buttery amongst our waiting-women?

MARY

Not now in truth, sir.

NEATFOOT

Our young master shall then have a feeling of your being here; presently it shall so be given him.

MARY

I humbly thank you, sir.

I.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Exit Neatfoot.

But that my bosom
Is full of bitter sorrows, I could smile
To see this formal ape play antic tricks:
But in my breast a poisoned arrow sticks,
And smiles cannot become me. Love woven slightly,
Such as thy false heart makes, wears out as lightly,
But love being truly bred i' th' the soul like mine
Bleeds even to death at the least wound it takes:
The more we quench this [fire], the less it slakes.
Oh, me!

Enter Sebastian Wengrave with Neatfoot.

SEBASTIAN

A sempster speak with me, sayst thou?

NEATFOOT

Yes, sir, she's there, viva voce, to deliver her auricular confession.

SEBASTIAN

With me, sweet heart? What is't?

MARY

I have brought home your bands, sir.

SEBASTIAN

Bands? Neatfoot.

NEATFOOT

Sir.

SEBASTIAN

Prithee look in, for all the gentlemen are upon rising.

NEATFOOT

Yes, sir, a most methodical attendance shall be given.

SEBASTIAN

And dost hear? If my father call for me, say I am busy with a sempster.

NEATFOOT

Yes, sir, he shall know it that you are busied with a needlewoman.

SEBASTIAN

In's ear, good Neatfoot.

NEATFOOT

It shall be so given him.

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Exit Neatfoot.

SEBASTIAN

Bands? Y'are mistaken, sweet heart, I bespake none. When, where? I prithee, what bands? Let me see them.

MARY

Yes, sir, a bond fast sealed with solemn oaths,
Subscribed unto as I thought with your soul,
Delivered as your deed in sight of heaven.
Is this bond cancell'd? Have you forgot me?
[She removes her disguise.]

SEBASTIAN

Ha! Life of my life: Sir Guy Fitzallard's daughter!
What has transform'd my love to this strange shape?
Stay, make all sure. So, now speak and be brief,
Because the wolf's at door that lies in wait
To prey upon us both. Albeit mine eyes
Are bless'd by thine, yet this so strange disguise
Holds me with fear and wonder.

MARY

Mine's a loathed sight.
Why from it are you banish'd else so long?

SEBASTIAN

I must cut short my speech. In broken language,
Thus much: sweet Moll, I must thy company shun;
I court another Moll. My thoughts must run
As a horse runs that's blind round in a mill,
Out every step yet keeping one path still.

MARY

Umh! Must you shun my company? In one knot
Have both our hands by th' hands of heaven been tied,
Now to be broke? I thought me once your bride:
Our fathers did agree on the time when,
And must another bedfellow fill my room?

SEBASTIAN

Sweet maid, let's lose no time. 'Tis in heaven's book
Set down that I must have thee. An oath we took
To keep our vows, but when the knight your father
Was from mine parted, storms began to sit
Upon my covetous father's brow, which fell
From them on me. He reckon'd up what gold
This marriage would draw from him, at which he swore
To lose so much blood could not grieve him more.
He then dissuades me from thee, call'd thee not fair,
And ask'd what is she but a beggar's heir?

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

He scorn'd thy dowry of five thousand marks.
If such a sum of money could be found,
And I would match with that, he'd not undo it,
Provided his bags might add nothing to it,
But vow'd, if I took thee, nay, more, did swear it,
Save birth from him I nothing should inherit.

MARY

What follows then, my shipwreck?

SEBASTIAN

Dear'st, no:
Tho' wildly in a labyrinth I go,
My end is to meet thee; with a side wind
Must I now sail, else I no haven can find
But both must sink forever. There's a wench
Call'd Moll, mad Moll or merry Moll, a creature
So strange in quality a whole city takes
Note of her name and person. All that affection
I owe to thee on her in counterfeit passion
I spend to mad my father: he believes
I dote upon this roaring girl, and grieves
As it becomes a father for a son
That could be so bewitch'd. Yet I'll go on
This crooked way, sigh still for her, feign dreams
In which I'll talk only of her: these streams
Shall, I hope, force my father to consent
That here I anchor rather than be rent
Upon a rock so dangerous. Art thou pleas'd,
Because thou seest we are waylaid, that I take
A path that's safe, tho' it be far about?

MARY

My prayers with heaven guide thee.

SEBASTIAN

Then I will on.
My father is at hand: kiss and be gone.
Hours shall be watch'd for meetings; I must now,
As men for fear, to a strange idol bow.

MARY

Farewell.

SEBASTIAN

I'll guide thee forth; when next we meet
A story of Moll shall make our mirth more sweet.

Exeunt.

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

[I.ii. The parlour of Sir Alexander's house]

Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave, Sir Davy Dapper, Sir Adam Appleton, Goshawk, Laxton, and gentlemen.
OMNES

Thanks, good Sir Alexander, for our bounteous cheer.

SIR ALEXANDER

Fie, fie, in giving thanks you pay too dear.

SIR DAVY

When bounty spreads the table, faith, 'twere sin,
At going off, if thanks should not step in.

SIR ALEXANDER

No more of thanks, no more. Ay, marry, sir,
Th' inner room was too close. How do you like
This parlour, gentlemen?

OMNES

Oh, passing well!

SIR ADAM

What a sweet breath the air casts here, so cool!

GOSHAWK

I like the prospect best.

LAXTON

See how 'tis furnish'd.

SIR DAVY

A very fair, sweet room.

SIR ALEXANDER

Sir Davy Dapper,
The furniture that doth adorn this room
Cost many a fair grey goat ere it came here,
But good things are most cheap when th' are most dear.
Nay, when you look into my galleries,
How bravely they are trimm'd up, you all shall swear
Y'are highly pleas'd to see what's set down there:
Stories of men and women mix'd together,
Fair ones with foul, like sunshine in wet weather;
Within one square a thousand heads are laid
So close that all of heads the room seems made.
As many faces there fill'd with blithe looks
Show like the promising titles of new books
Writ merrily, the readers being their own eyes,
Which seem to move and to give plaudities.
And here and there, whilst with obsequious ears
Throng'd heaps do listen, a cutpurse thrusts and leers
With hawk's eyes for his prey; I need not show him:

I.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

By a hanging villainous look yourselves may know him,
The face is drawn so rarely. Then, sir, below,
The very flower as 'twere waves to and fro,
And like a floating island seems to move
Upon a sea bound in with shores above.

Enter Sebastian and M[aster] Greenwit.

OMNES

These sights are excellent.

SIR ALEXANDER

I'll show you all.

Since we are met, make our parting comical.

SEBASTIAN

This gentleman, my friend, will take his leave, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Ha, take his leave, Sebastian? Who?

SEBASTIAN

This gentleman.

SIR ALEXANDER

Your love, sir, has already given me some time,

And if you please to trust my age with more,

It shall pay double interest. Good sir, stay.

GREENWIT

I have been too bold.

SIR ALEXANDER

Not so, sir. A merry day

'Mongst friends being spent is better than gold sav'd.

Some wine, some wine. Where be these knaves I keep?

Enter three or four serving-men, and Neatfoot.

NEATFOOT

At your worshipful elbow, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

You are kissing my maids, drinking, or fast asleep.

NEATFOOT

Your worship has given it us right.

SIR ALEXANDER

You varlets, stir:

Chairs, stools and cushions! Prithee, Sir Davy Dapper,

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Make that chair thine.

SIR DAVY

'Tis but an easy gift,
And yet I thank you for it, sir; I'll take it.

SIR ALEXANDER

A chair for old Sir Adam Appleton.

NEATFOOT

A back friend to your worship.

SIR ADAM

Marry, good Neatfoot,
I thank thee for it: back friends sometimes are good.

SIR ALEXANDER

Pray make that stool your perch, good M[aster] Goshawk.

GOSHAWK

I stoop to your lure, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Son Sebastian,
Take Master Greenwit to you.

SEBASTIAN

Sit, dear friend.

SIR ALEXANDER

Nay, Master Laxton. Furnish Master Laxton
With what he wants, a stone: a stool I would say,
A stool.

LAXTON

I had rather stand, sir.

Exeunt servants.

SIR ALEXANDER

I know you had, good Master Laxton. So, so.
Now here's a mess of friends, and, gentlemen,
Because time's glass shall not be running long,
I'll quicken it with a pretty tale.

SIR DAVY

Good tales do well
In these bad days, where vice does so excel.

SIR ADAM

Begin, Sir Alexander.

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

SIR ALEXANDER

Last day I met
An aged man upon whose head was scor'd
A debt of just so many years as these
Which I owe to my grave: the man you all know.

OMNES

His name I pray you, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Nay, you shall pardon me;
But when he saw me, with a sigh that brake,
Or seem'd to break, his heartstrings, thus he spake:
"Oh, my good knight," says he, and then his eyes
Were richer even by that which made them poor,
They had spent so many tears they had no more.
"Oh, sir," says he, "you know it, for you ha' seen
Blessings to rain upon mine house and me:
Fortune, who slaves men, was my slave; her wheel
Hath spun me golden threads, for, I thank heaven,
I ne'er had but one cause to curse my stars."
I ask'd him then what that one cause might be.

OMNES

So, sir?

SIR ALEXANDER

He paus'd, and as we often see
A sea so much becalm'd there can be found
No wrinkle on his brow, his waves being drown'd
In their own rage, but when th' imperious wind[s]
Use strange invisible tyranny to shake
Both heaven's and earth's foundation at their noise,
The seas, swelling with wrath to part that fray,
Rise up and are more wild, more mad, than they:
Even so this good old man was by my question
Stirr'd up to roughness, you might see his gall
Flow even in's eyes. Then grew he fantastical.

SIR DAVY

Fantastical? Ha, ha!

SIR ALEXANDER

Yes, and talk['d] oddly.

SIR ADAM

Pray, sir, proceed:
How did this old man end?

SIR ALEXANDER

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Marry, sir, thus:
He left his wild fit to read o'er his cards,
Yet then, though age cast snow on all his hairs,
He joy'd because, says he, "The god of gold
Has been to me no niggard: that disease
Of which all old men sicken, avarice,
Never infected me."

LAXTON

[Aside] He means not himself, I'm sure.

SIR ALEXANDER

"For, like a lamp
Fed with continual oil, I spend and throw
My light to all that need it, yet have still
Enough to serve myself. Oh, but," quoth he,
"Tho' heaven's dew fall thus on this aged tree,
I have a son that like a wedge doth cleave
My very heart—root."

SIR DAVY

Had he such a son?

SEBASTIAN

[Aside] Now I do smell a fox strongly.

SIR ALEXANDER

Let's see: no, Master Greenwit is not yet
So mellow in years as he; but as like Sebastian,
Just like my son Sebastian, such another.

SEBASTIAN

[Aside] How finely like a fencer my father fetches his by—blows to hit me, but if I beat you not at your own
weapon of subtlety—

SIR ALEXANDER

"This son," saith he, "that should be
The column and main arch unto my house,
The crutch unto my age, becomes a whirlwind
Shaking the firm foundation."

SIR ADAM

'Tis some prodigal.

SEBASTIAN

[Aside] Well shot, old Adam Bell!

SIR ALEXANDER

"No city monster neither, no prodigal,
But sparing, wary, civil, and, tho' wifeless,
An excellent husband, and such a traveller,

I.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

He has more tongues in his head than some have teeth."

SIR DAVY

I have but two in mine.

GOSHAWK

So sparing and so wary?

What then could vex his father so?

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, a woman!

SEBASTIAN

A flesh-fly, that can vex any man.

SIR ALEXANDER

A scurvy woman,
On whom the passionate old man swore he doted;
A creature, saith he, nature hath brought forth
To mock the sex of woman. It is a thing
One knows not how to name; her birth began
Ere she was all made. 'Tis woman more than man,
Man more than woman, and, which to none can hap,
The sun gives her two shadows to one shape;
Nay, more, let this strange thing walk, stand or sit,
No blazing star draws more eyes after it.

SIR DAVY

A monster, 'tis some monster.

SIR ALEXANDER

She's a varlet.

SEBASTIAN

[Aside] Now is my cue to bristle.

SIR ALEXANDER

A naughty pack.

SEBASTIAN

'Tis false.

SIR ALEXANDER

Ha, boy?

SEBASTIAN

'Tis false.

SIR ALEXANDER

What's false? I say she's naught.

SEBASTIAN

I say that tongue
That dares speak so but yours sticks in the throat
Of a rank villain; set yourself aside—

SIR ALEXANDER

So, sir, what then?

SEBASTIAN

Any here else had lied.
(Aside) I think I shall fit you!

SIR ALEXANDER

Lie?

SEBASTIAN

Yes.

SIR DAVY

Doth this concern him?

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Ah, sirrah boy!
Is your blood heated? Boils it? Are you stung?
I'll pierce you deeper yet.—Oh, my dear friends,
I am that wretched father, this that son
That sees his ruin yet headlong on doth run!

SIR ADAM

Will you love such a poison?

SIR DAVY

Fie, fie!

SEBASTIAN

Y'are all mad!

SIR ALEXANDER

Th' art sick at heart, yet feel'st it not. Of all these,
What gentleman but thou, knowing his disease
Mortal, would shun the cure? Oh, Master Greenwit,
Would you to such an idol bow?

GREENWIT

Not I, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Here's Master Laxton: has he mind to a woman
As thou hast?

LAXTON

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

No, not I, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Sir, I know it.

LAXTON

Their good parts are so rare, their bad so common,
I will have nought to do with any woman.

SIR DAVY

'Tis well done, Master Laxton.

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, thou cruel boy,
Thou wouldst with lust an old man's life destroy;
Because thou seest I'm half-way in my grave,
Thou shovel'st dust upon me: would thou mightest have
Thy wish, most wicked, most unnatural!

SIR DAVY

Why, sir, 'tis thought Sir Guy Fitzallard's daughter
Shall wed your son Sebastian.

SIR ALEXANDER

Sir Davy Dapper,
I have upon my knees woo'd this fond boy
To take that virtuous maiden.

SEBASTIAN

Hark you, a word, sir.
You on your knees have curs'd that virtuous maiden
And me for loving her, yet do you now
Thus baffle me to my face? [Wear] not your knees
In such entreats; give me Fitzallard's daughter.

SIR ALEXANDER

I'll give thee rats-bane rather!

SEBASTIAN

Well, then you know
What dish I mean to feed upon.

SIR ALEXANDER

Hark, gentlemen, he swears
To have this cutpurse drab to spite my gall.

OMNES

Master Sebastian!

SEBASTIAN

I am deaf to you all.

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

I'm so bewitch'd, so bound to my desires,
Tears, prayers, threats, nothing can quench out those fires
That burn within me.

Exit Sebastian.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Her blood shall quench it then.—
Lose him not, oh, dissuade him, gentlemen!

SIR DAVY

He shall be wean'd, I warrant you.

SIR ALEXANDER

Before his eyes
Lay down his shame, my grief, his miseries.

OMNES

No more, no more, away!

Exeunt all but Sir Alexander.

SIR ALEXANDER

I wash a negro,
Losing both pains and cost; but take thy flight:
I'll be most near thee when I'm least in sight.
Wild buck, I'll hunt thee breathless; thou shalt run on,
But I will turn thee when I'm not thought upon.

Enter Ralph Trapdoor.

Now, sirrah, what are you? Leave your ape's tricks and speak!

TRAPDOOR

A letter from my captain to your worship.

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, oh, now I remember: 'tis to prefer thee into my service.

TRAPDOOR

To be a shifter under your worship's nose of a clean trencher when there's a good bit upon't.

SIR ALEXANDER

Troth, honest fellow. [Aside] Humh, ha, let me see.
This knave shall be the axe to hew that down
At which I stumble; h'as a face that promiseth
Much of a villain. I will grind his wit,
And if the edge prove fine make use of it.—
Come hither, sirrah. Canst thou be secret, ha?

TRAPDOOR

l.i. [Sebastian's chambers in Sir Alexander's house]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

As two crafty attorneys plotting the undoing of their clients.

SIR ALEXANDER

Didst never, as thou hast walk'd about this town,
Hear of a wench call'd Moll, mad, merry Moll?

TRAPDOOR

Moll Cutpurse, sir?

SIR ALEXANDER

The same. Dost thou know her then?

TRAPDOOR

As well as I know 'twill rain upon Simon and Jude's day next. I will sift all the taverns i' th' city and drink half-pots with all the watermen a' th' Bankside, but if you will, sir, I'll find her out.

SIR ALEXANDER

That task is easy; do 't then. Hold thy hand up.
What's this? Is't burnt?

TRAPDOOR

No, sir, no, a little sing'd with making fireworks.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Giving him money] There's money, spend it; that being spent, fetch more.

TRAPDOOR

Oh, sir, that all the poor soldiers in England had such a leader! For fetching, no water-spaniel is like me.

SIR ALEXANDER

This wench we speak of strays so from her kind
Nature repents she made her. 'Tis a mermaid
Has toll'd my son to shipwreck.

TRAPDOOR

I'll cut her comb for you.

SIR ALEXANDER

I'll tell out gold for thee then; hunt her forth,
Cast out a line hung full of silver hooks
To catch her to thy company: deep spendings
May draw her that's most chaste to a man's bosom.

TRAPDOOR

The jingling of golden bells and a good fool with a hobbyhorse will draw all the whores i' th' town to dance in a morris.

SIR ALEXANDER

Or rather—for that's best, they say sometimes
She goes in breeches—follow her as her man.

TRAPDOOR

And when her breeches are off, she shall follow me.

SIR ALEXANDER

Beat all thy brains to serve her.

TRAPDOOR

Zounds, sir, as country wenches beat cream till butter comes.

SIR ALEXANDER

Play thou the subtle spider, weave fine nets
To ensnare her very life.

TRAPDOOR

Her life?

SIR ALEXANDER

Yes, suck
Her heart—blood if thou canst; twist thou but cords
To catch her, I'll find law to hang her up.

TRAPDOOR

Spoke like a worshipful bencher.

SIR ALEXANDER

Trace all her steps; at this she—fox's den
Watch what lambs enter: let me play the shepherd
To save their throats from bleeding and cut hers.

TRAPDOOR

This is the goll shall do't.

SIR ALEXANDER

Be firm and gain me
Ever thine own. This done, I entertain thee:
How is thy name?

TRAPDOOR

My name sir is Ralph Trapdoor, honest Ralph.

SIR ALEXANDER

Trapdoor, be like thy name, a dangerous step
For her to venture on, but unto me—

TRAPDOOR

As fast as your sole to your boot or shoe, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Hence then, be little seen here as thou canst.
I'll still be at thine elbow.

TRAPDOOR

The trapdoor's set.

Moll, if you budge y'are gone; this me shall crown:

A roaring boy the Roaring Girl puts down.

SIR ALEXANDER

God—a—mercy, lose no time.

Exeunt.

[II.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The first a pothecary's shop, the next a feather shop, the third a sempster's shop: Mistress Gallipot in the first, Mistress Tiltyard in the next, Master Openwork and his wife in the third. To them enters Laxton, Goshawk and Greenwit.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Gentlemen, what is't you lack? What is't you buy? See fine bands and ruffs, fine lawns, fine cambrics! What is't you lack, gentlemen, what is't you buy?

LAXTON

Yonder's the shop.

GOSHAWK

Is that she?

LAXTON

Peace.

GREENWIT

She that minces tobacco.

LAXTON

Ay, she's a gentlewoman born, I can tell you, tho' it be her hard fortune now to shred Indian pot—herbs.

GOSHAWK

Oh, sir, 'tis many a good woman's fortune, when her husband turns bankrout, to begin with pipes and set up again.

LAXTON

And indeed the raising of the woman is the lifting up of the man's head at all times: if one flourish, t'other will bud as fast, I warrant ye.

GOSHAWK

Come, th' art familiarly acquainted there, I grope that.

LAXTON

And you grope no better i' th' dark, you may chance lie i' th' ditch when y'are drunk.

[II.i.] The three shops open in a rank

GOSHAWK

Go, th' art a mystical lecher.

LAXTON

I will not deny but my credit may take up an ounce of pure smoke.

GOSHAWK

May take up an ell of pure smock. Away, go! [Aside] 'Tis the closest striker. Life, I think he commits venery foot deep; no man's aware on't. I like a palpable smockster go to work so openly with the tricks of art that I'm as apparently seen as a naked boy in a vial, and were it not for a gift of treachery that I have in me to betray my friend when he puts most trust in me—mass, yonder he is too—and by his injury to make good my access to her, I should appear as defective in courting as a farmer's son the first day of his feather that doth nothing at court but woo the hangings and glass windows for a month together, and some broken waiting—woman forever after. I find those imperfections in my venery that were 't not for flattery and falsehood, I should want discourse and impudence, and he that wants impudence among women is worthy to be kick'd out at beds' feet. He shall not see me yet.

GREENWIT

Troth, this is finely shred.

LAXTON

Oh, women are the best mincers.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

'T had been a good phrase for a cook's wife, sir.

LAXTON

But 'twill serve generally, like the front of a new almanac, as thus: calculated for the meridian of cooks' wives, but generally for all Englishwomen.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Nay, you shall ha't, sir, I have fill'd it for you.

She puts it to the fire.

LAXTON

The pipe's in a good hand, and I wish mine always so.

GREENWIT

But not to be us'd a' that fashion.

LAXTON

Oh, pardon me, sir, I understand no French.

[Greenwit doffs his hat and bows.]

I pray be cover'd. [Handing Goshawk a pipe] Jack, a pipe of rich smoke.

GOSHAWK

Rich smoke? That's sixpence a pipe, is't?

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

GREENWIT

To me, sweet lady.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

[Aside to Laxton] Be not forgetful: respect my credit, seem strange. Art and wit makes a fool of suspicion; pray be wary.

LAXTON

[Aside to Mistress Gallipot] Push, I warrant you!—Come, how is't, gallants?

GREENWIT

Pure and excellent.

LAXTON

I thought 'twas good, you were grown so silent; you are like those that love not to talk at victuals, tho' they make a worse noise i' the nose than a common fiddler's prentice and discourse a whole supper with snuffling.
[Aside to Mistress Gallipot] I must speak a word with you anon.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

[Aside to Laxton] Make your way wisely then.

GOSHAWK

Oh, what else, sir? He's perfection itself, full of manners, but not an acre of ground belonging to ['im].

GREENWIT

Ay, and full of form: h'as ne'er a good stool in's chamber.

GOSHAWK

But above all religious: he preyeth daily upon elder brothers.

GREENWIT

And valiant above measure; h'as run three streets from a sergeant.

LAXTON

Puh, puh!

He blows tobacco in their faces.

GREENWIT, GOSHAWK

Oh, puh, ho, ho!

[They move away.]

LAXTON

So, so.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

What's the matter now, sir?

LAXTON

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

I protest I'm in extreme want of money: if you can supply me now with any means, you do me the greatest pleasure, next to the bounty of your love, as ever poor gentleman tasted.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

What's the sum would pleasure ye, sir? Tho' you deserve nothing less at my hands.

LAXTON

Why, 'tis but for want of opportunity, thou know'st. [Aside] I put her off with opportunity still. By this light, I hate her but for means to keep me in fashion with gallants, for what I take from her I spend upon other wenches. Bear her in hand still; she has wit enough to rob her husband, and I ways enough to consume the money.—[Approaching Goshawk from behind and slapping him on the back] Why, how now? What, the chincough?

GOSHAWK

Thou hast the cowardliest trick to come before a man's face and strangle him ere he be aware! I could find in my heart to make a quarrel in earnest.

LAXTON

Pox and thou dost—thou know'st I never use to fight with my friends—thou'll but lose thy labour in't.

Enter J[ack] Dapper and his man Gull.

Jack Dapper!

GREENWIT

Monsieur Dapper, I dive down to your ankles.

JACK

Save ye gentlemen, all three in a peculiar salute.

GOSHAWK

[Aside to Laxton] He were ill to make a lawyer: he dispatches three at once.

LAXTON

So, well said.

[Mistress Gallipot secretly gives him money.]

But is this of the same tobacco, Mistress Gallipot?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

The same you had at first, sir.

LAXTON

I wish it no better: this will serve to drink at my chamber.

GOSHAWK

Shall we taste a pipe on't?

LAXTON

Not of this, by my troth, gentlemen; I have sworn before you.

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

GOSHAWK

What, not Jack Dapper?

LAXTON

Pardon me, sweet Jack, I'm sorry I made such a rash oath, but foolish oaths must stand. Where art going, Jack?

JACK

Faith, to buy one feather.

LAXTON

[Aside] One feather? The fool's peculiar still.

JACK

Gull.

GULL

Master.

JACK

Here's three halfpence for your ordinary, boy; meet me an hour hence in Paul's.

GULL

How! Three single halfpence! Life, this will scarce serve a man in sauce, a hal'p'orth of mustard, a hal'p'orth of oil, and a hal'p'orth of vinegar. What's left then for the pickle herring? This shows like small beer i' th' morning after a great surfeit of wine o'ernight. He could spend his three pound last night in a supper amongst girls and brave bawdy-house boys; I thought his pockets cackl'd not for nothing. These are the eggs of three pound; I'll go sup 'em up presently.

Exit Gull.

LAXTON

[Aside, counting his money] Eight, nine, ten angels. Good wench, i'faith, and one that loves darkness well: she puts out a candle with the best tricks of any drugster's wife in England; but that which mads her, I rail upon opportunity still and take no notice on't. The other night she would needs lead me into a room with a candle in her hand to show me a naked picture, where no sooner entered but the candle was sent of an arrant; now I not intending to understand her, but, like a puny at the inns of ventry, call'd for another light innocently: thus reward I all her cunning with simple mistaking. I know she cozens her husband to keep me, and I'll keep her honest as long as I can to make the poor man some part of amends: an honest mind of a whoremaster!—How think you amongst you? What, a fresh pipe? Draw in a third man.

GOSHAWK

No, you're a hoarder; you engross by th' ounces.

At the feather shop now

JACK

Puh, I like it not.

[MISTRESS] TILTYARD

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

What feather is't you'ld have, sir?
These are most worn and most in fashion
Amongst the beaver gallants, the stone riders,
The private stage's audience, the twelvepenny–stool gentlemen:
I can inform you 'tis the general feather.

JACK

And therefore I mislike it; tell me of general!
Now a continual Simon and Jude's rain
Beat all your feathers as flat down as pancakes.
Show me a spangled feather.

MISTRESS TILTYARD

Oh, to go
A–feasting with? You'd have it for a [hench]–boy;
You shall.

At the sempster's shop now

OPENWORK

Mass, I had quite forgot
His honour's footman was here last night, wife.
Ha' you done with my lord's shirt?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

What's that to you, sir?
I was this morning at his honour's lodging
Ere such a [snail] as you crept out of your shell.

OPENWORK

Oh, 'twas well done, good wife!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I hold it better, sir, than if you had done 't yourself.

OPENWORK

Nay, so say I. But is the countess's smock almost done, mouse?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Here, yes, the cambric, sir, but wants, I fear me.

OPENWORK

I'll resolve you of that presently.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

[Hoyda]! Oh, audacious groom,
Dare you presume to noblewomen's linen?
Keep you your yard to measure shepherd's holland!
I must confine you, I see that.

At the tobacco shop now.

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

GOSHAWK

What say you to this gear?

LAXTON

I dare the arrant's[t] critic in tobacco
To lay one fault upon't.

Enter Moll in a frieze jerkin and a black safeguard.

GOSHAWK

Life, yonder's Moll!

LAXTON

Moll? Which Moll?

GOSHAWK

Honest Moll.

LAXTON

Prithee, let's call her. Moll!

[GOSHAWK, GREENWIT]

Moll, Moll, pist, Moll!

MOLL

How now, what's the matter?

GOSHAWK

A pipe of good tobacco, Moll?

MOLL

I cannot stay.

GOSHAWK

Nay, Moll, puh! Prithee hark, but one word, i'faith.

MOLL

Well, what is't?

GREENWIT

Prithee come hither, sirrah.

LAXTON

[Aside] Heart, I would give but too much money to be nibbling with that wench! Life, sh'as the spirit of four great parishes, and a voice that will drown all the city; methinks a brave captain might get all his soldiers upon her and ne'er be beholding to a company of Mile End milksops, if he could come on and come off quick enough. Such a Moll were a marrow-bone before an Italian; he would cry bona roba till his ribs were nothing but bone. I'll lay hard siege to her; money is that aqua fortis that eats into many a maidenhead: where the walls are flesh and blood, I'll ever pierce through with a golden auger.

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

GOSHAWK

Now thy judgment, Moll: is't not good?

MOLL

Yes, faith, 'tis very good tobacco. How do you sell an ounce? Farewell. God b'i'you, Mistress Gallipot.

GOSHAWK

Why, Moll, Moll!

MOLL

I cannot stay now, i'faith. I am going to buy a shag ruff; the shop will be shut in presently.

GOSHAWK

'Tis the maddest, fantastical'st girl: I never knew so much flesh and so much nimbleness put together.

LAXTON

She slips from one company to another, like a fat eel between a Dutchman's fingers. [Aside] I'll watch my time for her.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Some will not stick to say she's a man
And some both man and woman.

LAXTON

That were excellent: she might first cuckold the husband and then make him do as much for the wife.

The feather shop again.

MOLL

Save you. How does Mistress Tiltyard?

JACK

Moll.

MOLL

Jack Dapper.

JACK

How dost, Moll?

MOLL

I'll tell thee by and by; I go but to th' next shop.

JACK

Thou shalt find me here this hour about a feather.

MOLL

Nay, and a feather hold you in play a whole hour, a goose will last you all the days of your life.

The sempster shop

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Let me see a good shag ruff.

OPENWORK

Mistress Mary, that shalt thou i'faith, and the best in the shop.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

How now! Greetings? Love—terms with a pox between you! Have I found out one of your haunts? I send you for hollands, and you're i' th' low countries with a mischief. I'm serv'd with good ware by th' shift, that makes it lie dead so long upon my hands: I were as good shut up shop, for when I open it I take nothing.

OPENWORK

Nay, and you fall a—ringing once the devil cannot stop you. I'll out of the belfry as fast as I can. Moll.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Get you from my shop.

MOLL

I come to buy.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I'll sell ye nothing; I warn ye my house and shop.

MOLL

You goody Openwork, you that prick out a poor living
And sews many a bawdy skin—coat together,
Thou private pandress between shirt and smock,
I wish thee for a minute but a man:
Thou shouldst never use more shapes. But as th' art
I pity my revenge: now my spleen's up,
I would not mock it willingly.

Enter a Fellow with a long rapier by his side.

Ha! Be thankful.

Now I forgive thee.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Marry, hang thee;

I never ask'd forgiveness in my life.

MOLL

You, goodman swine's—face!

FELLOW

What, will you murder me?

MOLL

You remember, slave, how you abus'd me t'other night in a tavern?

FELLOW

Not I, by this light.

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MOLL

No, but by candlelight you did. You have tricks to save your oaths, reservations have you, and I have reserved somewhat for you. [Strikes him.] As you like that, call for more; you know the sign again.

FELLOW

Pox on't, had I brought any company along with me to have borne witness on't; 'twould ne'er have griev'd me; but to be struck and nobody by, 'tis my ill fortune still. Why, tread upon a worm, they say 'twill turn tail, but indeed a gentleman should have more manners.

Exit Fellow.

LAXTON

Gallantly performed, i'faith, Moll, and manfully! I love thee forever for't! Base rogue! Had he offer'd but the least counterbuff, by this hand I was prepared for him.

MOLL

You prepared for him! Why should you be prepared for him? Was he any more than a man?

LAXTON

No, nor so much by a yard and a handful London measure.

MOLL

Why do you speak this then? Do you think I cannot ride a stone horse unless one lead him by th' snaffle?

LAXTON

Yes, and sit him bravely; I know thou canst, Moll. 'Twas but an honest mistake through love, and I'll make amends for't any way. Prithee, sweet, plump Moll, when shall thou and I go out a' town together?

MOLL

Whither? To Tyburn prithee?

LAXTON

Mass, that's out a' town indeed; thou hang'st so many jests upon thy friends still. I mean honestly to Brainford, Staines or Ware.

MOLL

What to do there?

LAXTON

Nothing but be merry and lie together; I'll hire a coach with four horses.

MOLL

I thought 'twould be a beastly journey. You may leave out one well: three horses will serve if I play the jade myself.

LAXTON

Nay, push, th' art such another kicking wench! Prithee be kind and let's meet.

MOLL

'Tis hard but we shall meet, sir.

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

LAXTON

Nay, but appoint the place then. [Giving her money] There's ten angels in fair gold, Moll; you see I do not trifle with you. Do but say thou wilt meet me, and I'll have a coach ready for thee.

MOLL

Why, here's my hand I'll meet you, sir.

LAXTON

[Aside] Oh, good gold!—The place, sweet Moll?

MOLL

It shall be your appointment.

LAXTON

Somewhat near Holborn, Moll.

MOLL

In Gray's Inn Fields then.

LAXTON

A match.

MOLL

I'll meet you there.

LAXTON

The hour?

MOLL

Three.

LAXTON

That will be time enough to sup at Brainford.

Fall from them to the other.

OPENWORK

I am of such a nature, sir, I cannot endure the house when she scolds. Sh' has a tongue will be [heard] further in a still morning than Saint Antling's bell. She rails upon me for foreign wenching, that I being a freeman must needs keep a whore i' th' suburbs, and seek to impoverish the liberties. When we fall out, I trouble you still to make all whole with my wife.

GOSHAWK

No trouble at all; 'tis a pleasure to me to join things together.

OPENWORK

Go thy ways. [Aside] I do this but to try thy honesty, Goshawk.

The feather shop

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

JACK

How lik'st thou this, Moll?

MOLL

Oh, singularly! You're fitted now for a bunch. [Aside] He looks for all the world with those spangled feathers like a nobleman's bedpost! The purity of your wench would I fain try; she seems like Kent, unconquered, and I believe as many wiles are in her. Oh, the gallants of these times are shallow lechers; they put not their courtship home enough to a wench. 'Tis impossible to know what woman is thoroughly honest, because she's ne'er thoroughly tried; I am of that certain belief there are more queans in this town of their own making than of any man's provoking. Where lies the slackness then? Many a poor soul would down, and there's nobody will push 'em:

Women are courted but ne'er soundly tried,
As many walk in spurs that never ride.

The sempster's shop.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Oh, abominable!

GOSHAWK

Nay, more: I tell you in private, he keeps a whore i' th' suburbs.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Oh, spital dealing! I came to him a gentlewoman born. I'll show you mine arms when you please, sir.

GOSHAWK

[Aside] I had rather see your legs and begin that way.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

'Tis well known he took me from a lady's service, where I was well beloved of the steward; I had my Latin tongue and a spice of the French before I came to him, and now doth he keep a suburban whore under my nostrils.

GOSHAWK

There's ways enough to cry quit with him; hark in thine ear.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

There's a friend worth a million.

MOLL

[Aside] I'll try one spear against your chastity, Mistress Tiltyard, though it prove too short by the [burr].

Enter Ralph Trapdoor.

TRAPDOOR

[Aside] Mass, here she is! I'm bound already to serve her, tho' it be but a sluttish trick.—Bless my hopeful young mistress with long life and great limbs! Send her the upper hand of all bailiffs and their hungry adherents!

MOLL

How now! What art thou?

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

TRAPDOOR

A poor, ebbing gentleman that would gladly wait for the young flood of your service.

MOLL

My service! What should move you to offer your service to me, sir?

TRAPDOOR

The love I bear to your heroic spirit and masculine womanhood.

MOLL

So, sir, put case we should retain you to us, what parts are there in you for a gentlewoman's service?

TRAPDOOR

Of two kinds, right worshipful, movable and immovable: movable to run of arrants, and immovable to stand when you have occasion to use me.

MOLL

What strength have you?

TRAPDOOR

Strength, Mistress Moll? I have gone up into a steeple and stayed the great bell as 't has been ringing, stopp'd a windmill going.

MOLL

And never struck down yourself?

TRAPDOOR

Stood as upright as I do at this present.

Molls trips up his heels; he falls.

MOLL

Come, I pardon you for this; it shall be no disgrace to you: I have struck up the heels of the high German's size ere now. What, not stand?

TRAPDOOR

I am of that nature where I love, I'll be at my mistress' foot to do her service.

MOLL

Why, well said. But say your mistress should receive injury: have you the spirit of fighting in you? Durst you second her?

TRAPDOOR

Life, I have kept a bridge myself and drove seven at a time before me.

MOLL

Ay?

TRAPDOOR aside

But they were all Lincolnshire bullocks, by my troth.

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MOLL

Well, meet me in Gray's Inn Fields between three and four this afternoon, and upon better consideration we'll retain you.

TRAPDOOR

I humbly thank your good mistress—ship.
[Aside] I'll crack your neck for this kindness.

Exit Trapdoor. Moll meets Laxton.

LAXTON

Remember: three.

MOLL

Nay, if I fail you, hang me.

LAXTON

Good wench, i'faith.

Then Openwork

MOLL

Who's this?

OPENWORK

'Tis I, Moll.

MOLL

Prithee tend thy shop and prevent bastards.

OPENWORK

We'll have a pint of the same wine, i'faith, Moll.

[Exeunt Moll and Openwork.] The bell rings.

GOSHAWK

Hark the bell rings; come, gentlemen.
Jack Dapper, where shall's all munch?

JACK

I am for Parker's ordinary.

LAXTON

He's a good guest to 'm; he deserves his board:
He draws all the gentlemen in a term—time thither.
We'll be your followers, Jack, lead the way.
Look you, by my faith, the fool has feather'd his nest well.

Exeunt gallants [Laxton, Goshawk, Greenwit, Jack Dapper]. Enter Master Gallipot, Master Tiltyard, and servants with water—spaniels and a duck.

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

TILTYARD

Come, shut up your shops. Where's Master Openwork?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Nay, ask not me, Master Tiltyard.

TILTYARD

Where's his water-dog? Puh-pist-her-her-pist!

GALLIPOT

Come, wenches, come, we're going all to Hogsden.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

To Hogsden, husband?

GALLIPOT

Ay, to Hogsden, pigsney.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

I'm not ready, husband.

GALLIPOT

Faith, that's well. Hum-pist-pist!

Spits in the dog's mouth.

Come, Mistress Openwork, you are so long.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I have no joy of my life, Master Gallipot.

GALLIPOT

Push, let your boy lead his water-spaniel along and we'll show you the bravest sport at Parlous Pond. Hey Trug, hey Trug, hey Trug! Here's the best duck in England, except my wife.

Hey, hey, hey, fetch, fetch, fetch, come let's away;

Of all the year this is the sportfull'st day.

[II.ii. A street]

Enter Sebastian solus.

SEBASTIAN

If a man have a free will, where should the use

More perfect shine than in his will to love?

All creatures have their liberty in that,

Enter Sir Alexander and listens to him.

Tho' else kept under servile yoke and fear;

The very bondslave has his freedom there.

Amongst a world of creatures voic'd and silent

[II.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Must my desires wear fetters? [Aside] Yea, are you
So near? Then I must break with my heart's truth,
Meet grief at a back way; well.—Why, suppose
The two-leav'd tongues of slander or of truth
Pronounce Moll loathsome: if before my love
She appear fair, what injury have I?
I have the thing I like. In all things else
Mine own eye guides me, and I find 'em prosper.
Life, what should ail it now? I know that man
Ne'er truly loves, if he gainsay 't he lies,
That winks and marries with his father's eyes.
I'll keep mine own wide open.

Enter Moll and a Porter with a viol on his back.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Here's brave willfulness,
A made match. Here she comes; they met a' purpose.

PORTER

Must I carry this great fiddle to your chamber, Mistress Mary?

MOLL

Fiddle, goodman hog-rubber? Some of these porters bear so much for others they have no time to carry wit for themselves.

PORTER

To your own chamber, Mistress Mary?

MOLL

Who'll hear an ass speak? Whither else, goodman pageant-bearer? They're people of the worst memories.

Exit Porter.

SEBASTIAN

Why, 'twere too great a burthen, love, to have them carry things in their minds and a' their backs together.

MOLL

Pardon me, sir, I thought not you so near.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] So, so, so.

SEBASTIAN

I would be nearer to thee, and in that fashion
That makes the best part of all creatures honest.
No otherwise I wish it.

MOLL

Sir, I am so poor to requite you, you must look for nothing but thanks of me. I have no humour to marry: I love to lie a' both sides a' th' bed myself; and again a' th' other side, a wife, you know, ought to be obedient,

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

but I fear me I am too headstrong to obey, therefore I'll ne'er go about it. I love you so well, sir, for your good will I'd be loath you should repent your bargain after, and therefore we'll ne'er come together at first. I have the head now of myself and am man enough for a woman; marriage is but a chopping and changing, where a maiden loses one head and has a worse i' th' place.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] The most comfortablest answer from a roaring girl
That ever mine ears drunk in.

SEBASTIAN

This were enough
Now to affright a fool forever from thee,
When 'tis the music that I love thee for.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] There's a boy spoils all again.

MOLL

Believe it, sir, I am not of that disdainful temper, but I could love you faithfully.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] A pox on you for that word! I like you not now:
Y'are a cunning roarer; I see that already.

MOLL

But sleep upon this once more, sir, you may chance shift a mind tomorrow. Be not too hasty to wrong yourself; never while you live, sir, take a wife running: many have run out at heels that have done 't. You see, sir, I speak against myself, and if every woman would deal with their suitor so honestly, poor younger brothers would not be so often gull'd with old cozening widows that turn o'er all their wealth in trust to some kinsman and make the poor gentleman work hard for a pension. Fare you well, sir.

SEBASTIAN

Nay, prithee, one word more.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] How do I wrong this girl: she puts him off still!

MOLL

Think upon this in cold blood, sir: you make as much haste as if you were a-going upon a sturgeon voyage. Take deliberation, sir; never choose a wife as if you were going to Virginia.

SEBASTIAN

And so we parted, my too-cursed fate.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] She is but cunning, gives him longer time in't.

Enter a Tailor.

TAILOR

Mistress Moll, Mistress Moll: so ho ho so ho!

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MOLL

There boy, there boy! What, dost thou go a-hawking after me with a red clout on thy finger?

TAILOR

I forgot to take measure on you for your new breeches.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Hoyda! Breeches! What, will he marry a monster with two trinkets? What age is this? If the wife go in breeches, the man must wear long coats like a fool.

MOLL

What fiddling's here? Would not the old pattern have serv'd your turn?

TAILOR

You change the fashion; you say you'll have the great Dutch slop, Mistress Mary.

MOLL

Why, sir, I say so still.

TAILOR

Your breeches then will take up a yard more.

MOLL

Well, pray look it be put in then.

TAILOR

It shall stand round and full, I warrant you,

MOLL

Pray make 'em easy enough.

TAILOR

I know my fault now: t'other was somewhat stiff between the legs; I'll make these open enough, I warrant you.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Here's good gear towards! I have brought up my son to marry a Dutch slop and a French doublet, a codpiece-daughter!

TAILOR

So, I have gone as far as I can go.

MOLL

Why then, farewell.

TAILOR

If you go presently to your chamber, Mistress Mary, pray send me the measure of your thigh by some honest body.

MOLL

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

Well, sir, I'll send it by a porter presently.

Exit Moll.

TAILOR

So you had need: it is a lusty one; both of them would make any porter's back ache in England.

Exit Tailor.

SEBASTIAN

I have examined the best part of man,
Reason and judgment, and in love they tell me
They leave me uncontroll'd: he that is sway'd
By an unfeeling blood past heat of love,
His springtime must needs err; his watch ne'er goes right
That sets his dial by a rusty clock.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Coming forward] So, and which is that rusty clock, sir? You?

SEBASTIAN

The clock at Ludgate, sir; it ne'er goes true.

SIR ALEXANDER

But thou goest fals'er: not thy father's cares
Can keep thee right. When that insensible work
Obeys the workman's art, lets off the hour
And stops again when time is satisfied;
But thou runn'st on, and judgment, thy main wheel,
Beats by all stops, as if the work would break
Begun with long pains for a minute's ruin,
Much like a suffering man brought up with care
At last bequeath'd to shame and a short prayer.

SEBASTIAN

I taste you bitterer than I can deserve, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Who has bewitch['d] thee, son? What devil or drug
Hath wrought upon the weakness of thy blood
And betray'd all her hopes to ruinous folly?
Oh, wake from drowsy and enchanted shame,
Wherein thy soul sits with a golden dream,
Flatter'd and poisoned! I am old, my son;
Oh, let me prevail quickly,
For I have weightier business of mine own
Than to chide thee: I must not to my grave
As a drunkard to his bed, whereon he lies
Only to sleep and never cares to rise.
Let me dispatch in time; come no more near her.

SEBASTIAN

Not honestly? Not in the way of marriage?

SIR ALEXANDER

What, sayst thou marriage? In what place, the sessions-house? And who shall give the bride, prithee, an indictment?

SEBASTIAN

Sir, now ye take part with the world to wrong her.

SIR ALEXANDER

Why, wouldst thou fain marry to be pointed at?
Alas, the number's great; do not o'erburden 't.
Why, as good marry a beacon on a hill,
Which all the country fix their eyes upon
As her thy folly dotes on. If thou long'st
To have the story of thy infamous fortunes,
Serve for discourse in ordinaries and taverns,
Th' art in the way; or to confound thy name,
Keep on, thou canst not miss it; or to strike
Thy wretched father to untimely coldness,
Keep the left hand still, it will bring thee to't.
Yet if no tears wrung from thy father's eyes,
Nor sighs that fly in sparkles from his sorrows,
Had power to alter what is willful in thee,
Methinks her very name should fright thee from her
And never trouble me.

SEBASTIAN

Why is the name of Moll so fatal, sir?

SIR ALEXANDER

[Marry], one, sir, where suspect is ent'red,
For seek all London from one end to t'other
More whores of that name than of any ten other.

SEBASTIAN

What's that to her? Let those blush for themselves.
Can any guilt in others condemn her?
I've vow'd to love her: let all storms oppose me
That ever beat against the breast of man,
Nothing but death's black tempest shall divide us.

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, folly that can dote on nought but shame!

SEBASTIAN

Put case a wanton itch runs through one name
More than another: is that name the worse
Where honesty sits possess'd in't? It should rather
Appear more excellent and deserve more praise

[ll.i.] The three shops open in a rank

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

When through foul mists a brightness it can raise.
Why, there are of the devil's honest gentlemen,
And well descended, keep an open house,
And some a' th' good man's that are arrant knaves.
He hates unworthily that by rote contemns,
For the name neither saves nor yet condemns.
And for her honesty, I have made such proof an't
In several forms, so nearly watch'd her ways,
I will maintain that strict against an army,
Excepting you my father. Here's her worst:
Sh' has a bold spirit that mingles with mankind,
But nothing else comes near it, and oftentimes
Through her apparel somewhat shames her birth,
But she is loose in nothing but in mirth.
Would all Molls were no worse.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] This way I toil in vain and give but aim
To infamy and ruin. He will fall;
My blessing cannot stay him: all my joys
Stand at the brink of a devouring flood
And will be willfully swallowed, willfully,
But why so vain? Let all these tears be lost:
I'll pursue her to shame, and so all's cross'd.

Exit Sir Alexander.

SEBASTIAN

He is gone with some strange purpose, whose effect
Will hurt me little if he shoot so wide,
To think I love so blindly. I but feed
His heart to this match to draw on th' other,
Wherein my joy sits with a full wish crown'd,
Only his mood excepted, which must change
By opposite policies, courses indirect:
Plain dealing in this world takes no effect.
This mad girl I'll acquaint with my intent,
Get her assistance, make my fortunes known:
'Twixt lovers' hearts, she's a fit instrument
And has the art to help them to their own
By her advice, for in that craft she's wise:
My love and I may meet, spite of all spies.

Exit Sebastian.

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

Enter Laxton in Gray's Inn Fields with the Coachman.

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

LAXTON
Coachman.

COACHMAN
Here sir.

LAXTON
[Giving him money] There's a tester more. Prithee drive thy coach to the hither end of Marybone Park, a fit place for Moll to get in.

COACHMAN
Marybone Park, sir?

LAXTON
Ay, it's in our way, thou know'st.

COACHMAN
It shall be done, sir.

LAXTON
Coachman.

COACHMAN
Anon, sir.

LAXTON
Are we fitted with good [frampold] jades?

COACHMAN
The best in Smithfield, I warrant you, sir.

LAXTON
May we safely take the upper hand of any [couch'd] velvet cap or tufftaffety jacket? For they keep a vild swaggering in coaches nowadays; the highways are stopp'd with them.

COACHMAN
My life for yours and baffle 'em too, sir. Why, they are the same jades, believe it, sir, that have drawn all your famous whores to Ware.

LAXTON
Nay then, they know their business; they need no more instructions.

COACHMAN
They're so us'd to such journeys, sir, I never use whip to 'em, for if they catch but the scent of a wench once, they run like devils.

Exit Coachman with his whip.

LAXTON
Fine Cerberus: that rogue will have the start of a thousand ones, for whilst others trot afoot, he'll ride prancing to hell upon a coach-horse. Stay, 'tis now about the hour of her appointment, but yet I see her not.

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

The clock strikes three.

Hark, what's this? One, two, three, three by the clock at Savoy: this is the hour, and Gray's Inn Fields the place. She swore she'd meet me. Ha, yonder's two Inns a' Court men with one wench, but that's not she; they walk toward Islington out of my way. I see none yet dress'd like her: I must look for a shag ruff, a frieze jerkin, a short sword, and safeguard, or I get none. Why, Moll, prithee make haste or the coachman will curse us anon.

Enter Moll like a man.

MOLL

[Aside] Oh, here's my gentleman: if they would keep their days as well with their mercers as their hours with their harlots, no bankrout would give seven score pound for a sergeant's place, for would you know a catchpole rightly deriv'd, the corruption of a citizen is the generation of a sergeant! How his eye hawks for venery!—Come, are you ready, sir?

LAXTON

Ready for what, sir?

MOLL

Do you ask that now, sir? Why was this meeting 'pointed?

LAXTON

I thought you mistook me, sir.
You seem to be some young barrister.
I have no suit in law; all my land's sold:
I praise heaven for't; 't has rid me of much trouble.

MOLL

Then I must wake you, sir. Where stands the coach?

LAXTON

Who's this? Moll? Honest Moll?

MOLL

So young and purblind? You're an old wanton in your eyes, I see that.

LAXTON

Th' art admirably suited for the Three Pigeons at Brainford; I'll swear I knew thee not.

MOLL

I'll swear you did not, but you shall know me now.

LAXTON

No, not here, we shall be spied, i'faith; the coach is better, come.

MOLL

Stay.

LAXTON

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

What, wilt thou untruss a point, Moll?

She puts off her cloak and draws.

MOLL

Yes, here's the point that I untruss: 't has but one tag; 'twill serve tho' to tie up a rogue's tongue.

LAXTON

How!

MOLL

There's the gold with which you hir'd your hackney.
[Attacking him] Here's her pace;
She racks hard, and perhaps your bones will feel it!
Ten angels of mine own I've put to thine;
Win 'em and wear 'em!

LAXTON

Hold, Moll, Mistress Mary!

MOLL

Draw or I'll serve an execution on thee
Shall lay thee up till doomsday!

LAXTON

Draw upon a woman? Why, what dost mean, Moll?

MOLL

To teach thy base thoughts manners: th' art one of those
That thinks each woman thy fond, flexible whore
If she but cast a liberal eye upon thee;
Turn back her head, she's thine, or amongst company,
By chance drink first to thee. Then she's quite gone;
There's no means to help her, nay, for a need,
Wilt swear unto thy credulous fellow lechers
That th' art more in favour with a lady
At first sight than her monkey all her lifetime.
How many of our sex by such as thou
Have their good thoughts paid with a blasted name
That never deserved loosely, or did trip
In path of whoredom beyond cup and lip?
But for the stain of conscience and of soul,
Better had women fall into the hands
Of an act silent than a bragging nothing.
There's no mercy in't. What durst move you, sir,
To think me whorish, a name which I'd tear out
From the high German's throat if it lay ledger there
To dispatch privy slanders against me?
In thee I defy all men, their worst hates
And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts
With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools,

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Distressed needlewomen, and trade-fall'n wives.
Fish that must needs bite or themselves be bitten,
Such hungry things as these may soon be took
With a worm fast'ned on a golden hook:
Those are the lecher's food, his prey; he watches
For quarrelling wedlocks, and poor shifting sisters:
'Tis the best fish he takes. But why, good fisherman,
Am I thought meat for you, that never yet
Had angling rod cast towards me? 'Cause, you'll say,
I'm given to sport, I'm often merry, jest.
Had mirth no kindred in the world but lust?
Oh, shame take all her friends then! But howe'er
Thou and the baser world censure my life,
I'll send 'em word by thee, and write so much
Upon thy breast, 'cause thou shalt bear 't in mind:
Tell them 'twere base to yield where I have conquer'd.
I scorn to prostitute myself to a man,
I that can prostitute a man to me:
And so I greet thee.

LAXTON

Hear me!

MOLL

Would the spirits
Of all my [slanderers] were clasp'd in thine
That I might vex an army at one time!

They fight.

LAXTON

I do repent me! Hold!

MOLL

You'll die the better Christian then.

LAXTON

I do confess I have wrong'd thee, Moll.

MOLL

Confession is but poor amends for wrong,
Unless a rope would follow.

LAXTON

I ask thee pardon.

MOLL

I'm your hir'd whore, sir.

LAXTON

I yield both purse and body!

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MOLL

Both are mine and now at my disposing.

LAXTON

Spare my life!

MOLL

I scorn to strike thee basely.

LAXTON

Spoke like a noble girl, i'faith! [Aside] Heart, I think I fight with a familiar or the ghost of a fencer! Sh' has wounded me gallantly. Call you this a lecherous [voyage]? Here's blood would have serv'd me this seven year in broken heads and cut fingers, and it now runs all out together. Pox a' the Three Pigeons! I would the coach were here now to carry me to the chirurgion's.

Exit Laxton.

MOLL

If I could meet my enemies one by one thus,
I might make pretty shift with 'em in time
And make 'em know she that has wit and spirit
May scorn to live beholding to her body for meat
Or for apparel like your common dame
That makes shame get her clothes to cover shame.
Base is that mind that kneels unto her body,
As if a husband stood in awe on's wife:
My spirit shall be mistress of this house
As long as I have time in't.

Enter Trapdoor.

[Aside] Oh,

Here comes my man that would be: 'tis his hour.
Faith, a good well-set fellow, if his spirit
Be answerable to his umbles. He walks stiff,
But whether he will stand to't stiffly, there's the point;
H'as a good calf for't, and ye shall have many a woman
Choose him she means to [make] her head by his calf.
I do not know their tricks in't. Faith, he seems
A man without; I'll try what he is within.

TRAPDOOR

[Aside] She told me Gray's Inn Fields 'twixt three and four.
I'll fit her mistress-ship with a piece of service!
I'm hir'd to rid the town of one mad girl.

She justles him.

What a pox ails you, sir?

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MOLL

[Aside] He begins like a gentleman.

TRAPDOOR

Heart, is the field so narrow, or your eyesight?

She comes towards him.

Life, he comes back again!

MOLL

Was this spoke to me, sir?

TRAPDOOR

I cannot tell, sir.

MOLL

Go, y'are a coxcomb!

TRAPDOOR

Coxcomb?

MOLL

Y'are a slave!

TRAPDOOR

I hope there's law for you, sir.

MOLL

[Yea], do you see, sir?

Turn his hat.

TRAPDOOR

Heart, this is no good dealing!
Pray let me know what house you're of.

MOLL

One of the Temple, sir.

Fillips him.

TRAPDOOR

Mass, so methinks!

MOLL

And yet sometime I lie
About Chick Lane.

TRAPDOOR

I like you the worse

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Because you shift your lodging so often.
I'll not meddle with you for that trick, sir.

MOLL

A good shift, but it shall not serve your turn.

TRAPDOOR

You'll give me leave to pass about my business, sir?

MOLL

Your business?
I'll make you wait on me before I ha' done,
And glad to serve me too.

TRAPDOOR

How, sir! Serve you?
Not if there were no more men in England!

MOLL

But if there were no more women in England,
I hope you'd wait upon your mistress then.

TRAPDOOR

Mistress!

MOLL

Oh, you're a tried spirit at a push, sir!

TRAPDOOR

What would your worship have me do?

MOLL

You a fighter?

TRAPDOOR

No, I praise heaven; I had better grace and more manners.

MOLL

As how I pray, sir?

TRAPDOOR

Life, 't had been a beastly part of me to have drawn my weapons upon my mistress! All the world would 'a' cried shame of me for that.

MOLL

Why, but you knew me not.

TRAPDOOR

Do not say so, mistress; I knew you by your wide straddle, as well as if I had been in your belly.

MOLL

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Well, we shall try you further; i' th' mean time we give you entertainment.

TRAPDOOR

Thank your good mistress-ship.

MOLL

How many suits have you?

TRAPDOOR

No more suits than backs, mistress.

MOLL

Well, if you deserve, I cast off this next week,
And you may creep into't.

TRAPDOOR

Thank your good worship.

MOLL

Come, follow me to St. Thomas Apostle's;
I'll put a livery cloak upon your back
The first thing I do.

TRAPDOOR

I follow, my dear mistress.

Exeunt omnes.

[III.ii. Gallipot's house]

Enter Mistress Gallipot as from supper, her husband after her.

GALLIPOT

What, Pru! Nay, sweet Prudence!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

What a pruing keep you; I think the baby would have a teat, it kyes so. Pray be not so fond of me: leave your city humours; I'm vex'd at you to see how like a calf you come bleating after me.

GALLIPOT

Nay, honey Pru. How does your rising up before all the table show? And flinging from my friends so uncivilly? Fie, Pru, fie, come!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Then up and ride, i'faith.

GALLIPOT

Up and ride? Nay, my pretty Pru, that's far from my thought, duck. Why, mouse, thy mind is nibbling at something. What is't? What lies upon thy stomach?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Such an ass as you. Hoyda, y'are best turn midwife or physician! Y'are a pothecary already, but I'm none of

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

your drugs.

GALLIPOT

Thou art a sweet drug, sweet'st Pru, and the more thou art pounded, the more precious.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Must you be prying into a woman's secrets, say ye?

GALLIPOT

Woman's secrets?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

What, I cannot have a qualm come upon me but your teeth waters till your nose hang over it.

GALLIPOT

It is my love, dear wife.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Your love? Your love is all words; give me deeds: I cannot abide a man that's too fond over me, so cookish; thou dost not know how to handle a woman in her kind.

GALLIPOT

No, Pru? Why, I hope I have handled--

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Handle a fool's head of your own, fie, fie!

GALLIPOT

Ha, ha, 'tis such a wasp! It does me good now to have her [sting] me, little rogue.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Now fie, how you vex me! I cannot abide these [apron] husbands, such cotqueans: you overdo your things; they become you scurvily.

GALLIPOT

[Aside] Upon my life, she breeds! Heaven knows how I have strain'd myself to please her, night and day. I wonder why we citizens should get children so fretful and untoward in the breeding, their fathers being for the most part as gentle as milch-kine.--Shall I leave thee, my Pru?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Fie, fie, fie.

GALLIPOT

Thou shalt not be vex'd no more, pretty kind rogue: take no cold, sweet Pru.

Exit Gallipot.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

As your wit has done. [Taking out a letter] Now, Master Laxton, show your head. What news from you? Would any husband suspect that a woman crying, "Buy any scurvygrass" should bring love letters amongst her herbs to his wife? Pretty trick, fine conveyance! Had jealousy a thousand eyes, a silly woman with

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

scurvygrass blinds them all.
Laxton, with bays
Crown I thy wit for this: it deserves praise.
This makes me affect thee more; this proves thee wise.
'Lack what poor shift is love forc'd to devise?
To th' point:

She reads the letter.

"Oh, sweet creature,"—a sweet beginning—"pardon my long absence, for thou shalt shortly be possessed with my presence. Though Demophon was false to Phyllis, I will be to thee as Pan-da-rus was to Cres-sida; tho' Aeneas made an ass of Dido, I will die to thee ere I do so. Oh, sweet'st creature, make much of me, for no man beneath the silver moon shall make more of a woman than I do of thee. Furnish me therefore with thirty pounds; you must do it of necessity for me: I languish till I see some comfort come from thee, protesting not to die in thy debt, but rather to live so, as hitherto I have and will.

Thy true Laxton ever."

Alas, poor gentleman! Troth, I pity him.
How shall I raise this money? Thirty pound?
'Tis thirty sure, a 3 before an O;
I know his threes too well. My childbed linen?
Shall I pawn that for him? Then if my mark
Be known, I am undone; it may be thought
My husband's bankrout. Which way shall I turn?
Laxton, what with my own fears and thy wants,
I'm as a needle 'twixt two adamants.
Enter Master Gallipot hastily.

GALLIPOT

Nay, nay, wife, the women are all up! [Aside] Ha! How, reading a' letters? I smell a goose, a couple of capons, and a gammon of bacon from her mother out of the country, I hold my life.—Steal, steal!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, beshrew your heart!

GALLIPOT

What letter's that?
I'll see't.

She tears the letter.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, would thou hadst no eyes to see
The downfall of me and thyself: I'm forever,
Forever I'm undone!

GALLIPOT

What ails my Pru?
What paper's that thou tear'st?

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Would I could tear
My very heart in pieces, for my soul
Lies on the rack of shame that tortures me
Beyond a woman's suffering.

GALLIPOT

What means this?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Had you no other vengeance to throw down
But even in height of all my joys--

GALLIPOT

Dear woman!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

When the full sea of pleasure and content
Seem'd to flow over me--

GALLIPOT

As thou desirest to keep
Me out of bedlam, tell what troubles thee?
Is not thy child at nurse fall'n sick, or dead?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, no!

GALLIPOT

Heavens bless me! Are my barns and houses
Yonder at Hockley Hole consum'd with fire?
I can build more, sweet Pru.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

'Tis worse, 'tis worse.

GALLIPOT

My factor broke, or is the Jonas sunk?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Would all we had were swallowed in the waves,
Rather than both should be the scorn of slaves.

GALLIPOT

I'm at my wits' end!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, my dear husband,
Where once I thought myself a fixed star
Plac'd only in the heaven of thine arms,

I fear now I shall prove a wanderer.
Oh, Laxton, Laxton, is it then my fate
To be by thee o'erthrown?

GALLIPOT

Defend me, wisdom,
From falling into frenzy! On my knees,
Sweet Pru, speak: what's that Laxton who so heavy
Lies on thy bosom?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

I shall sure run mad!

GALLIPOT

I shall run mad for company then. Speak to me:
I'm Gallipot thy husband. Pru, why, Pru!
Art sick in conscience for some villainous deed
Thou wert about to act? Didst mean to rob me?
Tush, I forgive thee! Hast thou on my bed
Thrust my soft pillow under another's head?
I'll wink at all faults, Pru; 'las, that's no more
Than what some neighbours near thee have done before.
Sweet honey Pru, what's that Laxton?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh!

GALLIPOT

Out with him!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, he's born to be my undoer!
This hand which thou call'st thine to him was given;
To him was I made sure i' th' sight of heaven.

GALLIPOT

I never heard this thunder.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Yes, yes, before
I was to thee contracted, to him I swore,
Since last I saw him twelve months three times told
The moon hath drawn through her light silver bow,
For o'er the seas he went, and it was said,
But rumour lies, that he in France was dead.
But he's alive, oh, he's alive! He sent
That letter to me, which in rage I rent,
Swearing with oaths most damnably to have me,
Or tear me from this bosom. Oh, heavens save me!

GALLIPOT

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

My heart will break! Sham'd and undone forever!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

So black a day poor wretch went o'er thee never.

GALLIPOT

If thou shouldst wrastle with him at the law,
Th' art sure to fall: no odd sleight, no prevention.
I'll tell him th' art with child.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Umh.

GALLIPOT

Or give out
One of my men was ta'en a-bed with thee.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Umh, umh.

GALLIPOT

Before I lose thee, my dear Pru,
I'll drive it to that push.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Worse, and worse still:
You embrace a mischief to prevent an ill.

GALLIPOT

I'll buy thee of him, stop his mouth with gold.
Think'st thou twill do?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh me, heavens grant it would!
Yet now my senses are set more in tune,
He writ, as I remember in his letter,
That he in riding up and down had spent
Ere he could find me thirty pounds: send that;
Stand not on thirty with him.

GALLIPOT

Forty, Pru;
Say thou the word 'tis done. We venture lives
For wealth, but must do more to keep our wives.
Thirty or forty, Pru?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Thirty, good sweet;
Of an ill bargain let's save what we can.
I'll pay it him with my tears: he was a man
When first I knew him of a meek spirit;

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

All goodness is not yet dried up, I hope.

GALLIPOT

He shall have thirty pound; let that stop all:
Love's sweets taste best when we have drunk down gall.

Enter Master Tiltyard and his wife, Master Goshawk, and Mistress Openwork.

God—so, our friends! Come, come, smooth your cheek;
After a storm the face of heaven looks sleek.

TILTYARD

Did I not tell you these turtles were together?

MISTRESS TILTYARD

How dost thou, sirrah? Why, sister Gallipot!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Lord, how she's chang'd!

GOSHAWK

Is your wife ill, sir?

GALLIPOT

Yes, indeed la, sir, very ill, very ill, never worse!

MISTRESS TILTYARD

How her head burns! Feel how her pulses work.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Sister, lie down a little; that always does me good.

MISTRESS TILTYARD

In good sadness, I find best ease in that too.
Has she laid some hot thing to her stomach?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

No, but I will lay something anon.

TILTYARD

Come, come, fools, you trouble her. Shall's go, Master Goshawk?

GOSHAWK

Yes, sweet Master Tiltyard. [Taking Mistress Openwork aside] Sirrah Rosamond, I hold my life Gallipot hath vex'd his wife.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

She has a horrible high colour indeed.

GOSHAWK

We shall have your face painted with the same red soon at night when your husband comes from his rubbers

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

in a false alley; thou wilt not believe me that his bowls run with a wrong bias.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

It cannot sink into me that he feeds upon stale mutton abroad, having better and fresher at home.

GOSHAWK

What if I bring thee where thou shalt see him stand at rack and manger?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I'll saddle him in's kind and spur him till he kick again.

GOSHAWK

Shall thou and I ride our journey then?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Here's my hand.

GOSHAWK

No more.—Come, Master Tiltyard, shall we leap into the stirrups with our women and amble home?

TILTYARD

Yes, yes; come, wife.

MISTRESS TILTYARD

In troth, sister, I hope you will do well for all this.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

I hope I shall. Farewell, good sister, sweet Master Goshawk.

GALLIPOT

Welcome, brother, most kindly welcome, sir.

OMNES

Thanks, sir, for our good cheer.

Exeunt all but Gallipot and his wife.

GALLIPOT

It shall be so, because a crafty knave
Shall not outreach me nor walk by my door
With my wife arm in arm, as 'twere his whore,
I'll give him a golden coxcomb, thirty pound.
Tush, Pru, what's thirty pound? Sweet duck, look cheerly.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Thou art worthy of my heart: thou buy'st it dearly.

Enter Laxton muffled.

LAXTON

'Ud's light, the tide's against me! A pox of your pothecaryship! Oh, for some glister to set him going! 'Tis one

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

of Hercules' labours to tread one of these city hens because their cocks are still crowing over them; there's no turning tail here, I must on.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, husband, see, he comes!

GALLIPOT

Let me deal with him.

LAXTON

Bless you, sir.

GALLIPOT

Be you bless'd too, sir, if you come in peace.

LAXTON

Have you any good pudding tobacco, sir?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, pick no quarrels, gentle sir! My husband
Is not a man of weapon as you are;
He knows all: I have op'ned all before him
Concerning you.

LAXTON

Zounds, has she shown my letters!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Suppose my case were yours, what would you do
At such a pinch, such batteries, such assaults
Of father, mother, kindred, to dissolve
The knot you tied, and to be bound to him?
How could you shift this storm off?

LAXTON

If I know, hang me.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Besides a story of your death was read
Each minute to me.

LAXTON

[Aside] What a pox means this riddling?

GALLIPOT

Be wise, sir; let not you and I be toss'd
On lawyers' pens: they have sharp nibs and draw
Men's very heart-blood from them. What need you, sir,
To beat the drum of my wife's infamy,
And call your friends together, sir, to prove
Your [precontract] when sh' has confess'd it?

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

LAXTON

Umh, sir,
Has she confess'd it?

GALLIPOT

Sh' has, faith, to me, sir,
Upon your letter sending.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

I have, I have.

LAXTON

[Aside] If I let this iron cool, call me slave.--
Do you hear, you dame Prudence? Think'st thou, vile woman,
I'll take these blows and wink?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Upon my knees--

LAXTON

Out, impudence!

GALLIPOT

Good sir--

LAXTON

You goatish slaves,
No wild fowl to cut up but mine?

GALLIPOT

Alas, sir,
You make her flesh to tremble; fright her not.
She shall do reason and what's fit.

LAXTON

I'll have thee,
Wert thou more common than an hospital
And more diseased.

GALLIPOT

But one word, good sir.

LAXTON

So, sir?

GALLIPOT

I married her, have [lain] with her, and got
Two children on her body; think but on that.
Have you so beggarly an appetite,
When I upon a dainty dish have fed,

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

To dine upon my scraps, my leavings? Ha, sir?
Do I come near you [now], sir?

LAXTON

Be—Lady, you touch me.

GALLIPOT

Would not you scorn to wear my clothes, sir?

LAXTON

Right, sir.

GALLIPOT

Then pray, sir, wear not her, for she's a garment
So fitting for my body, I'm loath
Another should put it on; you will undo both.
Your letter, as she said, complain'd you had spent
In quest of her some thirty pound: I'll pay it.
Shall that, sir, stop this gap up 'twixt you two?

LAXTON

Well, if I swallow this wrong, let her thank you;
The money being paid, sir, I am gone.
Farewell, oh women! Happy's he trusts none.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Dispatch him hence, sweet husband.

GALLIPOT

Yes, dear wife.
Pray, sir, come in. Ere Master Laxton part
Thou shalt in wine drink to him.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

With all my heart.
[Aside to Laxton] How dost thou like my wit?

LAXTON

[Aside to Mistress Gallipot] Rarely!

Exit Master Gallipot and his wife.

That wile
By which the serpent did the first woman beguile
Did ever since all women's bosoms fill;
Y'are apple—eaters all, deceivers still.

Exit Laxton.

[III.iii. Holborn Street]

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave, Sir Davy Dapper, Sir Adam Appleton at one door, and Trapdoor at another door.

SIR ALEXANDER

Out with your tale, Sir Davy, to Sir Adam;
A knave is in mine eye deep in my debt.

SIR DAVY

Nay, if he be a knave, sir, hold him fast.

[Sir Alexander takes Trapdoor aside.]

SIR ALEXANDER

Speak softly. What egg is there hatching now?

TRAPDOOR

A duck's egg, sir, a duck that has eaten a frog; I have crack'd the shell and some villainy or other will peep out presently. The duck that sits is the bouncing ramp, that roaring girl my mistress, the drake that must tread is your son Sebastian.

SIR ALEXANDER

Be quick.

TRAPDOOR

As the tongue of an oyster—wench.

SIR ALEXANDER

And see thy news be true.

TRAPDOOR

As a barber's every Saturday night. Mad Moll—

SIR ALEXANDER

Ah.

TRAPDOOR

Must be let in without knocking at your back gate.

SIR ALEXANDER

So.

TRAPDOOR

Your chamber will be made bawdy.

SIR ALEXANDER

Good.

TRAPDOOR

She comes in a shirt of mail.

SIR ALEXANDER

How shirt of mail?

[Ill.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

TRAPDOOR

Yes, sir, or a male shirt, that's to say in man's apparel.

SIR ALEXANDER

To my son?

TRAPDOOR

Close to your son: your son and her moon will be in conjunction, if all almanacs lie not. Her black safeguard is turn'd into a deep slop, the holes of her upper body to button holes, her waistcoat to a doublet, her placket to the ancient seat of a codpiece, and you shall take 'em both with standing collars.

SIR ALEXANDER

Art sure of this?

TRAPDOOR

As every throng is sure of a pickpocket, as sure as a whore is of the clients all Michaelmas Term, and of the pox after the term.

SIR ALEXANDER

The time of their tilting?

TRAPDOOR

Three.

SIR ALEXANDER

The day?

TRAPDOOR

This.

SIR ALEXANDER

Away, ply it, watch her.

TRAPDOOR

As the devil doth for the death of a bawd, I'll watch her; do you catch her.

SIR ALEXANDER

She's fast: here weave thou the nets. Hark—

TRAPDOOR

They are made.

SIR ALEXANDER

I told them thou didst owe me money; hold it up, maintain 't.

TRAPDOOR

Stiffly, as a puritan does contention. [Loudly] [Pox], I owe thee not the value of a halfpenny halter!

SIR ALEXANDER

Thou shalt be hang'd in't ere thou scape so! Varlet, I'll make thee look through a grate.

TRAPDOOR

I'll do't presently, through a tavern grate. Drawer! Pish!

Exit Trapdoor.

SIR ADAM

Has the knave vex'd you, sir?

SIR ALEXANDER

Ask'd him my money;
He swears my son receiv'd it. Oh, that boy
Will ne'er leave heaping sorrows on my heart
Till he has broke it quite.

SIR ADAM

Is he still wild?

SIR ALEXANDER

As is a Russian bear.

SIR ADAM

But he has left
His old haunt with that baggage?

SIR ALEXANDER

Worse still and worse:
He lays on me his shame, I on him my curse.

SIR DAVY

My son Jack Dapper then shall run with him,
All in one pasture.

SIR ADAM

Proves your son bad too, sir?

SIR DAVY

As villainy can make him. Your Sebastian
Dotes but on one drab, mine on a thousand,
A noise of fiddlers, tobacco, wine and a whore,
A mercer that will let him take up more,
Dice, and a water-spaniel with a duck: oh,
Bring him a-bed with these! When his purse jingles,
Roaring boys follow at's tale, fencers and ningles,
Beasts Adam ne'er gave name to: these horse-leeches suck
My son; he being drawn dry, they all live on smoke.

SIR ALEXANDER

Tobacco?

SIR DAVY

[Ill.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

Right, but I have in my brain
A windmill going that shall grind to dust
The follies of my son, and make him wise
Or a stark fool; pray lend me your advise.

[SIR ALEXANDER, SIR ADAM]
That shall you, good Sir Davy.

SIR DAVY

Here's the springe
I ha' set to catch this woodcock in: an action
In a false name, unknown to him, is ent'red
I' th' counter to arrest Jack Dapper.

[SIR ALEXANDER, SIR ADAM]
Ha, ha, he!

SIR DAVY

Think you the counter cannot break him?

SIR ADAM

Break him?
Yes, and break's heart too if he lie there long.

SIR DAVY

I'll make him sing a countertenor sure.

SIR ADAM

No way to tame him like it; there he shall learn
What money is indeed, and how to spend it.

SIR DAVY

He's bridled there.

SIR ALEXANDER

Ay, yet knows not how to mend it.
Bedlam cures not more madmen in a year
Than one of the counters does; men pay more dear
There for their wit than anywhere; a counter:
Why, 'tis an university! Who not sees?
As scholars there, so here men take degrees
And follow the same studies all alike.
Scholars learn first logic and rhetoric.
So does a prisoner: with fine honey'd speech
At's first coming in he doth persuade, beseech,
He may be lodg'd with one that is not itchy,
To lie in a clean chamber, in sheets not lousy;
But when he has no money, then does he try
By subtle logic and quaint sophistry
To make the keepers trust him.

SIR ADAM

Say they do?

SIR ALEXANDER

Then he's a graduate.

SIR DAVY

Say they trust him not?

SIR ALEXANDER

Then is he held a freshman and a sot,
And never shall commence, but being still barr'd
Be expuls'd from the master's side to th' twopenny ward,
Or else i' th' hole be plac'd.

SIR ADAM

When then I pray
Proceeds a prisoner?

SIR ALEXANDER

When money being the aim
He can dispute with his hard creditors' hearts
And get out clear, he's then a Master of Arts.
Sir Davy, send your son to Wood Street College:
A gentleman can nowhere get more knowledge.

SIR DAVY

There gallants study hard.

SIR ALEXANDER

True, to get money.

SIR DAVY

Lies by th' heels, i'faith; thanks, thanks. I ha' sent
For a couple of bears shall paw him.

Enter Sergeant Curtilax and Yeoman Hanger.

SIR ADAM

Who comes yonder?

SIR DAVY

They look like puttocks; these should be they.

SIR ALEXANDER

I know 'em;
They are officers, sir. We'll leave you.

SIR DAVY

My good knights.
Leave me; you see I'm haunted now with spirits.

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

[SIR ALEXANDER, SIR ADAM]

Fare you well, sir.

Exeunt [Sir] Alexander and [Sir] Adam.

CURTILAX

[Aside to Hanger] This old muzzle-chops should be he by the fellow's description.—Save you, sir.

SIR DAVY

Come hither, you mad varlets. Did not my man tell you I watch'd here for you?

CURTILAX

One in a blue coat, sir, told us that in this place an old gentleman would watch for us, a thing contrary to our oath, for we are to watch for every wicked member in a city.

SIR DAVY

You'll watch then for ten thousand. What's thy name, honesty?

CURTILAX

Sergeant Curtilax I, sir.

SIR DAVY

An excellent name for a sergeant, Curtilax.
Sergeants indeed are weapons of the law
When prodigal ruffians far in debt are grown:
Should not you cut them, citizens were o'erthrown.
Thou dwell'st hereby in Holborn, Curtilax?

CURTILAX

That's my circuit, sir; I conjure most in that circle.

SIR DAVY

And what young toward whelp is this?

HANGER

Of the same litter: his yeoman, sir; my name's Hanger.

SIR DAVY

Yeoman Hanger.
One pair of shears sure cut out both your coats:
You have two names most dangerous to men's throats;
You two are villainous loads on gentlemen's backs.
Dear ware, this Hanger and this Curtilax.

CURTILAX

We are as other men are, sir. I cannot see but he who makes a show of honesty and religion, if his claws can fasten to his liking, he draws blood. All that live in the world are but great fish and little fish, and feed upon one another: some eat up whole men; a sergeant cares but for the shoulder of a man. They call us knaves and curs, but many times he that sets us on worries more lambs one year than we do in seven.

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

SIR DAVY

Spoke like a noble Cerberus. Is the action ent'red?

HANGER

His name is ent'red in the book of unbelievers.

SIR DAVY

What book's that?

CURTILAX

The book where all prisoners' names stand, and not one amongst forty when he comes in believes to come out in haste.

SIR DAVY

Be as dogged to him as your office allows you to be.

[CURTILAX, HANGER]

Oh, sir!

SIR DAVY

You know the unthrift Jack Dapper?

CURTILAX

Ay, ay, sir. That gull? As well as I know my yeoman.

SIR DAVY

And you know his father too, Sir Davy Dapper?

CURTILAX

As damn'd a usurer as ever was among Jews; if he were sure his father's skin would yield him any money, he would when he dies [flay] it off, and sell it to cover drums for children at Bartholomew Fair.

SIR DAVY

[Aside] What toads are these to spit poison on a man to his face!—Do you see, my honest rascals? Yonder greyhound is the dog he hunts with: out of that tavern Jack Dapper will sally. Sa, sa; give the counter, on, set upon him.

[CURTILAX, HANGER]

We'll charge him upo' th' back, sir.

SIR DAVY

Take no bail, put mace enough into his caudle, double your files, traverse your ground.

[CURTILAX, HANGER]

Brave, sir.

SIR DAVY

Cry arm, arm, arm.

[CURTILAX, HANGER]

Thus, sir.

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

SIR DAVY

There boy, there boy, away: look to your prey, my true English wolves, and so I vanish.

Exit Sir Davy.

CURTILAX

Some warden of the sergeants begat this old fellow, upon my life! Stand close.

HANGER

Shall the ambuscado lie in one place?

CURTILAX

No, [nook] thou yonder.

Enter Moll and Trapdoor.

MOLL

Ralph.

TRAPDOOR

What says my brave captain male and female?

MOLL

This Holborn is such a wrangling street.

TRAPDOOR

That's because lawyers walks to and fro in't.

MOLL

Here's such justling, as if everyone we met were drunk and reel'd.

TRAPDOOR

Stand, mistress: do you not smell carrion?

MOLL

Carrion? No, yet I spy ravens.

TRAPDOOR

Some poor wind-shaken gallant will anon fall into sore labour, and these men-midwives must bring him to bed i' the counter: there all those that are great with child with debts lie in.

MOLL

Stand up.

TRAPDOOR

Like your new maypole.

HANGER

Whist, whew.

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

CURTILAX

Hump, no.

MOLL

Peeping? It shall go hard, huntsmen, but I'll spoil your game. They look for all the world like two infected maltmen coming muffled up in their cloaks in a frosty morning to London.

TRAPDOOR

A course, captain; a bear comes to the stake.

Enter Jack Dapper and Gull.

MOLL

It should be so, for the dogs struggle to be let loose.

HANGER

Whew.

CURTILAX

Hemp.

MOLL

Hark, Trapdoor, follow your leader.

JACK

Gull.

GULL

Master.

JACK

Didst ever see such an ass as I am, boy?

GULL

No, by my troth, sir. To lose all your money, yet have false dice of your own! Why, 'tis as I saw a great fellow used t'other day: he had a fair sword and buckler, and yet a butcher dry-beat him with a cudgel.

[MOLL]

Honest sergeant--

[TRAPDOOR]

Fly, fly, Master Dapper: you'll be arrested else!

JACK

Run, Gull, and draw!

GULL

Run, master, Gull follows you!

[Exeunt Jack] Dapper and Gull.

[III.i. Gray's Inn Fields]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

CURTILAX

I know you well enough: you're but a whore to hang upon any man.

MOLL

Whores then are like sergeants, so now hang you! [To Trapdoor] Draw, rogue, but strike not: for a broken pate they'll keep their beds and recover twenty marks damages.

CURTILAX

You shall pay for this rescue! [To Hanger] Run down Shoe Lane and meet him.

[Exeunt Curtilax and Hanger.]

TRAPDOOR

Shoo! Is this a rescue, gentlemen, or no?

MOLL

Rescue? A pox on 'em! Trapdoor, let's away;
I'm glad I have done perfect one good work today.
If any gentleman be in scriveners' bands,
Send but for Moll, she'll bail him by these hands.

Exeunt.

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave solus.

SIR ALEXANDER

Unhappy in the follies of a son,
Led against judgment, sense, obedience,
And all the powers of nobleness and wit:
Oh, wretched father!

Enter Trapdoor.

Now, Trapdoor, will she come?

TRAPDOOR

In man's apparel, sir; I am in her heart now
And share in all her secrets.

SIR ALEXANDER

Peace, peace, peace.
Here, take my German watch; hang 't up in sight
That I may see her hang in English for't.

TRAPDOOR

I warrant you for that now; next sessions rids her, sir: this watch will bring her in better than a hundred constables.

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

SIR ALEXANDER

Good Trapdoor, sayst thou so? Thou cheer'st my heart
After a storm of sorrow. My gold chain too:
Here, take a hundred marks in yellow links.

TRAPDOOR

That will do well to bring the watch to light, sir,
And worth a thousand of your headboroughs' lanthorns.

SIR ALEXANDER

Place that a' the court cupboard, let it lie
Full in the view of her thief-whorish eye.

TRAPDOOR

She cannot miss it, sir; I see't so plain
That I could steal 't myself.

SIR ALEXANDER

Perhaps thou shalt too,
That or something as weighty; what she leaves,
Thou shalt come closely in and filch away,
And all the weight upon her back I'll lay.

TRAPDOOR

You cannot assure that, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

No, what lets it?

TRAPDOOR

Being a stout girl, perhaps she'll desire pressing,
Then all the weight must lie upon her belly.

SIR ALEXANDER

Belly or back I care not so I've one.

TRAPDOOR

You're of my mind for that, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Hang up my ruff band with the diamond at it;
It may be she'll like that best.

TRAPDOOR

[Aside] It's well for her that she must have her choice; he thinks nothing too good for her.—If you hold on this mind a little longer, it shall be the first work I do to turn thief myself; would do a man good to be hang'd when he is so well provided for.

SIR ALEXANDER

So, well said; all hangs well, would she hung so too:

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

The sight would please me more than all their [glisterings].
Oh, that my mysteries to such straits should run
That I must rob myself to bless my son!

Exeunt. Enter Sebastian, with Mary Fitzallard like a page, and Moll [in man's clothing].

SEBASTIAN

Thou hast done me a kind office, without touch
Either of sin or shame; our loves are honest.

MOLL

I'd scorn to make such shift to bring you together else.

SEBASTIAN

Now have I time and opportunity
Without all fear to bid thee welcome, love.

Kiss.

MARY

Never with more desire and harder venture.

MOLL

How strange this shows, one man to kiss another.

SEBASTIAN

I'd kiss such men to choose, Moll;
Methinks a woman's lip tastes well in a doublet.

MOLL

Many an old madam has the better fortune then,
Whose breaths grew stale before the fashion came;
If that will help 'em, as you think 'twill do,
They'll learn in time to pluck on the hose too.

SEBASTIAN

The older they wax, Moll—troth, I speak seriously—
As some have a conceit their drink tastes better
In an outlandish cup than in our own,
So methinks every kiss she gives me now
In this strange form is worth a pair of two.
Here we are safe and furthest from the eye
Of all suspicion: this is my [father's] chamber,
Upon which floor he never steps till night;
Here he mistrusts me not, nor I his coming.
At mine own chamber he still pries unto me;
My freedom is not there at mine own finding,
Still check'd and curb'd: here he shall miss his purpose.

MOLL

And what's your business now you have your mind, sir?

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

At your great suit I promis'd you to come;
I pitied her for name's sake, that a Moll
Should be so cross'd in love when there's so many
That owes nine lays apiece, and not so little.
My tailor fitted her. How like you his work?

SEBASTIAN

So well no art can mend it for this purpose,
But to thy wit and help we're chief in debt
And must live still beholding.

MOLL

Any honest pity
I'm willing to bestow upon poor ring-doves.

SEBASTIAN

I'll offer no worse play.

MOLL

Nay, and you should, sir;
I should draw first and prove the quicker man.

SEBASTIAN

Hold, there shall need no weapon at this meeting;
But 'cause thou shalt not loose thy fury idle,
Here take this viol, run upon the guts,
And end thy quarrel singing.

MOLL

Like a swan above bridge,
For look you here's the bridge, and here am I.

SEBASTIAN

Hold on, sweet Moll.

MARY

I've heard her much commended, sir, for one that was ne'er taught.

MOLL

I'm much beholding to 'em. Well, since you'll needs put us together, sir, I'll play my part as well as I can; it shall ne'er be said I came into a gentleman's chamber and let his instrument hang by the walls.

SEBASTIAN

Why, well said, Moll! I'faith, it had been a shame for that gentleman then that would have let it hung still and ne'er off'red thee it.

MOLL

There it should have been still then for Moll, for though the world judge impudently of me, I ne'er came into that chamber yet where I took down the instrument myself.

SEBASTIAN

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Pish, let 'em prate abroad; th' art here where thou art known and lov'd. There be a thousand close dames that will call the viol an unmannerly instrument for a woman and therefore talk broadly of thee, when you shall have them sit wider to a worse quality.

MOLL

Push, I ever fall asleep and think not of 'em, sir, and thus I dream.

SEBASTIAN

Prithee let's hear thy dream, Moll.

The song.

MOLL. I dream there is a mistress,
And she lays out the money;
She goes unto her sisters,
She never comes at any.
Enter Sir Alexander behind them.

She says she went to th' Burse for patterns;
You shall find her at Saint Kathern's,
And comes home with never a penny.

SEBASTIAN

That's a free mistress, faith.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Ay, ay, ay, like her that sings it, one of thine own choosing.

MOLL

But shall I dream again?

Here comes a wench will brave ye,
Her courage was so great:
She lay with one o' the navy,
Her husband lying i' the Fleet,
Yet oft with him she cavill'd.
I wonder what she ails.
Her husband's ship lay gravell'd,
When hers could hoise up sails;
Yet she began like all my foes
To call whore first, for so do those:
A pox of all false tails!

SEBASTIAN

Marry, amen say I.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] So say I too.

MOLL

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Hang up the viol now, sir: all this while I was in a dream; one shall lie rudely then, but being awake, I keep my legs together. A watch: what's a' clock here?

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Now, now, she's trapp'd.

MOLL

Between one and two; nay, then I care not. A watch and a musician are cousin-germans in one thing: they must both keep time well, or there's no goodness in 'em; the one else deserves to be dash'd against a wall, and t'other to have his brains knock'd out with a fiddle case. What? A loose chain and a dangling diamond. Here were a brave booty for an evening-thief now; There's many a younger brother would be glad To look twice in at a window for't, And wriggle in and out, like an eel in a sandbag. Oh, if men's secret youthful faults should judge 'em, 'Twould be the general'st execution That e'er was seen in England; There would be but few left to sing the ballets. There would be so much work: most of our brokers Would be chosen for hangmen, a good day for them; They might renew their wardropes of free cost then.

SEBASTIAN

This is the roaring wench must do us good.

MARY

No poison, sir, but serves us for some use, Which is confirm'd in her.

SEBASTIAN

Peace, peace!
Foot, I did hear him sure, where'er he be!

MOLL

Who did you hear?

SEBASTIAN

My father.
'Twas like a sight of his; I must be wary.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] No, wilt not be. Am I alone so wretched That nothing takes? I'll put him to his plunge for't.

SEBASTIAN

Life, here he comes! [To Moll, giving her money] Sir, I beseech you take it; Your way of teaching does so much content me, I'll make it four pound. Here's forty shillings, sir. I think I name it right. [Aside to her] Help me, good Moll.— Forty in hand.

MOLL

Sir, you shall pardon me;
I have more of the mean'st scholar I can teach.
This pays me more than you have off'red yet.

SEBASTIAN

At the next quarter
When I receive the means my father 'lows me,
You shall have t'other forty.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] This were well now,
Were 't to a man whose sorrows had blind eyes,
But mine behold his follies and untruths
With two clear glasses.—How now?

SEBASTIAN

Sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

What's he there?

SEBASTIAN

You're come in good time, sir: I've a suit to you;
I'd crave your present kindness.

SIR ALEXANDER

What is he there?

SEBASTIAN

A gentleman, a musician, sir, one of excellent fing'ring.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Ay, I think so; I wonder how they scap'd her.

SEBASTIAN

H'as the most delicate stroke, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] A stroke indeed: I feel it at my heart.

SEBASTIAN

Puts down all your famous musicians.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Ay, a whore may put down a hundred of 'em.

SEBASTIAN

Forty shillings is the agreement, sir, between us.
Now, sir, my present means mounts but to half on't.

SIR ALEXANDER

And he stands upon the whole.

SEBASTIAN

Ay, indeed does he, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] And will do still; he'll ne'er be in other tale.

SEBASTIAN

Therefore I'd stop his mouth, sir, and I could.

SIR ALEXANDER

Hum, true, there is no other way indeed.

[Aside] His folly hardens; shame must needs succeed.—

Now, sir, I understand you profess music.

MOLL

I am a poor servant to that liberal science, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Where is it you teach?

MOLL

Right against Clifford's Inn.

SIR ALEXANDER

Hum, that's a fit place for it. You have many scholars?

MOLL

And some of worth whom I may call my masters.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Ay, true, a company of whoremasters.—

You teach to sing too?

MOLL

Marry, do I, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

I think you'll find an apt scholar of my son,

Especially for prick-song.

MOLL

I have much hope of him.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] I am sorry for't; I have the less for that.—

You can play any lesson?

MOLL

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

At first sight, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

There's a thing called "The Witch." Can you play that?

MOLL

I would be sorry anyone should mend me in't.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Ay, I believe thee: thou hast so bewitch'd my son,
No care will mend the work that thou hast done.
I have bethought myself, since my art fails,
I'll make her policy the art to trap her.
Here are four angels mark'd with holes in them,
Fit for his crack'd companions; gold he will give her:
These will I make induction to her ruin
And rid shame from my house, grief from my heart.—
Here, son, in what you take content and pleasure,
Want shall not curb you. [Giving him money] Pay the gentleman
His latter half in gold.

SEBASTIAN

I thank you, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

[Aside] Oh, may the operation an't end three:
In her, life, shame in him, and grief in me.

Exit [Sir] Alexander.

SEBASTIAN

Faith, thou shalt have 'em: 'tis my father's gift.
Never was man beguil'd with better shift.

MOLL

He that can take me for a male musician,
I cannot choose but make him my instrument
And play upon him.

Exeunt omnes.

[IV.ii. Openwork's house]

Enter Mistress Gallipot and Mistress Openwork.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Is then that bird of yours, Master Goshawk, so wild?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

A goshawk, a puttock: all for prey; he angles for fish, but he loves flesh better.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Is't possible his smooth face should have wrinkles in't and we not see them?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Possible! Why, have not many handsome legs in silk stockings villainous splay feet for all their great roses?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Troth, sirrah, thou sayst true.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Didst never see an archer as thou 'ast walk'd by Bunhill look a-squint when he drew his bow?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Yes, when his arrows have fline toward Islington, his eyes have shot clean contrary towards Pimlico.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

For all the world so does Master Goshawk double with me.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Oh, fie upon him! If he double once, he's not for me.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Because Goshawk goes in a shag-ruff band, with a face sticking up in't which shows like an agate set in a cramp-ring, he thinks I'm in love with him.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

'Las, I think he takes his mark amiss in thee.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

He has by often beating into me made me believe that my husband kept a whore.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Very good.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Swore to me that my husband this very morning went in a boat with a tilt over it to the Three Pigeons at Brainford, and his punk with him under his tilt.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

That were wholesome.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I believ'd it, fell a-swearing at him, cursing of harlots, made me ready to hoise up sail, and be there as soon as he.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

So, so.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

And for that voyage Goshawk comes hither incontinently. But, sirrah, this water-spaniel dives after no duck but me; his hope is having me at Brainford to make me cry quack.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Art sure of it?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Sure of it! My poor innocent Openwork came in as I was poking my ruff; presently hit I him i' the teeth with the Three Pigeons: he forswore all, I up and opened all, and now stands he in a shop hard by like a musket on a rest, to hit Goshawk i' the eye when he comes to fetch me to the boat.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Such another lame gelding offered to carry me through thick and thin—Laxton, sirrah—but I am rid of him now.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Happy is the woman can be rid of 'em all. 'Las, what are your whisking gallants to our husbands, weigh 'em rightly man for man?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Troth, mere shallow things.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Idle simple things, running heads, and yet let 'em run over us never so fast, we shopkeepers, when all's done, are sure to have 'em in our purse—nets at length, and when they are in, Lord, what simple animals they are!

[MISTRESS GALLIPOT

]

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Then they hang the head.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Then they droop.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Then they write letters.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Then they cog.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Then they deal underhand with us, and we must inge with our husbands a—bed, and we must swear they are our cousins, and able to do us a pleasure at court.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

And yet when we have done our best, all's but put into a riven dish: we are but frump'd at and libell'd upon.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Oh, if it were the good Lord's will, there were a law made no citizen should trust any of 'em at all!

Enter Goshawk.

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

[Aside to Mistress Openwork] Hush, sirrah, Goshawk flutters.

GOSHAWK

How now, are you ready?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Nay, are you ready? A little thing, you see, makes us ready.

GOSHAWK

Us? Why, must she make one i' the voyage?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Oh, by any means. Do I know how my husband will handle me?

GOSHAWK

[Aside] Foot, how shall I find water to keep these two mills going?—Well, since you'll needs be clapp'd under hatches, if I sail not with you both till all split, hang me up at the mainyard and duck me. [Aside] It's but liquoring them both soundly, and then you shall see their cork heels fly up high, like two swans when their tails are above water and their long necks under water, diving to catch gudgeons.—Come, come, oars stand ready, the tide's with us: on with those false faces. Blow winds and thou shalt take thy husband casting out his net to catch fresh salmon at Brainford.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

I believe you'll eat of a cod's head of your own dressing before you reach half way thither.

[The women don masks.]

GOSHAWK

So, so, follow close; pin as you go.

Enter Laxton muffled.

LAXTON

Do you hear?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Yes, I thank my ears.

LAXTON

I must have a bout with your pothecaryship.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

At what weapon?

LAXTON

I must speak with you.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

No.

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

LAXTON

No? You shall.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Shall? Away, sous'd sturgeon, half fish, half flesh!

LAXTON

Faith, gib, are you spitting? I'll cut your tail, pusscat, for this.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

'Las, poor Laxton, I think thy tail's cut already. Your worst!

LAXTON

If I do not--

Exit Laxton.

GOSHAWK

Come, ha' you done?

Enter Master Openwork.

[Aside to her] 'Sfoot, Rosamond, your husband!

OPENWORK

How now? Sweet Master Goshawk, none more welcome;
I have wanted your embracements: when friends meet,
The music of the spheres sounds not more sweet
Than does their conference. Who is this? Rosamond?
Wife? How now, sister?

GOSHAWK

[Aside to Mistress Openwork] Silence if you love me.

OPENWORK

Why mask'd?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Does a mask grieve you, sir?

OPENWORK

It does.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Then y'are best get you a--mumming.

GOSHAWK

[Aside to her] 'Sfoot, you'll spoil all!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

May not we cover our bare faces with masks

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

As well as you cover your bald heads with hats?

OPENWORK

No masks. Why, th' are thieves to beauty, that rob eyes
Of admiration in which true love lies.
Why are masks worn? Why good, or why desired,
Unless by their gay covers wits are fired
To read the vild'st looks? Many bad faces,
Because rich gems are treasured up in cases,
Pass by their privilege current, but as caves
Dam misers' gold, so masks are beauty's graves.
Men ne'er meet women with such muffled eyes
But they curse her that first did masks devise,
And swear it was some beldam. Come, off with 't.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I will not.

OPENWORK

Good faces mask'd are jewels kept by [sprites].
Hide none but bad ones, for they poison men's sights:
Show [them] as shopkeepers do their broid'ed stuff,
By owl-light; fine wares cannot be open enough.
Prithee, sweet Rose, come strike this sail.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Sail?

OPENWORK

Ha?
Yes, wife, strike sail, for storms are in thine eyes.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Th' are here, sir, in my brows if any rise.

OPENWORK

Ha, brows? What says she, friend? Pray tell me why
Your two flags were advanc'd. The comedy,
Come, what's the comedy?

MISTRESS [GALLIPOT]

Westward Ho!

OPENWORK

How?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

'Tis Westward Ho she says.

GOSHAWK

Are you both mad?

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Is't market day at Brainford, and your ware
Not sent up yet?

OPENWORK

What market day? What ware?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

A pie with three pigeons in't; 'tis drawn and stays
Your cutting up.

GOSHAWK

[Aside to her] As you regard my credit—

OPENWORK

Art mad?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Yes, lecherous goat, baboon!

OPENWORK

Baboon? Then toss
Me in a blanket.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Do I it well?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Rarely.

GOSHAWK

Belike, sir, she's not well; best leave her.

OPENWORK

No,
I'll stand the storm now how fierce so e'er it blow.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Did I for this lose all my friends? Refuse
Rich hopes and golden fortunes to be made
A stale to a common whore?

OPENWORK

This does amaze me!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Oh God, oh God, feed at reversion now?
A strumpet's leaving?

OPENWORK

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

Rosamond—

GOSHAWK

[Aside] I sweat!
Would I lay in Cold Harbour!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Thou hast struck ten thousand daggers through my heart!

OPENWORK

Not I, by heaven, sweet wife.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Go, devil, go;
That which thou swear'st by damns thee.

GOSHAWK

[Aside to her] 'Sheart, will you undo me?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Why stay you here? The star by which you sail
Shines yonder above Chelsea; you lose your shore
If this moon light you: seek out your light whore.

OPENWORK

Ha?

MISTRESS [OPENWORK]

Push! Your western [pug]—

GOSHAWK

[Aside] Zounds, now hell roars!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

With whom you tilted in a pair of oars
This very morning.

OPENWORK

Oars?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

At Brainford, sir.

OPENWORK

Rack not my patience. Master Goshawk,
Some slave has buzzed this into her, has he not?
I run atilt in Brainford with a woman?
'Tis a lie!
What old bawd tells thee this? 'Sdeath, 'tis a lie!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

'Tis one to thy face shall justify all that I speak.

OPENWORK

'Ud's soul, do but name that rascal!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

No, sir, I will not.

GOSHAWK

[Aside] Keep thee there girl, then!

OPENWORK

Sister, know you this varlet?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Yes.

OPENWORK

Swear true:

Is there a rogue so low damn'd? A second Judas?

A common hangman? Cutting a man's throat?

Does it to his face? Bite me behind my back?

A cur dog? Swear if you know this hell-hound!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

In truth I do.

OPENWORK

His name?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Not for the world,

To have you to stab him.

GOSHAWK

[Aside] Oh, brave girls: worth gold!

OPENWORK

A word, honest Master Goshawk.

Draw out his sword.

GOSHAWK

What do you mean, sir?

OPENWORK

Keep off, and if the devil can give a name

To this new fury, holla it through my ear,

Or wrap it up in some hid character.

I'll ride to Oxford and watch out mine eyes,

But I'll hear the brazen head speak; or else

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

Show me but one hair of his head or beard,
That I may sample it. If the fiend I meet
In mine own house, I'll kill him, [in] the street,
Or at the church door: there, 'cause he seeks to untie
The knot God fastens, he deserves to die.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

My husband titles him.

OPENWORK

Master Goshawk, pray, sir,
Swear to me that you know him or know him not.
Who makes me at Brainford to take up a petticoat
Beside my wife's?

GOSHAWK

By heaven that man I know not!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Come, come, you lie.

GOSHAWK

[Aside to her] Will you not have all out?
By heaven I know no man beneath the moon
Should do you wrong, but if I had his name,
I'd print it in text letters.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Print thine own then:
Didst not thou swear to me he kept his whore?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

And that in sinful Brainford they would commit
That which our lips did water at, sir, ha?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Thou spider, that hast woven thy cunning web
In mine own house t' ensnare me! Hast not thou
Suck'd nourishment even underneath this roof
And turn'd it all to poison? Spitting it
On thy friend's face, my husband, he as 'twere sleeping?
Only to leave him ugly to mine eyes
That they might glance on thee?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Speak: are these lies?

GOSHAWK

Mine own shame me confounds.

OPENWORK

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

No more; he's stung.
Who'd think that in one body there could dwell
Deformity and beauty, heaven and hell?
Goodness I see is but outside: we all set
In rings of gold stones that be [counterfeit].
I thought you none.

GOSHAWK

Pardon me.

OPENWORK

Truth, I do.
This blemish grows in nature not in you,
For man's creation stick[s] even moles in scorn
On fairest cheeks. Wife, nothing is perfect born.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I thought you had been born perfect.

OPENWORK

What's this whole world but a gilt, rotten pill?
For at the heart lies the old chore still.
I'll tell you, Master Goshawk, in your eye
I have seen wanton fire, and then to try
The soundness of my judgment, I told you
I kept a whore, made you believe 'twas true,
Only to feel how your pulse beat, but find
The world can hardly yield a perfect friend.
Come, come, a trick of youth, and 'tis forgiven;
This rub put by, our love shall run more even.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

You'll deal upon men's wives no more?

GOSHAWK

No, you teach me
A trick for that.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Troth, do not, they'll o'erreach thee.

OPENWORK

Make my house yours, sir, still.

GOSHAWK

No.

OPENWORK

I say you shall:
Seeing thus besieg'd it holds out, 'twill never fall.

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Enter Master Gallipot, and Greenwit like a sumner, Laxton muffled aloof off.

OMNES

How now?

GALLIPOT

With me, sir?

GREENWIT

You, sir. I have gone snaffling up and down by your door this hour to watch for you.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

What's the matter, husband?

GREENWIT

I have caught a cold in my head, sir, by sitting up late in the Rose Tavern, but I hope you understand my speech.

GALLIPOT

So, sir.

GREENWIT

I cite you by the name of Hippocrates Gallipot, and you by the name of Prudence Gallipot, to appear upon Crastino, do you see, Crastino sancti Dunstani this Easter Term in Bow Church.

GALLIPOT

Where sir? What says he?

GREENWIT

Bow, Bow Church, to answer to a libel of precontract on the part and behalf of the said Prudence and another. Y'are best, sir, take a copy of the citation; 'tis but twelvenpence.

OMNES

A citation?

GALLIPOT

You pocky-nosed rascal, what slave fees you to this?

LAXTON

Slave? I ha' nothing to do with you, do you hear, sir?

GOSHAWK

Laxton, is't not? What fagary is this?

GALLIPOT

Trust me, I thought, sir, this storm long ago
Had been full laid when, if you be rememb'red,
I paid you the last fifteen pound, besides
The thirty you had first, for then you swore.

LAXTON

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Tush, tush, sir, oaths!
Truth, yet I'm loath to vex you, tell you what:
Make up the money I had an hundred pound
And take your belly full of her.

GALLIPOT

An hundred pound?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

What, a hundred pound? He gets none: what, a hundred pound!

GALLIPOT

Sweet Pru, be calm, the gentleman offers thus,
If I will make the moneys that are past
A hundred pound, he will discharge all courts
And give his bond never to vex us more.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

A hundred pound! 'Las! Take, sir, but threescore.
Do you seek my undoing?

LAXTON

I'll not bate one sixpence.
I'll maul you, puss, for spitting.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Do thy worst!
Will fourscore stop thy mouth?

LAXTON

No.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Y'are a slave!
Thou cheat, I'll now tear money from thy throat!
Husband, lay hold on yonder tawny-coat.

GREENWIT

Nay, gentlemen, seeing your women are so hot,
I must lose my hair in their company, I see.

[Removes his wig.]

MISTRESS OPENWORK

His hair sheds off, and yet he speaks not so much in the nose as he did before.

GOSHAWK

He has had the better chirurgeon. Master Greenwit, is your wit so raw as to play no better a part than a sumner's?

GALLIPOT

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

I pray who plays a knack to know an honest man in this company?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Dear husband, pardon me, I did dissemble,
Told thee I was his precontracted wife,
When letters came from him for thirty pound;
I had no shift but that.

GALLIPOT

A very clean shift,
But able to make me lousy. On.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Husband, I pluck'd,
When he had tempted me to think well of him,
[Gelt] feathers from thy wings to make him fly
More lofty.

GALLIPOT

A' the top of you, wife. On.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

He, having wasted them, comes now for more,
Using me as a ruffian doth his whore,
Whose sin keeps him in breath. By heaven I vow
Thy bed he never wrong'd, more than he does now.

GALLIPOT

My bed? Ha, ha, like enough: a shop-board will serve
To have a cuckold's coat cut out upon.
Of that we'll talk hereafter. Y'are a villain.

LAXTON

Hear me but speak, sir, you shall find me none.

OMNES

Pray, sir, be patient and hear him.

GALLIPOT

I am muzzled
For biting, sir; use me how you will.

LAXTON

The first hour that your wife was in my eye,
Myself with other gentlemen sitting by
In your shop tasting smoke, and speech being used,
That men who have fairest wives are most abused
And hardly scap'd the horn, your wife maintain'd
That only such spots in city dames were stain'd,
Justly, but by men's slanders: for her own part,
She vow'd that you had so much of her heart;

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

No man by all his wit, by any wile
Never so fine spun, should yourself beguile
Of what in her was yours.

GALLIPOT

Yet Pru, 'tis well.
Play out your game at Irish, sir. Who wins?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

The trial is when she comes to bearing.

LAXTON

I scorn'd one woman thus should brave all men
And, which more vex'd me, a she-citizen.
Therefore I laid siege to her; out she held,
Gave many a brave repulse, and me compell'd
With shame to sound retreat to my hot lust.
Then seeing all base desires rak'd up in dust,
And that to tempt her modest ears, I swore
Ne'er to presume again. She said her eye
Would ever give me welcome honestly,
And since I was a gentleman, if it run low,
She would my state relieve, not to o'erthrow
Your own and hers; did so. Then seeing I wrought
Upon her meekness, me she set at nought,
And yet to try if I could turn that tide,
You see what stream I strove with. But, sir, I swear
By heaven, and by those hopes men lay up there,
I neither have nor had a base intent
To wrong your bed; what's done is merriment.
Your gold I pay back with this interest:
When I had most power to do't, I wrong'd you least.

GALLIPOT

If this no gullery be, sir--

OMNES

No, no, on my life!

GALLIPOT

Then, sir, I am beholden not to you, wife,
But, Master Laxton, to your want of doing ill,
Which it seems you have not. Gentlemen,
Tarry and dine here all.

OPENWORK

Brother, we have a jest
As good as yours to furnish out a feast.

GALLIPOT

We'll crown our table with it. Wife, brag no more

[IV.i. Sir Alexander's chamber]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Of holding out: who most brags is most whore.

Exeunt omnes.

[V.i. A street]

Enter Jack Dapper, Moll, Sir Beauteous Ganymede, and Sir Thomas Long.

JACK

But prithee, Master Captain Jack, be plain and perspicuous with me: was it your Meg of Westminster's courage that rescued me from the Poultry puttocks indeed?

MOLL

The valour of my wit, I ensure you, sir, fetch'd you off bravely when you were i' the forlorn hope among those desperates. Sir Beauteous Ganymede here and Sir Thomas Long heard that cuckoo, my man Trapdoor, sing the note of your ransom from captivity.

SIR BEAUTEOUS

'Uds so, Moll, where's that Trapdoor?

MOLL

Hang'd I think by this time: a justice in this town that speaks nothing but "make a mittimus, away with him to Newgate" used that rogue like a firework to run upon a line betwixt him and me.

OMNES

How, how?

MOLL

Marry, to lay trains of villainy to blow up my life; I smelt the powder, spied what linstock gave fire to shoot against the poor captain of the galley—foist, and away slid I my man, like a shovel—board shilling. He struts up and down the suburbs, I think, and eats up whores, feeds upon a bawd's garbage.

SIR THOMAS

Sirrah Jack Dapper.

JACK

What sayst Tom Long?

SIR THOMAS

Thou hadst a sweet—fac'd boy, hail—fellow with thee to your little Gull. How is he spent?

JACK

Troth, I whistled the poor little buzzard off a' my fist, because when he waited upon me at the ordinaries, the gallants hit me i' the teeth still, and said I look'd like a painted alderman's tomb, and the boy at my elbow like a death's head. Sirrah Jack, Moll.

MOLL

What says my little Dapper?

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

SIR BEAUTEOUS

Come, come, walk and talk, walk and talk.

JACK

Moll and I'll be i' the midst.

MOLL

These knights shall have squires' places, belike then. Well, Dapper, what say you?

JACK

Sirrah Captain Mad Mary, the gull my own father, Dapper Sir Davy, laid these London boot-halers, the catchpoles, in ambush to set upon me.

OMNES

Your father? Away, Jack!

JACK

By the tassels of this handkercher, 'tis true. And what was his warlike stratagem, think you? He thought because a wicker cage tames a nightingale, a lousy prison could make an ass of me.

OMNES

A nasty plot.

JACK

Ay, as though a counter, which is a park in which all the wild beasts of the city run head by head, could tame me.

Enter the Lord Noland.

MOLL

Yonder comes my Lord Noland.

OMNES

Save you, my lord.

LORD NOLAND

Well met gentlemen all, good Sir Beauteous Ganymede, Sir Thomas Long. And how does Master Dapper?

JACK

Thanks, my lord.

MOLL

No tobacco, my lord?

LORD NOLAND

No, faith, Jack.

JACK

My Lord Noland, will you go to Pimlico with us? We are making a boon voyage to that nappy land of spice-cakes.

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

LORD NOLAND

Here's such a merry ging, I could find in my heart to sail to the world's end with such company. Come, gentlemen, let's on.

JACK

Here's most amorous weather, my lord.

OMNES

Amorous weather?

They walk.

JACK

Is not amorous a good word?

Enter Trapdoor like a poor soldier with a patch o'er one eye, and Tearcat with him, all tatters.

TRAPDOOR

Shall we set upon the infantry, these troops of foot? Zounds, yonder comes Moll, my whorish master and mistress! Would I had her kidneys between my teeth.

TEARCAT

I had rather have a cow-heel.

TRAPDOOR

Zounds, I am so patch'd up, she cannot discover me; we'll on.

TEARCAT

Alla corago then.

TRAPDOOR

Good your honours and worships, enlarge the ears of commiseration and let the sound of a hoarse military organ-pipe, penetrate your pitiful bowels to extract out of them so many small drops of silver, as may give a hard straw-bed lodging to a couple of maim'd soldiers.

JACK

Where are you maim'd?

TEARCAT

In both our nether limbs.

MOLL

Come, come, Dapper, let's give 'em something. 'Las, poor men, what money have you? By my troth, I love a soldier with my soul.

SIR BEAUTEOUS

Stay, stay, where have you serv'd?

SIR THOMAS

In any part of the Low Countries?

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

TRAPDOOR

Not in the Low Countries, if it please your manhood, but in Hungary against the Turk at the siege of Belgrade.

LORD NOLAND

Who serv'd there with you, sirrah?

TRAPDOOR

Many Hungarians, Moldavians, Walachians, and Transylvanians, with some Sclavonians, and retiring home, sir, the Venetian galleys took us prisoners, yet freed us and suffered us to beg up and down the country.

JACK

You have ambled all over Italy then?

TRAPDOOR

Oh, sir, from Venice to Roma, Vecchio, Bononia, Romania, Bolonia, Modena, Piacenza, and Tuscana with all her cities, as Pistoia, Valteria, Mountepulchena, Arezzo with the Siennesis, and diverse others.

MOLL

Mere rogues: put spurs to 'em once more.

JACK

Thou look'st like a strange creature, a fat butter-box, yet speak'st English. What are thou?

TEARCAT

Ick, mine here? Ick bin den ruffling Tearcat, den brave soldado; ick bin dorick all Dutchlant gueresen: der shellum das meere ine beasa ine woert gaeb. Ick slaag um stroakes on tom cop: dastick den hundred touzun divell halle frolick, mine here.

SIR BEAUTEOUS

Here, here, let's be rid of their jobbering.

MOLL

Not a cross, Sir Beauteous. You base rogues, I have taken measure of you better than a tailor can, and I'll fit you as you, monster with one eye, have fitted me.

TRAPDOOR

Your worship will not abuse a soldier?

MOLL

Soldier? Thou deserv'st to be hang'd up by that tongue which dishonours so noble a profession. Soldier, you skeldering varlet? Hold, stand, there should be a trapdoor hereabouts.

Pull off his patch.

TRAPDOOR

The balls of these glaziers of mine, mine eyes, shall be shot up and down in any hot piece of service for my invincible mistress.

JACK

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

I did not think there had been such knavery in black patches, as now I see.

MOLL

Oh, sir, he hath been brought up in the Isle of Dogs, and can both fawn like a spaniel and bite like a mastiff as he finds occasion.

LORD NOLAND

What are you, sirrah? A bird of this feather too?

TEARCAT

A man beat'n from the wars, sir.

SIR THOMAS

I think so, for you never stood to fight.

DAPPER

What's thy name, fellow soldier?

TEARCAT

I am call'd by those that have seen my valour, Tearcat.

OMNES

Tearcat?

MOLL

A mere whip-jack, and that is, in the commonwealth of rogues, a slave that can talk of sea-fight, name all your chief pirates, discover more countries to you than either the Dutch, Spanish, French, or English ever found out, yet indeed all his service is by land, and that is to rob a fair or some such venturous exploit. Tearcat! Foot, sirrah, I have your name now! I remember me in my book of horners horns for the thumb, you know how.

TEARCAT

No indeed, Captain Moll, for I know you by sight: I am no such nipping Christian, but a maunderer upon on the pad, I confess, and meeting with honest Trapdoor here, whom you had cashier'd from bearing arms, out at elbows under your colours, I instructed him in the rudiments of roguery, and by my map made him sail over any country you can name, so that now he can maunder better than myself.

JACK

So then, Trapdoor, thou art turn'd soldier now.

TRAPDOOR

Alas, sir, now there's no wars, 'tis the safest course of life I could take.

MOLL

I hope then you can cant, for by your cudgels, you, sirrah, are an upright man.

TRAPDOOR

As any walks the highway, I assure you.

MOLL

And Tearcat, what are you? A wild rogue, an angler, or a ruffler?

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

TEARCAT

Brother to this upright man, flesh and blood, ruffling Tearcat is my name, and a ruffler is my style, my title, my profession.

MOLL

Sirrah, where's your doxy? Halt not with me.

OMNES

Doxy, Moll? What's that?

MOLL

His wench.

TRAPDOOR

My doxy? I have, by the salomon, a doxy that carries a kinchin mort in her slate at her back, besides my dell and my dainty wild dell, with all whom I'll tumble this next darkmans in the strommel, and drink ben [booze], and eat a fat gruntling cheat, a cackling cheat, and a quacking cheat.

JACK

Here's old cheating.

TRAPDOOR

My doxy stays for me in a boozing ken, brave captain.

MOLL

He says his wench stays for him in an alehouse. You are no pure rogues.

TEARCAT

Pure rogues? No, we scorn to be pure rogues, but if you come to our lib ken, or our stalling ken, you shall find neither him nor me a queer cuffin.

MOLL

So, sir, no churl of you.

TEARCAT

No, but a ben cove, a brave cove, a gentry cuffin.

LORD NOLAND

Call you this canting?

JACK

Zounds, I'll give a schoolmaster half a crown a week, and teach me this pedlar's French.

TRAPDOOR

Do but stroll, sir, half a harvest with us, sir, and you shall gabble your bellyful.

MOLL

Come, you rogue, cant with me.

SIR THOMAS

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Well said, Moll. Cant with her, sirrah, and you shall have money, else not a penny.

TRAPDOOR

I'll have a bout if she please.

MOLL

Come on, sirrah.

TRAPDOOR

Ben mort, shall you and I heave a booth, mill a ken, or nip a bung? And then we'll couch a hogshead under the ruffmans, and there you shall wap with me, and I'll niggle with you.

MOLL

[Slapping and kicking him] Out, you damn'd, impudent rascal!

TRAPDOOR

Cut benar whids, and hold your fambles and your stamps.

LORD NOLAND

Nay, nay, Moll, why art thou angry? What was his gibberish?

MOLL

Marry, this, my lord, says he: ben mort, good wench, shall you and I heave a booth, mill a ken, or nip a bung? Shall you and I rob a house or cut a purse?

OMNES

Very good.

MOLL

And then we'll couch a hogshead under the ruffmans: and then we'll lie under a hedge.

TRAPDOOR

That was my desire, captain, as 'tis fit a soldier should lie.

MOLL

And there you shall wap with me and I'll niggle with you, and that's all!

SIR BEAUTEOUS

Nay, nay, Moll, what's that wap?

JACK

Nay, teach me what niggling is; I'd fain be niggling.

MOLL

Wapping and niggling is all one, the rogue my man can tell you.

TRAPDOOR

'Tis fadoodling, if it please you.

SIR BEAUTEOUS

This is excellent. One fit more, good Moll.

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MOLL

Come, you rogue, sing with me.

The song.

A gage of ben rom–booze
In a boozing ken of Romville
TEARCAT. Is benar than a caster,
Peck, pannam, [lap] or popler,
Which we mill in deuse a [vill].
[**MOLL, TEARCAT.**] Oh, I would lib all the lightmans,
Oh, I would lib all the darkmans,
By the salomon, under the ruffmans,
By the salomon, in the hartmans!
TEARCAT. And scour the queer cramp–ring,
And couch till a palliard docked my dell,
So my boozey nab might skew rom–booze well.
[**MOLL, TEARCAT.**] Avast to the pad, let us bing,
Avast to the pad, let us bing.
OMNES
Fine knaves, i'faith!

JACK

The grating of ten new cartwheels and the gruntling of five hundred hogs coming from Romford market cannot make a worse noise than this canting language does in my ears. Pray, my Lord Noland, let's give these soldiers their pay.

SIR BEAUTEOUS

Agreed, and let them march.

LORD NOLAND

[Giving her money] Here, Moll.

MOLL

Now I see that you are stall'd to the rogue and are not ashamed of your professions. [Giving Tearcat and Trapdoor the money] Look you, my Lord Noland here and these gentlemen bestows upon you two two boards and a half, that's two shillings sixpence.

TRAPDOOR

Thanks to your lordship.

TEARCAT

Thanks, heroical captain.

MOLL

Away.

TRAPDOOR

We shall cut ben whids of your masters and mistress–ship wheresoever we come.

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

MOLL

You'll maintain, sirrah, the old justice's plot to his face?

TRAPDOOR

Else trine me on the cheats, hang me.

MOLL

Be sure you meet me there.

TRAPDOOR

Without any more maundering I'll do't. Follow, brave Tearcat.

TEARCAT

I prae, sequor, let us go mouse.

Exeunt they two, manet the rest.

LORD NOLAND

Moll, what was in that canting song?

MOLL

Troth, my lord, only a praise of good drink, the only milk which these wild beasts love to suck, and thus it was:

A rich cup of wine,
Oh, it is juice divine,
More wholesome for the head
Than meat, drink, or bread
To fill my drunken pate!
With that, I'd sit up late;
By the heels would I lie,
Under a lousy hedge die.
Let a slave have a pull
At my whore, so I be full
Of that precious liquor—
And a parcel of such stuff, my lord, not worth the opening.

Enter a Cutpurse very gallant, with four or five men after him, one with a wand.

LORD NOLAND

What gallant comes yonder?

SIR THOMAS

Mass, I think I know him: 'tis one of Cumberland.

FIRST CUTPURSE

Shall we venture to shuffle in amongst yon heap of gallants and strike?

SECOND CUTPURSE

'Tis a question whether there be any silver shells amongst them for all their satin outsides.

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

OMNES [CUTPURSES]

Let's try.

MOLL

Pox on him! A gallant? Shadow me, I know him: 'tis one that cumpers the land indeed; if he swim near to the shore of any of your pockets, look to your purses.

OMNES [WITH MOLL]

Is't possible?

MOLL

This brave fellow is no better than a foist.

OMNES [WITH MOLL]

Foist? What's that?

MOLL

A diver with two fingers, a pickpocket: all his train study the figging law, that's to say, cutting of purses and foisting. One of them is a nip; I took him once i' the twopenny gallery at the Fortune. Then there's a cloyer, or snap, that dogs any new brother in that trade, and snaps will have half in any booty. He with the wand is both a stale, whose office is to face a man i' the streets whilst shells are drawn by another, and then with his black conjuring rod in his hand, he, by the nimbleness of his eye and juggling–stick, will in cheaping a piece of plate at a goldsmith's stall, make four or five rings mount from the top of his caduceus, and, as if it were at leap–frog, they skip into his hand presently.

SECOND CUTPURSE

Zounds, we are smok'd!

OMNES [CUTPURSES]

Ha?

SECOND CUTPURSE

We are boil'd. Pox on her! See, Moll, the roaring drab.

FIRST CUTPURSE

All the diseases of sixteen hospitals boil her! Away!

MOLL

Bless you, sir.

FIRST CUTPURSE

And you, good sir.

MOLL

Dost not ken me, man?

FIRST CUTPURSE

No, [trust] me, sir.

MOLL

Heart, there's a knight to whom I'm bound for many favours lost his purse at the last new play i' the Swan,

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

seven angels in't. Make it good; you're best. Do you see? No more.

FIRST CUTPURSE

A synagogue shall be call'd, Mistress Mary; disgrace me not. Pacus palabros, I will conjure for you. Farewell.

[Exeunt Cutpurses.]

MOLL

Did not I tell you, my lord?

LORD NOLAND

I wonder how thou cam'st to the knowledge of these nasty villains.

SIR THOMAS

And why do the foul mouths of the world call thee Moll Cutpurse? A name, methinks, damn'd and odious.

MOLL

Dare any step forth to my face and say,
"I have ta'en thee doing so, Moll," I must confess,
In younger days, when I was apt to stray,
I have sat amongst such adders, seen their stings
As any here might, and in full playhouses
Watch'd their quick-diving hands to bring to shame
Such rogues, and in that stream met an ill name.
When next, my lord, you spy any one of those,
So he be in his art a scholar, question him,
Tempt him with gold to open the large book
Of his close villainies, and you yourself shall cant
Better than poor Moll can, and know more laws
Of cheaters, lifters, nips, foists, puggards, curbers,
With all the devil's black guard, than it is fit
Should be discovered to a noble wit.
I know they have their orders, offices,
Circuits and circles unto which they are bound
To raise their own damnation in.

JACK

How dost thou know it?

MOLL

As you do: I show it you, they to me show it.
Suppose, my lord, you were in Venice.

LORD NOLAND

Well.

MOLL

If some Italian pander there would tell
All the close tricks of courtesans, would not you
Hearken to such a fellow?

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

LORD NOLAND

Yes.

MOLL

And here,
Being come from Venice, to a friend most dear
That were to travel thither, you would proclaim
Your knowledge in those villainies to save
Your friend from their quick danger. Must you have
A black, ill name because ill things you know?
Good troth, my lord, I am made Moll Cutpurse so.
How many are whores in small ruffs and still looks!
How many chaste whose names fill slander's books!
Were all men cuckolds, whom gallants in their scorns
Call so, we should not walk for goring horns.
Perhaps for my mad going some reprove me:
I please myself and care not else who loves me.

OMNES

A brave mind, Moll, i'faith.

SIR THOMAS

Come, my lord, shall's to the ordinary?

LORD NOLAND

Ay, 'tis noon sure.

MOLL

Good my lord, let not my name condemn me to you or to the world. A fencer I hope may be call'd a coward:
is he so for that? If all that have ill names in London were to be whipp'd and to pay but twelvecence apiece to
the beadle, I would rather have his office than a constable's.

JACK

So would I, Captain Moll: 'twere a sweet, tickling office, i'faith.

Exeunt.

[V.ii. Sir Alexander's house]

Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave, Goshawk and Greenwit, and others.

SIR ALEXANDER

My son marry a thief, that impudent girl,
Whom all the world stick their worst eyes upon?

GREENWIT

How will your care prevent it?

GOSHAWK

'Tis impossible.
They marry close; they're gone, but none knows whither.

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, gentlemen, when has a father's heart—strings
Held out so long from breaking?

Enter a Servant.

Now what news, sir?

SERVANT

They were met upo' th' water an hour since, sir,
Putting in towards the Sluice.

[Exit Servant.]

SIR ALEXANDER

The Sluice? Come, gentlemen,
'Tis Lambeth works against us.

GREENWIT

And that Lambeth
Joins more mad matches than your six wet towns
'Twixt that and Windsor Bridge, where fares lie soaking.

SIR ALEXANDER

Delay no time, sweet gentlemen: to Blackfriars!
We'll take a pair of oars and make after 'em.

Enter Trapdoor.

TRAPDOOR

Your son and that bold masculine ramp,
My mistress, are landed now at Tower.

SIR ALEXANDER

Hoyda, at Tower?

TRAPDOOR

I heard it now reported.

[Exit Trapdoor.]

SIR ALEXANDER

Which way gentlemen shall I bestow my care?
I'm drawn in pieces betwixt deceit and shame.

Enter Sir [Guy] Fitzallard.

SIR GUY

Sir Alexander,
You're well met and most rightly served:
My daughter was a scorn to you.

[V.i. A street]

SIR ALEXANDER

Say not so, sir.

SIR GUY

A very abject she, poor gentlewoman;
Your house [has] been dishonoured. Give you joy, sir,
Of your son's gaskin-bride; you'll be a grandfather shortly
To a fine crew of roaring sons and daughters:
'Twill help to stock the suburbs passing well, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, play not with the miseries of my heart!
Wounds should be dress'd and heal'd, not vex'd or left
Wide open to the anguish of the patient,
And scornful air let in: rather let pity
And advice charitably help to refresh 'em.

SIR GUY

Who'd place his charity so unworthily
Like one that gives alms to a cursing beggar?
Had I but found one spark of goodness in you
Toward my deserving child, which then grew fond
Of your son's virtues, I had eased you now;
But I perceive both fire of youth and goodness
Are rak'd up in the ashes of your age,
Else no such shame should have come near your house,
Nor such ignoble sorrow touch your heart.

SIR ALEXANDER

If not for worth, for pity's sake, assist me.

GREENWIT

You urge a thing past sense. How can he help you?
All his assistance is as frail as ours,
Full as uncertain. Where's the place that holds 'em?
One brings us water-news; then comes another
With a full-charg'd mouth, like a culverin's voice,
And he reports the Tower. Whose sounds are truest?

GOSHAWK

In vain you flatter him, Sir Alexander.

[SIR ALEXANDER]

I flatter him! Gentlemen, you wrong me grossly.

GREENWIT

He does it well, i'faith.

SIR GUY

Both news are false

[V.i. A street]

Of Tower or water: they took no such way yet.

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, strange! Hear you this, gentlemen: yet more plunges?

SIR GUY

Th' are nearer than you think for, yet more close
Than if they were further off.

SIR ALEXANDER

How am I lost
In these distractions!

SIR GUY

For your speeches, gentlemen,
In taxing me for rashness, 'fore you all
I will engage my state to half his wealth,
Nay, to his son's revenues, which are less,
And yet nothing at all till they come from him,
That I could, if my will stuck to my power,
Prevent this marriage yet, nay, banish her
Forever from his thoughts, much more his arms.

SIR ALEXANDER

Slack not this goodness, though you heap upon me
Mountains of malice and revenge hereafter:
I'd willingly resign up half my state to him,
So he would marry the mean'st drudge I hire.

GREENWIT

He talks impossibilities, and you believe 'em.

SIR GUY

I talk no more than I know how to finish;
My fortunes else are his that dares stake with me.
The poor young gentleman I love and pity,
And to keep shame from him, because the spring
Of his affection was my daughter's first
Till his frown blasted all, do but estate him
In those possessions which your love and care
Once pointed out for him, that he may have room
To entertain fortunes of noble birth,
Where now his desperate wants casts him upon her;
And if I do not for his own sake chiefly
Rid him of this disease that now grows on him,
I'll forfeit my whole state before these gentlemen.

GREENWIT

Troth, but you shall not undertake such matches;
We'll persuade so much with you.

SIR ALEXANDER

Here's my ring;
He will believe this token. 'Fore these gentlemen
I will confirm it fully: all those lands
My first love 'lotted him he shall straight possess
In that refusal.

SIR GUY

If I change it not,
Change me into a beggar.

GREENWIT

Are you mad, sir?

SIR GUY

'Tis done.

GOSHAWK

Will you undo yourself by doing,
And show a prodigal trick in your old days?

SIR ALEXANDER

'Tis a match, gentlemen.

SIR GUY

Ay, ay, sir, ay.
I ask no favour, trust to you for none;
My hope rests in the goodness of your son.

Exit [Sir Guy] Fitzallard.

GREENWIT

He holds it up well yet.

GOSHAWK

Of an old knight, i'faith.

SIR ALEXANDER

Curs'd be the time I laid his first love barren,
Willfully barren, that before this hour
Had sprung forth fruits of comfort and of honour!
He lov'd a virtuous gentlewoman.

Enter Moll [in man's clothes].

GOSHAWK

Life,
Here's Moll!

GREENWIT

Jack?

[V.i. A street]

GOSHAWK

How dost thou, Jack?

MOLL

How dost thou, gallant?

SIR ALEXANDER

Impudence, where's my son?

MOLL

Weakness, go look him.

SIR ALEXANDER

Is this your wedding gown?

MOLL

The man talks monthly:
Hot broth and a dark chamber for the knight;
I see he'll be stark mad at our next meeting.

Exit Moll.

GOSHAWK

Why, sir, take comfort now, there's no such matter:
No priest will marry her, sir, for a woman
Whiles that shape's on, and it was never known
Two men were married and conjoin'd in one.
Your son hath made some shift to love another.

SIR ALEXANDER

Whate'er she be, she has my blessing with her.
May they be rich and fruitful, and receive
Like comfort to their issue as I take
In them; h'as pleas'd me now, marrying not this:
Through a whole world he could not choose amiss.

GREENWIT

Glad y'are so penitent for your former sin, sir.

GOSHAWK

Say he should take a wench with her smock-dowry,
No portion with her but her lips and arms?

SIR ALEXANDER

Why, who thrive better, sir? They have most blessing,
Though other have more wealth, and least repent:
Many that want most know the most content.

GREENWIT

Say he should marry a kind, youthful sinner?

[V.i. A street]

SIR ALEXANDER

Age will quench that: any offence but theft
And drunkenness, nothing but death can wipe away;
Their sins are green even when their heads are grey.
Nay, I despair not now; my heart's cheer'd, gentlemen:
No face can come unfortunately to me.

Enter a Servant.

Now, sir, your news?

SERVANT

Your son with his fair bride
Is near at hand.

SIR ALEXANDER

Fair may their fortunes be!

GREENWIT

Now you're resolv'd, sir, it was never she?

SIR ALEXANDER

I find it in the music of my heart.

Enter Moll mask'd, in Sebastian's hand, and [Sir Guy] Fitzallard.

See where they come.

GOSHAWK

A proper lusty presence, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER

Now has he pleas'd me right: I always counsell'd him
To choose a goodly, personable creature;
Just of her pitch was my first wife his mother.

SEBASTIAN

Before I dare discover my offence,
I kneel for pardon.

SIR ALEXANDER

My heart gave it thee
Before thy tongue could ask it.
Rise; thou hast rais'd my joy to greater height
Than to that seat where grief dejected it.
Both welcome to my love and care forever,
Hide not my happiness too long, all's pardoned.
Here are our friends. Salute her, gentlemen.

They unmask her.

[V.i. A street]

OMNES

Heart! Who['s] this? Moll?

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, my reviving shame! Is't I must live
To be struck blind? Be it the work of sorrow,
Before age take 't in hand.

SIR GUY

Darkness and death!
Have you deceiv'd me thus? Did I engage
My whole estate for this?

SIR ALEXANDER

You ask'd no favour,
And you shall find as little; since my comforts
Play false with me, I'll be as cruel to thee
As grief to fathers' hearts.

MOLL

Why, what's the matter with you,
'Less too much joy should make your age forgetful?
Are you too well, too happy?

SIR ALEXANDER

With a vengeance.

MOLL

Methinks you should be proud of such a daughter,
As good a man as your son.

SIR ALEXANDER

Oh, monstrous impudence!

MOLL

You had no note before, an unmark'd knight:
Now all the town will take regard on you,
And all your enemies fear you for my sake.
You may pass where you list through crowds most thick,
And come off bravely with your purse unpick'd;
You do not know the benefits I bring with me:
No cheat dares work upon you with thumb or knife
While y'ave a roaring girl to your son's wife.

SIR ALEXANDER

A devil rampant!

SIR GUY

Have you so much charity
Yet to release me of my last rash bargain,

[V.i. A street]

And I'll give in your pledge.

SIR ALEXANDER

No sir, I stand to't, I'll work upon advantage,
As all mischiefs do upon me.

SIR GUY

Content, bear witness all then
His are the lands, and so contention ends.
Here comes your son's bride, 'twixt two noble friends.

Enter the Lord Noland and Sir Beauteous Ganymede with Mary Fitzallard between them, the citizens and their wives with them.

MOLL

Now are you gull'd as you would be, thank me for't:
I'd a forefinger in't.

SEBASTIAN

Forgive me, father;
Though there before your eyes my sorrow feigned,
This still was she for whom true love complain'd.

SIR ALEXANDER

Blessings eternal and the joys of angels
Begin your peace here to be sign'd in heaven.
How short my sleep of sorrow seems now to me
To this eternity of boundless comforts
That finds no want but utterance and expression!
My lord, your office here appears so honourably,
So full of ancient goodness, grace, and worthiness:
I never took more joy in sight of man
Than in your comfortable presence now.

LORD NOLAND

Nor I more delight in doing grace to virtue
Than in this worthy gentlewoman, your son's bride,
Noble Fitzallard's daughter, to whose honour
And modest fame I am a servant vow'd;
So is this knight.

SIR ALEXANDER

Your loves make my joys proud.
Bring forth those deeds of land my care laid ready,
And which, old knight, thy nobleness may challenge,
Join'd with thy daughter's virtues, whom I prize now
As dearly as that flesh I call mine own.
Forgive me, worthy gentlewoman, 'twas my blindness
When I rejected thee; I saw thee not:
Sorrow and willful rashness grew like films
Over the eyes of judgment, now so clear

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

I see the brightness of thy worth appear.

MARY

Duty and love may I deserve in those,
And all my wishes have a perfect close,

SIR ALEXANDER

That tongue can never err, the sound's so sweet.
Here, honest son, receive into thy hands
The keys of wealth, possession of those lands
Which my first care provided: they're thine own;
Heaven give thee a blessing with 'em. The best joys
That can in worldly shapes to man betide
Are fertile lands and a fair fruitful bride,
Of which I hope thou'rt sped.

SEBASTIAN

I hope so too, sir.

MOLL

Father and son, I ha' done you simple service here.

SEBASTIAN

For which thou shalt not part, Moll, unrequited.

SIR ALEXANDER

Thou art a mad girl, and yet I cannot now
Condemn thee.

MOLL

Condemn me? Troth, and you should, sir.
I'd make you seek out one to hang in my room;
I'd give you the slip at gallows and cozen the people.
Heard you this jest, my lord?

LORD NOLAND

What is it, Jack?

MOLL

He was in fear his son would marry me,
But never dreamt that I would ne'er agree.

LORD NOLAND

Why? Thou hadst a suitor once, Jack. When wilt marry?

MOLL

Who, I, my lord? I'll tell you when, i'faith.
When you shall hear
Gallants void from sergeants' fear,
Honesty and truth unslan'd red,
Woman mann'd but never pand'red,

[V.i. A street]

[Cheaters] booted but not coach'd,
Vessels older ere they're broach'd:
If my mind be then not varied,
Next day following I'll be married.

LORD NOLAND

This sounds like doomsday,

MOLL

Then were marriage best,
For if I should repent, I were soon at rest.

SIR ALEXANDER

In troth, th' art a good wench. I'm sorry now
The opinion was so hard I conceiv'd of thee;
Some wrongs I've done thee.

Enter Trapdoor.

TRAPDOOR

Is the wind there now?
'Tis time for me to kneel and confess first,
For fear it come too late and my brains feel it:
Upon my paws, I ask you pardon, mistress.

MOLL

Pardon? For what, sir? What has your roguishness done now?

TRAPDOOR

I have been from time to time hir'd to confound you
By this old gentleman.

MOLL

How!

TRAPDOOR

Pray forgive him,
But may I counsel you, you should never do't.
Many a snare to entrap your worship's life
Have I laid privily, chains, watches, jewels,
And when he saw nothing could mount you up,
Four hollow-hearted angels he then gave you
By which he meant to trap you, I to save you.

SIR ALEXANDER

To all which shame and grief in me cry guilty.
Forgive me; now I cast the world's eyes from me
And look upon thee freely with mine own:
I see the most of many wrongs before [thee],
Cast from the jaws of envy and her people,
And nothing foul but that. I'll never more

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Condemn by common voice, for that's the whore
That deceives man's opinion, mocks his trust,
Cozens his love, and makes his heart unjust.

MOLL

Here be the angels, gentlemen; they were given me
As a musician. I pursue no pity;
Follow the law: and you can cuckold me, spare not;
Hang up my viol by me, and I care not.

SIR ALEXANDER

So far I'm sorry I'll thrice double 'em
To make thy wrongs amends.
Come, worthy friends, my honourable lord,
Sir Beauteous Ganymede, and noble Fitzallard,
And you kind [gentlewomen], whose sparkling presence
Are glories set in marriage, beams of society,
For all your loves give lustre to my joys.
The happiness of this day shall be rememb'ed
At the return of every smiling spring;
In my time now 'tis born, and may no sadness
Sit on the brows of men upon that day,
But as I am, so all go pleas'd away.

[Exeunt all but Moll.]

Epilogus

[MOLL]

A painter, having drawn with curious art
The picture of a woman, every part
Limn'd to the life, hung out the piece to sell.
People who pass'd along, viewing it well,
Gave several verdicts on it: some dispraised
The hair; some said the brows too high were raised;
Some hit her o'er the lips, mislik'd their colour;
Some wish'd her nose were shorter; some, the eyes fuller;
Others said roses on her cheeks should grow,
Swearing they look'd too pale; others cried no.
The workman still as fault was found did mend it
In hope to please all, but this work being ended
And hung open at stall, it was so vile,
So monstrous and so ugly, all men did smile
At the poor painter's folly. Such we doubt
Is this our comedy. Some perhaps do flout
The plot, saying, "'Tis too thin, too weak, too mean;"
Some for the person will revile the scene,
And wonder that a creature of her being
Should be the subject of a poet, seeing
In the world's eye none weighs so light; others look
For all those base tricks publish'd in a book,
Foul as his brains they flow'd from, of cutpurse[s],

[V.i. A street]

The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse

Of nips and foists, nasty, obscene discourses,
As full of lies, as empty of worth or wit,
For any honest ear or eye unfit. And thus,
If we to every brain that's humourous
Should fashion scenes, we with the painter shall
In striving to please all please none at all.
Yet for such faults as either the writers' wit
Or negligence of the actors do commit,
Both crave your pardons; if what both have done
Cannot full pay your expectation,
The Roaring Girl herself some few days hence
Shall on this stage give larger recompense,
Which mirth that you may share in herself does woo you,
And craves this sign: your hands to beckon her to you.
[Exit.]

FINIS