

# **A Trick to Catch the Old One**

Thomas Middleton



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# **A Trick to Catch the Old One**

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**Thomas Middleton**

[Dramatis Personae (in order of appearance)]

Theodorus WITGOOD, a gallant  
COURTESAN, posing as the Widow Jane Medler  
ONESIPHORUS Hoard, brother of Walkadine Hoard  
LIMBER }  
KIX } his friends  
HOST  
LAMPREY, friend of Hoard  
Walkadine HOARD  
Pecunius LUCRE, Witgood's uncle  
SPITCHCOCK, friend of Hoard  
SAM Freedom, son of Lucre's wife by her first husband  
MONEYLOVE, a suitor of Hoard's niece  
GULF, a usurer  
Harry DAMPIT, a lawyer and usurer  
GEORGE, Lucre's servant  
Jinny, Lucre's WIFE  
THREE CREDITORS, the third called Cockpit  
Joyce, Hoard's NIECE  
DRAWER  
WILLIAM, a tapster  
BOY  
VINTNER  
GENTLEMEN, friends of Lucre  
AUDREY, Dampit's servant  
SERGEANTS  
A TAILOR  
A BARBER  
A PERFUMER  
A FALCONER  
A HUNTSMAN  
ARTHUR, Hoard's servant  
A SCRIVENER  
SIR LANCELOT  
[LADY FOXSTONE]

**[I.i. A street in Leicestershire]**

Enter Witgood, a gentleman, solus.

**WITGOOD**

All's gone! Still thou'rt a gentleman, that's all; but a poor one, that's nothing. What milk brings thy meadows forth now? Where are thy goodly uplands and thy downlands? All sunk into that little pit, lechery. What should a gallant pay but two shillings for his ordinary that nourishes him, and twenty times two for his brothel that consumes him? But where's Longacre? In my uncle's conscience, which is three years' voyage about; he that sets out upon his conscience never finds the way home again—he is either swallowed in the quicksands of law-quillets, or splits upon the piles of a praemunire; yet these old fox-brained and ox-browed uncles have still defences for their avarice, and apologies for their practices, and will thus greet our follies:

He that doth his youth expose  
To brothel, drink, and danger,  
Let him that is his nearest kin  
Cheat him before a stranger.

And that's his uncle, 'tis a principle in usury. I dare not visit the city: there I should be too soon visited by that horrible plague, my debts, and by that means I lose a virgin's love, her portion and her virtues. Well, how should a man live now, that has no living, hum? Why, are there not a million of men in the world, that only sojourn upon their brain, and make their wits their mercers; and am I but one amongst that million and cannot thrive upon't? Any trick, out of the compass of law, now would come happily to me.

Enter Courtesan.

**COURTESAN**

My love.

**WITGOOD**

My loathing! Hast thou been the secret consumption of my purse? And now com'st to undo my last means, my wit? Wilt leave no virtue in me, and yet thou never the better?

Hence, courtesan, round-webbed tarantula,  
That dryest the roses in the cheeks of youth!

**COURTESAN**

I have been true unto your pleasure, and all your lands thrice racked was never worth the jewel which I prodigally gave you, my virginity;  
Lands mortgaged may return and more esteemed,  
But honesty, once pawned, is ne'er redeemed.

**WITGOOD**

Forgive: I do thee wrong  
To make thee sin and then to chide thee for't.

**COURTESAN**

I know I am your loathing now: farewell.

**WITGOOD**

Say, best invention, stay.

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

### COURTESAN

I that have been the secret consumption of your purse, shall I stay now to undo your least means, your wits?  
Hence, courtesan, away!

### WITGOOD

I prithee, make me not mad at my own weapon, stay (a thing few women can do, I know that, and therefore they had need wear stays); be not contrary. Dost love me? Fate has so cast it that all my means I must derive from thee.

### COURTESAN

From me! Be happy then;  
What lies within the power of my performance  
Shall be commanded of thee.

### WITGOOD

Spoke like  
An honest drab, i'faith; it may prove something.  
What trick is not an embryo at first,  
Until a perfect shape come over it?

### COURTESAN

Come, I must help you, whereabouts left you?  
I'll proceed.  
Though you beget, 'tis I must help to breed.  
Speak, what is't? I'd fain conceive it.

### WITGOOD

So, so, so; thou shall presently take the name and form upon thee of a rich country widow, four hundred a year valiant, in woods, in bullocks, in barns and in rye-stacks; we'll to London, and to my covetous uncle.

### COURTESAN

I begin to applaud thee; our states being both desperate, they're soon resolute. But how for horses?

### WITGOOD

Mass, that's true; the jest will be of some continuance. Let me see; horses now, a bots on 'em! Stay, I have acquaintance with a mad host, never yet bawd to thee; I have rinsed the whoreson's gums in mull-sack many a time and often; put but a good tale into his ear now, so it come off it cleanly, and there's horse and man for us, I dare warrant thee.

### COURTESAN

Arm your wits then speedily;  
There shall want nothing in me,  
Either in behaviour, discourse or fashion,  
That shall discredit your intended purpose.  
I will so artfully disguise my wants,  
And set so good a courage on my state,  
That I will be believed.

### WITGOOD

Why, then, all's furnished; I shall go nigh to catch that old fox, mine uncle. Though he make but some amends for my undoing, yet there's some comfort in't—he cannot otherwise choose (though it be but in hope to cozen me again) but supply any hasty want that I bring to town with me. The device well and cunningly carried, the name of

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a rich widow, and four hundred a year in good earth, will so conjure up a kind of usurer's love in him to me, that he will not only desire my presence—which at first shall scarce be granted him, I'll keep off a' purpose—but I shall find him so officious to deserve, so ready to supply! I know the state of an old man's affection so well; if his nephew be poor indeed, why, he lets God alone with him; but if he be once rich, then he'll be the first man that helps him.

### **COURTESAN**

'Tis right the world; for in these days an old man's love to his kindred is like his kindness to his wife, 'tis always done before he comes at it.

### **WITGOOD**

I owe thee for that jest. Begone, here's all my wealth; prepare thyself, away! I'll to mine host with all possible haste, and with the best art, and most profitable form, pour the sweet circumstance into his ear, which shall have the gift to turn all the wax to honey.

[Enter Onesiphorus Hoard, Limber, and Kix. Exit Courtesan.]

How [now]? Oh, the right worshipful seniors of our country!

### **[ONESIPHORUS]**

Who's that?

### **[LIMBER]**

Oh, the common rioter, take no note of him.

### **WITGOOD**

[Aside] You will not see me now; the comfort is,  
Ere it be long you will scarce see yourselves.

[Exit.]

### **[ONESIPHORUS]**

I wonder how he breathes; h'as consumed all  
Upon that courtesan!

### **[LIMBER]**

We have heard so much.

### **[ONESIPHORUS]**

You have heard all truth. His uncle and my brother  
Have been these three years mortal adversaries.  
Two old tough spirits, they seldom meet but fight,  
Or quarrel when 'tis calmest;  
I think their anger be the very fire  
That keeps their age alive.

### **[LIMBER]**

What was the quarrel, sir?

### **[ONESIPHORUS]**

Faith, about a purchase, fetching over a young heir; Master Hoard, my brother, having wasted much time in

[l.i. A street in Leicestershire]



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beating the bargain, what did me old Lucre, but as his conscience moved him, knowing the poor gentleman, stepped in between 'em and cozened him himself.

**[LIMBER]**

And was this all, sir?

**[ONESIPHORUS]**

This was e'en it, sir; yet for all this I know no reason but the match might go forward betwixt his wife's son and my niece; what though there be a dissension between the two old men, I see no reason it should put a difference between the two younger; 'tis as natural for old folks to fall out, as for young to fall in! A scholar comes a-wooing to my niece: well, he's wise, but he's poor; her son comes a-wooing to my niece: well, he's a fool, but he's rich—

**[LIMBER]**

Ay, marry, sir?

**[ONESIPHORUS]**

Pray, now, is not a rich fool better than a poor philosopher?

**[LIMBER]**

One would think so, i'faith!

**[ONESIPHORUS]**

She now remains at London with my brother, her second uncle, to learn fashions, practise music; the voice between her lips, and the viol between her legs; she'll be fit for a consort very speedily. A thousand good pound is her portion; if she marry, we'll ride up and be merry.

**[KIX]**

A match, if it be a match!

Exeunt.

[I.ii. The Host's inn in Leicestershire]

Enter at one door, Witgood, at the other, Host.

**WITGOOD**

Mine host!

**HOST**

Young Master Witgood.

**WITGOOD**

I have been laying all the town for thee.

**HOST**

Why, what's the news, bully Hadland?

**WITGOOD**

What geldings are in the house of thine own? Answer me to that first.

**HOST**

Why, man, why?

[I.i. A street in Leicestershire]

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### WITGOOD

Mark me what I say: I'll tell thee such a tale in thine ear, that thou shalt trust me spite of thy teeth, furnish me with some money, willy–nilly, and ride up with me thyself contra voluntatem et professionem.

### HOST

How? Let me see this trick, and I'll say thou hast more art than a conjuror.

### WITGOOD

Dost thou joy in my advancement?

### HOST

Do I love sack and ginger?

### WITGOOD

Comes my prosperity desiredly to thee?

### HOST

Come forfeitures to a usurer, fees to an officer, punks to an host, and pigs to a parson desiredly? Why, then, la.

### WITGOOD

Will the report of a widow of four hundred a year, boy, make thee leap, and sing, and dance, and come to thy place again?

### HOST

Wilt thou command me now? I am thy spirit; conjure me into any shape.

### WITGOOD

I ha' brought her from her friends, turned back the horses by a sleight; not so much as one amongst her six men, goodly large yeomanly fellows, will she trust with this her purpose: by this light, all unmanned, regardless of her state, neglectful of vainglorious ceremony, all for my love; oh, 'tis a fine little voluble tongue, mine host, that wins a widow.

### HOST

No, 'tis a tongue with a great T, my boy, that wins a widow.

### WITGOOD

Now sir, the case stands thus: good mine host, if thou lov'st my happiness, assist me.

### HOST

Command all my beasts i' th' house.

### WITGOOD

Nay, that's not all neither; prithee take truce with thy joy, and listen to me. Thou know'st I have a wealthy uncle i' th' city, somewhat the wealthier by my follies; the report of this fortune, well and cunningly carried, might be a means to draw some goodness from the usuring rascal; for I have put her in hope already of some estate that I have either in land or money; now, if I be found true in neither, what may I expect but a sudden breach of our love, utter dissolution of the match, and confusion of my fortunes for ever?

### HOST

Wilt thou but trust the managing of thy business with me?

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### WITGOOD

With thee? Why, will I desire to thrive in my purpose? Will I hug four hundred a year, I that know the misery of nothing? Will that man wish a rich widow, that has never a hole to put his head in? With thee, mine host? Why, believe it, sooner with thee than with a covey of counsellors!

### HOST

Thank you for your good report, i'faith, sir, and if I stand you not in stead, why then let an host come off hic et haec hostis, a deadly enemy to dice, drink, and venery. Come, where's this widow?

### WITGOOD

Hard at Park End.

### HOST

I'll be her serving—man for once.

### WITGOOD

Why, there we let off together, keep full time; my thoughts were striking then just the same number.

### HOST

I knew't; shall we then see our merry days again?

### WITGOOD

Our merry nights—which never shall be more seen.

Exeunt.

[I.iii. A street in London]

Enter at several doors, old Lucre, and old Hoard, Gentlemen [Lamprey, Spitchcock, Sam Freedom and Moneylove] coming between them to pacify 'em.

### LAMPREY

Nay, good Master Lucre, and you, Master Hoard, anger is the wind which you're both too much troubled withal.

### HOARD

Shall my adversary thus daily affront me, ripping up the old wound of our malice, which three summers could not close up? Into which wound the very sight of him drops scalding lead instead of balsamum.

### LUCRE

Why, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard; may I not pass in the state of quietness to mine own house? Answer me to that, before witness, and why? I'll refer the cause to honest, even-minded gentlemen, or require the mere indifferences of the law to decide this matter. I got the purchase, true; was't not any man's case? Yes. Will a wise man stand as a bawd, whilst another wipes his nose of the bargain? No, I answer no in that case.

### LAMPREY

Nay, sweet Master Lucre.

### HOARD

Was it the part of a friend? No, rather of a Jew—mark what I say—when I had beaten the bush to the last bird, or, as I may term it, the price to a pound, then like a cunning usurer to come in the evening of the bargain, and glean all my hopes in a minute? To enter, as it were, at the back door of the purchase? For thou never cam'st the right

[I.i. A street in Leicestershire]

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way by it.

**LUCRE**

Hast thou the conscience to tell me so, without any impeachment to thyself?

**HOARD**

Thou that canst defeat thy own nephew, Lucre, lap his lands into bonds, and take the extremity of thy kindred's forfeitures, because he's a rioter, a wastethrift, a brothel-master, and so forth--what may a stranger expect from thee, but vulnera dilacerata, as the poet says, dilacerate dealing?

**LUCRE**

Upbraid'st thou me with nephew? Is all imputation laid upon me? What acquaintance have I with his follies? If he riot, 'tis he must want it; if he surfeit, 'tis he must feel it; if he drab it, 'tis he must lie by't; what's this to me?

**HOARD**

What's all to thee? Nothing, nothing; such is the gulf of thy desire, and the wolf of thy conscience; but be assured, old Pecunius Lucre, if ever fortune so bless me, that I may be at leisure to vex thee, or any means so favour me, that I may have opportunity to mad thee, I will pursue it with that flame of hate, that spirit of malice, unrepressed wrath, that I will blast thy comforts.

**LUCRE**

Ha, ha, ha!

**LAMPREY**

Nay, Master Hoard, you're a wise gentleman.

**HOARD**

I will so cross thee.

**LUCRE**

And I thee.

**HOARD**

So without mercy fret thee.

**LUCRE**

So monstrously oppose thee!

**HOARD**

Dost scoff at my just anger? Oh, that I had as much power as usury has over thee!

**LUCRE**

Then thou wouldst have as much power as the devil has over thee.

**HOARD**

Toad!

**LUCRE**

Aspic!

**HOARD**

[l.i. A street in Leicestershire]

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Serpent!

**LUCRE**

Viper!

**SPITCHCOCK**

Nay, gentlemen, then we must divide you perforce.

**LAMPREY**

When the fire grows too unreasonable hot, there's no better way than to take off the wood.

Exeunt. Mane[n]t Sam and Moneylove.

**SAM**

A word, good signior.

**MONEYLOVE**

How now, what's the news?

**SAM**

'Tis given me to understand that you are a rival of mine in the love of Mistress Joyce, Master Hoard's niece: say me ay, say me no.

**MONEYLOVE**

Yes, 'tis so.

**SAM**

Then look to yourself: you cannot live long. I'm practising every morning; a month hence I'll challenge you.

**MONEYLOVE**

Give me your hand upon't; there's my pledge I'll meet you!

Strikes him. Exit.

**SAM**

Oh, oh! What reason had you for that, sir, to strike before the [month]? You knew I was not ready for you, and that made you so crank. I am not such a coward to strike again, I warrant you. My ear has the law of her side for it burns horribly. I will teach him to strike a naked face, the longest day of his life; 'slid, it shall cost me some money, but I'll bring this box into the Chancery.

Exit.

[I.iv. Another street in London]

Enter Witgood and the Host.

**HOST**

Fear you nothing, sir; I have lodged her in a house of credit, I warrant you.

**WITGOOD**

Hast thou the writings?

**HOST**

[I.i. A street in Leicestershire]

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Firm, sir.

[Enter Dampit and Gulf, who talk apart.]

### WITGOOD

Prithee, stay, and behold two the most prodigious rascals that ever slipped into the shape of men: Dampit, sirrah, and young Gulf, his fellow caterpillar.

### HOST

Dampit? Sure I have heard of that Dampit.

### WITGOOD

Heard of him? Why, man, he that has lost both his ears may hear of him: a famous infamous trampler of time; his own phrase. Note him well: that Dampit, sirrah, he in the uneven beard, and the serge cloak, is the most notorious, usuring, blasphemous, atheistical, brothel-vomiting rascal that we have in these latter times now extant, whose first beginning was the stealing of a masty dog from a farmer's house.

### HOST

He looked as if he would obey the commandment[s] well, when he began first with stealing.

### WITGOOD

True. The next town he came at, he set the dogs together by th' ears.

### HOST

A sign he should follow the law, by my faith.

### WITGOOD

So it followed, indeed; and being destitute of all fortunes, staked his masty against a noble, and by great fortune his dog had the day. How he made it up ten shillings I know not, but his own boast is that he came to town but with ten shillings in his purse, and now is credibly worth ten thousand pound!

### HOST

How the devil came he by it?

### WITGOOD

How the devil came he not by it? If you put in the devil once, riches come with a vengeance. H'as been a trampler of the law, sir, and the devil has a care of his footmen. The rogue has spied me now: he nibbled me finely once too; a pox search you. [To Dampit] Oh, Master Dampit! [Aside] The very loins of thee! [To Gulf] Cry you mercy, Master Gulf, you walk so low I promise you I saw you not, sir!

### GULF

He that walks low walks safe, the poets tell us.

### WITGOOD

[Aside] And nigher hell by a foot and a half than the rest of his fellows.--But, my old Harry!

### DAMPIT

My sweet Theodorus!

### WITGOOD

'Twas a merry world when thou cam'st to town with ten shillings in thy purse.

[l.i. A street in Leicestershire]

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### DAMPIT

And now worth ten thousand pound, my boy; report it, Harry Dampit, a trampler of time, say, he would be up in a morning, and be here with his serge gown, dashed up to the hams in a cause; have his feet stink about Westminster Hall, and come home again; see the galleons, the galleasses, the great armadas of the law; then there by hoys and petty vessels, oars and scullers of the time; there be picklocks of the time too. Then would I be here, I would trample up and down like a mule; now to the judges, "May it please your reverend-honourable fatherhoods"; then to my counsellor, "May it please your worshipful patience"; then to the examiner's office, "May it please your mastership's gentleness"; then to one of the clerks, "May it please your worshipful lousiness", for I find him scrubbing in his codpiece; then to the Hall again, then to the chamber again--

### WITGOOD

And when to the cellar again?

### DAMPIT

E'en when thou wilt again! Trampers of time, motions of Fleet Street, and visions of Holborn; here I have fees of one, there I have fees of another; my clients come about me, the fooliaminy and coxcombrity of the country; I still trashed and trotted for other men's causes. Thus was poor Harry Dampit made rich by others' laziness, who, though they would not follow their own suits, I made 'em follow me with their purses.

### WITGOOD

Didst thou so, old Harry?

### DAMPIT

Ay, and I [sourced] 'em with bills of charges, i'faith; twenty pound a year have I brought in for boat-hire, and I never stepped into boat in my life.

### WITGOOD

Trampers of time!

### DAMPIT

Ay, trampers of time, rascals of time, bull-beggars!

### WITGOOD

Ah, thou'rt a mad old Harry! Kind Master Gulf, I am bold to renew my acquaintance.

### GULF

I embrace it, sir.

Music. Exeunt.

**II.[i. A room in Lucre's house]**

Enter Lucre.

**LUCRE**

My adversary evermore twits me with my nephew, forsooth, my nephew; why may not a virtuous uncle have a dissolute nephew? What though he be a brotheller, a wastethrift, a common surfeiter, and, to conclude, a beggar; must sin in him call up shame in me? Since we have no part in their follies, why should we have part in their infamies? For my strict hand toward his mortgage, that I deny not, I confess I had an uncle's pen'worth: let me see, half in half, true. I saw neither hope of his reclaiming nor comfort in his being, and was it not then better bestowed upon his uncle than upon one of his aunts? I need not say bawd, for everyone knows what "aunt" stands for in the last translation.

[Enter George.]

Now, sir?

**[GEORGE]**

There's a country serving—man, sir, attends to speak with your worship.

**LUCRE**

I'm at best leisure now; send him in to me.

[Exit George.] Enter Host like a serving—man.

**HOST**

Bless your venerable worship.

**LUCRE**

Welcome, good fellow.

**HOST**

[Aside] He calls me thief at first sight, yet he little thinks I am an host!

**LUCRE**

What's thy business with me?

**HOST**

Faith, sir, I am sent from my mistress to any sufficient gentleman indeed, to ask advice upon a doubtful point; 'tis indifferent, sir, to whom I come, for I know none, nor did my mistress direct me to any particular man, for she's as mere a stranger here as myself; only I found your worship within, and 'tis a thing I ever loved, sir, to be dispatched as soon as I can.

**LUCRE**

[Aside] A good blunt honesty, I like him well.—What is thy mistress?

**HOST**

Faith, a country gentlewoman and a widow, sir. Yesterday was the first flight of us, but now she intends to stay till a little term business be ended.



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**LUCRE**

Her name, I prithee?

**HOST**

[Handing him documents] It runs there in the writings, sir, among her lands: Widow Medler.

**LUCRE**

Medler? Mass, have I never heard of that widow?

**HOST**

Yes, I warrant you, have you, sir; not the rich widow in Staffordshire?

**LUCRE**

Cuds me, there 'tis indeed; thou hast put me into memory. There's a widow indeed, ah, that I were a bachelor again!

**HOST**

No doubt your worship might do much then, but she's fairly promised to a bachelor already.

**LUCRE**

Ah, what is he, I prithee?

**HOST**

A country gentleman too, one whom your worship knows not, I'm sure; h'as spent some few follies in his youth, but marriage, by my faith, begins to call him home; my mistress loves him, sir, and love covers faults, you know: one Master Witgood, if ever you have heard of the gentleman?

**LUCRE**

Ha? Witgood, say'st thou?

**HOST**

That's his name indeed, sir; my mistress is like to bring him to a goodly seat yonder—four hundred a year, by my faith.

**LUCRE**

But, I pray, take me with you.

**HOST**

Ay, sir?

**LUCRE**

What countryman might this young Witgood be?

**HOST**

A Leicestershire gentleman, sir.

**LUCRE**

[Aside] My nephew, by th' mass, my nephew! I'll fetch out more of this, i'faith; a simple country fellow, I'll work't out of him.—And is that gentleman, say'st thou, presently to marry her?

**HOST**

II.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

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Faith, he brought her up to town, sir; h'as the best card in all the bunch for't, her heart; and I know my mistress will be married ere she go down; nay, I'll swear that, for she's none of those widows that will go down first, and be married after; she hates that, I can tell you, sir.

**LUCRE**

By my faith, sir, she is like to have a proper gentleman and a comely; I'll give her that gift!

**HOST**

What, does your worship know him, sir?

**LUCRE**

I know him! Does not all the world know him? Can a man of such exquisite qualities be hid under a bushel?

**HOST**

Then your worship may save me a labour, for I had charge given me to enquire after him.

**LUCRE**

Enquire of him? If I might counsel thee, thou shouldst never trouble thyself further; enquire of him of no more but of me; I'll fit thee! I grant he has been youthful, but is he not now reclaimed? Mark you that, sir; has not your mistress, think you, been wanton in her youth? If men be wags, are there not women wagtails?

**HOST**

No doubt, sir.

**LUCRE**

Does not he return wisest, that comes home whipped with his own follies?

**HOST**

Why, very true, sir.

**LUCRE**

The worst report you can hear of him, I can tell you, is that he has been a kind gentleman, a liberal, and a worthy; who but lusty Witgood, thrice noble Witgood!

**HOST**

Since your worship has so much knowledge in him, can you resolve me, sir, what his living might be? My duty binds me, sir, to have a care of my mistress's estate; she has been ever a good mistress to me, though I say it. Many wealthy suitors has she non-suited for his sake; yet, though her love be so fixed, a man cannot tell whether his non-performance may help to remove it, sir; he makes us believe he has lands and living.

**LUCRE**

Who, young Master Witgood? Why, believe it, he has as goodly a fine living out yonder--what do you call the place?

**HOST**

Nay, I know not, i'faith.

**LUCRE**

Hum--see, like a beast, if I have not forgot the name--puh! And out yonder again, goodly grown woods and fair meadows; pax on't; I can never hit of that place neither. He? Why, he's Witgood of Witgood Hall, he an unknown thing!

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**HOST**

Is he so, sir? To see how rumour will alter! Trust me, sir, we heard once he had no lands, but all lay mortgaged to an uncle he has in town here.

**LUCRE**

Push! 'Tis a tale, 'tis a tale.

**HOST**

I can assure you, sir, 'twas credibly reported to my mistress.

**LUCRE**

Why, do you think, i'faith, he was ever so simple to mortgage his lands to his uncle, or his uncle so unnatural to take the extremity of such a mortgage?

**HOST**

That was my saying still, sir.

**LUCRE**

Puh, never think it.

**HOST**

Yet that report goes current.

**LUCRE**

Nay, then you urge me:  
Cannot I tell that best that am his uncle?

**HOST**

How, sir? What have I done!

**LUCRE**

Why, how now! In a [swoon], man?

**HOST**

Is your worship his uncle, sir?

**LUCRE**

Can that be any harm to you, sir?

**HOST**

I do beseech you, sir, do me the favour to conceal it. What a beast was I to utter so much! Pray, sir, do me the kindness to keep it in; I shall have my coat pulled o'er my ears, an't should be known; for the truth is, an't please your worship, to prevent much rumour and many suitors, they intend to be married very suddenly and privately.

**LUCRE**

And dost thou think it stands with my judgment to do them injury? Must I needs say the knowledge of this marriage comes from thee? Am I a fool at fifty-four? Do I lack subtlety now, that have got all my wealth by it? There's a leash of angels for thee: come, let me woo thee; speak, where lie they?

**HOST**

II.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

So I might have no anger, sir—

**LUCRE**

Passion of me, not a jot; prithee, come.

**HOST**

I would not have it known it came by my means.

**LUCRE**

Why, am I a man of wisdom?

**HOST**

I dare trust your worship, sir, but I'm a stranger to your house; and to avoid all intelligencers, I desire your worship's ear.

**LUCRE**

[Aside] This fellow's worth a matter of trust.—Come, sir.

[The Host whispers to him.]

Why, now, thou'rt an honest lad. [Aside] Ah, sirrah nephew!

**HOST**

Please you, sir, now I have begun with your worship, when shall I attend for your advice upon that doubtful point? I must come warily now.

**LUCRE**

Tut, fear thou nothing; tomorrow's evening shall resolve the doubt.

**HOST**

The time shall cause my attendance.

**LUCRE**

Fare thee well.

Exit [Host].

There's more true honesty in such a country serving-man than in a hundred of our cloak companions: I may well call 'em companions, for since blue coats have been turned into cloaks, we can scarce know the man from the master. George!

[Enter George.]

**GEORGE**

Anon, sir.

**LUCRE**

List hither. [Whispers to him.] Keep the place secret. Commend me to my nephew; I know no cause, tell him, but he might see his uncle.

**GEORGE**

II.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

I will, sir.

### LUCRE

And, do you hear, sir, take heed you use him with respect and duty.

### GEORGE

[Aside] Here's a strange alteration: one day he must be turned out like a beggar, and now he must be called in like a knight!

Exit.

### LUCRE

Ah, sirrah, that rich widow! Four hundred a year! Beside, I hear she lays claim to a title of a hundred more. This falls unhappily that he should bear a grudge to me now, being likely to prove so rich. What is't, trow, that he makes me a stranger for? Hum—I hope he has not so much wit to apprehend that I cozened him: he deceives me then. Good heaven, who would have thought it would ever have come to this pass! Yet he's a proper gentleman, i'faith, give him his due—marry, that's his mortgage; but that I never mean to give him. I'll make him rich enough in words, if that be good; and if it come to a piece of money I will not greatly stick for't: there may be hope of some of the widow's lands, too, may one day fall upon me if things be carried wisely.

[Enter George.]

Now, sir, where is he?

### GEORGE

He desires your worship to hold him excused; he has such weighty business it commands him wholly from all men.

### LUCRE

Were those my nephew's words?

### GEORGE

Yes, indeed, sir.

### LUCRE

[Aside] When men grow rich, they grow proud too, I perceive that. He would not have sent me such an answer once within this twelvemonth; see what 'tis when a man's come to his lands!—Return to him again, sir; tell him his uncle desires his company for an hour; I'll trouble him but an hour, say; 'tis for his own good, tell him; and, do you hear, sir, put "worship" upon him. Go to, do as I bid you; he's like to be a gentleman of worship very shortly.

### GEORGE

[Aside] This is good sport, i'faith.

Exit.

### LUCRE

Troth, he uses his uncle discourteously now. Can he tell what I may do for him? Goodness may come from me in a minute, that comes not in seven year again. He knows my humour; I am not so usually good; 'tis no small thing that draws kindness from me, he may know that an he will. The chief cause that invites me to do him most good is the sudden astonishing of old Hoard, my adversary. How pale his malice will look at my nephew's advancement! With what a dejected spirit he will behold his fortunes, whom but last day he proclaimed rioter, penurious

A Trick to Catch the Old One

makeshift, despised brothel-master! Ha, ha! 'Twill do me more secret joy than my last purchase, more precious comfort than all these widow's revenues.

[Enter George.]

Now, sir.

**GEORGE**

With much entreaty he's at length come, sir.

[Exit.] Enter Witgood.

**LUCRE**

Oh, nephew, let me salute you, sir! You're welcome, nephew.

**WITGOOD**

Uncle, I thank you.

**LUCRE**

Y'ave a fault, nephew; you're a stranger here. Well, heaven give you joy!

**WITGOOD**

Of what, sir?

**LUCRE**

Hah, we can hear!  
You might have known your uncle's house, i'faith,  
You and your widow; go to, you were too blame,  
If I may tell you so without offence.

**WITGOOD**

How could you hear of that, sir?

**LUCRE**

Oh, pardon me,  
It was your will to have it kept from me,  
I perceive now.

**WITGOOD**

Not for any defect of love, I protest, uncle.

**LUCRE**

Oh, 'twas unkindness, nephew! Fie, fie, fie.

**WITGOOD**

I am sorry you take it in that sense, sir.

**LUCRE**

Puh, you cannot colour it, i'faith, nephew.

**WITGOOD**

Il.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

Will you but hear what I can say in my just excuse, sir?

**LUCRE**

Yes, faith, will I, and welcome.

**WITGOOD**

You that know my danger i' th' city, sir, so well, how great my debts are, and how extreme my creditors, could not out of your pure judgment, sir, have wished us hither.

**LUCRE**

Mass, a firm reason indeed.

**WITGOOD**

Else, my uncle's house, why 't'ad been the only make-match.

**LUCRE**

Nay, and thy credit.

**WITGOOD**

My credit? Nay, my countenance. Push, nay, I know, uncle, you would have wrought it so by your wit you would have made her believe in time the whole house had been mine.

**LUCRE**

Ay, and most of the goods, too.

**WITGOOD**

La, you there; well, let 'em all prate what they will, there's nothing like the bringing of a widow to one's uncle's house.

**LUCRE**

Nay, let nephews be ruled as they list, they shall find their uncle's house the most natural place when all's done.

**WITGOOD**

There they may be bold.

**LUCRE**

Life, they may do anything there, man, and fear neither beadle nor summoner. An uncle's house! A very Cole Harbour! Sirrah, I'll touch thee near now: hast thou so much interest in thy widow that by a token thou couldst presently send for her?

**WITGOOD**

Troth, I think I can, uncle.

**LUCRE**

Go to, let me see that!

**WITGOOD**

Pray command one of your men hither, uncle.

**LUCRE**

George!

A Trick to Catch the Old One

[Enter George.]

**GEORGE**

Here, sir.

**LUCRE**

Attend my nephew!

[Witgood whispers to George, who then goes out]

[Aside] I love a' life to prattle with a rich widow; 'tis pretty, methinks, when our tongues go together; and then to promise much and perform little. I love that sport a' life, i'faith. Yet I am in the mood now to do my nephew some good, if he take me handsomely.—What, have you dispatched?

**WITGOOD**

I ha' sent, sir.

**LUCRE**

Yet I must condemn you of unkindness, nephew.

**WITGOOD**

Heaven forbid, uncle!

**LUCRE**

Yes, faith, must I; say your debts be many, your creditors importunate, yet the kindness of a thing is all, nephew; you might have sent me close word on't, without the least danger or prejudice to your fortunes.

**WITGOOD**

Troth, I confess it, uncle, I was too blame there; but, indeed, my intent was to have clapped it up suddenly, and so have broke forth like a joy to my friends, and a wonder to the world. Beside, there's a trifle of a forty pound matter toward the setting of me forth; my friends should never have known on't; I meant to make shift for that myself.

**LUCRE**

How, nephew? Let me not hear such a word again, I beseech you. Shall I be beholding to you?

**WITGOOD**

To me? Alas, what do you mean, uncle?

**LUCRE**

I charge you upon my love: you trouble nobody but myself.

**WITGOOD**

Y'ave no reason for that, uncle.

**LUCRE**

Troth, I'll never be friends with you while you live, an you do.

**WITGOOD**

Nay, an you say so, uncle, here's my hand, I will not do't.

II.[i. A room in Lucre's house]



A Trick to Catch the Old One

**LUCRE**

Why, well said! There's some hope in thee when thou wilt be ruled; I'll make it up fifty, faith, because I see thee so reclaimed. Peace, here comes my wife with Sam, her tother husband's son.

[Enter Wife and Sam.]

**WITGOOD**

Good aunt---

**SAM**

Cousin Witgood! I rejoice in my salute: you're most welcome to this noble city governed with the sword in the scabbard.

**WITGOOD**

[Aside] And the wit in the pommel---good Master Sam Freedom, I return the salute.

**LUCRE**

By the mass, she's coming; wife, let me see now how thou wilt entertain her.

**WIFE**

I hope I am not to learn, sir, to entertain a widow; 'tis not so long ago since I was one myself.

[Enter Courtesan.]

**WITGOOD**

Uncle---

**LUCRE**

She's come indeed!

**WITGOOD**

My uncle was desirous to see you, widow, and I presumed to invite you.

**COURTESAN**

The presumption was nothing. Master Witgood: is this your uncle, sir?

**LUCRE**

Marry am I, sweet widow, and his good uncle he shall find me; ay, by this smack that I give thee, thou'rt welcome. Wife, bid the widow welcome the same way again.

**SAM**

[Aside] I am a gentleman now too, by my father's occupation, and I see no reason but I may kiss a widow by my father's copy; truly, I think the charter is not against it; surely these are the words: "The son, once a gentleman, may revel it, though his father were a dauber;" 'tis about the fifteenth page. I'll to her.

[Attempts to kiss the Courtesan, who rejects him.]

**LUCRE**

Y'are not very busy now; a word with thee, sweet widow---

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

### SAM

[Aside] Coad's nigs! I was never so disgraced, since the hour my mother whipped me.

### LUCRE

Beside, I have no child of mine own to care for; she's my second wife, old, past bearing; clap sure to him, widow; he's like to be my heir, I can tell you.

### COURTESAN

Is he so, sir?

### LUCRE

He knows it already, and the knave's proud on't; jolly rich widows have been offered him here i' th' city, great merchants' wives, and do you think he would once look upon 'em? Forsooth, he'll none. You are beholding to him i' th' country, then, ere we could be; nay, I'll hold a wager, widow, if he were once known to be in town, he would be presently sought after; nay, and happy were they that could catch him first.

### COURTESAN

I think so.

### LUCRE

Oh, there would be such running to and fro, widow, he should not pass the streets for 'em; he'd be took up in one great house or other presently. Fah! They know he has it, and must have it. You see this house here, widow; this house and all comes to him, goodly rooms, ready furnished, ceiled with plaster of Paris, and all hung above with cloth of arras. Nephew!

### WITGOOD

Sir.

### LUCRE

Show the widow your house; carry her into all the rooms and bid her welcome. You shall see, widow. [Aside to Witgood] Nephew, strike all sure above an thou beest a good boy—ah!

### WITGOOD

Alas, sir, I know not how she would take it.

### LUCRE

The right way, I warrant t'ee. A pox, art an ass? Would I were in thy stead! Get you up; I am ashamed of you.

[Exeunt Witgood and Courtesan.]

[Aside] So, let 'em agree as they will now; many a match has been struck up in my house a' this fashion: let 'em try all manner of ways, still there's nothing like an uncle's house to strike the stroke in. I'll hold my wife in talk a little.—Now, Jinny, your son there goes a—wooing to a poor gentlewoman but of a thousand portion; see my nephew, a lad of less hope, strikes at four hundred a year in good rubbish.

### WIFE

Well, we must do as we may, sir.

### LUCRE

I'll have his money ready told for him again he come down. Let me see, too; by th' mass, I must present the widow with some jewel, a good piece a' plate, or such a device; 'twill hearten her on well. I have a very fair [standing]

II.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

cup, and a good high standing cup will please a widow above all other pieces.

Exit.

### WIFE

Do you mock us with your nephew? I have a plot in my head, son; i'faith, husband, to cross you.

### SAM

Is it a tragedy plot, or a comedy plot, good mother?

### WIFE

'Tis a plot shall vex him, I charge you, of my blessing, son Sam, that you presently withdraw the action of your love from Master Hoard's niece.

### SAM

How, mother!

### WIFE

Nay, I have a plot in my head, i'faith. Here, take this chain of gold, and this fair diamond; dog me the widow home to her lodging, and at thy best opportunity fasten 'em both upon her. Nay I have a reach; I can tell you thou art known what thou art, son, among the right worshipful, all the twelve companies.

### SAM

Truly, I thank 'em for it.

### WIFE

He? He's a scab to thee; and so certify her thou hast two hundred a year of thyself, beside thy good parts, a proper person and a lovely. If I were a widow, I could find it in my heart to have thee myself, son; ay, from 'em all.

### SAM

Thank you for your good will, mother, but indeed I had rather have a stranger; and if I woo her not in that violent fashion that I will make her be glad to take these gifts ere I leave her, let me never be called the heir of your body.

### WIFE

Nay, I know there's enough in you, son, if you once come to put it forth.

### SAM

I'll quickly make a bolt or a shaft on't.

Exeunt.

[II.ii. A street in London]

Enter Hoard and Moneylove.

### MONEYLOVE

Faith, Master Hoard, I have bestowed many months in the suit of your niece, such was the dear love I ever bore to her virtues; but since she hath so extremely denied me, I am to lay out for my fortunes elsewhere.

### HOARD

Heaven forbid but you should, sir. I ever told you my niece stood otherwise affected.

### MONEYLOVE

II.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

I must confess you did, sir; yet, in regard of my great loss of time, and the zeal with which I sought your niece, shall I desire one favour of your worship?

**HOARD**

In regard of those two, 'tis hard but you shall, sir.

**MONEYLOVE**

I shall rest grateful. 'Tis not full three hours, sir, since the happy rumour of a rich country widow came to my hearing.

**HOARD**

How? A rich country widow?

**MONEYLOVE**

Four hundred a year landed.

**HOARD**

Yes?

**MONEYLOVE**

Most firm, sir, and I have learned her lodging; here my suit begins, sir: if I might but entreat your worship to be a countenance for me, and speak a good word—for your words will pass—I nothing doubt but I might set fair for the widow; nor shall your labour, sir, end altogether in thanks, two hundred angels—

**HOARD**

So, so, what suitors has she?

**MONEYLOVE**

There lies the comfort, sir, the report of her is yet but a whisper, and only solicited by young riotous Witgood, nephew to your mortal adversary.

**HOARD**

Ha! Art certain he's her suitor?

**MONEYLOVE**

Most certain, sir, and his uncle very industrious to beguile the widow, and make up the match!

**HOARD**

So! Very good!

**MONEYLOVE**

Now, sir, you know this young Witgood is a spendthrift, dissolute fellow.

**HOARD**

A very rascal.

**MONEYLOVE**

A midnight surfeiter.

**HOARD**

The spume of a brothel-house.

Il.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

### **MONEYLOVE**

True, sir! Which being well told in your worship's phrase, may both heave him out of her mind, and drive a fair way for me to the widow's affections.

### **HOARD**

Attend me about five.

### **MONEYLOVE**

With my best care, sir.

Exit.

### **HOARD**

Fool, thou hast left thy treasure with a thief,

To trust a widower with a suit in love!

Happy revenge, I hug thee! I have not only the means laid before me, extremely to cross my adversary, and confound the last hopes of his nephew, but thereby to enrich my state, augment my revenues, and build mine own fortunes greater; ha, ha!

I'll mar your phrase, o'erturn your flatteries,

Undo your windings, policies, and plots,

Fall like a secret and dispatchful [plague]

On your secured comforts. Why, I am able

To buy three of Lucre, thrice outbid him,

Let my out-monies be reckoned and all.

Enter three Creditors.

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

I am glad of this news.

### **SECOND CREDITOR**

So are we, by my faith.

### **THIRD CREDITOR**

Young Witgood will be a gallant again now.

### **HOARD**

[Aside] Peace!

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

I promise you, Master Cockpit, she's a mighty rich widow.

### **SECOND CREDITOR**

Why, have you ever heard of her?

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

Who? Widow Medler? She lies open to much rumour.

### **THIRD CREDITOR**

Four hundred a year, they say, in very good land.

Il.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**FIRST CREDITOR**

Nay, take't of my word, if you believe that, you believe the least.

**SECOND CREDITOR**

And to see how close he keeps it!

**FIRST CREDITOR**

Oh, sir, there's policy in that, to prevent better suitors.

**THIRD CREDITOR**

He owes me a hundred pound, and I protest I never looked for a penny.

**FIRST CREDITOR**

He little dreams of our coming; he'll wonder to see his creditors upon him.

Exeunt.

**HOARD**

Good, his creditors; I'll follow. This makes for me:

All know the widow's wealth; and 'tis well known

I can estate her fairly, ay, and will.

In this one chance shines a twice happy fate:

I both deject my foe, and raise my state.

Music. Exit.

**III.[i. Another street in London]**

[Enter] Witgood and his Creditors.

**WITGOOD**

Why, alas, my creditors, could you find no other time to undo me but now? Rather, your malice appears in this than the justness of the debt.

**FIRST CREDITOR**

Master Witgood, I have forborne my money long.

**WITGOOD**

I pray, speak low, sir; what do you mean?

**SECOND CREDITOR**

We hear you are to married suddenly to a rich country widow.

**WITGOOD**

What can be kept so close but you creditors hear on't? Well, 'tis a lamentable state, that our chiefest afflictors should first hear of our fortunes. Why, this is no good course, i'faith, sirs; if ever you have hope to be satisfied, why do you seek to confound the means that should work it? There's neither piety, no, nor policy in that. Shine favourably now, why, I may rise and spread again, to your great comforts.

**FIRST CREDITOR**

He says true, i'faith.

**WITGOOD**

Remove me now, and I consume for ever.

**SECOND CREDITOR**

Sweet gentleman!

**WITGOOD**

How can it thrive which from the sun you sever?

**THIRD CREDITOR**

It cannot, indeed!

**WITGOOD**

Oh, then, show patience! I shall have enough  
To satisfy you all.

**FIRST CREDITOR**

Ay, if we could  
Be content, a shame take us.

**WITGOOD**

For, look you,  
I am but newly sure yet to the widow,  
And what a rend might this discredit make!

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Within these three days will I bind you lands  
For your securities.

### FIRST CREDITOR

No, good Master Witgood,  
Would 'twere as much as we dare trust you with!

### WITGOOD

I know you have been kind; however, now,  
Either by wrong report, or false incitement,  
Your gentleness is injured. In such  
A state as this a man cannot want foes.  
If on the sudden he begin to rise,  
No man that lives can count his enemies.  
You had some intelligence, I warrant ye, from an ill-willer.

### SECOND CREDITOR

Faith, we heard you brought up a rich widow, sir, and were suddenly to marry her.

### WITGOOD

Ay, why there it was, I knew 'twas so: but since you are so well resolved of my faith toward you, let me be so much favoured of you, I beseech you all---

### ALL

Oh, it shall not need, i'faith, sir---

### WITGOOD

As to lie still awhile, and bury my debts in silence, till I be fully possessed of the widow; for the truth is, I may tell you as my friends---

### ALL

Oh, oh, oh---

### WITGOOD

I am to raise a little money in the city, toward the setting forth of myself, for mine own credit, and your comfort. Now, if my former debts should be divulged, all hope of my proceedings were quite extinguished!

### FIRST CREDITOR

[Taking Witgood aside] Do you hear, sir? I may deserve your custom hereafter; pray let my money be accepted before a stranger's. Here's forty pound I received as I came to you; if that may stand you in any stead, make use on't. Nay, pray sir, 'tis at your service.

### WITGOOD

You do so ravish me with kindness that  
I'm constrained to play the maid and take it!

### FIRST CREDITOR

Let none of them see it, I beseech you.

### WITGOOD

Fah!

III.[i. Another street in London]



A Trick to Catch the Old One

**FIRST CREDITOR**

I hope I shall be first in your remembrance  
After the marriage rites.

**WITGOOD**

Believe it firmly.

**FIRST CREDITOR**

So.--What, do you walk, sirs?

**SECOND CREDITOR**

I go. [Taking Witgood aside] Take no care, sir, for money to furnish you; within this hour I'll send you sufficient.--Come, Master Cockpit, we both stay for you.

**THIRD CREDITOR**

I ha' lost a ring, i'faith, I'll follow you presently.

[Exeunt First and Second Creditors.]

But you shall find it, sir; I know your youth and expenses have disfunished you of all jewels; there's a ruby of twenty pound price, sir; bestow it upon your widow. What, man, 'twill call up her blood to you; beside, if I might so much work with you, I would not have you beholding to those bloodsuckers for any money.

**WITGOOD**

Not I, believe it.

**THIRD CREDITOR**

They're a brace of cutthroats!

**WITGOOD**

I know 'em.

**THIRD CREDITOR**

Send a note of all your wants to my shop, and I'll supply you instantly.

**WITGOOD**

Say you so? Why, here's my hand then, no man living shall do't but thyself.

**THIRD CREDITOR**

Shall I carry it away from 'em both then?

**WITGOOD**

I'faith, shalt thou!

**THIRD CREDITOR**

Troth, then I thank you, sir.

**WITGOOD**

Welcome, good Master Cockpit.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

Exit [Third Creditor].

Ha, ha, ha! Why, is not this better now than lying a-bed? I perceive there's nothing conjures up wit sooner than poverty, and nothing lays it down sooner than wealth and lechery! This has some savour; yet, oh, that I had the mortgage from mine uncle as sure in possession as these trifles! I would forswear brothel at noon day, and muscadine and eggs at midnight.

Enter Courtesan.

**COURTESAN**

Master Witgood? Where are you?

**WITGOOD**

Holla!

**COURTESAN**

Rich news!

**WITGOOD**

Would 'twere all in plate.

**COURTESAN**

There's some in chains and jewels. I am so haunted with suitors, Master Witgood, I know not which to dispatch first.

**WITGOOD**

You have the better term, by my faith.

**COURTESAN**

Among the number, one Master Hoard, an ancient gentleman.

**WITGOOD**

Upon my life, my uncle's adversary.

**COURTESAN**

It may well hold so, for he rails on you,  
Speaks shamefully of him.

**WITGOOD**

As I could wish it.

**COURTESAN**

I first denied him, but so cunningly,  
It rather promised him assured hopes,  
Than any loss of labour.

**WITGOOD**

Excellent.

**COURTESAN**

I expect him every hour, with gentlemen

III.[i. Another street in London]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

With whom he labours to make good his words,  
To approve you riotous, your state consumed,  
Your uncle—

### WITGOOD

Wench, make up thy own fortunes now, do thyself a good turn once in thy days. He's rich in money, moveables, and lands; marry him, he's an old doting fool, and that's worth all; marry him, 'twould be a great comfort to me to see thee do well, i'faith; marry him, 'twould ease my conscience well to see thee well bestowed; I have a care of thee, i'faith.

### COURTESAN

Thanks, sweet Master Witgood.

### WITGOOD

I reach at farder happiness: first, I am sure it can be no harm to thee, and there may happen goodness to me by it. Prosecute it well: let's send up for [our] wits, now we require their best and most pregnant assistance!

### COURTESAN

Step in, I think I hear 'em.

Exit [with Witgood]. Enter Hoard and Gentlemen [Lamprey and Spitchcock] with the Host [as] serving-man.

### HOARD

Art thou the widow's man? By my faith, sh'as a company of proper men then.

### HOST

I am the worst of six, sir; good enough for blue-coats.

### HOARD

Hark hither: I hear say thou art in most credit with her.

### HOST

Not so, sir.

### HOARD

Come, come, thou'rt modest. There's a brace of royals; prithee, help me to th' speech of her.

### HOST

I'll do what I may, sir, always saving myself harmless.

### HOARD

Go to, do't, I say; thou shalt hear better from me.

### HOST

[Aside] Is not this a better place than five mark a year standing wages? Say a man had but three such clients in a day, methinks he might make a poor living on't; beside, I was never brought up with so little honesty to refuse any man's money; never. What gulls there are a' this side of the world! Now know I the widow's mind, none but my young master comes in her clutches. Ha, ha, ha!

Exit.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**HOARD**

Now, my dear gentlemen, stand firmly to me;  
You know his follies, and my worth.

[LAMPREY]

We do, sir.

[SPITCHCOCK]

But, Master Hoard, are you sure he is not i' th' house now?

**HOARD**

Upon my honesty I chose this time  
A' purpose, fit; the spendthrift is abroad.  
Assist me; here she comes.

[Enter Courtesan.]

Now, my sweet widow.

**COURTESAN**

Y'are welcome, Master Hoard.

**HOARD**

Dispatch, sweet gentlemen, dispatch.  
I am come, widow, to prove those my words  
Neither of envy sprung nor of false tongues,  
But such as their deserts and actions  
Do merit and bring forth, all which these gentlemen,  
Well known and better reputed, will confess.

**COURTESAN**

I cannot tell  
How my affections may dispose of me,  
But surely if they find him so desertless,  
They'll have that reason to withdraw themselves.  
And therefore, gentlemen, I do entreat you,  
As you are fair in reputation  
And in appearing form, so shine in truth.  
I am a widow, and, alas, you know,  
Soon overthrown; 'tis a very small thing  
That we withstand, our weakness is so great.  
Be partial unto neither, but deliver,  
Without affection, your opinion.

**HOARD**

And that will drive it home.

**COURTESAN**

Nay, I beseech your silence, Master Hoard;  
You are a party.

**HOARD**

Widow, not a word!

[LAMPREY]

The better first to work you to belief,  
Know neither of us owe him flattery,  
Nor t'other malice, but unbribed censure,  
So help us our best fortunes.

**COURTESAN**

It suffices.

[LAMPREY]

That Witgood is a riotous, undone man,  
Imperfect both in fame and in estate,  
His debts wealthier than he, and executions  
In wait for his due body, we'll maintain  
With our best credit and our dearest blood.

**COURTESAN**

Nor land nor living, say you? Pray, take heed  
You do not wrong the gentleman!

[LAMPREY]

What we speak  
Our lives and means are ready to make good.

**COURTESAN**

Alas, how soon are we poor souls beguiled!

[SPITCHCOCK]

And for his uncle—

**HOARD**

Let that come to me.  
His uncle, a severe extortioner;  
A tyrant at a forfeiture; greedy of others'  
Miseries; one that would undo his brother,  
Nay, swallow up his father, if he can,  
Within the fathoms of his conscience.

[LAMPREY]

Nay, believe it, widow,  
You had not only matched yourself to wants,  
But in an evil and unnatural stock.

**HOARD**

[Aside] Follow hard, gentlemen, follow hard!

**COURTESAN**

Is my love so deceived? Before you all

III.[i. Another street in London]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

I do renounce him; on my knees I vow  
He ne'er shall marry me.

### WITGOOD

[Appearing] Heaven knows he never meant it!

### HOARD

[Aside to Lamprey] There, take her at the bound.

[LAMPREY]

Then with a new and pure affection,  
Behold yon gentleman, grave, kind, and rich,  
A match worthy yourself; esteeming him,  
You do regard your state.

### HOARD

[Aside to Lamprey] I'll make her a jointure, say.

[LAMPREY]

He can join land to land, and will possess you  
Of what you can desire.

[SPITCHCOCK]

Come, widow, come.

### COURTESAN

The world is so deceitful!

[LAMPREY]

There 'tis deceitful,  
Where flattery, want, and imperfection lies;  
But none of these in him; push!

### COURTESAN

Pray, sir—

[LAMPREY]

Come, you widows are ever most backward when you should do yourselves most good; but were it to marry a chin not worth a hair now, then you would be forward enough! Come, clap hands, a match. [He joins their hands.]

### HOARD

With all my heart, widow. Thanks, gentlemen.  
I will deserve your labour, and thy love.

### COURTESAN

Alas, you love not widows but for wealth!  
I promise you I ha' nothing, sir.

### HOARD

Well said, widow,  
Well said; thy love is all I seek, before

III.[i. Another street in London]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

These gentlemen.

### **COURTESAN**

Now I must hope the best.

### **HOARD**

My joys are such they want to be expressed.

### **COURTESAN**

But, Master Hoard, one thing I must remember you of, before these gentlemen, your friends: how shall I suddenly avoid the loathed soliciting of that perjured Witgood, and his tedious, dissembling uncle, who this [very] day hath appointed a meeting for the same purpose too, where, had not truth come forth, I had been undone, utterly undone.

### **HOARD**

What think you of that, gentlemen?

[LAMPREY]

'Twas well devised.

### **HOARD**

Hark thee, widow: train out young Witgood single; hasten him thither with thee, somewhat before the hour, where, at the place appointed, these gentlemen and myself will wait the opportunity, when, by some sleight removing him from thee, we'll suddenly enter and surprise thee, carry thee away by boat to Cole Harbour, have a priest ready, and there clap it up instantly. How lik'st it, widow?

### **COURTESAN**

In that it pleaseth you, it likes me well.

### **HOARD**

I'll kiss thee for those words. Come, gentlemen;  
Still must I live a suitor to your favours,  
Still to your aid beholding.

[LAMPREY]

We're engaged, sir;  
'Tis for our credits now to see't well ended.

### **HOARD**

'Tis for your honours, gentlemen; nay, look to't;  
[Aside] Not only in joy, but I in wealth excel.—  
No more sweet widow, but sweet wife, farewell.

### **COURTESAN**

Farewell, sir.

Exeunt [Hoard, Lamprey and Spitchcock]. Enter Witgood.

### **WITGOOD**

Oh, for more scope! I could laugh eternally! Give you joy, Mistress Hoard; I promise your fortune was good, forsooth; y'ave fell upon wealth enough, and there's young gentlemen enow can help you to the rest. Now it

III.[i. Another street in London]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

requires our wits; carry thyself but heedfully now, and we are both—

[Enter Host.]

**HOST**

Master Witgood, your uncle.

**WITGOOD**

Cuds me! Remove thyself a while; I'll serve for him.

[Exeunt Courtesan and Host.] Enter Lucre.

**LUCRE**

Nephew, good morrow, nephew.

**WITGOOD**

The same to you, kind uncle.

**LUCRE**

How fares the widow? Does the meeting hold?

**WITGOOD**

Oh, no question of that, sir.

**LUCRE**

I'll strike the stroke, then, for thee; no more days.

**WITGOOD**

The sooner the better, uncle. Oh, she's mightily followed!

**LUCRE**

And yet so little rumoured!

**WITGOOD**

Mightily! Here comes one old gentleman, and he'll make her a jointure of three hundred a year, forsooth; another wealthy suitor will estate his son in his lifetime, and make him weigh down the widow; here a merchant's son will possess her with no less than three goodly lordships at once, which were all pawns to his father.

**LUCRE**

Peace, nephew, let me hear no more of 'em; it mads me. Thou shalt prevent 'em all. No words to the widow of my coming hither. Let me see. 'Tis now upon nine; before twelve, nephew, we will have the bargain struck, we will, i'faith, boy.

**WITGOOD**

Oh, my precious uncle!

Exit [with Lucre].

[III.ii. Hoard's house, London]

[Enter] Hoard and his Niece.

**HOARD**

III.[i. Another street in London]



## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Niece, sweet niece, prithee, have a care to my house; I leave all to thy discretion. Be content to dream awhile; I'll have a husband for thee shortly; put that care upon me, wench, for in choosing wives and husbands I am only fortunate; I have that gift given me.

Exit.

### **NIECE**

But 'tis not likely you should choose for me,  
Since nephew to your chiefest enemy  
Is he whom I affect; but, oh, forgetful!  
Why dost thou flatter thy affections so,  
With name of him that for a widow's bed  
Neglects thy purer love? Can [it] be so,  
Or does report dissemble?

[Enter George.]

How now, sir?

### **GEORGE**

A letter, with which came a private charge.

### **NIECE**

Therein I thank your care.

[Exit George.]

I know this hand. [Reads] "Dearer than sight, what the world reports of me, yet believe not; rumour will alter shortly. Be thou constant; I am still the same that I was in love, and I hope to be the same in fortunes. Theodorus Witgood."

I am resolved; no more shall fear or doubt  
Raise their pale powers to keep affection out.

Exit.

[III.iii. A tavern, London]

Enter, with a Drawer, Hoard and two Gentlemen [Lamprey and Spitchcock].

### **DRAWER**

You're very welcome, gentlemen. Dick, show those gentlemen the Pomegranate, there.

### **HOARD**

Hist!

### **DRAWER**

Up those stairs, gentlemen.

### **HOARD**

Pist! Drawer--

### **DRAWER**

III.[i. Another street in London]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

Anon, sir.

**HOARD**

Prithee, ask at the bar if a gentlewoman came not in lately.

**DRAWER**

William, at the bar, did you see any gentlewoman come in lately? Speak you ay, speak you no?

**WILLIAM**

[Within] No, none came in yet but Mistress Florence.

**DRAWER**

He says none came in yet, sir, but one Mistress Florence.

**HOARD**

What is that Florence? A widow?

**DRAWER**

Yes, a Dutch widow.

**HOARD**

How?

**DRAWER**

That's an English drab, sir; give your worship good morrow.

[Exit.]

**HOARD**

A merry knave, i'faith! I shall remember a Dutch widow the longest day of my life.

[LAMPREY]

Did not I use most art to win the widow?

[SPITCHCOCK]

You shall pardon me for that, sir; Master Hoard knows I took her at best vantage.

**HOARD**

What's that, sweet gentlemen, what's that?

[SPITCHCOCK]

He will needs bear me down that his art only wrought with the widow most.

**HOARD**

Oh, you did both well, gentlemen, you did both well, I thank you.

[LAMPREY]

I was the first that moved her.

**HOARD**

You were, i'faith.

III.[i. Another street in London]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

[SPITCHCOCK]

But it was I that took her at the bound.

**HOARD**

Ay, that was you; faith, gentlemen, 'tis right.

[LAMPREY]

I boasted least, but 'twas I joined their hands.

**HOARD**

By th' mass, I think he did. You did all well,  
Gentlemen, you did all well; contend no more.

[LAMPREY]

Come, yon room's fittest.

**HOARD**

True, 'tis next the door.

Exit [with Lamprey and Spitchcock]. Enter Witgood, Courtesan, [Drawer] and Host.

**DRAWER**

You're very welcome; please you to walk upstairs, cloth's laid, sir.

**COURTESAN**

Upstairs? Troth, I am weary, Master Witgood.

**WITGOOD**

Rest yourself here awhile, widow; we'll have a cup of muscadine in this little room.

**DRAWER**

A cup of muscadine? You shall have the best, sir.

**WITGOOD**

But, do you hear, sirrah?

**DRAWER**

Do you call? Anon, sir.

**WITGOOD**

What is there provided for dinner?

**DRAWER**

I cannot readily tell you, sir; if you please, you may go into the kitchen and see yourself, sir; many gentlemen of worship do use to do it, I assure you, sir.

[Exit.]

**HOST**

A pretty familiar priggish rascal, he has his part without book!

III.[i. Another street in London]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**WITGOOD**

Against you are ready to drink to me, widow, I'll be present to pledge you.

**COURTESAN**

Nay, I commend your care, 'tis done well of you.

[Exit Witgood.]

['Las], what have I forgot!

**HOST**

What, mistress?

**COURTESAN**

I slipped my wedding ring off when I washed, and left it at my lodging; prithee run, I shall be sad without it.

[Exit Host.]

So, he's gone! Boy!

[Enter Boy.]

**BOY**

Anon, forsooth.

**COURTESAN**

Come hither, sirrah: learn secretly if one Master Hoard, an ancient gentleman, be about house.

**BOY**

I heard such a one named.

**COURTESAN**

Commend me to him.

Enter Hoard with Gentlemen [Lamprey and Spitchcock].

**HOARD**

I'll do thy commendations!

**COURTESAN**

Oh, you come well; away, to boat, begone.

**HOARD**

Thus wise men are revenged, give two for one.

Exeunt. Enter Witgood and Vintner.

**WITGOOD**

I must request

You, sir, to show extraordinary care;

III.[i. Another street in London]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

My uncle comes with gentlemen, his friends,  
And 'tis upon a making.

**VINTNER**

Is it so?  
I'll give a special charge, good Master Witgood.  
May I be bold to see her?

**WITGOOD**

Who, [the] widow?  
With all my heart, i'faith, I'll bring you to her!

**VINTNER**

If she be a Staffordshire gentlewoman, 'tis much if I know her not.

**WITGOOD**

How now? Boy, drawer!

**VINTNER**

Hie!

[Enter Boy.]

**BOY**

Do you call, sir?

**WITGOOD**

Went the gentlewoman up that was here?

**BOY**

Up, sir? She went out, sir.

**WITGOOD**

Out, sir?

**BOY**

Out, sir; one Master Hoard with a guard of gentlemen carried her out at back door, a pretty while since, sir.

**WITGOOD**

Hoard? Death and darkness, Hoard?

Enter Host.

**HOST**

The devil of ring I can find!

**WITGOOD**

How now, what news? Where's the widow?

**HOST**

My mistress? Is she not here, sir?

Ill.[i. Another street in London]

**WITGOOD**

More madness yet.

**HOST**

She sent me for a ring.

**WITGOOD**

A plot, a plot! To boat! She's stole away!

**HOST**

What?

Enter Lucre with Gentlemen.

**WITGOOD**

Follow, enquire old Hoard, my uncle's adversary!

[Exit Host.]

**LUCRE**

Nephew, what's that?

**WITGOOD**

Thrice miserable wretch!

**LUCRE**

Why, what's the matter?

**VINTNER**

The widow's borne away, sir.

**LUCRE**

Ha? Passion of me! A heavy welcome, gentlemen.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

The widow gone?

**LUCRE**

Who durst attempt it?

**WITGOOD**

Who but old Hoard, my uncle's adversary?

**LUCRE**

How!

**WITGOOD**

With his confederates.

**LUCRE**

III.[i. Another street in London]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

Hoard, my deadly enemy! Gentlemen, stand to me,  
I will not bear it, 'tis in hate of me;  
That villain seeks my shame, nay, [thirsts] my blood;  
He owes me mortal malice.  
I'll spend my wealth on this despiteful plot,  
Ere he shall cross me and my nephew thus.

**WITGOOD**

So maliciously.

Enter Host.

**LUCRE**

How now, you treacherous rascal?

**HOST**

That's none of my name, sir.

**WITGOOD**

Poor soul, he knew not on't.

**LUCRE**

I'm sorry. I see then 'twas a mere plot.

**HOST**

I traced 'em nearly—

**LUCRE**

Well?

**HOST**

And hear for certain  
They have took Cole Harbour.

**LUCRE**

The devil's sanctuary!  
They shall not rest, I'll pluck her from his arms.  
Kind and dear gentlemen,  
If ever I had seat within your breasts—

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

No more, good sir; it is a wrong to us  
To see you injured; in a cause so just  
We'll spend our lives, but we will right our friends.

**LUCRE**

Honest and kind! Come, we have delayed too long:  
Nephew, take comfort; a just cause is strong.

**WITGOOD**

That's all my comfort, uncle.

III.[i. Another street in London]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

Exeunt [Lucre, Gentlemen, Host, Vintner, and Boy].

Ha, ha, ha!

Now may events fall luckily and well:

He that ne'er strives, says wit, shall ne'er excel.

Exit.

[III.iv. Dampit's House, London]

Enter Dampit the usurer, drunk.

**DAMPIT**

When did I say my prayers? In anno '88, when the great armada was coming; and in anno '99, when the great thundering and [lightning] was, I prayed heartily then, i'faith, to overthrow Poovies' new buildings; I kneeled by my great iron chest, I remember.

[Enter Audrey.]

**AUDREY**

Master Dampit, one may hear you before they see you; you keep sweet hours, Master Dampit; we were all abed three hours ago.

**DAMPIT**

Audrey?

**AUDREY**

Oh, y'are a fine gentleman.

**DAMPIT**

So I am, i'faith, and a fine scholar. Do you use to go to [bed] so early, Audrey?

**AUDREY**

Call you this early, Master Dampit?

**DAMPIT**

Why, is't not one of clock i' th' morning? Is not that early enough? Fetch me a glass of fresh beer.

**AUDREY**

Here, I have warmed your nightcap for you, Master Dampit.

**DAMPIT**

Draw it on then. I am very weak, truly; I have not eaten so much as the bulk of an egg these three days.

**AUDREY**

You have drunk the more, Master Dampit.

**DAMPIT**

What's that?

**AUDREY**

You mought, an you would, Master Dampit.

III.[i. Another street in London]



## A Trick to Catch the Old One

**DAMPIT**

I answer you I cannot. Hold your prating; you prate too much and understand too little. Are you answered? Give me a glass of beer.

**AUDREY**

May I ask you how you do, Master Dampit?

**DAMPIT**

How do I? I'faith, naught.

**AUDREY**

I never knew you do otherwise.

**DAMPIT**

I eat not one penn'ort' of bread these two years. Give me a glass of fresh beer. I am not sick, nor I am not well.

**AUDREY**

Take this warm napkin about your neck, sir, whilst I help to make you unready.

**DAMPIT**

How now, Audrey-prater, with your scurvy devices, what say you now?

**AUDREY**

What say I, Master Dampit? I say nothing but that you are very weak.

**DAMPIT**

Faith, thou hast more coney-catching devices than all London!

**AUDREY**

Why, Master Dampit, I never deceived you in all my life!

**DAMPIT**

Why was that? Because I never did trust thee.

**AUDREY**

I care not what you say, Master Dampit!

**DAMPIT**

Hold thy prating. I answer thee, thou art a beggar, a quean, and a bawd; are you answered?

**AUDREY**

Fie, Master Dampit! A gentleman, and have such words?

**DAMPIT**

Why, thou base drudge of infortunity, thou kitchen-stuff drab of beggary, roguery and coxcombry, thou cavernesed quean of foolery, knavery and bawdreaminy, I'll tell thee what, I will not give a louse for thy fortunes.

**AUDREY**

No, Master Dampit? And there's a gentleman comes a-wooing to me, and he doubts nothing but that you will get me from him.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**DAMPIT**

I? If I would either have thee or lie with thee for two thousand pound, would I might be damned! Why, thou base, impudent quean of foolery, flattery and coxcombry, are you answered?

**AUDREY**

Come, will you rise and go to bed, sir?

**DAMPIT**

Rise, and go to bed too, Audrey? How does [Mistress] Proserpine?

**AUDREY**

Fooh--

**DAMPIT**

She's as fine a philosopher of a stinkard's wife as any within the liberties. Fah, fah, Audrey!

**AUDREY**

How now, Master Dampit?

**DAMPIT**

Fie upon't, what a choice of stinks [is here]! What hast thou done, Audrey? Fie upon't, here's a choice of stinks indeed! Give me a glass of fresh beer, and then I will to bed.

**AUDREY**

It waits for you above, sir.

**DAMPIT**

Foh! I think they burn horns in Barnard's Inn; if ever I smelt such an abominable stink, usury forsake me.

[Exit.]

**AUDREY**

They be the stinking nails of his trampling feet, and he talks of burning of horns.

Exit.

**IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]**

Enter at Cole Harbour, Hoard, [Courtesan as] the Widow, and Gentlemen [Lamprey and Spitchcock], he married now.

[LAMPREY]

Join hearts, join hands,  
In wedlock's bands,  
Never to part  
Till death cleave your heart;  
You shall forsake all other women;  
You lords, knights, gentlemen and yeomen.  
What my tongue slips,  
Make up with your lips.

**HOARD**

Give you joy, Mistress Hoard; let the kiss come about.

[Knocking]

Who knocks? Convey my little pig-eater out.

**LUCRE**

[Within] Hoard!

**HOARD**

Upon my life, my adversary, gentlemen.

**LUCRE**

[Within] Hoard, open the door, or we will force it open:  
Give us the widow.

**HOARD**

Gentlemen, keep 'em out.

**LAMPREY**

He comes upon his death that enters here.

**LUCRE**

[Within] My friends assist me.

**HOARD**

He has assistants, gentlemen.

**LAMPREY**

Tut, nor him, nor them, we in this action fear.

**LUCRE**

[Within] Shall I, in peace, speak one word with the widow?

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**COURTESAN**

Husband and gentlemen, hear me but a word.

**HOARD**

Freely, sweet wife.

**COURTESAN**

Let him in peaceably;  
You know we're sure from any act of his.

**HOARD**

Most true.

[COURTESAN]

You may stand by and smile at his old weakness;  
Let me alone to answer him.

**HOARD**

Content,  
'Twill be good mirth, i'faith; how think you, gentlemen?

**LAMPREY**

Good gullery!

**HOARD**

Upon calm conditions let him in.

**LUCRE**

[Within] All spite and malice--

**LAMPREY**

Hear me, Master Lucre:  
So you will vow a peaceful entrance  
With those your friends, and only exercise  
Calm conference with the widow, without fury,  
The passage shall receive you.

**LUCRE**

[Within] I do vow it.

**LAMPREY**

Then enter and talk freely, here she stands.

Enter Lucre[, Gentlemen and Host].

**LUCRE**

Oh, Master Hoard, your spite has watched the hour;  
You're excellent at vengeance, Master Hoard.

**HOARD**

Ha, ha, ha!

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

**LUCRE**

I am the fool you laugh at:  
You are wise, sir, and know the seasons well.  
Come hither, widow: why is it thus?  
Oh, you have done me infinite disgrace,  
And your own credit no small injury!  
Suffer mine enemy so despitefully  
To bear you from my nephew! Oh, I had  
Rather half my substance had been forfeit,  
And begged by some starved rascal!

**COURTESAN**

Why, what would you wish me do, sir?  
I must not overthrow my state for love:  
We have too many precedents for that;  
From thousands of our wealthy undone widows  
One may derive some wit. I do confess,  
I loved your nephew, nay, I did affect him,  
Against the mind and liking of my friend[s];  
Believed his promises, lay here in hope  
Of flattered living, and the boast of lands:  
Coming to touch his wealth and state indeed,  
It appears dross; I find him not the man,  
Imperfect, mean, scarce furnished of his needs;  
In words, fair lordships, in performance, hovels:  
Can any woman love the thing that is not?

**LUCRE**

Broke you for this?

**COURTESAN**

Was it not cause too much?  
Send to enquire his state: most part of it  
Lay two years mortgaged in his uncle's hands.

**LUCRE**

Why, say it did, you might have known my mind;  
I could have soon restored it.

**COURTESAN**

Ay, had I but seen any such thing performed,  
Why, 'twould have tied my affection, and contained  
Me in my first desires: do you think, i'faith,  
That I could twine such a dry oak as this,  
Had promise in your nephew took effect?

**LUCRE**

Why, and there's no time past; and rather than  
My adversary should thus thwart my hopes,  
I would—

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

### **COURTESAN**

Tut, y've been ever full of golden speech.  
If words were lands, your nephew would be rich.

### **LUCRE**

Widow, believe it, I vow by my best bliss,  
Before these gentlemen, I will give in  
The mortgage to my nephew instantly,  
Before I sleep or eat.

### **FIRST GENTLEMAN**

We'll pawn our credits,  
Widow, what he speaks shall be performed  
In fullness.

### **LUCRE**

Nay, more: I will estate him  
In farder blessings: he shall be my heir.  
I have no son;  
I'll bind myself to that condition.

### **COURTESAN**

When I shall hear this done, I shall soon yield  
To reasonable terms.

### **LUCRE**

In the mean season,  
Will you protest, before these gentlemen,  
To keep yourself as you are now at this present?

### **COURTESAN**

I do protest before these gentlemen,  
I will be as clear then as I am now.

### **LUCRE**

I do believe you. Here's your own honest servant,  
I'll take him along with me.

### **COURTESAN**

Ay, with all my heart.

### **LUCRE**

He shall see all performed and bring you word.

### **COURTESAN**

That's all I wait for.

### **HOARD**

What, have you finished, Master Lucre? Ha, ha, ha, ha!

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**LUCRE**

So laugh, Hoard, laugh at your poor enemy, do;  
The wind may turn, you may be laughed at too.  
Yes, marry, may you, sir. Ha, ha, ha!

Exeunt [Lucre, Gentlemen, and Host].

**HOARD**

Ha, ha, ha! If every man that swells in malice  
Could be revenged as happily as I,  
He would choose hate and forswear amity.  
What did he say, wife, prithee?

**COURTESAN**

Faith, spoke to ease his mind.

**HOARD**

Oh, oh, oh!

**COURTESAN**

You know now little to any purpose.

**HOARD**

True, true, true.

**COURTESAN**

He would do mountains now.

**HOARD**

Ay, ay, ay, ay.

**LAMPREY**

Y'ave struck him dead, Master Hoard.

**SPITCHCOCK**

Ay, and his nephew desperate.

**HOARD**

I know't, sirs, ay.  
Never did man so crush his enemy!

[IV.ii. A room in Lucre's house]

Enter Lucre with Gentlemen [and Host], meeting Sam Freedom.

**LUCRE**

My son-in-law, Sam Freedom! Where's my nephew?

**SAM**

O man in lamentation, father!

**LUCRE**

How?

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**SAM**

He thumps his breast like a gallant dicer that has lost his doublet, and stands in's shirt to do penance.

**LUCRE**

Alas, poor gentleman.

**SAM**

I warrant you may hear him sigh in a still evening to your house at Highgate.

**LUCRE**

I prithee, send him in.

**SAM**

Were it to do a greater matter, I will not stick with you, sir, in regard you married my mother.

[Exit.]

**LUCRE**

Sweet gentlemen, cheer him up; I will but fetch the mortgage, and return to you instantly.

Exit.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

We'll do our best, sir.

[Enter Witgood.]

See where he comes,  
E'en joyless and regardless of all form.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

Why, how, Master Witgood? Fie, you a firm scholar, and an understanding gentleman, and give your best parts to passion?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Come, fie!

**WITGOOD**

Oh, gentlemen—

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Sorrow of me, what a sigh was there, sir!  
Nine such widows are not worth it.

**WITGOOD**

To be borne from me by that lecher, Hoard!

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

That vengeance is your uncle's, being done  
More in despite to him, than wrong to you.

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]



A Trick to Catch the Old One

But we bring comfort now.

**WITGOOD**

I beseech you, gentlemen--

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

Cheer thyself, man, there's hope of her, i'faith!

**WITGOOD**

Too gladsome to be true.

Enter Lucre.

**LUCRE**

Nephew, what cheer?

Alas, poor gentleman, how art thou changed!

Call thy fresh blood into thy cheeks again:

She comes--

**WITGOOD**

Nothing afflicts me so much

But that it is your adversary, uncle,

And merely plotted in despite of you.

**LUCRE**

Ay, that's it mads me, spites me! I'll spend my wealth ere he shall carry her so, because I know 'tis only to spite me. Ay, this is it. Here, nephew [gives him a paper], before these kind gentlemen I deliver in your mortgage, my promise to the widow; see, 'tis done. Be wise, you're once more master of your own; the widow shall perceive now you are not altogether such a beggar as the world reposes you: you can make shift to bring her to three hundred a year, sir.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Berlady, and that's no toy, sir.

**LUCRE**

A word, nephew.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

[To Host] Now you may certify the widow.

**LUCRE**

You must conceive it aright, nephew, now;

To do you good I am content to do this.

**WITGOOD**

I know it, sir.

**LUCRE**

But your own conscience can tell I had it

Dearly enough of you.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**WITGOOD**

Ay, that's most certain.

**LUCRE**

Much money laid out, beside many a journey  
To fetch the rent; I hope you'll think on't, nephew.

**WITGOOD**

I were worse than a beast else, i'faith.

**LUCRE**

Although to blind the widow and the world  
I out of policy do't, yet there's a conscience, nephew.

**WITGOOD**

Heaven forbid else!

**LUCRE**

When you are full possessed,  
'Tis nothing to return it.

**WITGOOD**

Alas, a thing quickly done, uncle.

**LUCRE**

Well said! You know I give it you but in trust.

**WITGOOD**

Pray let me understand you rightly, uncle:  
You give it me but in trust?

**LUCRE**

No.

**WITGOOD**

That is, you trust me with it.

**LUCRE**

True, true.

**WITGOOD**

[Aside] But if ever I trust you with it again, would I might be trussed up for my labour!

**LUCRE**

You can all witness, gentlemen, and you, sir yeoman?

**HOST**

My life for yours, sir, now I know my mistress's mind too well toward your nephew; let things be in preparation and I'll train her hither in most excellent fashion.

Exit.

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**LUCRE**

A good old boy. Wife, [Jinny]!

Enter Wife.

**WIFE**

What's the news, sir?

**LUCRE**

The wedding day's at hand: prithee, sweet wife, express thy housewifery; thou'rt a fine cook, I know't; thy first husband married thee out of an alderman's kitchen; go to, he raised thee for raising of paste. What! Here's none but friends; most of our beginnings must be winked at. Gentlemen, I invite you all to my nephew's wedding against Thursday morning.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

With all our hearts, and we shall joy to see  
Your enemy so mocked.

**LUCRE**

He laughed at me,  
Gentleman; ha, ha, ha!

Exeunt [all but Witgood].

**WITGOOD**

He had no conscience, faith,  
Would laugh at them; they laugh at one another!  
Who then can be so cruel? Troth, not I;  
I rather pity now than aught envy.  
I do conceive such joy in mine own happiness,  
I have no leisure yet to laugh at their follies.  
Thou soul of my estate I kiss thee,  
I miss life's comfort when I miss thee.  
Oh, never will we part again,  
Until I leave the sight of men.  
We'll ne'er trust conscience of own kin,  
Since cozenage brings that title in.

[Exit.]

[IV.iii. A street in London]

Enter three Creditors.

**FIRST CREDITOR**

I'll wait these seven hours but I'll see him caught.

**SECOND CREDITOR**

Faith, so will I.

**THIRD CREDITOR**

Hang him, prodigal, he's stripped of the widow.

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

A' my troth, she's the wiser; she has made the happier choice; and I wonder of what stuff those widows' hearts are made of, that will marry unfledged boys before comely thrum-chinned gentlemen.

Enter a Boy.

### **BOY**

News, news, news!

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

What, boy?

### **BOY**

The rioter is caught.

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

So, so, so, so! It warms me at the heart; I love a' life to see dogs upon men. Oh, here he comes.

Enter Witgood with Sergeants.

### **WITGOOD**

My last joy was so great it took away the sense of future afflictions. What a day is here o'ercast! How soon a black tempest rises!

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

Oh, we may speak with you now, sir! What's become of your rich widow? I think you may cast your cap at the widow, may you not, sir?

### **SECOND CREDITOR**

He a rich widow? Who, a prodigal, a daily rioter, and a nightly vomiter? He a widow of account? He a hole i' th' Counter!

### **WITGOOD**

You do well, my masters, to tyrannize over misery, to afflict the afflicted; 'tis a custom you have here amongst you; I would wish you never leave it, and I hope you'll do as I bid you.

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

Come, come, sir, what say you extempore now to your bill of a hundred pound? A sweet debt, for frotting your doublets.

### **SECOND CREDITOR**

Here's mine of forty.

### **THIRD CREDITOR**

Here's mine of fifty.

### **WITGOOD**

Pray, sirs, you'll give me breath?

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

No, sir, we'll keep you out of breath still; then we shall be sure you will not run away from us.

### WITGOOD

Will you but hear me speak?

### SECOND CREDITOR

You shall pardon us for that, sir; we know you have too fair a tongue of your own: you overcame us too lately, a shame take you! We are like to lose all that for want of witnesses; we dealt in policy then: always when we strive to be most politic we proved most coxcombs; non plus ultra. I perceive by us we're not ordained to thrive by wisdom, and therefore we must be content to be tradesmen.

### WITGOOD

Give me but reasonable time, and I protest I'll make you ample satisfaction.

### FIRST CREDITOR

Do you talk of reasonable time to us?

### WITGOOD

'Tis true, beasts know no reasonable time.

### SECOND CREDITOR

We must have either money or carcass.

### WITGOOD

Alas, what good will my carcass do you?

### THIRD CREDITOR

Oh, 'tis a secret delight we have amongst us! We that are used to keep birds in cages, have the heart to keep men in prison, I warrant you.

### WITGOOD

[Aside] I perceive I must crave a little more aid from my wits: do but make shift for me this once, and I'll forswear ever to trouble you in the like fashion hereafter; I'll have better employment for you, an I live.—You'll give me leave, my masters, to make trial of my friends and raise all means I can?

### FIRST CREDITOR

That's our desires, sir.

Enter Host.

### HOST

Master Witgood.

### WITGOOD

Oh, art thou come?

### HOST

May I speak one word with you in private, sir?

### WITGOOD

No, by my faith, canst thou; I am in hell here, and the devils will not let me come to thee.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

[FIRST CREDITOR]

Do you call us devils? You shall find us Puritans.

[SECOND CREDITOR]

Bear him away; let 'em talk as they go; we'll not stand to hear 'em.

[THIRD CREDITOR]

Ah, sir, am I a devil? I shall think the better of myself as long as I live: a devil, i'faith!

Exeunt.

[IV.iv. A room in Hoard's house]

Enter Hoard.

**HOARD**

What a sweet blessing hast thou, Master Hoard, above a multitude! Wilt thou never be thankful? How dost thou think to be blest another time? Or dost thou count this the full measure of thy happiness? By my troth, I think thou dost: not only a wife large in possessions, but spacious in content: she's rich, she's young, she's fair, she's [wise]; when I wake, I think of her lands—that revives me; when I go to bed, I dream of her beauty—and that's enough for me; she's worth four hundred a year in her very smock, if a man knew how to use it. But the journey will be all, in troth, into the country; to ride to her lands in state and order following my brother and other worshipful gentlemen, whose companies I ha' sent down for already, to ride along with us in their goodly decorum beards, their broad velvet cassocks, and chains of gold twice or thrice double; against which time I'll entertain some ten men of mine own into liveries, all of occupations or qualities: I will not keep an idle man about me; the sight of which will so vex my adversary Lucre—for we'll pass by his door of purpose, make a little stand for [the] nonce, and have our horses curvet before [the] window—certainly he will never endure it, but run up and hang himself presently!

[Enter Arthur.]

How now, sirrah, what news? Any that offer their service to me yet?

[ARTHUR]

Yes, sir, there are some i' th' hall that wait for your worship's liking, and desire to be entertained.

**HOARD**

Are they of occupation?

[ARTHUR]

They are men fit for your worship, sir.

**HOARD**

Say'st so? Send 'em all in!

[Exit Arthur.]

To see ten men ride after me in watchet liveries, with orange-tawny capes, 'twill cut his comb, i'faith.

Enter all [Tailor, Barber, Perfumer, Falconer, and Huntsman].

How now? Of what occupation are you, sir?

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

### **TAILOR**

A tailor, an't please your worship.

### **HOARD**

A tailor? Oh, very good: you shall serve to make all the liveries. What are you, sir?

### **BARBER**

A barber, sir.

### **HOARD**

A barber? Very needful: you shall shave all the house, and, if need require, stand for a reaper i' th' summer time. You, sir?

### **PERFUMER**

A perfumer.

### **HOARD**

I smelt you before. Perfumers, of all men, had need carry themselves uprightly, for if they were once knaves they would be smelt out quickly. To you, sir?

### **FALCONER**

A falconer, an't please your worship.

### **HOARD**

Sa ho, sa ho, sa ho! And you, sir?

### **HUNTSMAN**

A huntsman, sir.

### **HOARD**

There, boy, there, boy, there, boy! I am not so old but I have pleasant days to come. I promise you, my masters, I take such a good liking to you, that I entertain you all; I put you already into my countenance, and you shall be shortly in my livery; but especially you two, my jolly falconer and my bonny huntsman, we shall have most need of you at my wife's manor houses i' th' country; there's goodly parks and champion grounds for you; we shall have all our sports within ourselves; all the gentlemen o' th' country shall be beholding to us and our pastimes.

### **FALCONER**

And we'll make you[r] worship admire, sir.

### **HOARD**

Say'st thou so? Do but make me admire, and thou shalt want for nothing. My tailor!

### **TAILOR**

Anon, sir.

### **HOARD**

Go presently in hand with the liveries.

### **TAILOR**

I will, sir.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**HOARD**

My barber.

**BARBER**

Here, sir.

**HOARD**

Make 'em all trim fellows, louse 'em well—especially my huntsman—and cut all their beards of the Polonian fashion. My perfumer.

**PERFUMER**

Under your nose, sir.

**HOARD**

Cast a better savour upon the knaves, to take away the scent of my tailor's feet, and my barber's lotium—water.

**PERFUMER**

It shall be carefully performed, sir.

**HOARD**

But you, my falconer and huntsman, the welcom'st men alive, i'faith!

**HUNTSMAN**

And we'll show you that, sir, shall deserve your worship's favour.

**HOARD**

I prithee, show me that. Go, you knaves all, and wash your lungs i' th' buttery, go.

[Exeunt Tailor, Barber, Perfumer, Falconer, and Huntsman.]

By th' mass, and well remembered, I'll ask my wife that question. Wife, Mistress Jane Hoard!

Enter Courtesan, altered in apparel.

**COURTESAN**

Sir, would you with me?

**HOARD**

I would but know, sweet wife, which might stand best to thy liking, to have the wedding dinner kept here or i' th' country?

**COURTESAN**

Hum! Faith, sir, 'twould like me better here; here you were married, here let all rites be ended.

**HOARD**

Could a marquess give a better answer? Hoard, bear thy head aloft, thou'st a wife will advance it.

[Enter Host with a letter.]

What haste comes here now? [Yea], a letter? Some dreg of my adversary's malice. Come hither; what's the news?



A Trick to Catch the Old One

**HOST**

A thing that concerns my mistress, sir. [Gives letter to Courtesan.]

**HOARD**

Why then it concerns me, knave!

**HOST**

Ay, and you, knave, too (cry your worship mercy): you are both like to come into trouble, I promise you, sir: a precontract.

**HOARD**

How? A precontract, say'st thou?

**HOST**

I fear they have too much proof on't, sir. Old Lucre, he runs mad up and down, and will to law as fast as he can; young Witgood laid hold on by his creditors, he exclaims upon you a't'other side, says you have wrought his undoing by the injurious detaining of his contract.

**HOARD**

Body a' me!

**HOST**

He will have utmost satisfaction;  
The law shall give him recompense, he says.

**COURTESAN**

[Aside] Alas, his creditors so merciless! My state being yet uncertain, I deem it not unconscionable to further him.

**HOST**

True, sir—

**HOARD**

Wife, what says that letter? Let me construe it.

**COURTESAN**

Curst be my rash and unadvised words! [Tears and treads on letter.]  
I'll set my foot upon my tongue,  
And tread my inconsiderate grant to dust.

**HOARD**

Wife—

**HOST**

[Aside] A pretty shift, i'faith! I commend a woman when she can make away a letter from her husband handsomely, and this was cleanly done, by my troth.

**COURTESAN**

I did, sir!  
Some foolish words I must confess did pass,  
Which now litigiously he fastens on me.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**HOARD**

Of what force? Let me examine 'em.

**COURTESAN**

Too strong, I fear: would I were well freed of him!

**HOARD**

Shall I compound?

**COURTESAN**

No, sir, I'd have it done some nobler way  
Of your side; I'd have you come off with honour;  
Let baseness keep with them. Why, have you not  
The means, sir? The occasion's offered you.

**HOARD**

Where? How, dear wife?

**COURTESAN**

He is now caught by his creditors; the slave's needy, his debts petty; he'll rather bind himself to all inconveniences than rot in prison; by this only means you may get a release from him. 'Tis not yet come to his uncle's hearing; send speedily for the creditors; by this time he's desperate, he'll set his hand to anything: take order for his debts, or discharge 'em quite: a pax on him, let's be rid of a rascal!

**HOARD**

Excellent!  
Thou dost astonish me. [To Host] Go, run, make haste;  
Bring both the creditors and Witgood hither.

**HOST**

[Aside] This will be some revenge yet.

[Exit.]

**HOARD**

In the mean space I'll have a release drawn. Within there!

[Enter Arthur.]

**[ARTHUR]**

Sir?

**HOARD**

Sirrah, come take directions; go to my scrivener.

**COURTESAN**

[Aside] I'm yet like those whose riches lie in dreams;  
If I be waked, they're false; such is my fate,  
Who ventures deeper than the desperate state.  
Though I have sinned, yet could I become new,

A Trick to Catch the Old One

For, where I once vow, I am ever true.

**HOARD**

Away, dispatch; on my displeasure, quickly.

[Exit Arthur.]

Happy occasion! Pray heaven he be in the right vein now to set his hand to't, that nothing alter him; grant that all his follies may meet in him at once, to besot him enough! I pray for him, i'faith, and here he comes.

[Enter Witgood and Creditors.]

**WITGOOD**

What would you with me now, my uncle's spiteful adversary?

**HOARD**

Nay, I am friends.

**WITGOOD**

Ay, when your mischief's spent.

**HOARD**

I heard you were arrested.

**WITGOOD**

Well, what then?

You will pay none of my debts, I am sure.

**HOARD**

A wise man cannot tell;  
There may be those conditions 'greed upon  
May move me to do much.

**WITGOOD**

Ay, when?  
[To Courtesan] 'Tis thou, perjured woman—oh, no name  
Is vild enough to match thy treachery!—  
That art the cause of my confusion.

**COURTESAN**

Out, you penurious slave!

**HOARD**

Nay, wife, you are too froward;  
Let him alone; give losers leave to talk.

**WITGOOD**

Shall I remember thee of another promise  
Far stronger than the first?

**COURTESAN**

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

I'd fain know that.

**WITGOOD**

'Twould call shame to thy cheeks.

**COURTESAN**

Shame!

**WITGOOD**

Hark in your ear.

[Takes Courtesan aside] Will he come off, think'st thou, and pay my debts roundly?

**COURTESAN**

Doubt nothing; there's a release a-drawing and all, to which you must set your hand.

**WITGOOD**

Excellent!

**COURTESAN**

But methinks, i'faith, you might have made some shift to discharge this yourself, having in the mortgage, and never have burdened my conscience with it.

**WITGOOD**

A' my troth, I could not, for my creditors' cruelties extend to the present.

**COURTESAN**

No more.—

Why, do your worst for that, I defy you.

**WITGOOD**

Y'are impudent: I'll call up witnesses.

**COURTESAN**

Call up thy wits, for thou hast been devoted  
To follies a long time.

**HOARD**

Wife, y'are too bitter.

Master Witgood, and you, my masters, you shall hear a mild speech come from me now, and this it is: 't 'as been my fortune, gentlemen, to have an extraordinary blessing poured upon me a'late, and here she stands; I have wedded her and bedded her, and yet she is little the worse. Some foolish words she hath passed to you in the country, and some peevish debts you owe here in the city; set the hare's head to the goose-giblet: release you her of her words, and I'll release you of your debts, sir.

**WITGOOD**

Would you so? I thank you for that, sir; I cannot blame you, i'faith.

**HOARD**

Why, are not debts better than words, sir?

**WITGOOD**

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Are not words promises, and are not promises debts, sir?

### **HOARD**

He plays at back-racket with me.

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

Come hither, Master Witgood, come hither; be ruled by fools once.

[The Creditors take Witgood aside.]

### **SECOND CREDITOR**

We are citizens, and know what belong to't.

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

Take hold his offer; pax on her, let her go. If your debts were once discharged, I would help you to a widow myself worth ten of her.

### **THIRD CREDITOR**

Mass, partner, and now you remember me on't, there's Master Mulligrub's sister newly fallen a widow.

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

Cuds me, as pat as can be! There's a widow left for you, ten thousand in money, beside plate, jewels, et cetera; I warrant it a match; we can do all in all with her. Prithee dispatch; we'll carry thee to her presently.

### **WITGOOD**

My uncle will never endure me, when he shall hear I set my hand to a release.

### **SECOND CREDITOR**

Hark, I'll tell thee a trick for that. I have spent five hundred pound in suits in my time; I should be wise. Thou'rt now a prisoner; make a release; take't of my word, whatsoever a man makes as long as he is in durance, 'tis nothing in law, not thus much. [Snaps his fingers.]

### **WITGOOD**

Say you so, sir?

### **THIRD CREDITOR**

I have paid for't, I know't.

### **WITGOOD**

Proceed then, I consent.

### **THIRD CREDITOR**

Why, well said.

### **HOARD**

How now, my masters; what, have you done with him?

### **FIRST CREDITOR**

With much ado, sir, we have got him to consent.

### **HOARD**

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Ah—a—a! And what came his debts to now?

### FIRST CREDITOR

Some eight score odd pounds, sir.

### HOARD

Naw, naw, naw, naw, naw! Tell me the second time; give me a lighter sum. They are but desperate debts, you know, never called in but upon such an accident; a poor, needy knave, he would starve and rot in prison. Come, come, you shall have ten shillings in the pound, and the sum down roundly.

### FIRST CREDITOR

You must make it a mark, sir.

### HOARD

Go to, then; tell your money in the mean time; you shall find little less there. Come, Master Witgood, you are so unwilling to do yourself good now.

[Enter Scrivener.]

Welcome, honest scrivener. Now you shall hear the release read.

### SCRIVENER

[Reading] Be it known to all men by these presents, that I, Theodorus Witgood, gentleman, sole nephew to Pecunius Lucre, having unjustly made title and claim to one Jane Medler, late widow of Anthony Medler, and now wife to Walkadine Hoard, in consideration of a competent sum of money to discharge my debts, do forever hereafter disclaim any title, right, estate, or interest in or to the said widow, late in the occupation of the said Anthony Medler, and now in the occupation of Walkadine Hoard; as also neither to lay claim by virtue of any former contract, grant, promise, or demise, to any of her [manors], manor houses, parks, groves, meadow—grounds, arable lands, barns, stacks, stables, dove—holes, and coney—burrows; together with all her cattle, money, plate, jewels, borders, chains, bracelets, furnitures, hangings, moveables, or [immoveables]. In witness whereof I, the said Theodorus Witgood, have interchangeably set to my hand and seal before these presents, the day and date above written.

### WITGOOD

What a precious fortune hast thou slipped here, like a beast as thou art!

### HOARD

Come, unwilling heart, come.

### WITGOOD

Well, Master Hoard, give me the pen; I see 'Tis vain to quarrel with our destiny. [Signs.]

### HOARD

Oh, as vain a thing as can be; you cannot commit a greater absurdity, sir. So, so; give me that hand now: before all these presents, I am friends forever with thee.

### WITGOOD

Troth, and it were pity of my heart now, if I should bear you any grudge, i'faith.

### HOARD

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Content. I'll send for thy uncle against the wedding dinner; we will be friends once again.

### WITGOOD

I hope to bring it to pass myself, sir.

### HOARD

How now? Is't right, my masters?

### FIRST CREDITOR

'Tis something wanting, sir; yet it shall be sufficient.

### HOARD

Why, well said; a good conscience makes a fine show nowadays. Come, my masters, you shall all taste of my wine ere you depart.

### ALL

We follow you, sir.

[Exeunt Hoard, Courtesan and Scrivener.]

### WITGOOD

[Aside] I'll try these fellows now.—A word, sir; what, will you carry me to that rich widow now?

### FIRST CREDITOR

Why, do you think we were in earnest, i'faith? Carry you to a rich widow? We should get much credit by that: a noted rioter! A contemptible prodigal! 'Twas a trick we have amongst us to get in our money. Fare you well, sir.

Exeunt [Creditors].

### WITGOOD

Farewell, and be hanged, you short pig-haired, ram-headed rascals! He that believes in you shall never be saved, I warrant him. By this new league I shall have some access unto my love.

She is above.

### NIECE

Master Witgood!

### WITGOOD

My life!

### NIECE

Meet me presently; that note directs you [throwing him a note]; I would not be suspected. Our happiness attends us. Farewell!

### WITGOOD

A word's enough.

Exeunt.

[IV.v. Dampit's bedroom]

IV.[i. An apartment in Cole Harbour]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Dampit, the usurer, in his bed; Audrey spinning by [and Boy].

Song.

[AUDREY:] Let the usurer cram him, in interest that excel,  
There's pits enow to damn him, before he comes to hell;  
In Holborn some, in Fleet Street some,  
Where'er he come, there's some, there's some.

**DAMPIT**

Trahe, traheto, draw the curtain, give me a sip of sack more.  
Enter Gentlemen [Lamprey and Spitchcock].

**LAMPREY**

Look you, did not I tell you he lay like the devil in chains, when he was bound for a thousand more?

**SPITCHCOCK**

But I think the devil had no steel bedstuffs; he goes beyond him for that.

**LAMPREY**

Nay, do but mark the conceit of his drinking; one must wipe his mouth for him with a muckinder, do you see, sir?

**SPITCHCOCK**

Is this the sick trampler? Why, he is only bed-rid with drinking.

**LAMPREY**

True, sir. He spies us.

**DAMPIT**

What, Sir Tristram? You come and see a weak man here, a very weak man.

**LAMPREY**

If you be weak in body, you should be strong in prayer, sir.

**DAMPIT**

Oh, I have prayed too much, poor man.

**LAMPREY**

There's a taste of his soul for you.

**SPITCHCOCK**

Fah, loathsome!

**LAMPREY**

I come to borrow a hundred pound of you, sir.

**DAMPIT**

Alas, you come at an ill time: I cannot spare it, i'faith; I ha' but two thousand i' th' house.

**AUDREY**

Ha, ha, ha!

**DAMPIT**

Out, you gernative quean, the mullipood of villainy, the spinner of concupiscency!



A Trick to Catch the Old One

Enter other Gentleman [Sir Lancelot].

**LANCELOT**

[Yea], gentlemen, are you here before us? How is he now?

**LAMPREY**

Faith, the same man still: the tavern bitch has bit him i' th' head.

**LANCELOT**

We shall have the better sport with him; peace! And how cheers Master Dampit now?

**DAMPIT**

Oh, my bosom Sir Lancelot, how cheer I! Thy presence is restorative.

**LANCELOT**

But I hear a great complaint of you, Master Dampit, among gallants.

**DAMPIT**

I am glad of that, i'faith; prithee, what?

**LANCELOT**

They say you are waxed proud a'late, and if a friend visit you in the afternoon, you'll scarce know him.

**DAMPIT**

Fie, fie! Proud? I cannot remember any such thing; sure I was drunk then.

**LANCELOT**

Think you so, sir?

**DAMPIT**

There 'twas, i'faith, nothing but the pride of the sack, and so certify 'em. [To Boy] Fetch sack, sirrah!

**BOY**

A vengeance sack you once!

[Exit, returning in time with the sack.]

**AUDREY**

Why, Master Dampit, if you hold on as you begin, and lie a little longer, you need not take care how to dispose your wealth; you'll make the vintner your heir.

**DAMPIT**

Out, you babliaminy, you unfeathered, cremitoried quean, you cullisance of scabiosity!

**AUDREY**

Good words, Master Dampit, to speak before a maid and a virgin.

**DAMPIT**

Hang thy virginity upon the pole of carnality!

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**AUDREY**

Sweet terms! My mistress shall know 'em.

**LAMPREY**

Note but the misery of this usuring slave: here he lies, like a noisome dunghill, full of the poison of his drunken blasphemies, and they to whom he bequeaths all grudge him the very meat that feeds him, the very pillow that eases him. Here may a usurer behold his end. What profits it to be a slave in this world, and a devil i' th' next?

**DAMPIT**

Sir Lancelot, let me buss thee, Sir Lancelot; thou art the only friend that I honour and respect.

**LANCELOT**

I thank you for that, Master Dampit.

**DAMPIT**

Farewell, my bosom Sir Lancelot.

**LANCELOT**

[Takes Lamprey and Spitchcock aside] Gentlemen, an you love me, let me step behind you, and one of you fall a-talking of me to him.

**LAMPREY**

Content.—Master Dampit.

**DAMPIT**

So, sir.

**LAMPREY**

Here came Sir Lancelot to see you e'en now.

**DAMPIT**

Hang him, rascal!

**LAMPREY**

Who, Sir Lancelot?

**DAMPIT**

Pythagorical rascal!

**LAMPREY**

Pythagorical?

**DAMPIT**

Ay, he changes his cloak when he meets a sergeant.

**LANCELOT**

[Aside] What a rogue's this!

**LAMPREY**

I wonder you can rail at him, sir; he comes in love to see you.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**DAMPIT**

A louse for his love! His father was a comb-maker; I have no need of his crawling love. He comes to have longer day, the superlative rascal!

**LANCELOT**

[Aside] 'Sfoot, I can no longer endure the rogue!—Master Dampit, I come to take my leave once again, sir.

**DAMPIT**

Who? My dear and kind Sir Lancelot, the only gentleman of England? Let me hug thee; farewell, and a thousand.

[Lancelot takes Lamprey and Spitchcock aside.]

**LAMPREY**

Composed of wrongs and slavish flatteries!

**LANCELOT**

Nay, gentlemen, he shall show you more tricks yet; I'll give you another taste of him.

**LAMPREY**

Is't possible?

**LANCELOT**

His memory is upon departing.

**DAMPIT**

Another cup of sack!

**LANCELOT**

Mass, then 'twill be quite gone! Before he drink that, tell him there's a country client come up, and here attends for his learned advice.

**LAMPREY**

Enough.

**DAMPIT**

One cup more, and then let the bell toll; I hope I shall be weak enough by that time.

**LAMPREY**

Master Dampit.

**DAMPIT**

Is the sack spouting?

**LAMPREY**

'Tis coming forward, sir. Here's a countryman, a client of yours, waits for your deep and profound advice, sir.

**DAMPIT**

A coxcombry? Where is he? Let him approach; set me up a peg higher.

**LAMPREY**

You must draw near, sir.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**DAMPIT**

Now, good man fooliaminy, what say you to me now?

**LANCELOT**

Please your good worship, I am a poor man, sir—

**DAMPIT**

What make you in my chamber then?

**LANCELOT**

I would entreat your worship's device in a just and honest cause, sir.

**DAMPIT**

I meddle with no such matters; I refer 'em to Master Noman's office.

**LANCELOT**

I had but one house left me in all the world, sir, which was my father's, my grandfather's, my great-grandfather's; and now a villain has unjustly wrung me out, and took possession on't.

**DAMPIT**

Has he such feats? Thy best course is to bring thy ejectione [firmae], and in seven year thou may'st shove him out by the law.

**LANCELOT**

Alas, an't please your worship, I have small friends and less money.

**DAMPIT**

Hoyday! This gear will fadge well. Hast no money? Why, then, my advice is thou must set fire o' th' house and so get him out.

**LAMPREY**

That will break strife, indeed.

**LANCELOT**

I thank your worship for your hot counsel, sir. [To Lamprey and Spitchcock] Altering but my voice a little, you see he knew me not; you may observe by this that a drunkard's memory holds longer in the voice than in the person. But, gentlemen, shall I show you a sight? Behold the little dive-dapper of damnation, Gulf the usurer, for his time worse than t'other.

Enter Hoard with Gulf.

**LAMPREY**

What's he comes with him?

**LANCELOT**

Why, Hoard, that married lately the Widow Medler.

**LAMPREY**

Oh, I cry you mercy, sir.

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

### HOARD

Now, gentlemen visitants, how does Master Dampit?

### LANCELOT

Faith, here he lies e'en drawing in, sir, good canary as fast as he can, sir; a very weak creature, truly, he is almost past memory.

### HOARD

Fie, Master Dampit! You lie lazing abed here, and I come to invite you to my wedding dinner; up, up, up!

### DAMPIT

Who's this? Master Hoard? Who hast thou married, in the name of foolery?

### HOARD

A rich widow.

### DAMPIT

A Dutch widow?

### HOARD

A rich widow; one Widow Medler.

### DAMPIT

Medler? She keeps open house.

### HOARD

She did, I can tell you, in her tother husband's days; open house for all comers; horse and man was welcome, and room enough for 'em all.

### DAMPIT

There's too much for thee, then; thou may'st let out some to thy neighbours.

### GULF

What, hung alive in chains? O spectacle! Bedstuffs of steel? O monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum! O Dampit, Dampit, here's a just judgment shown upon usury, extortion, and trampling villainy!

### LANCELOT

[This is excellent], thief rails upon the thief!

### GULF

Is this the end of cut-throat usury, brothel, and blasphemy? Now may'st thou see what race a usurer runs.

### DAMPIT

Why, thou rogue of universality, do not I know thee? Thy sound is like the cuckoo, the Welsh ambassador; thou cowardly slave, that offers to fight with a sick man when his weapon's down! Rail upon me in my naked bed? Why, thou great Lucifer's little vicar, I am not so weak but I know a knave at first sight. Thou inconscionable rascal! Thou that goest upon Middlesex juries, and will make haste to give up thy verdict, because thou wilt not lose thy dinner, are you answered?

### GULF

An't were not for shame---

A Trick to Catch the Old One

Draws his dagger.

**DAMPIT**

Thou wouldst be hanged then.

**LAMPREY**

Nay, you must exercise patience, Master Gulf, always, in a sick man's chamber.

**LANCELOT**

He'll quarrel with none, I warrant you, but those that are bed-rid.

**DAMPIT**

Let him come, gentlemen, I am armed; reach my closestool hither.

**LANCELOT**

Here will be a sweet fray anon; I'll leave you, gentlemen.

**LAMPREY**

Nay, we'll along with you. Master Gulf--

**GULF**

Hang him, usuring rascal!

**LANCELOT**

Push, set your strength to his, your wit to his.

**AUDREY**

Pray, gentlemen, depart; his hour's come upon him. [To Dampit] Sleep in my bosom, sleep.

**LANCELOT**

Nay, we have enough of him, i'faith;  
Keep him for the house. Now make your best.  
For thrice his wealth I would not have his breast.

**GULF**

A little thing would make me beat him, now he's asleep.

**LANCELOT**

Mass, then 'twill be a pitiful day when he wakes. I would be loath to see that day come.

[GULF]

You overrule me, gentlemen, i'faith.

Exeunt.

**V.[i. A room in Lucre's house]**

Enter Lucre and Witgood.

**WITGOOD**

Nay, uncle, let me prevail with you so much;  
I'faith, go, now he has invited you.

**LUCRE**

I shall have great joy there when he has borne away the widow.

**WITGOOD**

Why, la, I thought where I should find you presently; uncle, a' my troth, 'tis nothing so.

**LUCRE**

What's nothing so, sir? Is not he married to the widow?

**WITGOOD**

No, by my troth, is he not, uncle.

**LUCRE**

How?

**WITGOOD**

Will you have the truth on't? He is married to a whore, i'faith.

**LUCRE**

I should laugh at that.

**WITGOOD**

Uncle, let me perish in your favour if you find it not so, and that 'tis I that have married the honest woman.

**LUCRE**

Ha! I'd walk ten mile a' foot to see that, i'faith.

**WITGOOD**

And see't you shall, or I'll never see you again.

**LUCRE**

A quean, i'faith? Ha, ha, ha!

Exeunt.

[V.ii. A room in Hoard's house]

Enter Hoard, tasting wine, the Host following in a livery cloak.

**HOARD**

Pup, pup, pup, pup! I like not this wine. Is there never a better tierce in the house?

**HOST**

Yes, sir, there are as good tierce in the house as any are in England.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**HOARD**

Desire your mistress, you knave, to taste 'em all over; she has better skill.

**HOST**

[Aside] Has she so? The better for her, and the worse for you.

Exit.

**HOARD**

Arthur!

[Enter Arthur.]

Is the cupboard of plate set out?

**ARTHUR**

All's in order, sir.

[Exit.]

**HOARD**

I am in love with my liveries every time I think on 'em; they make a gallant show, by my troth. Niece!

[Enter Niece.]

**NIECE**

Do you call, sir?

**HOARD**

Prithee, show a little diligence, and overlook the knaves a little; they'll filch and steal today, and send whole pasties home to their wives; an thou beest a good niece, do not see me purloined.

**NIECE**

Fear it not, sir. [Aside] I have cause: though the feast be prepared for you, yet it serves fit for my wedding dinner too.

[Exit.] Enter two Gentlemen [Lamprey and Spitchcock].

**HOARD**

Master Lamprey and Master Spitchcock, two the most welcome gentlemen alive! Your fathers and mine were all free o' th' fishmongers.

**LAMPREY**

They were indeed, sir. You see bold guests, sir, soon entreated.

**HOARD**

And that's best, sir.

[Enter Arthur.]



A Trick to Catch the Old One

How now, sirrah?

**[ARTHUR]**

There's a coach come to th' door, sir.

[Exit.]

**HOARD**

My Lady Foxstone, a' my life! Mistress Jane Hoard, wife! Mass, 'tis her Ladyship indeed!

[Enter Lady Foxstone.]

Madam, you are welcome to an unfurnished house, dearth of cheer, scarcity of attendance.

**LADY FOXSTONE**

You are pleased to make the worst, sir.

**HOARD**

Wife!

[Enter Courtesan.]

**LADY FOXSTONE**

Is this your bride?

**HOARD**

Yes, madam. [To Courtesan] Salute my Lady [Foxstone].

**COURTESAN**

Please you, madam, a while to taste the air in the garden?

**LADY FOXSTONE**

'Twill please us well.

Exeunt [Courtesan and Lady Foxstone].

**HOARD**

Who would not wed? The most delicious life!

No joys are like the comforts of a wife.

**LAMPREY**

So we bachelors think, that are not troubled with them.

[Enter Arthur.]

**[ARTHUR]**

Your worship's brother with another ancient gentleman are newly alighted, sir.

[Exit.]

**HOARD**

V.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

Master Onesiphorus Hoard? Why, now our company begins to come in.

[Enter Onesiphorus Hoard, Limber and Kix.]

My dear and kind brother, welcome, i'faith.

**ONESIPHORUS**

You see we are men at an hour, brother.

**HOARD**

Ay, I'll say that for you, brother; you keep as good an hour to come to a feast as any gentleman in the shire. What, old Master Limber and Master Kix! Do we meet, i'faith, jolly gentlemen?

**LIMBER**

We hope you lack guests, sir?

**HOARD**

Oh, welcome, welcome! We lack still such guests as your worships.

**ONESIPHORUS**

Ah, sirrah brother, have you caught up Widow Medler?

**HOARD**

From 'em all, brother; and I may tell you, I had mighty enemies, those that stuck sore; old Lucre is a sore fox, I can tell you, brother.

**ONESIPHORUS**

Where is she? I'll go seek her out; I long to have a smack at her lips.

**HOARD**

And most wishfully, brother, see where she comes.

[Enter Courtesan and Lady Foxstone.]

Give her a [smack] now we may hear it all the house over.

Both [Courtesan and Onesiphorus] turn back.

**COURTESAN**

[Aside] Oh, heaven, I am betrayed! I know that face.

**HOARD**

Ha, ha, ha! Why, how now? Are you both ashamed? Come, gentlemen, we'll look another way.

**ONESIPHORUS**

Nay, brother, hark you: come, y'are disposed to be merry?

**HOARD**

Why do we meet else, man?

**ONESIPHORUS**

V.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

A Trick to Catch the Old One

That's another matter; I was never so 'fraid in my life but that you had been in earnest.

**HOARD**

How mean you, brother?

**ONESIPHORUS**

You said she was your wife?

**HOARD**

Did I so? By my troth, and so she is.

**ONESIPHORUS**

By your troth, brother?

**HOARD**

What reason have I to dissemble with my friends, brother? If marriage can make her mine, she is mine! Why?

**ONESIPHORUS**

Troth, I am not well of a sudden. I must crave pardon, brother; I came to see you but I cannot stay dinner, i'faith.

**HOARD**

I hope you will not serve me so, brother.

**LIMBER**

By your leave, Master Hoard—

**HOARD**

What now? What now? Pray, gentlemen, you were wont to show yourselves wise men.

**LIMBER**

But you have shown your folly too much here.

**HOARD**

How?

**KIX**

Fie, fie! A man of your repute and name!  
You'll feast your friends, but cloy 'em first with shame.

**HOARD**

This grows too deep; pray, let us reach the sense.

**LIMBER**

In your old age dote on a courtesan—

**HOARD**

Ha?

**KIX**

Marry a strumpet!

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**HOARD**

Gentlemen!

**ONESIPHORUS**

And Witgood's quean!

**HOARD**

Oh! Nor lands, nor living?

**ONESIPHORUS**

Living!

**HOARD**

[To Courtesan] Speak!

**COURTESAN**

Alas, you know at first, sir,  
I told you I had nothing.

**HOARD**

Out, out! I am cheated; infinitely cozened!

**LIMBER**

Nay, Master Hoard—

Enter Witgood and Lucre.

**HOARD**

A Dutch widow, a Dutch widow, a Dutch widow!

**LUCRE**

Why, nephew, shall I trace thee still a liar?  
Wilt make me mad? Is not yon thing the widow?

**WITGOOD**

Why, la, you are so hard a' belief, uncle!  
By my troth, she's a whore.

**LUCRE**

Then thou'rt a knave.

**WITGOOD**

Negatur argumentum, uncle.

**LUCRE**

Probo tibi, nephew: he that knows a woman to be a quean must needs be a knave; thou say'st thou know'st her to be one; ergo, if she be a quean, thou'rt a knave.

**WITGOOD**

Negatur sequela majoris, uncle, he that knows a woman to be a quean must needs be a knave; I deny that.

A Trick to Catch the Old One

**HOARD**

Lucre and Witgood, y'are both villains; get you out of my house!

**LUCRE**

Why, didst not invite me to thy wedding dinner?

**WITGOOD**

And are not you and I sworn perpetual friends before witness, sir, and were both drunk upon't?

**HOARD**

Daintily abused! Y'ave put a junt upon me!

**LUCRE**

Ha, ha, ha!

**HOARD**

A common strumpet!

**WITGOOD**

Nay, now

You wrong her, sir; if I were she, I'd have  
The law on you for that; I durst depose for her  
She ne'er had common use, nor common thought.

**COURTESAN**

Despise me, publish me: I am your wife;  
What shame can I have now but you'll have part?  
If in disgrace you share, I sought not you;  
You pursued me, nay, forced me;  
Had I friends would follow it,  
Less than your action has been proved a rape.

**ONESIPHORUS**

Brother!

**COURTESAN**

Nor did I ever boast of lands unto you,  
Money, or goods; I took a plainer course  
And told you true I'd nothing.  
If error were committed, 'twas by you;  
Thank your own folly. Nor has my sin been  
So odious but worse has been forgiven;  
Nor am I so deformed but I may challenge  
The utmost power of any old man's love.  
She that tastes not sin before, twenty to one but she'll taste it after; most of you old men are content to marry  
young virgins, and take that which follows; where, marrying one of us, you both save a sinner, and are quit from a  
cuckold for ever.  
"And more, in brief, let this your best thoughts win,  
She that knows sin, knows best how to hate sin."

**HOARD**

V.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Cursed be all malice! Black are the fruits of spite,  
And poison first their owners. Oh, my friends,  
I must embrace shame to be rid of shame!  
Concealed disgrace prevents a public name.  
Ah, Witgood! Ah, Theodorus.

### WITGOOD

Alas, sir, I was pricked in conscience to see her well bestowed, and where could I bestow her better than upon your pitiful worship? Excepting but myself, I dare swear she's a virgin; and now, by marrying your niece, I have banished myself for ever from her. She's mine aunt now, by my faith, and there's no meddling with mine aunt, you know—a sin against my nuncle.

### COURTESAN

[Kneeling] Lo, gentlemen, before you all  
In true reclaimed form I fall.  
Henceforth for ever I defy  
The glances of a sinful eye,  
Waving of fans (which some suppose  
Tricks of fancy), treading of toes,  
Wringing of fingers, biting the lip,  
The wanton gait, th'alluring trip,  
All secret friends and private meetings,  
Close-borne letters and bawds' greetings,  
Feigning excuse to women's labours  
When we are sent for to th' next neighbours,  
Taking false physic, and ne'er start  
To be let blood, though sign be at heart,  
Removing chambers, shifting beds,  
To welcome friends in husbands' steads,  
Them to enjoy, and you to marry,  
They first served, while you must tarry,  
They to spend, and you to gather,  
They to get, and you to father—  
These and thousand thousand more,  
New reclaimed, I now abhor.

### LUCRE

Ah, here's a lesson, rioter, for you.

### WITGOOD

[Kneeling] I must confess my follies; I'll down too.  
And here for ever I disclaim  
The cause of youth's undoing, game,  
Chiefly dice, those true outlanders,  
That shake out beggars, thieves, and panders,  
Soul-wasting surfeits, sinful riots,  
Queans' evils, doctors' diets,  
'Pothecaries' drugs, surgeons' glisters,  
Stabbing of arms for a common mistress,  
Riband favours, ribald speeches,  
Dear perfumed jackets, penniless breeches,

V.[i. A room in Lucre's house]

## A Trick to Catch the Old One

Dutch flapdragons, healths in urine,  
Drabs that keep a man too sure in—  
I do defy you all.  
Lend me each honest hand, for here I rise  
A reclaimed man, loathing the general vice.

### **HOARD**

So, so, all friends! The wedding dinner cools.  
Who seem most crafty prove oft times most fools.

[Exeunt.]