

THE BEAUX STRATAGEM (EXTRACT 1)

George Farquhar

DORINDA: You share in all the pleasures that the country affords.

MRS SULLEN: Country pleasures! Racks and torments! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clambering over stiles? Or that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness in country pleasures, had early instructed me in the rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoking tobacco with my husband; or of spreading of plasters, brewing of diet drinks, and stilling rosemary-water, with the good old gentlewoman my mother-in-law?

DORINDA: I'm sorry, madam, that it is not more in our power to divert you; I could wish, indeed, that our entertainments were a little more polite, or your taste a little less refined. But, pray, madam, how came the poets and philosophers, that laboured so much in hunting after pleasure, to place it at last in country life?

MRS SULLEN: Because they wanted money, child, to find out the pleasures of the town. Did you ever see a poet or philosopher worth ten thousand pound? If you can show me such a man, I'll lay you fifty pound you'll find him somewhere within the weekly bills. Not that I disapprove rural pleasures, as the poets have painted them; in their landscape, every Phyllis has her Corydon, every murmuring stream, and every flowery mead, gives fresh alarms to love, Besides, you'll find that their couples were never married. - But yonder I see my Corydon, and a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry; he's my husband, and your brother and, between both, is he not a sad brute?

DORINDA: I have nothing to say to your part of him - you're the best judge.

MRS SULLEN: O sister, sister! If ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot, one that's always missing, but never thinks. There's some diversion in a talking blockhead; and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing 'em rattle a little. Now you shall see, but take this by the way; he came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else, by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces; after his man and he had rolled about the room like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as a furnace, and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel nightcap. - O, matrimony! - He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale, his nose! O the pleasure of counting the melancholy clock by a snoring husband! But now, sister, you shall see how handsomely, being a well bred man, he will beg my pardon.