

## The Beaux Stratagem by George Farquar (1707)

MRS. SULLEN: married to Mr. Sullen, a country blockhead  
ARCHER: a gentleman of broken fortune

After squandering all their money in London, Aimwell and Archer have descended on the provincial town of Lichfield. Posing as master and servant, their plan is for one of them to secure a lucrative marriage and split the income. Here, Archer has attempted an illicit "courtship" with the unhappily married Mrs. Sullen.

Suggested weapons: found

*A bedchamber in Lady Bountiful's house. Enter Mrs. Sullen, undressed.*

MRS. SULLEN: Thoughts free! Are they so? Why, then, suppose him here, dressed like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom, *(Here Archer steals out of the closet.)* with tongue enchanting, eyes bewitching, knees imploring — *(Turns a little o' one side, and sees Archer in the posture she describes.)* — Ah! — *(Shrieks and runs to the other side of the stage.)* Have my thoughts raised a spirit? — What are you, sir, a man or a devil?

ARCHER: A man, a man, madam. *(Rising.)*

MRS. SULLEN: How shall I be sure of it?

ARCHER: Madam, I'll give you demonstration this minute. *(Takes her hand.)*

MRS. SULLEN: What, sir! Do you intend to be rude?

ARCHER: Yes, madam, if you please.

MRS. SULLEN: In the name of wonder, whence came ye?

ARCHER: From the skies, madam — I'm a Jupiter in love, and you shall be my Alemena.

MRS. SULLEN: How came you in?

ARCHER: I flew in at the window, madam; your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus opened the casement.

MRS. SULLEN: I'm struck dumb with admiration!

ARCHER: And I — with wonder! *(Looks passionately at her.)*

MRS. SULLEN: What will become of me?

ARCHER: How beautiful she looks! — The teeming jolly spring smiles in her blooming face, and when she was conceived, her mother smelt to roses, looked on lilies — Lilies unfold their white, their fragrant charms. When the warm sun thus darts into their arms. *(Runs to her.)*

MRS. SULLEN: Ah! *(Shrieks.)*

ARCHER: 'Oons, madam, what d'ye mean? You'll raise the house.

MRS. SULLEN: Sir, I'll wake the dead before I bear this! — What! Approach me with the freedoms of a keeper! I'm glad on't; your impudence has cured me.

ARCHER: If this be impudence, *(Kneels.)* I leave to your partial self; no panting pilgrim, after a tedious, painful voyage, e'er bowed before his saint with more devotion.

MRS. SULLEN: *(Aside.)* Now, now, I'm ruined, if he kneels! — Rise, thou prostrate engineer; not all thy undermining skill shall reach my heart. — Rise, and know, I am a woman without my sex; I can love to all the tenderness of wishes, sighs, and tears — but go no farther. — Still, to convince you that I'm more than woman, I can speak my frailty, confess my weakness even for you — but —

ARCHER: For me! *(Going to lay hold on her.)*

MRS. SULLEN: Hold, Sir, build not upon that; for my most mortal hatred follows if you disobey what I command you now. — Leave me this minute. — *(Aside.)* If he denies, I'm lost.

ARCHER: Then you'll promise —

MRS. SULLEN: Anything another time.

ARCHER: When shall I come?

MRS. SULLEN: Tomorrow — when you will.

ARCHER: Your lips must seal the promise.

MRS. SULLEN: Pshaw!

ARCHER: They must! They must! (*Kisses her.*) — Raptures and paradise! — And why not now, my angel? The time, the place, silence, and secrecy, all conspire. And the now conscious stars have preordained this moment for my happiness.

(*Takes her in his arms.*)

MRS. SULLEN: You will not! Cannot, sure!

ARCHER: If the sun rides fast, and disappoints not mortals of tomorrow's dawn, this night shall crown my joys.

MRS. SULLEN: My sex's pride assist me!

ARCHER: My sex's strength help me!

MRS. SULLEN: You shall kill me first.

ARCHER: I'll die with you. (*Carrying her off.*)

MRS. SULLEN: Thieves! Thieves! Murder!



## The Transformed Peasant

by Ludvig Holberg (1723)

translated by Reginald Spink

JEPPE: a peasant

NILLE: his wife

After finding Jeppe passed out drunk in a dunghill, a Baron takes him back to his house and, in jest, cleans him up as a gentleman and has his servants pretend that Jeppe is the Baron. Just as Jeppe gets used to the good life, they get him drunk again and return him to the dunghill. Now Jeppe must face his wife, Nille, who thinks he has gone to the market for soap, instead of spending the money on drink. Her stick, which she calls Master Eric, serves as punishment for Jeppe's ignorance.

Suggested weapon: cane or staff

*A country scene in Denmark, outside a peasant's cottage. Jeppe, in his peasant clothes again, is fast asleep on the dunghill. Presently he wakes and, without looking up, calls out:*

JEPPE: Hi, sekkertary, valet, lackeys! Another glass o' that canary-bird!  
(*Sitting up and gradually becoming conscious, he gazes round him and rubs his eyes. He puts his hand to his head and finds his peasant cap. He rubs his eyes again, turns the hat over in his hands, and looks at his clothes. It is only too clear that he is his old self again, and he gives vent to a loud groan.*)  
Oh!!! I knew it! I knew it! I'm myself again! I knew it was too good to last! How long was Adam in Eden? The same breeches, the same cuckoldy hat, the same — bed! Ugh!