

The Country Wife – Audition Pieces

Margery (Mrs Pinchwife), Alithea and Pinchwife

Mrs. Pinchwife: Pray, Sister, where are the best fields and woods to walk in London?

Alithea: A pretty question, Why, sister, Mulberry Garden and St. James's Park; and for close walks the New Exchange.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Pray, Sister, tell me why my husband looks so grum here in town and keeps me up so close, and will not let me go a walking nor let me wear my best gown yesterday?

Alithea: O he's jealous, sister.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Jealous? What's that?

Alithea: He's afraid you should love another man.

Mrs. Pinchwife: How should he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself.

Alithea: Did he not carry you yesterday to a play?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Ay, but we sat amongst ugly people. He would not let me come near the gentry, who sat under us, so that I could not see 'em. He told me none but naughty women sat there, whom they toused and moused. But I would have ventured for all that.

Alithea: But how did you like the Play?

Mrs. Pinchwife: Indeed I was a weary of the Play, but I liked hugely the actors. They are the goodliest properest men, sister.

Alithea: O, but you must not like the actors, sister.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Ay, how should I help it, sister?

Alithea: (*Enter Mr. Pinchwife to them.*) But here comes your husband.

Mrs. Pinchwife: Oh my dear, dear bud, welcome home! Why dost thou look so fropish? What has nangered thee?

Pinchwife: You're a Fool.

(*Mrs. Pinchwife goes aside, & cries.*)

Alithea: Faith, so she is for crying for no fault, poor tender creature!

Pinchwife: What, you would have her as impudent as yourself, as arrant a jill-flirt, a gadder, a magpie, and to say all - a mere notorious town-woman?

Alithea: Brother, you are my only censurer; and the honour of your family shall sooner suffer in your wife there than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the town.

Pinchwife: Hark you, Mistress, do not talk so before my wife! The innocent liberty of the town!

Alithea: Why, pray, who boasts of any intrigue with me? What lampoon has made my name notorious? What ill women frequent my lodgings? I keep no company with any women of scandalous reputations.

Pinchwife: No, you keep the men of scandalous reputations company.