threatens him with a knife for "touching my Thing and my Cod," extorts an extra £200, and his wife remarks: "I wish that all Miser's were served but so."1

Numerous variants on this plot taught the lesson that lust never paid where misers were concerned. In the broadside *Bite Upon Bite* (1760), a "country lass" bears an illegitimate child, cheekily named Maidenhead, and embarks to London. On the way she is accosted by a miser, who learns that she intends "to sell my Maidenhead" for £50. Although he bristles at the price, he finally agrees and they retreat to an inn. When they arrive, the baby in her basket starts to cry, and she tells him it is a pig—which the miser thinks a "noble bargain" on top of her virginity. But before he can bed her, the innkeeper interrupts them to reveal the hamper's contents, and the lass gets the last laugh: "It's my Maidenhead, Sir, you have bought... it is your own fault."2 In *The Harlequin Incendiary* (1746), the miser himself turns into a baby instead of merely buying one. After he agrees to pay Colombine for her affection (and she "dissembles a Fondness for him"), Harlequin appears and transforms the miser's "Couch... into a Cradle" and changes himself into "a Nurse, who feeds the Miser with Pap in his second Childhood." In the next scene, Harlequin and Colombine "drive out the Miser in his Swathing-Clothes."3

Besides often conspiring in a miser's romantic undoing, servants also sometimes achieved upward mobility, by marrying either the miser's hoped-for bride or the miser himself. In *The Happy Marriage*, which opened at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1727, Sir John Saveall asks his servant Tom for advice in courting the much-younger Belinda. Tom first secures funds to buy "fine Clothes" for Belinda as a gift, which he instead uses to adorn himself. Newly clad, he successfully woos Belinda. After Belinda's father supports her refusal to marry Saveall, the miser dies of grief and leaves his fortune to Tom, who marries Belinda and gloats: "He's dead, and I am deadly rich, there's good News to go Home with."4 In *The Lottery*, which opened at Haymarket a year later, a miser's plot to marry the winner of a lottery ticket backfires when the ticket-holder, Lucia, pretends to have transferred it to her cook, who dresses up as "a Lady of Figure" to fool the miser into believing her to be rich. After Lucia tells him he married the wrong woman, he sputters while the cook thanks her "for a good Husband" and slyly promises: "I'll make the most of him."5

The details shifted, but the tricks remained the same, when comedies turned to misers who tried to dictate their daughters' choice of a husband. Otway's *Cheats of Scapin* used this theme as its premise, positing that each of two misers' daughters unwittingly marries the other miser's son. Anguish and confusion reign (with much help from the professional plotter Scapin) before the identity of the marriage partners is revealed at the end, to the relief of all concerned. Newburgh Hamilton's *Petticoat-Plotter* offered no such solace to the miser Thrifty, whose daughter Isabella conspires to marry the "prodigal young True-love" with help from a

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4 *The Happy Marriage; or, The Turn of Fortune* (London: J. Smith, 1727), 8, 27, 37-38.