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Cupboard Love

A Costume Comedy in One Act

BY
HERBERT SWEARS

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CUPBOARD LOVE

SCENE.—*The action passes at the house of KITTY BELLAIRS, situate at No. 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, and the Scene is laid in KITTY'S boudoir.*

PERIOD.—1789.

(There is a door up L., leading to KITTY'S bedroom; a door up R. opens into a sitting-room. A door down R. leads to the passage-way and street entrance. A door C. at back masks a cupboard. The apartment is very beautifully furnished; ornamental tables and cabinets of rare china are in profusion. There is a settee R. An arm-chair L. Behind the arm-chair is a small table. Several chairs are against the walls.)

(As the curtain rises, KITTY enters from her bedroom. She is an attractive comedy actress much beloved of her public. A distant sound of voices and some disturbance is heard off R. KITTY pauses C. and listens. The door down R. is then flung open and LADY CHARTERIS, a very haughty beauty of that time, bursts into the room.)

LADY CHARTERIS *(at sight of KITTY, with a cry of satisfaction)*. Ah! Your serving wench was misinformed, it seems.

KITTY. Indeed?

LADY CHARTERIS. I presume that you are Kitty Bellairs, of Drury Lane Theatre?

KITTY. Your ladyship presumes—correctly. *(She curtsies.)*

LADY CHARTERIS. I thought I could not be mistaken.

KITTY. And you, if I mistake not, are Diana, Lady Charteris, noted alike for her matchless beauty and—and her exquisite manners.

LADY CHARTERIS (*grimly*). I pray that my manners may not belie my reputation the while I discuss certain matters with you, Mistress Kitty Bellairs.

KITTY (*with a twinkle*). Would it interfere with your ladyship's intentions if we were to be seated? (*Indicates the arm-chair L.*)

LADY CHARTERIS (*glares, and seats herself on arm-chair L.*). Very well.

KITTY. That chair, madam, once belonged to Mr. Garrick. He would have been much honoured had he foreseen its destiny.

LADY CHARTERIS (*insolently*). First then, let me tell you that I am not accustomed to be refused admission when I choose to call upon a player.

KITTY (*with concern*). Is it possible . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. For reasons of my own, I wished to arrive unannounced and unexpected. . . .

KITTY (*with delicate irony*). But welcome—always welcome, in whatever fashion it might please your ladyship to appear. (*Crosses to settee.*)

LADY CHARTERIS. Your wench had the effrontery to lie to me.

KITTY (*pretending to be shocked*). La!

LADY CHARTERIS. She dared to tell me that you were not at home.

KITTY. Her statement may not have been strictly accurate. . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. I say she lied!

KITTY. But she will have it that I am more at home on the boards of Old Drury than in this modern apartment. A quaint conceit.

LADY CHARTERIS. It is indeed!

KITTY. The critics, alas! are not always of her opinion.

LADY CHARTERIS. Doubtless she had her instructions.

KITTY. As to that . . .

LADY CHARTERIS (*quickly*). Maybe you had good reasons for not wishing to be disturbed?

KITTY (*quietly*). I had.

LADY CHARTERIS (*rising triumphantly*). Ah!

KITTY (*demurely*). It pains me to admit it. . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. So!

KITTY. Still, 'twould be but foolish to deny it. . . .

LADY CHARTERIS (*crosses c.*). Foolish indeed!

KITTY (*with a sigh*). Alas! for human weakness!

LADY CHARTERIS. I should use another term.

KITTY. Your ladyship is right! I should have explained that the reason is *not* weakness but—fatigue!

LADY CHARTERIS (*contemptuously*). Fatigue! (*Crosses down L.*)

KITTY (*moves c.*). I have been attending a rehearsal at Drury Lane Theatre. The author was trying and capricious. First this, then that. He would and he would not. This line a shade quicker—that one not quite so fast. I know I can rely on your ladyship's discretion—a word of this abroad would be my ruin—but, truth to tell . . .

(*A pause.*)

LADY CHARTERIS (*down L., half back to audience*). Well?

KITTY. I am not as young as I would like to be!

LADY CHARTERIS. Or as your costume might imply. . . .

KITTY. Exactly; and though I may not be as old as my enemies would suggest, still, I must admit to—a growing feeling of fatigue. (*Yawns behind her handkerchief.*)

LADY CHARTERIS (*crosses up to L. of KITTY*). A more regular life, maybe, might mend matters.

KITTY (*blandly*). Possibly, possibly! and yet 'twere better to be dead than dull! Some, it is true, achieve both ends—(*crosses R.*)—but they are authors for the most part.

LADY CHARTERIS (*with a sneer*). And so fatigue was your reason for desiring privacy?

KITTY. Alas! yes! (*Sits on settee.*)

LADY CHARTERIS. You are certain?

KITTY. Oh, quite, quite certain.

LADY CHARTERIS. There is nothing else?

KITTY. Nothing—nothing else.

LADY CHARTERIS. Since your health leaves so much to be desired—since you are, in a word, so frail . . .

KITTY (*demurely*). Yes, your ladyship?

LADY CHARTERIS. Is it wise, do you think, to entertain so largely?

KITTY. Your ladyship has read of my little parties?

LADY CHARTERIS. One hears of little else.

KITTY. I am flattered at such interest!

LADY CHARTERIS. You enjoy, with Elizabeth Farren and Dorothea Jordan, a quite uncommon notoriety.

KITTY. Dorothea was in tears about it to the Duke but yesterday. She vowed that I was receiving more than my share.

LADY CHARTERIS. One hears, it seems, of nothing else but your horses and your carriages; your latest hat; your last *mot*; your most recent coiffure; your newest costume, and . . .

(*Pause.*)

KITTY (*demurely*). Yes, your ladyship?

LADY CHARTERIS. Your last love!

KITTY. One really hears all that?

LADY CHARTERIS. One does.

KITTY. How intriguing.

LADY CHARTERIS. The world is vastly interested in your latest dupe.

KITTY (*innocently*). My dupe?

LADY CHARTERIS. I said—your dupe!

KITTY. Does the gentleman possess a name?

LADY CHARTERIS. He does. A great one, of which he is unworthy. Incidentally, I bear it too—he happens to be my husband.

KITTY. La!

LADY CHARTERIS. He is a fop and he is a fool! He lives for his clothes. He dreams of cravats and spends

days in thinking out the latest angle for his hat. He is the uncrowned king of fashion. His word is law. He sets the mode and the *beau monde* follows at his heels. A pitiful creature! Yet he is my husband—I do not choose that you shall steal him.

KITTY (*rises*). I!

LADY CHARTERIS. He is worthless—still—he is mine!

KITTY. Your—your ladyship leaves me breathless.

LADY CHARTERIS. When you are recovered, perhaps you will be good enough to explain.

KITTY. To explain what, your ladyship?

LADY CHARTERIS. His visits here.

KITTY. Certainly, his lordship has honoured me with a visit. . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. Ah! at last! (*Moves L.*)

KITTY (*moves C.*). Many of the quality favour my poor house with their presence.

LADY CHARTERIS. I know.

KITTY. All London admits your husband to be the best-dressed man in town, and I have reason to know that he is most good-natured; but your ladyship need be under no apprehension. I am not a receiver of stolen property.

LADY CHARTERIS. Why should he come here at all?

KITTY. There was certainly a reason.

LADY CHARTERIS. Doubtless.

KITTY. But your ladyship may be reassured. It had naught to do with love.

LADY CHARTERIS. It has been reported to me that my husband was seen leaving your house yesterday and two days in advance of that, and Heaven knows how many times before. 'Tis the gossip of the town. Last night at my Lady Basildon's the company was agog with it.

KITTY (*with a shrug*). Your ladyship knows how the characters talk in Mr. Sheridan's comedy?

LADY CHARTERIS. Full well. But I do not choose that my affairs shall become a by-word. I will not have it, do you mark me, Kitty Bellairs? (*Crosses to KITTY C.*)

KITTY. I have already assured your ladyship that his lordship has been here but once.

LADY CHARTERIS. May one ask the purport of his visit?

KITTY. I desired his lordship's advice on a matter of importance.

LADY CHARTERIS (*contemptuously*). His advice! (*Crosses R. to back of settee.*) The fool hasn't an idea in his head, except for his clothes.

KITTY. If I dare venture, I think that your ladyship is severe. His lordship gave me some information that I greatly needed.

LADY CHARTERIS. Indeed!

KITTY. Oh yes—indeed!

LADY CHARTERIS. Would it be indiscreet to ask its nature?

KITTY. Ah! there I must beg to be excused. . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. As I thought. (*Moves up c.*)

KITTY. I will merely add . . .

LADY CHARTERIS (*stops*). Well?

KITTY. The result of our interview will be apparent in a few weeks.

LADY CHARTERIS (*grimly*). So soon?

KITTY. You will then realize the reason of my silence.

LADY CHARTERIS. Passing strange!

KITTY. Until that time my tongue is tied.

LADY CHARTERIS. Vastly mysterious.

KITTY. Yet 'tis absurdly simple. So obvious in truth, that it surprises me that your ladyship has not already guessed it.

LADY CHARTERIS. Will it be necessary for his lordship to repeat the visit?

KITTY (L.C.). No. I do not expect to be honoured again.

LADY CHARTERIS (*up c.*). Well, Mistress Bellairs, I must perforce accept your explanation.

KITTY. Your ladyship is too kind!

LADY CHARTERIS. I will confess that it does not greatly satisfy me; still, I must possess my soul in patience, and be content. (*Her glance travels round the room.*)

KITTY (*smiling*). Meanwhile, your ladyship may be of easy mind.

LADY CHARTERIS (*comes down c.*). Thank you, Mistress Bellairs, you relieve me vastly. And yet, to my own despite, I fear that this—this enigma will torment my thoughts.

KITTY. Oh ?

LADY CHARTERIS. Mystery is so fascinating—don't you find it so ? And the secret, you say, will be revealed in a few short weeks ?

KITTY. Assuredly.

LADY CHARTERIS. Suppose I were to learn it sooner ?

KITTY. Your ladyship has a clue ?

LADY CHARTERIS. It may be.

KITTY. One knows that your ladyship is gifted with rare powers of divination.

LADY CHARTERIS. I will even venture farther.

KITTY. How far ?

LADY CHARTERIS. No farther than this room.

KITTY. Indeed !

LADY CHARTERIS. I have a fancy . . .

KITTY. Yes ?

LADY CHARTERIS. That the clue lies here.

KITTY. Is it possible ?

LADY CHARTERIS. Already the pieces in the puzzle are beginning to take shape.

KITTY (*clapping her hands*). *Brava !*

LADY CHARTERIS. Before I take my leave the mystery may have yielded up its secret.

KITTY (*again clapping her hands*). *Brava ! brava !*

LADY CHARTERIS. First permit me to offer you my sincere congratulations.

KITTY. On what head ?

LADY CHARTERIS. There have been some so foolish as to decry your capacity as a player.

KITTY. Many, I fear. In truth, Mr. Sheridan is still in two minds about it.

LADY CHARTERIS. I shall take the first opportunity of reassuring Mr. Sheridan. You are a great artist, Mistress Bellairs.

KITTY. Your ladyship flatters me.

LADY CHARTERIS. You act so well, indeed—both on the stage and off—that I will admit for quite ten minutes you completely mystified me.

KITTY. A crowning triumph, truly.

LADY CHARTERIS. You have an engaging air of candour and a sweet simplicity, quite invaluable—to a comedy of intrigue.

KITTY. Such as . . . ?

LADY CHARTERIS. Well, shall we say the little comedy that you and I have been recently rehearsing ?

KITTY. Was that a comedy ?

LADY CHARTERIS. It was.

KITTY. La ! so it was, and Shakespeare has already put a name to it—The Genius ! Of course, of course ! “Much ado about nothing !”

LADY CHARTERIS. So far, our comedy has progressed without a hero.

KITTY. Ah ! there’s the rub. Is he to be yours or mine ?

LADY CHARTERIS. Before deciding, perhaps we had best see him.

KITTY. True ! I beg that your ladyship will produce him.

LADY CHARTERIS. Nay, I leave that task to you.

KITTY. But where am I to find him ?

LADY CHARTERIS. You have but to look in this direction, or in that.

KITTY (*moves up c., smiling and pretending to search*). He seems monstrous shy.

LADY CHARTERIS (*following*). Come, Mistress Bel-lairs, produce him, I beg.

KITTY (*up L.C.*). But where is the monster hiding ?

LADY CHARTERIS (*up R.C.*). He will come if you do but call him.

KITTY. What name shall I call ?

LADY CHARTERIS. My husband’s.

KITTY. What !

LADY CHARTERIS. My husband’s ! Further pretence is useless.

KITTY. Your ladyship cannot be serious.

LADY CHARTERIS. I was never more so.

KITTY. I have already explained the situation at some length. If I have not succeeded in persuading your ladyship, I am disconsolate. At the same time, I feel that I am occupying too much of your ladyship's leisure. May I have the honour of calling your ladyship's chair? (*Crosses to door down R. and holds it open.*)

LADY CHARTERIS. Before you do so, I would crave a moment. You have explained much, it is true. 'Tis a business in which you greatly excel. So greatly—that, perhaps, you may be able to explain this. (*She picks up her husband's cane that leans against a chair L.*) A charming cane! I am informed that it took my husband three months to compose the design. (*Crosses with cane to C.*)

(KITTY remains silent.)

You bite your lip and have no word to say. Why should my worthless husband leave his cane?

KITTY. Might he not have forgotten it?

LADY CHARTERIS. Oh, come, come! Kitty Bellairs, that is unworthy of you. Does a gentleman walk abroad without his cane?

KITTY (*moves to back of settee*). If you must know the truth—he lent it to me.

LADY CHARTERIS (*laughs scornfully*). A pretty tale truly, and a likely! So he lent it to you?

KITTY. Yes.

LADY CHARTERIS. It seems that his lordship is not the only one to lose his head.

KITTY. Since I cannot hope to convince your ladyship . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. Well, well, we will pass the cane. My husband is eccentric—some say that he is mad. We will allow that in token of his high esteem he permits you to retain his precious cane. But that—that does not account for these! (*Picks up a pair of gentleman's gauntlets from small table at back of arm-chair L.*) Has he also lent you these?

(KITTY *is silent.*)

These do not seem to be suited to a lady's hand. A shade too large, methinks, for the dainty fingers of Mistress Kitty Bellairs, unless rumour and my powers of vision both deceive me.

KITTY. I admit that the matter is difficult of explanation. . . .

LADY CHARTERIS (*places gloves and cane on small table at back of arm-chair L.*). But not beyond your powers, I'll warrant! Come, let us hear.

KITTY. At the present moment I cannot give a satisfactory answer.

LADY CHARTERIS. Kitty Bellairs tongue-tied—oh, fie! Kitty Bellairs, so noted for her ready wit and quick riposte. Reduced to silence by a pair of paltry gloves! Amazing! I cannot credit my five senses. A gentleman's cane and a pair of gloves to work such havoc! 'Tis tragic!

KITTY (*quietly*). Let the play proceed! Before the curtain falls I may have found my tongue. (*Moves up c.*)

LADY CHARTERIS. Let us hope so.

KITTY. The smile may even freeze upon your lips.

LADY CHARTERIS. Come! do you still deny that my husband is concealed in your rooms?

KITTY. I do.

LADY CHARTERIS. You require more proof?

KITTY. Much more.

LADY CHARTERIS. Doubtless I can oblige you.

KITTY. Would you like to search the house?

LADY CHARTERIS. An excellent plan. I will begin with this room. (*Moves quickly to door up R.*) And I promise you that my search shall be thorough.

(*Exit.*)

(*During LADY CHARTERIS'S momentary absence, KITTY moves to cupboard C., locks the door, and conceals the key in her bosom.*)

(*Re-enter LADY CHARTERIS.*)

Not there. Yet I'll be sworn he's hidden somewhere near.

KITTY. Shall I summon my serving-maid to light your ladyship?

LADY CHARTERIS. To help hoodwink me—eh? I thank you—no! This room! (*Moves to door up L., looks in.*) Hah! your bedroom! Excellent!

(She hurries in.)

(KITTY remains c. in front of cupboard.)

(LADY CHARTERIS without gives a cry of exultation.)

What's this? What's this? Here's treasure trove indeed! A rare discovery!

(She returns with a gentleman's hat.)

May one ask, Mistress Bellairs, what my husband's hat—is doing in your bedroom?

(KITTY is silent.)

Has he lent it to you, or is it a souvenir of an agreeable visit? Oh! there is no mistake! His monogram is embroidered within. Now, let me see—I first discover his lordship's cane, then his gloves, dyed his own peculiar shade of grey, and now his hat. Will you be good enough to inform me where I am likely to find the rest of his wardrobe?

KITTY. Your ladyship does not seem to need assistance.

LADY CHARTERIS. Hah! an inspiration! I notice that you stand before a door, Mistress Bellairs.

KITTY. I do.

LADY CHARTERIS. I have a feeling that what I seek lies hidden on the other side.

KITTY. Indeed.

LADY CHARTERIS. I hate to seem inquisitive, but might one ask whither that door leads?

KITTY. It leads—nowhere.

LADY CHARTERIS. Nowhere!

KITTY. It is, in short, a cupboard.

LADY CHARTERIS. A cupboard—it only needed that !
(*Throws hat on to a chair.*) In a comedy of intrigue there is always a cupboard. Cupboard love is the theme of half the dramatists from the Restoration downwards, and you, Mistress Bellairs, who have adorned many such a masquerade, are perfectly equipped to play your part. The scene, then, is set. Come, Kitty Bellairs, the moment has arrived for the *dénouement*.

KITTY. There, your ladyship, I beg to differ.

LADY CHARTERIS. Oh ! believe me, delay is fatal. All else has been but preparation. The mystery now is all but solved. Pray, open the door and gratify my curiosity.

KITTY. I regret that I am unable to oblige your ladyship. (*Moves R.*)

LADY CHARTERIS. Then I must perforce probe the mystery myself ! (*Moves to cupboard door and tries the handle.*) As I suspected—locked !

KITTY (*turning*). Disappointing— isn't it ?

LADY CHARTERIS. Unlock the door !

KITTY (*demurely*). I beg your ladyship's pardon !

LADY CHARTERIS. Unlock the door, I say, or must I beat it down. (*Beats on the door.*)

KITTY. The panels are of stout oak. I fear that your ladyship will injure your hands.

LADY CHARTERIS (*moves to KITTY*). You refuse me ?

KITTY. I regret to have to do so.

LADY CHARTERIS. Why ?

KITTY. I have my reasons.

LADY CHARTERIS. I can well believe it.

KITTY (*smiling*). Though they are not of the nature you suspect. (*Crosses L.*)

LADY CHARTERIS. This is folly ! The hand is played, you have lost each trick. Why, then, not admit defeat ?

KITTY (*quietly glancing at cupboard*). Because—I still hold the ace of trumps !

LADY CHARTERIS. Then play it—if you dare !

KITTY. I shall play it—when I choose !

LADY CHARTERIS. My husband is concealed in your

rooms. I have proved it to the hilt—can you deny that?

KITTY. I deny it, with the utmost emphasis.

LADY CHARTERIS. Very well. I assert that he lies hid behind this door. If I am wrong, disprove it. You have but to turn the key. You decline?

KITTY. I do.

LADY CHARTERIS. You dare not disclose your guilt.

KITTY. I will admit this much . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. Ah!

KITTY. The cupboard certainly contains a secret . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. Ah!

KITTY. But it does not contain your husband.

LADY CHARTERIS. Does my husband share the secret?

KITTY. Well . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. Speak, woman!

KITTY. I'm afraid he does.

LADY CHARTERIS. I knew it!

KITTY. If your ladyship knows it—why trouble further?

LADY CHARTERIS. Because I mean to unmask the pair of you.

KITTY. I see.

LADY CHARTERIS. Don't play-act to me, Mistress Kitty Bellairs! I am in no mood for it. You must think me vastly simple—a child to be tricked by a player's cunning. You women of the stage need putting in your places. It amuses you to spread your nets, and draw our husbands from us. To break hearts and ruin homes for a mere caprice! The time has come to make an end on't. I, for one, will have none of it. Unlock that door!

KITTY. Having stolen your husband, your ladyship suggests that I keep him in my cupboard to be put on or off as the fancy takes me.

LADY CHARTERIS. You are pleased to be flippant.

KITTY. I think it but reasonable to presume that your ladyship jests.

LADY CHARTERIS. You will find to your cost that I am in grim earnest. You need a lesson!

KITTY. In manners?

LADY CHARTERIS. And in morals.

KITTY. And your ladyship has a mind to instruct me? (*With a curtsy.*) I am vastly obliged!

LADY CHARTERIS. I am acquainted with Mr. Sheridan—

KITTY (*pretending astonishment*). La!

LADY CHARTERIS. And Lord Spenlove and the Marquis of Kilroy, who stand behind him.

KITTY (*still feigning surprise*). Is't possible?

LADY CHARTERIS. My word carries some weight.

KITTY (*pretending great distress*). And your ladyship proposes to—to lay a complaint?

LADY CHARTERIS. I'll break you if I can. (*Moves R.*)

KITTY (c.). Ah! but your ladyship would not be so cruel! (*Pretending great distress*). You are a great lady. I am but a poor player. You would not rob me of my livelihood. Think what it would mean. Ruin, desolation—perhaps even death!

LADY CHARTERIS. The remedy is in your own hands. Open that door!

KITTY. Is there no other way?

LADY CHARTERIS. None.

KITTY (*still playing a part*). I implore you on my knees. (*Sinks on her knees.*) Spare me, oh, spare me the humiliation.

LADY CHARTERIS. Have you spared me?

KITTY. You drive me to desperation.

LADY CHARTERIS. Reveal your guilty secret and restore my husband, else . . .

KITTY (*eagerly*). Yes, yes!

LADY CHARTERIS. I proceed at once to my Lord Spenlove, who is a particular friend of mine—

KITTY (*sobbing*). Yes, yes—'tis common gossip . . .

LADY CHARTERIS (*angrily*). What?

KITTY (*hastily*). That—that Lord Spenlove has much influence with Mr. Sheridan.

LADY CHARTERIS. Well, which is it to be?

KITTY (*dragging herself to her feet*). I am distraught. Was ever woman so hardly pressed!

LADY CHARTERIS. Unlock that door!

KITTY. Have you no mercy? Will naught move your heart?

LADY CHARTERIS (*relentlessly*). Unlock that door!

KITTY. Since you are adamant, deaf to all entreaties—I plead no more. (*Moves to door c.*) With a breaking heart—with eyes that are dim from unshed tears—I place the key in the lock, and call courage to my aid! Ah, me! that I should have known this day. Mists rise before me. The room revolves. Yet before my senses leave me, I make one superhuman effort, and throw wide the door!

(She suits the action to the word. The cupboard door swings open and reveals the complete outfit of a man of fashion, hanging from a peg. Coat, vest, cravat, breeches, stockings, shoes, nothing is lacking. LADY CHARTERIS gazes at the display in amazement. KITTY watches her antagonist, laughter dancing in her eyes. Then dropping her eyes demurely, she murmurs.)

My secret, ma'am!

LADY CHARTERIS. What folly is this?

KITTY. In truth, your ladyship, I am to appear as "Sir Harry Hardup" in Mr. Daventry's new comedy. It—ahem!—(*coughs*)—is what is called a breeches part, and there has been some doubt as to whether my—my understandings were quite suited to the costume.

LADY CHARTERIS. Well?

KITTY. Mr. Sheridan referred the matter to the greatest authority on dress now living, your husband, madam, saving your presence . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. Well?

KITTY. His lordship was good-natured enough to pay me a visit, and after a little talk—he felt himself able to reassure Mr. Sheridan; and more . . .

LADY CHARTERIS. What else?

KITTY. His lordship, anxious that my costume should be correct in every detail, was kind enough to send his valet with a complete suit of clothes to serve as a model.

LADY CHARTERIS. Why make a secret of it ?

KITTY. 'Tis my first appearance in a breeches part, and Mr. Sheridan wishes no word of it to be breathed, till the first night.

LADY CHARTERIS (*moodily*). And suppose I reveal this precious secret ?

KITTY (*sweetly*). Your ladyship won't do that ?

LADY CHARTERIS. And why not, pray ?

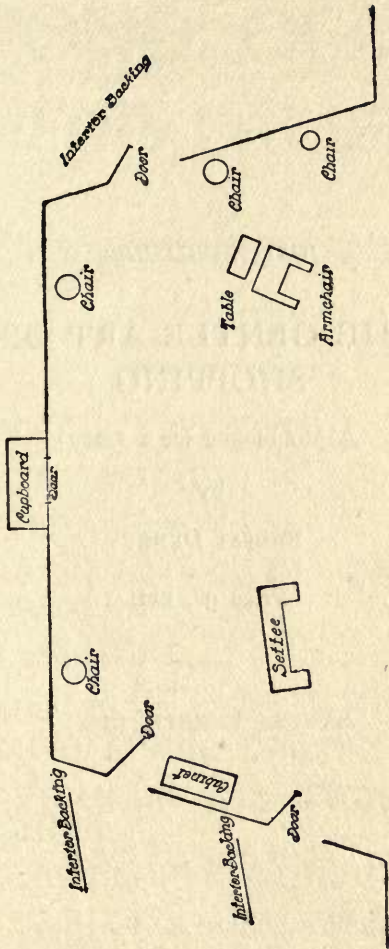
KITTY. Because if you did, I should be compelled to tell Mr. Pasquin, who would write a lampoon relating the whole story of your ladyship's mystification, and unwarranted suspicion.

LADY CHARTERIS. So ! Well, Kitty Bellairs, I accept defeat. I hate you ! I hate you ! but I must admit—you're a clever jade.

KITTY. If your ladyship's star has not been in the ascendant 'tis but a momentary eclipse. Remember that we poor players must use our wits, as strong men use their swords. We have to play our parts, sometimes maybe with tear-dimmed eyes, and aching hearts—yet we must not falter. We exist but to please. We live, as do the butterflies, in the sunshine of your smiles. Frown upon us and we wither. Hate us and we die. If sometimes we snatch success from the discomfiture of others, or turn a phrase to gain our ends, bear no ill will. For such is the way of comedy.

(LADY CHARTERIS *moves to door down R., turns and looks back at her antagonist, her handsome face disfigured with a frown. KITTY, smilingly, makes a profound obeisance, and on this picture—*

the CURTAIN falls.)



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