

**TREVANION; OR, THE
FALSE POSITION: A
PLAY IN THREE ACTS**

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Trevanion; Or, The False Position: A Play in Three Acts by Westland Marston & Bayle Bernard

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WESTLAND MARSTON & BAYLE BERNARD

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PLAY IN THREE ACTS**

©

TRE VANION;

OR,

THE FALSE POSITION.

A Play,

IN THREE ACTS,

BY

WESTLAND MARSTON, ESQ.,

Author of "The Patrician's Daughter," "Strathmore," &c.

AND

BAYLE BERNARD, ESQ.,

Author of "Lucille," "The Farmer's Story," &c.

FIRST REPRESENTED AT THE
ROYAL SURREY THEATRE,
MONDAY, OCT. 22, 1849,
UNDER THE JOINT LICENSESHIP OF
MESSRS. SHEPHERD AND CRESWICK.

LONDON:
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AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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J. E. Colman,
Boston.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

- Trevanion (*a Man of Fortune*) . . . Mr. CRESWICK.
 Knightly (*his Steward*) Mr. BRUCE NORTON.
 Michael Langford (*a Ship Carpenter*) Mr. EMERY.
 Adams (*his Foreman*) Mr. BUTLER.
 Vox (*a Village Oracle*) Mr. H. WIDDICOMB.
 Skillet (*his Sub.*) Mr. ROGERS.
 Auguste Mr. J. W. COLLIER.
 Roberts Mr. E. NEWTON.

- Margaret Langford Madame PONTAL.
 Mrs. Langford (*her Mother*) Mrs. WATSON.
 Mrs. Lorimer Mrs. HENRY VINING.
 Miss Hornet Miss LAPORTE.
 Williams Miss BLOOMFIELD.

Workmen, Miners, &c. &c.

*Scenes of the First Act on the English Coast and in Paris;
 Second and Third Acts in London and on the English Coast.*

ACT FIRST.

SCENE I.—PARLOUR OF A COTTAGE,

Opening through door and window at back on a Ship Carpenter's Work-yard. Table laid for tea.

[*Mrs. LANGFORD is discovered arranging the table.*

Mrs. L. There, now—all's ready, and it won't want a relish; it's been a hot day to-day, and he'll be drest enough.

[*Workmen now pass across at back, LANGFORD following, and entering from the yard.*

Workm. Good night, Mr. Langford; good night, sir—good night.

Len. Good night to you, lads. Well, Lizzy—tea ready? That's right my love, it was never more welcome; that boat we're upon is a wearying job. [*He takes off his hat and apron, and sinks into a chair.*] There now, that's comfort—every muscle enjoys it. Arm-chairs, I really think, were first made for ship-carpenters; even if they haven't such a thing as spring seats to scare you, as though you had dropped upon something alive.

Mrs. L. La! Michael, take your tea.

Len. Certainly, love, and as much as a Chinaman; I've a throat a yard long. Well, now, people, they tell us, are never contented, and yet I fancy if I could always stretch out in this fashion, there's not another blessing I'd wish in the world—and yet, what do I say—not another? Ah! Margaret.

Mrs. L. Well, well—we shall hear from her to-day, Michael.

Len. Well, I hope so, indeed, as it's so long past the time; to-day, at the latest, we ought to have news.

[*Vox is heard outside.*

Vox. Very well, very well—I shall step in for a moment.

Len. Eh! Mr. Vox, our great newspaper man, who fires a shot every week about parish abuses—a wonderful man for making much out of nothing; a sort of chap who'd build a ship out of three sticks of timber.

Vox. [*looking in at the back.*] How are you, friends—how are you? At tea, I perceive.

Len. Yes, sir, we are, and would be happy if you'd join us.

Mrs. L. Yes, Mr. Vox—pray do!

Vox. Well, I thank you, I will. I rather like tea. Tea is essentially an intellectual beverage. You remember, I suppose, my attack on the Faving Board? Well, sir, that letter was written under the influence of tea!

Len. Was it indeed, sir? [*Aside.*] Then it strikes me there was a good deal of water in the pot.

Mrs. L. Now, Mr. Vox.

Vox. Thank you, Mrs. Langford. You saw my last letter—that case of the bird's-nest? Did you ever know such an outrage on mind and humanity? What were the facts? A poor bricklayer's boy, allured by the charms of nature, strays into the fields—he sees there a tree; prompted

by the love of knowledge, he mounts to explore it, and, over-staying his time, he's discharged by his master—a master who thus crushes all his love for the beautiful, and arrests even the progress of scientific inquiry!

Lan. [*aside.*] And all this on a bird's-nest! What would he say on a pigeon-house?

Vox. But oh! bless my soul, I was forgetting my errand. I've some tidings I think you'll be happy to hear. [*He pulls out a newspaper.*]

Lan. What, of Margaret?

Vox. Herself. You're expecting a letter?

Lan. Yes, sir—from Switzerland.

Vox. Well, here's a London paper, and in the Paris arrivals—

Lan. Her friend, Mrs. Lorimer. Yes, Lizzy, yes—so now all's explained; this journey, you see, has prevented her writing.

Mrs. L. Of course it has, Michael.

Lan. Well, thank you, Mr. Vox, we're very much obliged to you; for, to tell you the truth, we were getting uneasy, as she's been always so regular sending every month to us.

Vox. Well, really your daughter's is a very strange story,—though, to be sure, there's no doubt she was a very strange girl, showing talent so early—only fourteen when she began to write verses.

Lan. Only fourteen, sir.

Vox. And gained, among others, the notice of Lady Eveham.

Lan. Exactly; by something she wrote on her ladyship's birthday.

Vox. And what's more, so elegant; quite a marvel of manners when only a child.

Lan. She was, sir, she was; didn't curtsy like other girls—always talked so softly, and glided like when she moved; wore her little bonnet with a sort of an air; and as she grew up, she seemed born for a carriage. The wonder was always to see her enter my door.

Mrs. L. And yet, with it all, there was no pride in her, Michael.

Lan. No, Lizzy, no; humble as her home was, she didn't love it the less. If her fancies went up like the lark's wings, her dwelling, like its nest, was still on the ground.

Mrs. L. So you may suppose, sir, it cost us no little to part with her, proud as we were of her—and she, too, our only one.

Lan. No common pang, sir, a girl so worth loving; but still, when we saw her health so suddenly breaking, and Lady Eveham kindly offered to take her abroad—

Mrs. L. Why of course we were thankful; and as she doesn't forget us—

Lan. No, sir; her letters still come to us, like her voice, full of sweetness. We think we see her face in them.

Vox. Well, and then—let me see, at her ladyship's death she went to live with a young baroness she met with in Germany.

Lan. Yes, sir; and under her roof she saw Mrs. Lorimer—

Vox. That very rich person—her present protector—excellent, clever girl, played her cards famously.

Lan. Played her cards! And do you think, sir, she cares only for herself?

Vox. Well, and why not? What's self-interest but virtue? Who can be good that isn't happy!—and who happy that isn't prosperous?

Lan. Then the more a man's paid, sir, the better he grows?

Vox. No question of that; the more justice he gets, the more he dispenses.

[*ADAMS looks in at the back.*]

Adams. Oh, if you please, sir, Miss Hornet's been here.

Lan. Miss Hornet?

Adams. Yes, sir, about the gate which you promised to make for her.

Lan. Eh—as I live, I forgot all about it. I ought to have done it yesterday; but what with thinking of Margaret, and other affairs, I—

Adams. And as she is going to the post, she said she'd stop in again, sir. [*He disappears at the back.*]

Vox. Well, of all my aversions, that woman is the greatest!

Mrs. L. Miss Hornet, sir?

Vox. Miss Hornet—that mass of pretension—whose vanity's enough to make a whole city modest.

Mrs. L. Why we thought, Mr. Vox, that you liked her so much.

Vox. Liked her, indeed! I endured her, perhaps; that I couldn't help; for she's a sort of tuss that will stick to any man of distinction; but the woman's my horror. Such a terrible temper—almost as bad as a cupping-machine; you can't touch her, but you feel a dozen lancets immediately.

Len. Well, that's very true, sir.

Vox. A creature, in fact, who's so much my dislike that—

[*Miss Hornet enters at the back.*]

Miss H. Good evening, Mr. Langford.

Len. Ah, good evening, Miss Hornet; I hope I see you well, ma'am; pray take a seat; have you had tea, ma'am?

Miss H. Tea, sir! why hardly. I thought it was known that our family hour has been six for a century.

Len. Has it, indeed, ma'am? Well my kettle, you see, hasn't such regular habits.

Vox. [aside] The infamous Jill; why she won't even see me!

Len. But do take a seat, ma'am—or let me bring this; this is a soft one. [Bringing her a chair; a post horn is heard.] Why, Lizzy, what's that?

Mrs. L. The post, Michael.

Len. It is. And with a letter, I'm sure of it.

Mrs. L. Then they'll bring it soon; and—

Len. Bring it—and can I wait with my heart beating in this way? They'd be slow if they flew with it. My wife, ma'am, will talk to you; but, if you please, I can't stop. Margaret! Margaret!

[*Throwing aside the chair, he runs out at back.*]

Miss H. Mrs. Langford!

Mrs. L. I really beg pardon, but we expect news from our daughter; and—

Miss H.—*Len.*—And is news from your daughter to set aside all respect? [sits down] But I suppose I must overlook it. And pray what's she doing? Is she a companion at present, or merely a governess?

Mrs. L. She's neither, Miss Hornet; she's the friend of her protector.

Miss H. Oh, of course, she's a friend, as she lives under her roof.

Vox. Well, and she deserves to be, with her mind and manners.

Miss H. Ah! bless my soul, is that you, Mr. Vox?

Vox. Yes, ma'am, it is.

Miss H. Well, really, you must excuse me; I confess I didn't see you.

Vox. Oh, I knew that. I was aware I wasn't wanted!

Miss H. Wanted, sir! wanted!

Vox. A friend, like a pin, is never seen when he's done with.

Miss H. Because, sir, such friends are not worth picking up. Well, Mrs. Langford, of course you've heard the news? You know who's bought the mines?

Mrs. L. The mines—oh, yes, ma'am; it's a Mr. Trevanion.

Miss H. Exactly.

Mrs. L. Of Cornwall, they say; and of very good family.

Miss H. Good, madam! the best; one he can trace up to the times of the Britons!

Vox. [aside] Honourable, really; men with moons on their bodies.

Mrs. L. And more than all this, who, we're also informed—

Miss H. Is a great friend of ours!

Mrs. L. Of yours, ma'am?

Miss H. Of ours. You're aware that my cousin is appointed engineer?

Mrs. L. He is, ma'am?

Miss H. He is; and I may now make it known that Mr. Trevaunon, when he comes here, will reside at our house.

Mrs. L. [*aside*] Why, here's a piece of news!

Vox. [*aside*] And so now all's explained. She hopes to catch this fellow.

Miss H. We've just heard from him, in fact, to settle the time; for at present I must tell you he's travelling in Switzerland, where it seems he's been detained by an old friend of his—a lady named Lorimer.

Mrs. L. Lorimer?

Miss H. Yes.

Mrs. L. [*aside*] Why, can it be the same?

Miss H. So of course I'm most anxious that this tour should prove of service; and perhaps upon that point Mr. Vox can inform me. Can you tell me, Mr. Vox, what are the climate's peculiarities?

Vox. Yes, madam. One—if he drinks the snow-water, he may have a lump under his throat; what they call a *gôitre*.

Miss H. A *gôitre*!

Vox. Yes, madam; as big as a water melon!

Miss H. Well, really, sir, your abruptness is a something inhuman.

Vox. Is it, indeed, ma'am? I'm not so kind as your friend, then; who, as he's coming to your house, can bear any infliction.

Miss H. Well, perhaps, sir, he can; he may even be induced to read one of your letters.

Vox. Which you have read, madam, without any inducement; but that was at a time when you could reverence mind—mind, the great potentate that now rules the world.

Miss H. And hasn't I honoured the potentate when I noticed its livery? What but my dinners, sir, gave you inspiration? What was your Holicon but my soup-tureen?

Vox. Well, and what, in return, was your Lethe?—My inkstand. When excluded from certain circles, didn't I soothe your pangs by attacking at large the prodigality of fashion?—and when not asked to dance on account of your age, didn't I denounce the system which hurries girls into women?

Miss H. Silence, sir; silence! Mrs. Langford, can you allow me to be talked to in this manner?

Mrs. L. Well, really, Miss Hornet, I don't know, I'm sure; but—

[LANGFORD is heard outside.]

Lan. Lizzy! Lizzy! [*He enters at the back, waving a letter.*]

Mrs. L. Ah! my husband!

Lan. Didn't I tell you—it's here, love—it's here; and from Paris!

Miss H. Oh, from your daughter? Well, I trust there's good news.

Lan. Thank you, ma'am; thank you. I trust so myself.

Vox. And as a proof of my feelings I shall leave you to read it.

Miss H. And so you'd set me an example on the point of good manners? Well, sir, I shall follow you as far as the street.

Vox. I don't care so long as you don't overtake me at the church.

[*He goes out at the back.*]

Miss H. So good day, Mr. Langford; I really hope you've good news; and whether your daughter be companion or governess, believe me, I trust she has a good situation.

[*She goes out at the back.* LANGFORD during this has opened the letter, and now stands surveying it.]

Lan. No; I can't read it; there's a cloud in my eyes that wont turn to rain. Lizzy, do you read it—do you, love; and then I shall fancy I hear her voice as well as your own.

[*She takes the letter; and, as he sinks into a chair holding her*
the scene closes in.]

SCENE II.—CORRIDOR IN AN HOTEL IN PARIS.

[*French servants cross with luggage, WILLIAMS follows.*]

Wil. So, another arrival—these Paris hotels are just like our coaches; crowd 'em as you please and they've always got room. Well, it's time for our ladies to be in from their walk, and for my part I think to go back to England, for I'm tired of the French, always saying so much that they never intend; and then, too, pretending there's no one else who can dress,—that we buy their shawls, and yet can't put them on!

[*AUGUSTA crosses with cloaks.*]

Aug. Bon jour, mademoiselle.

Wil. Good day, Mr. Auguste; another arrival?

Aug. Oh, yess—zere's noozers.

Wil. A countess, I hear. Well, I hope she's something grander than the last one I saw, a little wizen woman I mistook for a servant.

Aug. Ah, but she was noble—great blood in her vein.

Wil. Well, I did'nt think she'd say.

Aug. Vere different from Ainglant, where you've ver pretty women, but zen you've no lady.

Wil. What! we've no ladies?

Aug. Bien jolic, ma chère, très agréable—mais.

Wil. Well, that's a good joke. What do you call Mrs. Lorimer? Isn't Miss Langford a lady?

Aug. Oh, vere pretty gal, vere pretty bote—

Wil. And you mean then to say, sir, that?—

Aug. It is not your fault; ze grande manners, like alices, take long time to grow. Want ze ancienne noblesse; now in Ainglant, you know, you were all burn yesterday.

Wil. Were we indeed? Then we're pretty big babies. Why Miss Langford comes of a family as old as any alive.

Aug. Oh! mademoiselle.

Wil. I say, sir, she does. She's a niece of Lady Evesham—Lady Evesham who brought her over here for her health, and the Eveshams are related to our highest nobility.

Aug. Nobility—oh!

Wil. Miss Langford's relations have titles among them—and as good, I'm quite sure, as ever come to this house—and I should not at all wonder if she got one herself; that some time or other she'd come in for something.

Aug. Sans doute, mademoiselle. She will come in for her dinere. There is Miss Langford, so if you please I will go to my business.

[*He goes off.*]

MARGARET enters with a book.

Mar. Why, Williams, I trust that you were not quarrelling?

Wil. Oh no, miss, not at all; only really these Frenchmen do try one's temper so. What do you think he said, miss? That we'd no ladies in England!

Mar. What a cruel aspersion.

Wil. He actually did—that we hadn't one old family—he had even the impudence to sneer, miss, at yours.

Mar. At mine! do you say?

Wil. At yours, miss; to doubt yours was such. But that was a point I very soon settled. I told him 'twould be difficult to match it in France.

Mar. Williams!

Wil. Oh, I did. I said he'd be proud if he could get any such visitors.

Mar. You were very kind, really; but—

Wil. And what's more than that, I took leave to say that—

Mar. Oh, thank you; thank you. Will you place this on my table?