

**HORACE WALPOLE: A
ROMANTIC DRAMA
IN FOUR ACTS**

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Horace Walpole: A Romantic Drama in Four Acts by Gustave Simonson

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IN FOUR ACTS

BY
GUSTAVE SIMONSON
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NEW YORK
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1913

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CHARACTERS

- SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, *Prime Minister.*
- HORACE WALPOLE, M.P., *His son; about twenty-five years old.*
- CAPTAIN HENRY CONWAY, *Friend of Horace.*
- GEORGE SELWYN, M.P., *Friend of Horace, about twenty-five years of age, like Conway.*
- LORD CHESTERFIELD, *About forty-five years of age.*
- LORD CARLINGTON, *A Peer; Jacobite, in correspondence with the Pretender, and the chief organizer of the projected rising in London.*
- LORD HAXTON, *Jacobite.*
- SIR PERCY CAMPBELL, *Scotch Jacobite gentleman.*
- FIREBRACE PENDREL, *Jacobite.*
- JENKS, *Young servant of Sir Robert Walpole.*
- LADY VIRGINIA CARLINGTON, *Daughter of Lord Carlington; about nineteen years old, ardent Jacobite, proud, in love with Horace.*
- LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU, *About forty-five years of age.*
- LADY TOWNLEY, *About twenty-five years of age.*
- Guests of Lady Townley; Jacobite Gentlemen; and Soldiers in Act II.*

The scene in Act I is a parlour in Lady Townley's house in London.

The scene in Act II is a private room of Lord Carlington's mansion in London.

The scene in Act III is a private room in Sir Robert Walpole's residence in London.

The scene in Act IV is a large room at Strawberry Hill, Horace Walpole's home near Twickenham.

The time of the action of Act I is 1745 (the year of the last Jacobite rebellion), just after Prince Charles's occupation of Derby, when his success was believed by many to be probable; thus leading to the projected rising in London, which conspiracy involves the participants in disaster.—Act II occurs in the night, a day after the time of the first act.—Act III about four weeks later.—Act IV (an epilogue), fifty years later.

ACT I

SCENE.—*Parlour at Lady Townley's, with chairs, tables, etc. In the back-ground, card-table.*

[*Present: Horace, Carlington, Selwyn, Chesterfield; Lady Virginia; Lady Montagu; Lady Townley; Haxton; Campbell; and Guests—in the course of the act Captain Conway and Sir Robert Walpole.*]

Chesterfield. You have again won, Lady Montagu, your cards seem to be as irresistible as your wit.

Lady Montagu. I fear that our victory was due entirely to our luck, combined, of course, with Mr. Selwyn's matchless skill.

Lady Townley. Nonsense! Mr. Selwyn never had any skill, in spite of my desperate attempts to teach him the game. Besides, he was half asleep during the entire last hand, he played so badly.

Selwyn. How cruelly unjust you are, Lady Townley; you begrudge your vanquished slave the only satisfaction which you deign to let him have, of defeating you at cards, although conquered in——

Lady Townley. Sleepy simpleton, you nodded while dealing, and almost snored while taking the tricks.

Chesterfield. No, Lady Townley, I must defend my sentimental friend—his eyes were wide open, fixed dreamily upon his fair adversary.

Lady Montagu. My Lord Chesterfield, you know, while the most ingenious of flatterers, takes a malicious pleasure in provoking combats of wit among his friends.

Lady Townley. In which he is skilful enough to direct the combatants, while avoiding the shafts himself.

Selwyn. Lady Montagu also knows how to provoke, only in a different way. The late Mr. Pope was her most notable victim. The Marquis of Linbury has often related that famous love-declaration of the great poet to Lady Mary, which she extinguished in a burst of laughter.

Lady Montagu. Poor Mr. Pope! But even great poets, who always live in the clouds, sometimes become earthly.

Chesterfield. The Marquis, I hear, has married off the last of his five daughters.

Lady Townley. Those fat dowdies! What a load off his mind;—but he must have paid for it dearly. And how fares his younger brother, Lord Claybourne, with his new consort?

Selwyn. He deeply regrets his first wife.

Chesterfield. So does the second one. Rumour has it that they are hardly on speaking terms with each other, and that a fashionable divorce is impending.

Lady Montagu. What! another? It seems to

rain divorce suits this year. It would almost be a good plan for Parliament to pass a general law divorcing all the people of England, and be done with it.

Lady Townley. What a dreadful scheme!

Selwyn. And what would be the advantages of such a law?

Lady Montagu. Oh! very many. It would save a vast expense; those that pleased could marry again; those that are now unhappy would be released from their misery; while many reputations now in great peril, would be saved.

Lady Townley. I fear that England is not yet far enough advanced for such a law. But we are neglecting our friends. Lord Carlington, you do not join us in our nonsense. You seem as grave as a statesman out of place or a parson disappointed of a bishopric.

Carlington. In these troublous times, we cannot always be merry, even in the presence of wit and beauty.

Lady Montagu. Surely public affairs, which are mostly a huge joke, can worry no one.

Chesterfield. I trust your Lordship is not distressed at the disturbances in the Northern part of the kingdom. Even our North-British friend Sir Percy Campbell seems to be a little moved by the absurd rising of the Pretender's misguided adherents.

Sir Percy. We must bear with patience what