

**AMBITION: A PLAY,
IN THREE ACTS**

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Ambition: a play, in three acts by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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IN THREE ACTS**

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A M B I T I O N .

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AMBITION:

A PLAY, IN THREE ACTS.

ALTERED AND ADAPTED

FOR REPRESENTATION UPON THE ENGLISH STAGE,

FROM

M. SCRIBE'S CELEBRATED COMEDY

CALLED

“L'AMBITIEUX,”

NOW PERFORMING IN PARIS, AT THE THEATRE FRANCAIS,
WITH DISTINGUISHED SUCCESS.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

1835.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

P R E F A C E.

IN the translation and adaptation of this Play for the English stage, I have in the first instance to apologize to the talented French author for having taken, what he may consider at the first view, great liberties with his piece, both as regards curtailments, alterations, and omissions. It is my duty, therefore, to explain to that gentleman the reasons that have guided me in this respect. First, I must observe, that there is a personage in his play that would of itself alone become an absolute impediment to its receiving the regulated licence for permitting its exhibition at our theatres; and as the plot of the play can be carried on to its full extent, without the necessity of the personage alluded to appearing upon the stage at all, I have judged it the best and most prudent way (by omitting the character altogether), to remove at once the only objectionable part in the composition of it. Having, I trust, given a satisfactory explanation to the French writer, it rests with me to say a few words to the public, and to impress upon the minds of those who read my adaptation, that if I have somewhat strayed away from historic facts, I have at least, in not strictly following the original piece in all its scenes, endeavoured to produce a drama that may be seen without offending; in doing which, my chief desire has been to display to what extent a noble and a virtuous mind becomes degraded by the mischievous and powerful workings of ambition.

LONDON, Jan. 26, 1835.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Robert Walpole, *Prime Minister to the King.*

Henry Shorter, *his Nephew.*

Neuboroug, *an old Doctor of Medicine.*

Lady Cecilia Sunderland, *Maid of Honour to the Queen.*

Margaret, *Daughter to Neuboroug.*

The action of the play takes place in the year 1736.

N. B. *The Publisher is authorized to make arrangements with Managers of Theatres for the Performance of this Drama.*

AMBITION.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Room in the DOCTOR'S House.

DOCTOR and MARGARET.

Doc. OH! what a confounded place this London is for noise, especially for us doctors of medicine. Do, Margaret, shut down the window.

MAR. Yes, sir. It all comes from the hustings over the way; I wonder who will come in?

Doc. Why, what does that matter to you, I should like to know? As for me, I wish all the elections and all the hustings were at old scratch. No—come, I must not quite say that; because it's no bad time for us; we are sure to have some broken heads to mend, and that's what the people call freedom. But come, Margaret, sit down by me, whilst I speak to you upon a subject that more concerns yourself—your marriage with your cousin Kingston!

MAR. No, no, no, my dear father, I do not wish to have him!

Doc. And why not?

MAR. O—he is too young; besides, he has no place.

Doc. He's a lawyer!

MAR. A lawyer! yes, a lawyer without practice; and then he is of the opposition party, and that's not the way to get on—besides, I do not wish to marry at all; I am quite happy, and content, to remain at home with you, my dear father: here I have every thing that I can want.

Doc. True, Margaret; but still I wish to see you well settled. All my old comrades at Cambridge have got on in life; some are rich merchants, others lords, generals, and ministers; and here have I been living almost all my life a poor doctor of physic, in the little village where I was born.

MAR. And there let us continue to live—

Doc. Then you decline to marry your cousin; but how can I break this resolution to him? If, indeed, in so doing I could manage to serve him in some other way—

MAR. Well, then, that's very easily done.

Doc. In what manner, Margaret?

MAR. Why by speaking to your old friend, Sir Robert Walpole.

Doc. What, the Prime Minister?—never!

MAR. And why not?

Doc. Why not! has he not insulted me—forgot me! It did mighty well when we were at Cambridge together, whilst he was studying theology and me physic; but now that he is Prime Minister all that's forgot,—I'll ask nothing of him, and never wish to hear his name again.

MAR. That's not just, sir; recollect there has been some negligence on your own part, for you have been five years in London and never once called upon him.

Doc. It was his business to call upon me—so I have done with him; he is an ambitious upstart, and ambition tears the heart-strings all to pieces.

MAR. Well, then, if you will not speak to him, you can at least speak to his nephew, Henry Shorter.

Doc. Ah! that's quite another thing—I'll do that, Margaret.

MAR. Very well, sir; and if you could only hear him speak of you, of your talents, of your goodness, and your—

Doc. Well, well, never mind all that.

MAR. Ah, sir, when I saw him wounded, pale, and bleeding, close to our garden wall—

Doc. Aye, I never knew exactly the cause of this duel, but I know that I dressed his wounds, and cured him. I believe, however, the cause arose from a certain nobleman speaking disrespectfully of his uncle.

MAR. It was.

Doc. But hark! don't you hear a carriage driving up to the door?

MAR. It must be Henry then, for we have not so many carriages stopping at our house. It is him; and now, dear father, speak to him about Kingston.

Doc. Why, Margaret, I wish you would speak to him yourself, I am so awkward in these matters.

MAR. Well, very well.

Enter HENRY.

HEN. Good day, dear Doctor, and thanks for having so soon set me on my legs.

Doc. You go on well then ?

HEN. Excellently well ! and to-morrow I intend dancing at the ball that is given by the Queen.

Doc. Then you'll do a very imprudent thing—

MAR. Yes, a very imprudent thing, indeed.

HEN. Oh no, not at all ; I'll do so on purpose to shew all the lords and ladies of the court how well and how soon your father has cured me : but I have news for you ; your cousin Kingston, though no great friend to the administration, is appointed to a place about the court.

Doc. A place about the court !

MAR. Then for this we must be indebted to you.

HEN. Not at all.

MAR. And this very favour I was about to ask myself.

HEN. Indeed ! Well, I have more news for you then—your father is on the high road to honours, and is put in nomination to serve in parliament—

Doc. In parliament ! I'll have nothing to do with parliament, I can tell you.

HEN. And now, my friend, you must not any longer be doctor to the opposition side.

Doc. I'll be doctor to all sides ! and shall not be such an old fool as to think about parliament, and all that. No ; in my capacity of doctor I am esteemed—there I am in my place ; in the House of Parliament I shall be altogether out of it. And what am I to gain by all this ? I shall be called *honourable member* ! And I should like to know what's to become of all my patients whilst my honour is sitting in the House of Parliament, representing a borough (and a rotten one perhaps) ? No, no, I'll remain as I am : glory is a fine thing, but happiness is much finer, and more to my taste.

HEN. To hear the author of the "Letters upon Ireland" talk in such a manner,—one of the cleverest works that has been published for years,—is surprising. But, to another subject. My uncle—

Doc. Do not speak of him—his name is odious to me !

HEN. You are too severe against him, and so are many others. He has been of great service to the country—has governed it with truth and great ability under two reigns—has preserved it in a state of peace for more than twenty years !

Doc. Well, well, that may all be ; but still—

HEN. Oh, Doctor ! in thus speaking of his virtues and his talents, do not imagine that I am blind to his defects ; for I have more than once voted against his measures !

Doc. What ! you vote against Sir Robert Walpole ?