

Audition Piece for Captain Brice

Thomasina nearly bumps into Brice who is entering. She runs out of sight.

Brice: Good God, man, what have you told her.

Septimus: Told her? Told her what?

Brice: Hodge!

(Septimus looks outside the door, sees that Chater is skulking out of view)

Septimus: Chater! My dear fellow! Don't hang back – come in, sir!

Chater: Captain Brice does me the honour – I mean to say, sir, whatever you have to say to me, sir, address yourself to Captain Brice.

Septimus: How unusual. *(To Brice)* Your wife did not appear yesterday, sir. I trust she is not sick?

Brice: My wife? I have no wife. What the devil do you mean, sir?

(Septimus makes no reply, but hesitates, puzzled. He turns back to Chater)

Septimus: I do not understand the scheme, Chater. Whom do I address when I want to speak to Captain Brice?

Brice: Oh, slippery, Hodge – slippery!

Septimus: *(to Chater)* By the way, Chater – *(He interrupts himself and turns to Brice)* – by the way, Chater, I have amazing news to tell you. Someone has taken to writing wild and whirling letters in your name. I received one not half an hour ago.

Brice: *(angrily)* Mr Hodge! Look to your honour, sir! If you cannot attend to me without this foolery, nominate your second who might settle the business as between gentlemen. No doubt your friend Byron would do you the service.

Septimus: Oh yes, he would do me the service. *(His mood changes and he turns to Chater)* Sir – I repent your injury. You are an honest fellow with no more malice in you than poetry.

Chater: *(happily)* Ah well! – that is more like the thing! *(Overtaken by doubt)* Is he apologizing?

Brice: There is still the injury to his conjugal property, Mrs Chater's...

Chater: Tush, sir!

Brice: As you will – her tush. Nevertheless...

(They are interrupted by Lady Croom)