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Anonymous

*An Exmoor Courtship: Or, a Suitoring Discourse
in the Devonshire Dialect and Mode,
near the Forest of Exmoor (1746)*

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THE PERSONS

Andrew Moorman, *a young farmer.*

Margery Vagwell, *his sweetheart.*

Old gammer Nell, *gammer to Margery.*

Tamsin, *sister to Margery.*

SCENE.—*Margery's House.*

To Margery enter Andrew.

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And. How geeth et, Cozen Magery?

Mar. Hoh! cozen Andra, how d'ye try?

A. Come, let's shake honds, thof kissing be scarce.

M. Kissing's plenty enow; but chud zo leefe kiss tha back o' ma hond, as e'er a man in Challacomb, or eet in Paracomb; no dispreize.

A. Es don't believe thek, and eet es believe well too.

(Zwop! he kisses and smuggles her.)

M. Hemph!—Oh! the vary vengeance out o' tha!—Tha hast a creem'd ma yearms, and a'morst a burst ma neck.—Well, bet, vor oll, how dost try, ees zay, cozen Andra? Ees hant a zee'd ye a gurt while.

A. Why, fath, cozen Magery, nort marchantable, e'er zince es scor'st a tack or two wey Rager Trogwell, t'ather day.—Bet, zugs! es trem'd en, and vagg'd en zo, that he'll veel et vor wone while, chell warndy.

M. How, cozen Andra! Why ees thort ee couden a vort zo.

A. Why, 'twas oll about *thee*, mun;—vor es chan't hire an eel word o' tha.

M. How about *me*!—why, why vore about *me*, good zweet now?—Of a ground ha can zay no harm by ma.

A. Well, well, no matter. Es cou'den hire tha a run down, and a roilad upon zo, and zet still leke a mumchance, and net pritch en vor't.

M. Why, whot, and be hang'd to en, cou'd a zey o' *me*, a gurt meazel?

A. Es begit tha words now;—bet ha roilad zo, that es cou'dent bear et.—Bet a deden't looze his labour, fath;—vor es toz'd en, es lamb'd en, es lace'd en, es thong'd en, es drash'd en, es drumm'd en, es tann'd en to tha true ben, fath.—Bet stap! cham avore ma story. —Zes I, *Thee! thee art a pretty vella*—Zes he, *Gar! thee castn't make a pretty vella o' ma*. —No, agar," zes I, *vor th'art too ugly to be made a pretty vella, that true enow*.

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Gar, ha wos woundy mad than.—*Chell try thek, zes he.*—*As zoon's tha wut, zes I.* —Zo up ha roze, and to't we went.—Vurst ha geed ma a whisterpooop under tha year, and vorewey ha geed ma a vulch in tha leer.—Add, then ees rakad up, and tuck en be tha collar, and zo box'd en, and zlapp'd en, that es made hes kep hoppy, and hes yead addle to en.

M. Well, ees thank ye, cozen Andra, vor taking wone's peart zo.—Bet cham agest eel go vor a warrant vor ye, and take ye bevore tha cunsabel; and than ye mey be bound over, and be vorst to gi'n t'Exeter to zizes; and than ha mey zwear tha peace of es, you know.—Es en et better to drenk vriends and make et up?

A. Go vor a warrant!—Ad! let 'en, let en go; chell not hender en:—Vor there's Tom Vuss can take hes cornoral oath that *he* begun vurst.—And if ha do's, chell ha' as good a warrant vor *he* as he can vor *me*, don't quesson't: Vor tha turney into Moulton knows *me*, good now, and has had zome zweet pounds o' veather bevore ha dy'd. —And if he's a meended to go to la, es can spend vorty or vifty shillings as well's he. And zo let en go, and wipe whot ha zets upon a zindeys wi' hes warrant.—Bet hang en, let's ha' nort more to zey about en; vor chave better bezneze in hond a gurt deal.

(He takes hold of her, and paddles in her neck and bosom.)

M. Come, be quiet;—be quiet, ees zay, a grabbling o' wone's tetties.—Ees won't ha' ma tetties a grabbed zo; ner ees won't be zo mullad and foulad.—Stand azide; come, gi' o'er.'

A. Lock, lock! How skittish we be now! Yow weren't zo skittish wey Kester Hosegood up to Daraty Vuzz's up-zetting.—No, no, yow weren't zo skittish than, ner zo squeamesh nether. —He murt mully and foully tell ha wos weary.

M. Ees believe the vary dowl's in voke vor leeing.

A. How! zure and zure, you won't deny et, wull ye, whan oll the voaken took noteze o' et?

M. Why, cozen Andra, thes wos the whole sump o' tha bezneze.—Chaw'r in wey en to donce; and whan tha donce was out, tha crowd cry'd *Squeak squeak, squeak squeak* (as

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ha uzeth to do, you know) and ha cort ma about tha neck, and wouden't be a zed bet ha woud kiss ma, in spite o' ma, do what ees coud to hender en.—Ees coud a borst tha crowd in shivers, and tha crowder too, a foul slave as ha wos, and hes veddlestick to tha bargaen.

A. Well, well, es b'ent angry, mun.—And zo let's kiss and vriends.—(*Kisses her.*)—Well, bet cozen Magery, oll thes while es han't a told tha my arrant;—and chave on ever arrant to tha, mun.

M. (*Simpering*) Good sweet now, whot arrant es et? Ees marl whot arrant ee can ha to me.

A. Why, vath, chell tell tha. Whot zignavies et to mence the matter? 'Tes these; *volus nolus* wut ha' ma?

M. Ha' ma? Whot's thek?—Ees can't tell what ye me-an by thek.

A. Why, than, chell tell tha vlat and plean. Yow know es kep Challacomb-moor in hond; 'tes vull-stataad: Bet cham to chonge a live vor drie yallow-beels. And than there's tha lant up to Parracomb town; and whan es be to Parracomb, es must ha' wone that es can trest to look arter thee girred-teal'd meazels, and to zar tha ilt and tha barra, and melk tha kee to Challacomb, and to look arter the thengs of tha houze.

M. O varjuice! Why, cozen Andra, a good stedy zarrant can do oll thes.

A. Po, po, po! chell trest no zarrants.—And more an zo, than they'll zey by me as they ded by gaffer Hill t'ather day: *They made two beds, and ded g'in to wone.*—No, no, es ban't zo mad nether.—Well, bet, lock, dost zee, cozen Magery; zo vur yore es tha wut ha ma, chell put thy live upon Parracomb-down. 'Tes wor twanty nobles a year, and a purse to put min in.

M. O vile! Whot, marry?—No; chan't ha' tha best man in Challacomb, ner eet in Parracomb.—Na, chell ne'er marry, vor ort's know. No, no; they zey thare be more a marry'd aready than can boil tha crock o' zendeys.—No, no, cozen Andra, cud amorst zwear chudn't ha tha best squaer in oll England.—Bet, come; prey, cozen Andra, zet down a lit. Ees murst g'up in chamber, and speak a word or two wey zister Tamzin. Hare's darnung up of old blankets, and rearting tha peels, and snapping o' vleas.—Ees'll come agen prezently.

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A. Well, do than; bet make haste, d'ye zee.—Mean time chell read o'er the new ballet chavé in ma pocket.

M. New ballet! O good now, let's hire you zing it up.

A. Zing!—No, no; 'tes no zinging ballet, mun: bet 'tes a godly wone, good now.

M. Why, whot's about, than?

A. Why, 'tes about a boy that kill'd hes veather; and how hes veather went agen, in shape of a gurt vout theng, wi' a cloven voot, and vlashes o' vire, and troubled tha house zo, that the whotjecombe, tha whit-witch, was vorst to lay en in the Red-Zea; and how tha boy repented, and went distracted, and was taen up, and was hang'd vor't, and zung saums, and zed hes prayers. 'Twull do your heart good to hire et, and make yow cry lick enny theng.—Thare's tha picture o'en too, and the parson, and tha dowl, and tha ghost, and tha gallows.

M. Bet es et true, bezure?

A. True! O la! yes, yes; Es olweys look to that. Look's zee; 'tes here in prent, *lissen'd according to order*. That's olweys prented on'what es true, mun.—Es took care to zee that, whan es bort 'en.

M. Well, well, read et;—and chell g'up to zester.

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SCENE—*the chamber.*
To Tamzen enter Margery.

M. Oh; zester Tamzen!—Odd! ee es a come along, and fath and trath hath a put vore the quesson to ma a ready.—Ees very b'leive tha banes wull g' in next zindey.—'Tis oll es ho' vor.—Bet es tell en, *marry a-ketha!* and tell en downreert es chant marry tha best man in *Sherwill*-hunderd.—Bet dest hire ma, zester *Tamzen?*—Don'tee be a labb o' tha tongue in what cham a going to zey, and than chell tell tha zometheng.—The banes, cham a'most zure, wull g'in other a Zendei, or a Zendei-zenneert to vurdest. E's not abo' two and twonty;—a spicy vella, and a vitty vella vor enny keendest theng.—Thee know'st *Jo Hosegood* es reckon'd a vitty vella: Poo! ees a zooterly vella to *Andra*; thare's no compare.

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T. Go, ya wicked countervit! why dost lee zo agenst tha meend; and whan ha put vore tha quesson tell en tha wudstn't marry?—Besides, zo vur as know'st, ha murt take pip o', and meach off, and come no more anearst tha.

M. Go, yow alkitole! yow gurt vullesh trapes! Dest thee thenk ee believad ma, whan ees zed chudn't marry? Ee es net zo zart-a-baked nether. Vor why? Ees wudn't be too vurword nether; vor than ee murt dra back.—No, no; vor oll whot's zed, ees hope tha banes wull g'in, ees zey, next Zunday.—And vath, nif's do vall over tha desk, 'twont thir ma, ner borst ma bones.—Bet nif they don't g'in by Zunday-zenneert, chell tell tha, in shoort company, es shall borst ma heart. Bet ees must go down to en; vor he's by es zel oll thes while.

SCENE—*the ground-room again.*
To Andrew enter Margery.

A. Well, cozen Magery; cham glad you're come agen: vor thes ballet es so very good, that et makes wone's heart troubled to read et.

M. Why, put et up than while ees get a putcher o' zyder. Will ee eat a croust o' bread and cheeze, cozen Andra?

A. No, es thankee, cozen Magery; vor es eat a crub as es came along; besides es went to denner jest avore.—Well, bet cozen Magery, whot onser do'st gi ma to tha quesson es put vore now-reert.

M. What quesson was et?

A. Why, zure, yow ar'n't zo vorgetvul. Why, the quesson es put a little rather.

M. Ees don't know whot quesson ee mean; ees begit what quesson 'twos.

A. Why, to tell tha vlat and plane agen, 'twos thes: *Wut ha ma ay or no?*

M. Whot! marry to earten? Ees gee tha zame onser ees gee'd avore, ees wudn't marry tha best man in oll England. Ees cud amorst zwear chud ne'er marry at oll.—No more chon't—vor ort's know.—And more an zo, cozen Andra, cham a told you keep company wey *Tamzen Hosegood*, thek gurt banging, thonging, muxy drawbreech, daggle-tea!d jade, a zower-sop'd, yerring, chockling trash, a buzzom-chuck'd haggaging moyle, a gurt fustilug. Hare's a trub. And nif you keep hare company, ees 'll ha no more to zey to tha

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A. Ay, this is *Jo Hosegood's* flimflam.—Oh tha vary vengeance out o'en.

M. No, no; tes none of *Jo Hosegood's* flimflam; bet zo tha crime of tha country goeth.

A. Ah, bet 'twos *Jo Hosegood's* zetting vore in tha vurst place. Ha wull lee a rope upreert.—Whan ha hath a took a shord and a paddled, ha wull tell doil, and tell dildrams, and roily upon enny kesson zoul.—Add! nif es come athert en, chell gi' en a lick;—chell lay en o'er the years;—chell plim en, chell toze en, chell cotten en, chell thong en, chell tann en;—chell gi' en a strat in tha chups;—chell vag en, chell trem en, chell drash en, chell curry hes coat vor en —chell drub en, chell make hes kep hoppy.—Add! chell gi' en zutch a zwop!—chell gi' en a whapper, and a wherret, and a whisterpoop too: Add! chell baste en to tha true benn.

(Speaks in a great passion, and shews with his hands how he'll beat his adversary.)

M. Lock, lock, lock! cozen Andra! vor why vore be ee in zitch a vustin fume?—Why, ees don't zey 'twos *Jo Hosegood* zes zo, bet only that zo tha crime o' tha country goeth.

A. Well, well, cozen Magery, be't how twull, whot caree I?—And zo, good-buy, good-buy t'ye, cozen Magery.—Nif voaken be jealous avore they be married, zo they mey arter. Ay ay, zo they mey arter. Zo good-buy, cozen Magery. Chell not trouble yow agen vor wone while, chell warndy. *(Going.)*

M. *(calling after him)*. Bet hearky, hearky a bit, cozen Andra! Ees wudn't ha' ye go away angry nether. Zure and zure you won't deny to zee ma drenk, wull ye?—Why, you han't a tasted our zyder yet. *(A. returns.)* Come, cozen Andra, here's tee.

A. Na, vor that matter, es owe no illwill tu enny kesson, net I.—Bet es won't drenk, nether, except yow vurst kiss and vriends. *(Kisses her.)*

M. Yow won't be a zed—*(he drinks)*—Well, bet hearkee, cozen Andra; won't ye g'up and zee grammer avore ye g'up to Challacomb?—'Tes bet jest over tha paddack and along the park.

A. Es caren't much nif's do go zee old ont Nell.—And how do hare tare along?

M. Rub along, d'ye zey?—Oh! grammer's wor vour hunderd pounds, reckon tha goods indoor and out a door.

A. Cham glad tu hire et: vor es olweys thort her to ha' be bare buckle and thongs.

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M. Oh! no, no, mun: hare's mearty well to pass, and maketh gurt account of me, good now.

A. Cham glad to hire o' thek too. Mey be, hare mey gi' tha a good stub.—Come let's g'ender than.

(Takes her arm under his, and leads her.)

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SCENE—*Old Gammer Nell's.*
To her enter Andrew and Margery.

A. Good den, good den, ount Nell.—Well, how d'ye try? How goeth et wi' ye?

Old Nell. Why, vath, cozen Andra, pritty vitty, whot's chur. Chad a glam or two about ma.—Chad a crick in ma back, and in ma niddick. Tho chaw'r a lamps'd in wone o' ma yearms. Tho come to a heartgun: vorewey struck out and came to a barngun: tho come to an allernbatch: and vorey vell in upon ma bones, and come to a boneshave.—But e'er zince the old *Jilian Vrinklee* blessed vore, 'tes pritty vitty; and cham come to ma meat-list agen.—Well, but hearky, Cozen Andra: Ees hire yow lick a lit about ma cozen Magery, ay and have smeled about her a pritty while. Chaw'r a told that yow simmered upon wone t'ather up to *Grace Vrogwell's* bed-ale.—Well, cozen Andra, 'twell do vary well vor both. No matter how zoon. Cham oll vore, and zo chaw'r zo zoon's ees hired o't.—Hare's net as zome giglets, zome prenking mencing thengs be, oll vor gamboying, rumping, steehopping, ragrouting, and gigletting; bet a tyrant maid vor work, and tha stewardlest vittest wanch that comath on tha stones o' Moulton, no dispreise.

Margery softly aside to her.

Thenkee, grammer, thenkee keendly.—And nif's shou'dn't ha' en, shou'd borst ma heart—*(aloud)* Good grammer, don't tell me o' marrying. Chave a told cozen Andra ma meend already, that chell *ne'er* marry, vor ort's know.

Old Nell. Stap hather, cozen Magery, a lite, and tern these cheesen.—*(Pretendedly private to her.)* Go, you alketole, why dest tell zo, tha'rt *ne'er* marry? Tha wutten ha' tha' leek; a comely spreyy vitty vella vor enny keendest theng. Come, nif tha wut ha' en, chell gi' tha a good stub. There's net a spryer vella in Challacomb.

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M. Bet, grammer, wullee be zo good's yow zey, nif zo be, vor your zake, ees do vorce ma zel to let en lick a bit about ma.

Old Nell. Ay, es tell tha.—(*aside*) Cham agest hare'll dra en into a promish wone dey or wother.

A. Well, ount Nell, es hired whot yow zed, and es thank yow too.—Bet now chave a zeed ye, 'tes zo good as chad eat ye, as they uze to zey. Es must go home now as vast as es can. Cozen Magery, won'tee go wi' ma a lit wey?

M. May be ees may g'up and zee ont Moreman, and may be ees man't (*Exeunt*).

SCENE—*The open Country.*

Enter Andrew, follow'd by Margery.

M. Add! ees 'll zee en up to Challacomb-Moor stile.—Now must ees make wise chawr a going to ont Moreman's, and only come thes wey.

A. (*spying her*). Cozen Magery, cozen Magery! stap a lit: whare zo vast, mun? (*She stays*.) Zo, now es zee yow be zo good as yer word, na, and better; vor tha zedst "may be chell, and may be chon't."

M. Oh, yow take tha words t'ather wey. Ees zed, "may be chell, and may be chon't g'up and zee ont Moreman." Ees zed no more an zo. Ees go thes wey to zee *hare*, that's oll. Bet chudn't go zo vur to meet enny man in Challacomb, ner Parracomb, ner eet in oll king George's kingdom, bless hes worship! Meet tha men aketha!—Hah! be quiet; ees zey, a creaming a body zo. And more an zo, yar beard precketh ill-vavourdly. Ees marl whot these gurt black beards be good vor. Yow ha made ma chucks buzzom.

A. Well whot's zey, cozen Magery? Chell put in tha banes a Zendeay, *volus nolus*.

M. Than ees 'll vorbed men, fath.

A. Oh! chell trest tha vor thek. Es don't think yow'll take zo much stomach to yare zel as to vorbed men avore zo many vokes.—Well, cozen Magery, good neart.

M. Cozen Andra, good neart.—Ees wish you well to do.

SCENE—*Margery's Home.*

To Tamzen enter Margery singing.

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M. Zister Tamzin, whare art? Whare art a popling and a pulching, dost hire ma?

T. Lock, lock, lock! Whot's the mater, Magery, that tha leapest, and caperest, and whistlest, and zing'st zo? Whot, art hanteck?

M. That's nort to nobody; chell whistle, and capery, and zing vor oll yow.—Eet a vor oll, nif ta wutten't be a labb of tha tongue now, chell tell tha zometheng,—Zart! whistery.—My banes g'in a Zende, fath, to Andra, tha spicest vella in Sherwill hunderd.

T. O la! why thare lo! why zo lo! Now we shall be marry'd near together; vor mine be in and out agen;—thof my man don't eet tell me tha day. Ees marl ha don't pointee whot's in tha meend o' en.

M. Chell g'in to Moulton tomarra pritty tapely, to buy zome canvest vor a new holland chonge.

T. Ay, ay, zo do; vor tha casen't tell whot mey happen to tha in tha middle banes.

M. How! ya gurt trapes.—Whot dest me-an by thek? Ees scorn tha words. Ded ort happen to *thee* in *thy* middle banes? Happen aketha!

T. Hah! ort happen to *me* in my middle banes? Ees scorn et to tha dert o' ma shoes, locks zee, ya mincing, kerpung baggage.—Varewell.

