



### **Sensational Broadside**

This week as part of our Curator Love Event we are celebrating the bawdy broadside! From “true” crime to satires on marriage, these often-anonymous ephemeral documents—despite their humorous or sensationalized verse—shed light on a range of social anxieties in the long nineteenth century. Fascinating for their research potential as well as miraculous survival, these broadsides are sure to provide an entertaining read.

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*Led astray by fashion, a woman turns to cheating her neighbors and loses her reputation*

[More, Hannah].

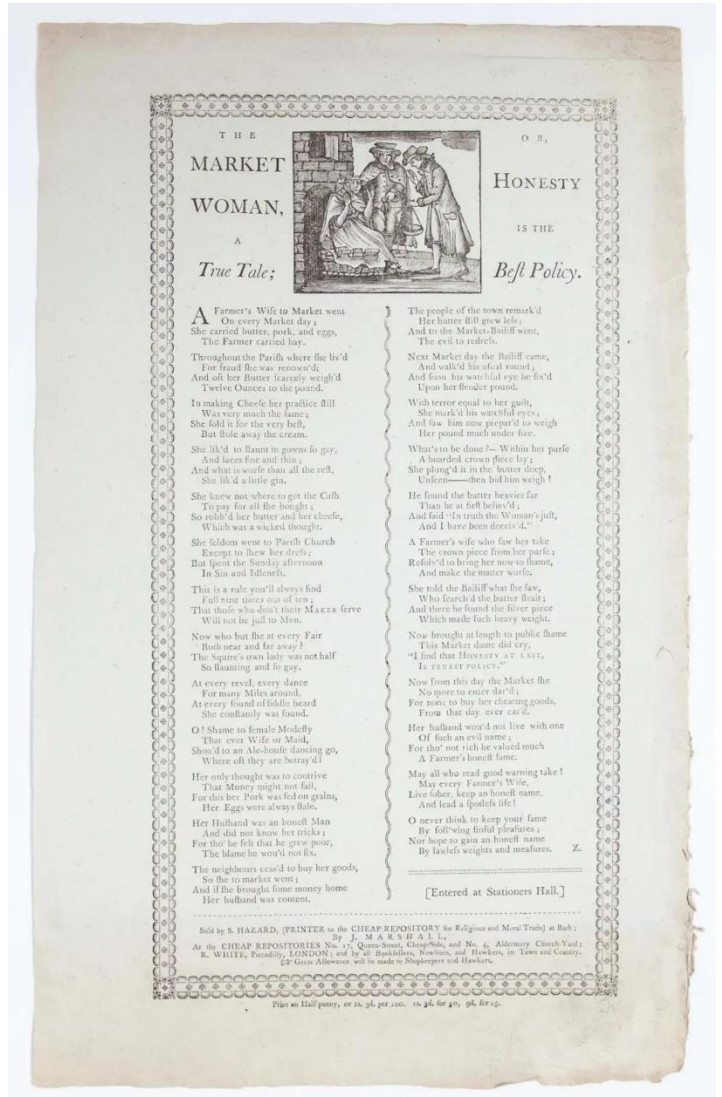
The Market Woman, a True Tale; or, Honesty is the Best Policy

Bath and London: S. Hazard, J. Marshall, and R. White, [1795]. First edition. First issue, with Spinney recording this form of imprint in use from March to May of 1795; the second variant, also scarce, was used from May 1795 through early 1796. Broadside ballad on one sheet measuring 420 x 270mm and printed to recto only. Woodcut ornament at head; signed Z [Hannah More] at end. In Near Fine condition, with a bit of light fraying and soiling to fore-edge and bottom edge; faint crease above header. Overall fresh and unmarked. ESTC reports 12 libraries holding copies (with the BL, Oxford, and Harvard reporting duplicates). It does not appear in the modern auction record, and the present is the only example on the market.

Four years before her influential treatise *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, Hannah More used several of her *Cheap Repository Tracts* to articulate her ideas in narrative form. In *The Market Woman*, she focuses in on women's vulnerability to fashion -- not only clothing, but also revels such as dancing and drinking -- and the financial, filial, and personal costs that can result. Going to market each day because her neighbors will no longer buy from her, the *Farmer's Wife* cheats her customers for personal profit because "she lik'd to flaunt in gowns so gay, And laces fine and thin; And is worse than all the rest, She lik'd a little gin." Funding her habits to the detriment of her household finances ("her Husband was an honest Man And did not know her tricks") and her community, she also risks her own reputation. Frustrated with being swindled, townspeople report her to the Market Bailiff; and when he demands to weigh her butter, she inserts a coin inside to avoid coming up short and facing consequences. But even this is brought to light. As a result, she loses her husband who "wou'd not live with one Of such an evil name"; but worse, she loses her chance at "an honest name."

The concerns of propriety and reputation become centerpieces of More's later treatise, admonishing women on "appearing to behave properly in public in order to get a good reputation"; for it is only with the public trust that comes with a good reputation that women "can enact change" (*Constructing Women's Reputations*). Pleasant public behavior was, in her perspective, used to "combine and express all moral and intellectual excellence" (*Strictures*). While numerous of the *Cheap Repository Tracts* emphasize God's grace or present women like the *Farmer's Wife* repenting and finding Grace, no such ending occurs here. Rather, More seems more interested in how the vapid fashions women are encouraged toward can lead them onto destructive paths that ultimately deplete them of public authority or any opportunity to create communal change, instead feeding into the stereotypes so often used to deny them access to educational or activist spaces.

ESTC T38985. Spinney 20:3, 142. *Feminist Companion* 760. **\$1,800**



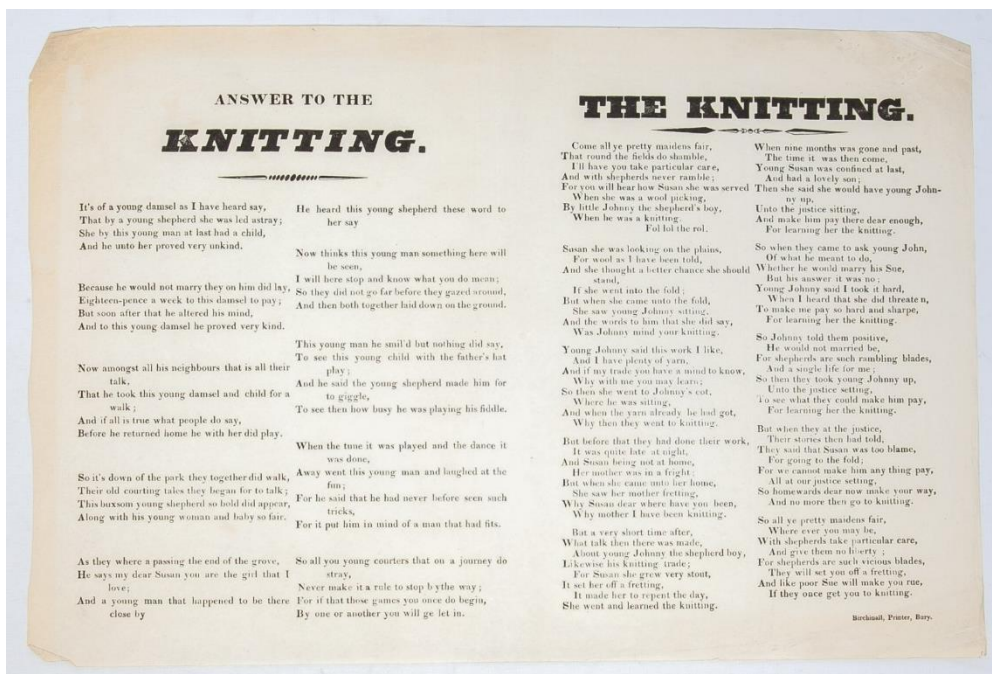
Two poems consider Johnny and Susan's tryst, taking very different approaches to how gossip affects men and women

[Bawdy Broadside] Anonymous.

Answer to The Knitting [with] The Knitting

Bury: Birchinnall, Printer, [c. 1820]. First edition. Broadside measuring 245 x 380mm and printed to verso only; the layout and placement of the imprint suggest that this piece was meant to be folded down the center with The Knitting appearing first and Answer appearing at rear. A very nearly Fine example, with just a bit of creasing at the corners and faint offsetting along the left margin. Unrecorded by the Bodleian Library of Broadside Ballads or by OCLC, the typeface suggests that it was produced toward the end of W. Birchinnall's operations (1806-1829).

A common thread connecting the Birchinnall broadsides recorded by OCLC is the sensational depictions of 19th century true crime -- from the murder of Mary Booty in 1806 to the execution of Thomas South and his companions in 1816 to the burglary trial of James Philips and John Wade in 1822. The Knitting and Answer to the Knitting stand apart from these in a number of ways. Not only are they not sensationalizing identifiable local activities (using names and dates clearly within their titles), they take a more literary and satirical tone in relating young Susan's education in "knitting" and her resulting pregnancy and rejection by the shepherd Johnny. The Knitting focuses not only on Johnny's seduction but even more so on Susan's public exposure to gossip and social rejection as a result of his refusal to marry her. The text's serious warning to young women - that whether right or wrong, they will ultimately be blamed for the outcomes of unwed sex -- is undercut, however, by the followup Answer. Unlike The Knitting, which opens with a more formal, communal overture "come all ye pretty maidens fair," Answer creates a more private, conspiratorial tone with its "It's of a young damsel as I have heard say." Lured into gossip by the narrator, readers hear how Johnny returns to Susan after being required to pay child support for their son; how he secretly confesses his love in order to lure Susan again into a tryst; and how the couple's intercourse in a grove is a source of humor (with Johnny's lovemaking resembling "a man that had fits"). Unlike The Knitting's widely shared community knowledge and its use of gossip to warn young women and curb their sexual behavior, Answer depicts how gossip spreads individual to individual (with the narrator having heard this story from an unnamed friend, and then sharing it with the reader) among men to warn them against getting caught for their indiscretions.



A research rich piece and the only known copy, further work could be done on the physical object, its typography, and its printer. On a literary level, further analysis could be done on how the pairing connects to other call-and-response poems (such as the 17th century *Passionate Shepherd to His Love* and *The Nymph's Reply*) and to the pastoral tradition. On a social history level, further study could connect the work to 19th century gossip, helping historians to understand how the practice of gossip differed in groups of various genders or classes especially surrounding sexuality and shame. Near Fine. **\$2,000**

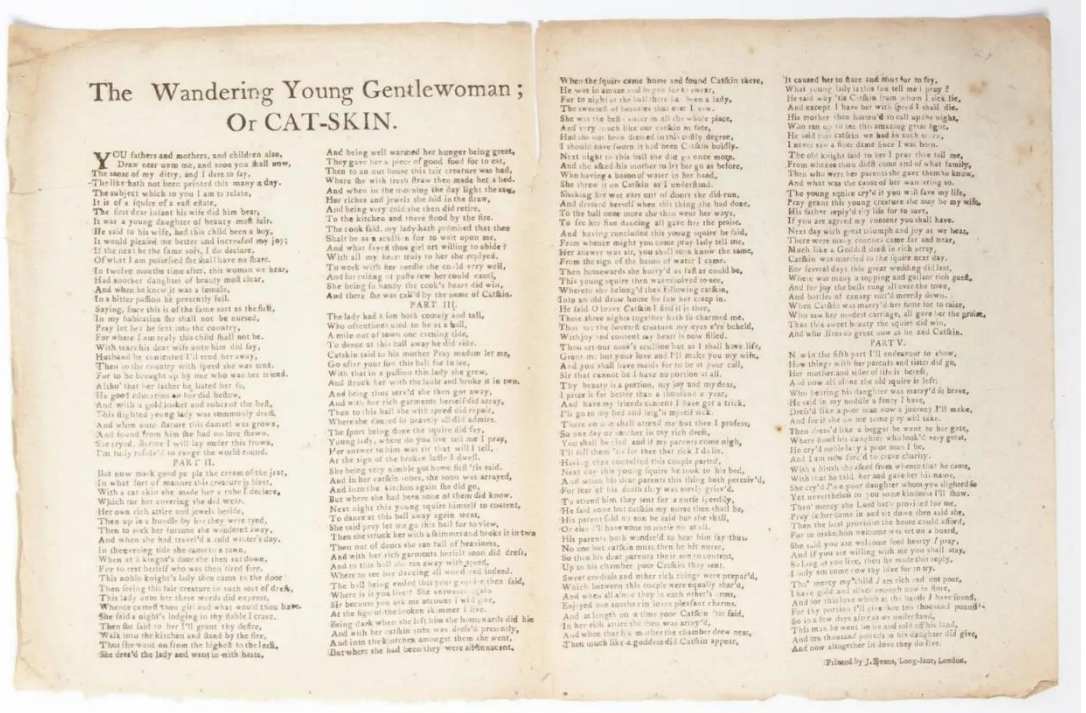


*Rejected before her birth, a young woman seeks to carve out stability for herself in a system that privileges men*

[Broadside Ballad]  
[Gender and  
Inheritance].

The Wandering Young  
Gentlewoman; or Cat-  
Skin

London: J. Evans,  
[1795]. Early edition.  
One of several  
iterations printed in  
broadside format  
between 1750 and  
1800. Measuring 380 x  
240mm printed to  
recto only. Trivial wear  
to edges; long closed  
tear between columns  
three and four with no  
loss to text. A lovely  
example of this scarce  
broadside, depicting a young woman rejected by her father on account of her sex, and the life she builds for herself within the patriarchal marriage economy. ESTC reports copies of this impression at four libraries; no copy of any edition has appeared at auction, and the present is the only example in trade.



On the surface, *The Wandering Young Gentlewoman* is a fairytale of meritocracy. The second daughter of a gentleman, the protagonist is roundly and fully rejected by her family: "In twelve months time this woman we hear, Had another daughter of beauty most clear. And when he knew it was a female, In bitter passion he presently fell." Railing at his wife, the squire demands that this second child be cast off into the country. There she is educated and clothed on her father's bill, but is denied family affection or even a name that would allow her to find safety and advance her own circumstances through marriage. On coming of age, she casts off her father's silks, clothes herself in a cat-skin, and goes out to make a living of a scullion maid; however, she attracts the attention of a knight's son who asserts that her "beauty is thy portion" and together they plot to accomplish their marriage despite their difference in means. Her father reappears at the end, having lost his wife and first daughter, and he calls upon his newly wealthy daughter to forgive and accept him.

The broadside's message, under the surface, is much darker and more tragic; indeed, it highlights the dangerous contingency of women within the system of primogeniture. Before being born, the protagonist is devalued by her father and rejected by her mother -- a woman who needs to ensure stability for herself and her firstborn child. Educated and clothed like a gentlewoman, she nonetheless will not have access to the class from which she was ejected; and it is through a combination of cleverness and luck that she is able to avoid being forced into sex work in order to maintain her class. Instead, she opts to leverage her good looks to enter the "honorable prostitution" of marriage to a young man silly enough to value her fleeting beauty over anything else she can bring to the union.

ESTC T206996. \$760

*A widow anticipates sexual satisfaction, her young groom claims her wealth, and his sweetheart bides her time and takes inventory of all she'll inherit*



[Erotic Satire] [Widows and Sexuality] [Marriage and Economics].

The Triumph of Sentiment - The Prospect of Happiness - or, a Picture for Dotards

London: S. W. Fores, Nov. 1, 1800. First edition. Illustrated hand-colored broadside measuring 270 x 400mm and printed to verso only. Faint offsetting to recto and faint traces of mounting to corners. In all, a Fine example of this visual satire commenting on the phenomenon of younger men seeking marriage with elderly widows for their own

financial gain -- and the cultural anxiety surrounding the marital sexuality of such brides. Unrecorded in ESTC and OCLC, we have located two examples of the present work at the British Museum and Yale.

The present broadside draws together a wide matrix of debates and social anxieties surrounding the economic and sexual status of widows, and the financial motivations for marriage among second sons and men of the middle class. Though women were more frequently forced into experiencing marriage as a form of 'honorable prostitution' in which their physical desirability served as their key for accessing wealth and stability under coverture, it was increasingly acknowledged that large swaths of young men also suffered under this system. And while widows could escape the system -- shifting from the disempowered femme covert to the more legally independent femme sole on their husbands' deaths -- there was both a social fantasy of reinserting them into the marriage market (as a means for regaining control over their money and bodies) as well as a social anxiety about their ability to corrupt (through the range of knowledge and authority they gained through previous marital experience). Here, a young man walks his aging crone down the aisle. Ornatly clad and expressing her anticipation for "the comforts of matrimony," she is ridiculed by the ministers at the pulpit who posit that if "matrimony was first ordained...for a remedy against fornication," then "the remedy will be worse than the disease" in this instance. Untroubled, the young groom focuses on the land deeds, bank notes, and jewelry accounts which stuff his pockets -- assets which will legally become his after the ceremony and which serve as his marital comforts. Meanwhile, two young women observe from the sidelines, one of them planning her future with the groom after his aging bride's eventual demise. "Those jewels will look better on me than on the last owner," she notes as her companion whispers hopefully "you'll let me take a morning ride with you sometimes..."

A visual commentary on the financial and social issues surrounding marriage under coverture, which Daniel Defoe would deride as "matrimonial whoredom."

British Museum 1935.0522.8.109. Yale Center for British Art B1974.12.328. **\$1,200**



*A man thinks that selecting a wife from a boarding school will satisfy him -- and quickly learns that she's out to meet her own needs*

[Honorable Prostitution] [Marital Economies and Sex] [Women's Education] [Broadside Ballad].

### The Dandy Wife

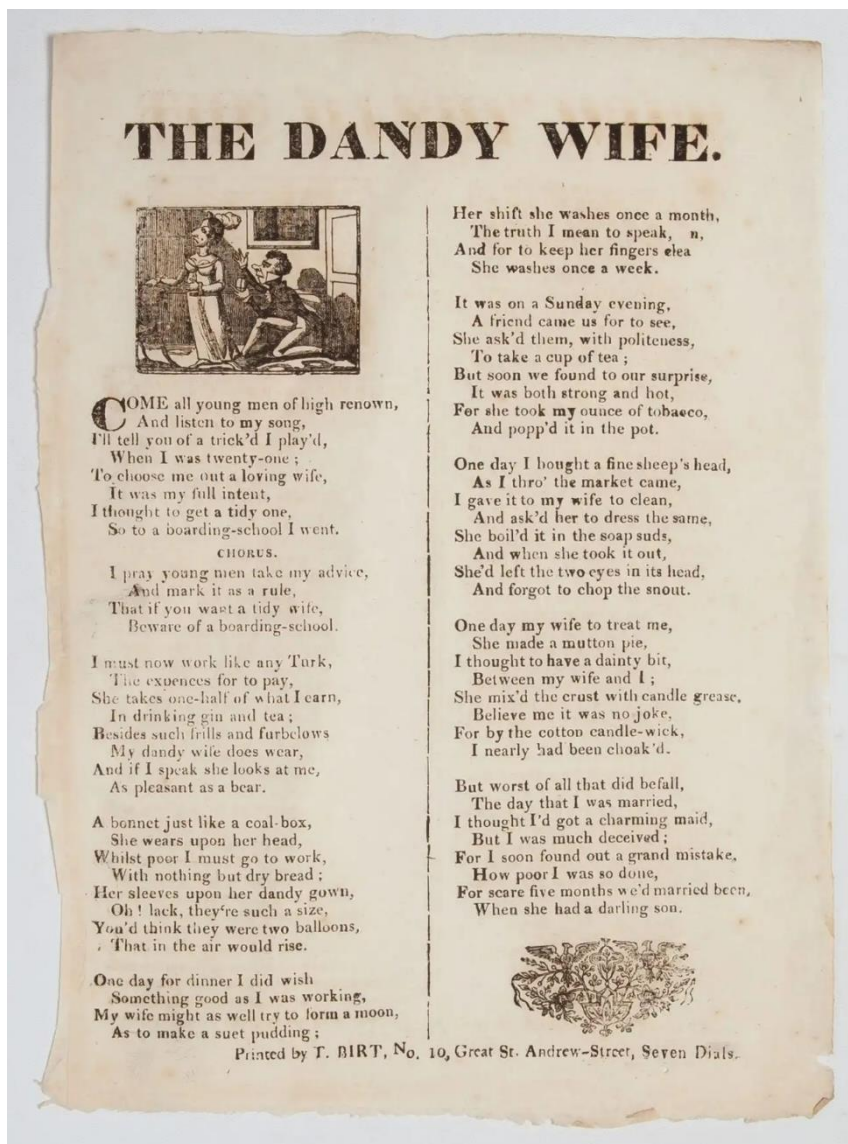
London: T. Birt, c. 1828. First edition. Single sheet measuring 250 x 185mm and printed in two columns to recto. Some edgewear to margins not affecting text; a bit of foxing and toning largely confined to margins. A scarce and delicate survivor, OCLC documents only one example (at the National Library of Scotland). The present is the only example on the market.

The Dandy Wife is narrated by a man who aimed "to choose me out a loving wife" at the age of twenty-one, but whose experience becomes a warning to "all young men of high renown": "If you want a tidy wife, Beware of a boarding school." What unfolds is a satire of how the marriage economy is affected when women have access to knowledge -- intellectual and physical -- and how by meeting a man's superficial expectations a woman can fulfill her own more pressing needs.

Thinking that a boarding school girl will have the innocence, submissiveness, and domestic skill he desires, the narrator selects a wife from among their ranks. Thinking only of what he can obtain from

such a bargain, he is unprepared for what an educated woman brings into his house. The Dandy Wife he describes understands the commodity value of her own beauty and material adornment, and that these are her key means for acquiring wealth of her own. "She takes one-half of what I earn, In drinking gin and tea; Besides such frills and furbelows My Dandy Wife does wear...Her sleeves upon her dandy gown, Oh! Lack, they're such a size, You'd think they were two balloons that in the air would rise." Aside from staying on par with fashion trends, her clothing assists her in avoiding domestic tasks she abhors. She refuses to do laundry more than monthly, and through ridiculous cooking failures she rapidly establishes that the kitchen is not a showcase for her skillset. Accustomed to a life of learning, she is not trained to conduct domestic business.

By the ballad's end, it becomes clear that the Dandy Wife was savvier in managing a marriage than her husband was. For not only does her superior intellect help her carve out a more satisfying role, but she also has physical knowledge that predates him: "The day that I was married, I thought I'd got a charming maid, But I was much deceived...For scarce five months we'd married been, When she had a darling son." **\$1,320**



## THE DANDY WIFE.



COME all young men of high renown,  
And listen to my song,  
I'll tell you of a trick'd I play'd,  
When I was twenty-one;  
To choose me out a loving wife,  
It was my full intent,  
I thought to get a tidy one,  
So to a boarding-school I went.

#### CHORUS.

I pray young men take my advice,  
And mark it as a rule,  
That if you want a tidy wife,  
Beware of a boarding-school.

I must now work like any Turk,  
The expences for to pay,  
She takes one-half of what I earn,  
In drinking gin and tea;  
Besides such frills and furbelows  
My dandy wife does wear,  
And if I speak she looks at me,  
As pleasant as a bear.

A bonnet just like a coal-box,  
She wears upon her head,  
Whilst poor I must go to work,  
With nothing but dry bread;  
Her sleeves upon her dandy gown,  
Oh! lack, they're such a size,  
You'd think they were two balloons,  
That in the air would rise.

One day for dinner I did wish  
Something good as I was working,  
My wife might as well try to form a moon,  
As to make a suet pudding;

Printed by T. BIRT, No. 10, Great St. Andrew-Street, Seven Dials.

Her shift she washes once a month,  
The truth I mean to speak, n,  
And for to keep her fingers elea  
She washes once a week.

It was on a Sunday evening,  
A friend came us for to see,  
She ask'd them, with politeness,  
To take a cup of tea;  
But soon we found to our surprise,  
It was both strong and hot,  
For she took my ounce of tobacco,  
And popp'd it in the pot.

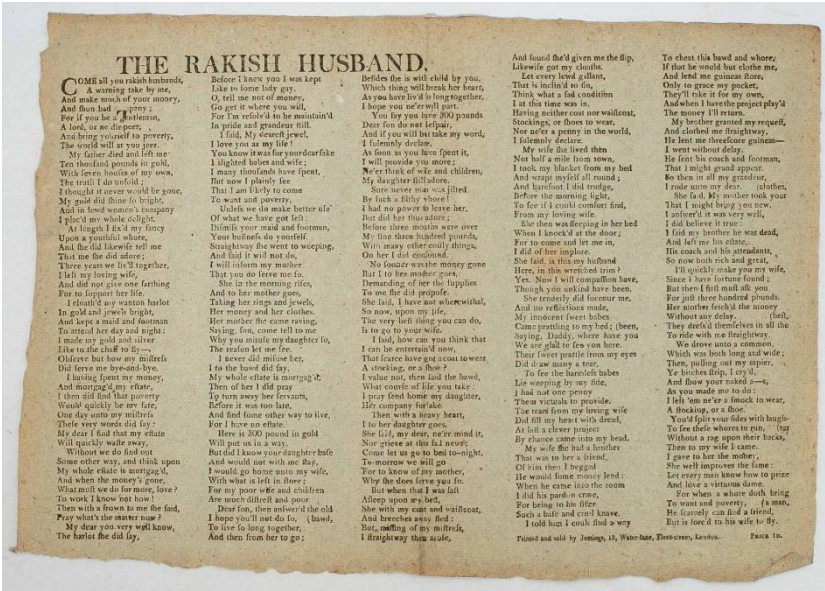
One day I bought a fine sheep's head,  
As I thro' the market came,  
I gave it to my wife to clean,  
And ask'd her to dress the same,  
She boil'd it in the soap suds,  
And when she took it out,  
She'd left the two eyes in its head,  
And forgot to chop the snout.

One day my wife to treat me,  
She made a mutton pie,  
I thought to have a dainty bit,  
Between my wife and I;  
She mix'd the crust with candle grease,  
Believe me it was no joke,  
For by the cotton candle-wick,  
I nearly had been choak'd.

But worst of all that did befall,  
The day that I was married,  
I thought I'd got a charming maid,  
But I was much deceived;  
For I soon found out a grand mistake,  
How poor I was so done,  
For scarce five months we'd married been,  
When she had a darling son.



*A man's finances reveal that his relationships with his courtesan and his wife are far more economic than emotional as they each reject his poverty*



[Bawdy Broadside] [Sex Work] [Marriage].

The Rakish Husband

London: Jennings, [1809]. Early edition. Broadside measuring 250 x 360mm and printed in five columns to recto only. Deckled bottom edge. A Near Fine example with a bit of toning to edges and archival reinforcement to verso along central fold line. Scarce in any version, Bodleian Broadside Ballads records The Rakish Husband (or The Rakish Husband's Garland) across nine variants -- the present undocumented -- from 1757 to 1836. While the majority open "You gallant beaus of pleasure," the present opens "Come all you rakish husbands" (an opening present in only two recorded variants). While ESTC is unavailable

at the time of cataloguing, OCLC reports only one existing copy of this variant (at the BL). No examples appear in the modern auction record, and the present is the only example in trade.

The Rakish Husband speaks to turn of the century anxieties about the rising wealth and influence of London's demi-monde community. Casting successful sex workers as a danger to men's economic power, the broadside also pits female courtesans against wives and mothers. Men get some blame for their financially irresponsible choices; but in the end, the courtesan's ingenuity in using her body and her fame places her at fault. Her refusal to uphold the status quo is cast as the reason that women who abided by the social rule book by remaining at the mercy of their husbands under coverture wind up financially devastated. The broadside dives right in with a warning from the male narrator's perspective. "Come all you rakish husbands, a warning take by me, And make much of your money, And shun bad company...At length I fix'd my fancy Upon a youthful whore, And she did likewise tell me That me she did adore; Three years we liv'd together, I left my loving wife, And did not give one farthing For to support her life. I cloath'd my wanton harlot In gold and jewels bright, And kept a maid and footman To attend her day and night." While the narrator's legal wife endured three years of poverty as a single mother, his courtesan thrived and managed to build her own savings—owning the gifts and earnings because she wasn't subject to coverture. It isn't until she gains the upper hand and he sinks to poverty that he is shocked by the sex worker's business-like approach. Unlike a wife, she refuses to abide by his budgets or to remain faithful to him. Unable to pay, he is no longer a client. Unswayed by his sudden mentions of the wife whose wealth she usurped, she grows impatient with him. Emotional appeals are for wives, not courtesans. "I have not wherewithal, So now upon my life, The very best thing you can do, Is to go to your wife."

On returning to his family, the narrator feels some guilt about the "innocent sweet babes" he abandoned and is gutted that his wife refuses to share a bed because she "had not one penny Them victuals to provide." But even more he burns with the shame that when you "bring yourself to poverty, The world will at you jeer." Desperate to regain control, the narrator turns to a fellow of the patriarchy -- his brother in law -- to borrow clothes and money. Luring his courtesan and her daughter to meet him under the guise of renewed wealth, he instead strips and assaults them, gleefully chasing them with a weapon. Taking their rich clothes to his wife so she can dress like wealth and welcome him back to bed, he re-enters a marital space but has also exposed how similar wifehood and whoredom truly are. His actions suggest that all women are at men's mercy when ultimately they have little legal or social recourse for abusive male behavior regardless of their marital positions.

\$2,200