



The Soldier's Wife

based on a true story

by Christian Lanciai (2012)

The characters:

Angelica
Harry
King Charles I Stuart
Henriette, his queen
Thomas Rainsborough
Oliver Cromwell
Edward Sexby
Jolliff, member of parliament and landowner
Christian, member of the Diggers
leader of the Ranters
servants and soldiers
judges and servants of the law
Puritans

The action is in England about 1644-58.

Act I scene 1. The Fanshawe castle, the bedroom. In bed.

Angelica What do they really want?

Harry They just want to make trouble. That's all they want who want war. Trouble for the sake of trouble. It's the worst vanity.

Angelica You must not let them in.

Harry I have to. We have no chance of defending ourselves.

Angelica I refuse to leave my home.

Harry You have to.

Angelica No one can force me.

Harry Everybody forces us.

Angelica You mean all the troublemakers.

Harry We have no choice.

Angelica Yes, to remain.

Harry That's the same as surrender.

Angelica Anything is better than violence.

Harry The King forces us to violence.

Angelica He can't force a woman to violence.

Harry You must leave, my love, and save yourself, and let me defend the castle. I owe that to the King. I can't show him any disloyalty. Look what happened to others who surrendered. They are marked for life by their shame in the King's eyes.

Angelica I insist.

Harry You could believe you had taken a stand for Cromwell.

Angelica I don't take a stand for anything except peace and common sense. That's why I dare defy the entire cursed civil war, which no one wanted but which everyone is forced into anyway.

Harry (sighs) I must defend the castle, but I can't force you into anything, for I am your husband, and I love you. You know that. I give up the castle to Cromwell for your sake, to prove that I love you.

Angelica You don't have to prove it. We always loved each other. We learned it already as children. We grew up together, and it was intended from the start that we should be married. We had a happy marriage but without children, but we can still have. Surrender without battle, and life will go on.

Harry I still must prove my loyalty to the King. We must go to him in Oxford and enter his service.

Angelica We were always among his closest. We have nothing to fear from him.

Harry Still it feels wrong somehow. You direct me when you should obey me. The only right thing would have been to send you to the court at Oxford and resist Cromwell.

Angelica And what would it have led to? The shedding of blood, unnecessary and idiotic violence, perhaps your death, so that you would have made me a widow.

Harry No, we couldn't fight for long, and Cromwell would take me prisoner. Thus I would not have lost anything of my honour.

Angelica How many lives would be lost? A number would be wasted for nothing.

Harry That's the price of honour and glory in our time. If I follow your directions and save all lives, I would in the King's eyes lose my honour and glory.

Angelica I don't think so. He isn't that stupid and narrow-minded. He is after all the King. Then he must be magnanimous and tolerant.

Harry That's what he hasn't been during this long political crisis. He has stubbornly stuck to his divine right as King and refused to compromise one inch. That is why we have the civil war. Do you still insist?

Angelica Yes, I do still insist. It is more important to save lives than to not risk honour and glory.

Harry Who are you really? I always wondered. You always led me by the nose and almost treated me as a child. What have I been to you?

Angelica My husband and cousin and best friend for life.

Harry But I have not been able to give you any children.

Angelica Not yet. We still have our life ahead, if you grant yourself the right to live.

Harry There were always other men between us, who brushed me aside and overran me, like now Cromwell. Already when we married, Prince Rupert importuned in our bedchamber as he, I don't know how, he had come across your garters, which gave him the right of your bed, if it pleased him. Fortunately he was royal enough not to avail himself of that right, but he still importuned and boasted his privilege and almost threatened to apply it, just to insult me. There was no sex for us that night, and every time we almost succeeded, there was something coming between us that put me off. And then we have your strange association and contact with the devil...

Angelica Just childish fantasies. You must not take them seriously.

Harry What really happened? I could never understand it.

Angelica My mother deserted us. She was to be a nun in France. She felt her calling and therefore deserted home and family. That was the worst thing she could have done to us. I could never forgive her. I found her religion to be guilty, which she had deceived us with, and then I trampled on the Bible and almost renounced everything of religion, for the abuse that it always leads to. And then I thought I saw the devil reveal himself to me from up in a tree...

Harry How clear was he?

Angelica He wasn't clear at all, but I knew at once who he was. It was an opposite power to religion. I was given a compensation for my denouncement of religion and for the loss of my mother. That's how I felt, and it felt quite justified. But I don't believe in the devil. He is just a superstition like all things religious. That's how I see it. I always preferred common sense.

Harry But you are beautiful and irresistible to any man and have only grown more beautiful since we married. Don't you think you had your beauty from the devil as some kind of your covenant? It is as if you couldn't age...

Angelica Don't get superstitious, Harry. It's a weakness.

Harry But there is something about you that must arouse both every man's love and suspicion, like a secret superiority in the form of charm and wisdom in dangerous union with your beauty, so that every man simply must fall for you. I have seen it happen time and time again, how any men have given you eyes that they couldn't let go. Even our simplest and ugliest scarred veteran adores you. It is obvious at any distance. Or else he would have left us long ago.

Angelica You mean Sexby?

Harry Yes, the poor Sexby.

Angelica It was Prince Rupert who bestowed him on us. He was in his service, but we got him from him when we married. *(There is a knock.)*

Harry (loudly) Yes?

Sexby (enters in humility, bows and removes his hat) Your grace, Cromwell demands an answer.

Harry Tell him that we surrender. Angelica refuses to leave her home. We can't expose her to danger. He gets the castle, if he spares us all.

Sexby So you change sides to Cromwell?

Harry Never. We will leave shortly for the King to explain the whole situation to him.

Sexby He will not receive it well. He can't take another defeat.

Harry It can't be helped.

Sexby If there is anything I could do for you...

Harry Yes, tell Cromwell that Fanshawe is his. Then escort us to Oxford.

Sexby Yes, your grace. *(bows again, resumes his hat and removes himself.)*

Angelica Thank you, Harry. And you are a brave fellow, Sexby.

Sexby No, I am the coward.

Angelica It is braver to save lives than to take lives.

Harry But among the cavaliers it will be regarded as cowardice. I just sincerely hope the King will be able to forgive me.

Angelica He must show some understanding. Or else he is not a real king.

Harry We shall see, Angelica. Now get dressed.

(They get up from the bed and make ready.)

Scene 2. Oxford. The court.

Charles No, it is not acceptable!

Henriette But they have done no harm!

Charles My dear, we cannot tolerate defeats. They gave up without a fight. A nobleman must never do that. Our cause is too sacred to be deserted, and if it is deserted, the one who does it must take the consequences.

Henriette At least spare them.

Charles No, they must take the consequences.

Henriette Is that wise, my husband? Is it wise to make such examples? If one after the other of your most faithful followers go over to Cromwell to save lives rather than sacrifice them in a hopeless battle, how many will then continue to follow you?

Charles That is not the issue. It's a matter of principle. It's God against godlessness. We represent the divine order of this country, while Cromwell represents the opposite, revolution, upheaval, the dethronement of order, nobility and monarchy, and quite simply destructive barbarity. We can't desert God who gave us this responsibility to represent his order. We can't give in to Cromwell one single inch.

Henriette But if he had made resistance, he would have fallen!

Charles That is far from certain. He would probably have been spared and imprisoned with his honour intact. Now he comes here with his tail between his legs with his honour lost, and we cannot give it back to him. Enough talk. Bring in the poor delinquents.

(The doors are opened, and Harry with Angelica are showed in. They enter together and bow to their majesties as is proper.)

Well, what have you got to say for your defence?

Angelica I accept the whole responsibility, your majesty.

Charles Quiet, woman! Let Harry speak for himself.

Harry We had to surrender without battle, since Angelica refused to leave the home of her ancestors willingly.

Charles Didn't you insist on her finding safety for herself?

Harry Yes.

Charles Why didn't she do so? Why didn't she obey?

Harry She refused.

Charles So you obeyed her instead.

Harry Yes.

Charles That is not acceptable. A man does not obey a woman. A woman obeys a man. You must take the consequences.

Harry I would do anything for your majesty, which he knows all too well. Or else we would not be here.

Charles What can you do, poor boy? You were never good enough for battle. When you got into a crisis you gave way to the easiest solution – you gave in to your wife, who for comfortable reasons wanted to surrender her castle without a battle.

Angelica No, I refused to abandon my responsibility for my home!

Charles Quiet, woman! Whatever your intention was, the result was that your home was given up without a battle, Cromwell got yet another fortress, we got yet another defeat to grieve for, we lost another host of followers, Cromwell was strengthened in his position, we were even more demoralised, and your husband appeared as a miserable coward in the eyes of the whole country. And then you come here expecting everything to be as it was! It will not do. You are lost. As the highest responsible authority of this country I must be consistent and respect the law.

Lord Henry Fanshawe gave up his estate to the enemy without fighting for it. That is treason. In wartime this is punishable with death by decapitation.

Angelica (down on her knees in despair) No!

Charles And you, Angelica Fanshawe, who instead of being obedient to her husband as is regular and proper, tempted your husband to this treason, can never expect any mercy from our house. You have fallen and cannot rise again, and the only way for Lord Harry Fanshawe to save his honour as a nobleman is to accept his death penalty. That is the law. Enough of it! Take them out! *(to Angelica)* I never want to see you again.

Angelica (in desperation while Harry is taken out) No! It's too hard! It is inhuman! He has done no evil!

Charles Take her out! *(She is forced to rise and brusquely taken out as well.)*

Henriette This is not politically wise, my husband.

Charles It is not about politics. It's a matter of principle! We have to be consistent! Or else we have no right to keep the crown!

Henriette (shakes her head and goes out)

Charles We have no choice. We have to do what is right, and if the world makes us wrong, it's the world that is wrong, and we will be proven right with time anyway. Poor people! There is no worse weakness than cowardice, and no weakness more common...

Act II scene 1. Fanshawe.

Angelica What kind of people are they? May I never be left in peace?

Servant They bring peace, madam, sent by colonel Cromwell himself.

Angelica But what do they want?

Servant I wonder that as well.

Angelica I sense dangers by far, and there are men out there who wish me any amount of harm, just because I never allowed them to harm me. Well, Thomas Rainsborough is still an honourable man. I suppose I must receive him.

(The doors are opened, and Rainsborough with attendants are let in.)

(Rainsborough greets her politely by removing his hat and kneeling to her.)

What brings me the honour? I had believed and hoped that the world would have forgotten me after so cruelly having executed my husband for nothing, to leave me alone in my mourning widowhood. What could Cromwell want from me?

Rainsborough My lady, we come in an awkward matter. I had better be absolutely frank with you, but there are no pleasant things I have to say.

Angelica Well, what is the hesitation? Don't you think I could stand anything after having to watch my innocent husband being executed by the order of the government?

Rainsborough That government was the King, who will be tried for his crimes. My mission is about what happened to you after the execution.

Angelica Am I to be prosecuted for having defended myself against a rapist by hurting him so badly that he died? Am I a murderess for unintentionally having caused a brutal man's death, because he mistook me for a whore?

Rainsborough That's exactly what it is about. The man happened to be in a high position, and his closest friend is a member of parliament, a certain Jolliff. From colonel Cromwell he has obtained a mission ratified by parliament to subject you to a witch trial.

Angelica So I am now a witch, am I? Another title to my list of merits. My only previous merit was as a widow. So if a widow defends her honour, she is a witch?

Rainsborough I must learn from you exactly what happened to have the matter discarded by colonel Cromwell's personal intervention. Only he can by military authority cancel a parliamentary act.

Angelica I am not the first witch in England that you men persecuted to death for nothing except the mere suspicion of absurd witchcraft, which no woman is capable of.

Rainsborough You are still alive, and if you can convince me that your case is true, no one will be able to touch a hair on your head.

Angelica Well. I will tell you exactly what happened. After the execution of my husband I was brought to nothing and utterly devastated and therefore remained in Oxford, since my only chance of survival was if the King or Queen would return their grace on me and help me. The Queen did this behind the King's back, but unfortunately I was in so dire need that I also had to accept help from others. One gentleman was helpful, offered me food and lodging, and I trusted him, until he demanded payment in the form of carnal satisfaction. I was not willing to go that far. I insisted on leaving his house immediately, which he was not willing to allow me, since he had the fixed idea that he should know me against my will. When he then used force, I had to defend myself by using force. A pair of scissors happened to be at hand, and applying them I stabbed him unintentionally so badly that he got them through his throat and died.

Rainsborough What did you do then?

Angelica What could I do? I just wanted to disappear and did my best in that effort, dressed as a man and stole out of the city. Since then this Jolliff, apparently my victim's best friend, has persecuted me with the same fixed idea that he should have me at any price which led to the death of my rapist.

Rainsborough So he wants to avenge his friend. Is that the whole story?

Angelica That's the relevant part of the story. Now I want to hear in detail what I am accused of. Can any accusation be brought to court as evidence? If the accusation is that I am a witch, what evidence can in that case be produced to prove it?

Rainsborough (looks down) This entire story is absurd. We have a civil war to finish off and a painful process to conclude against a deposed and criminal king, and then this absurd matter comes in between. The parliament seems only good for giving its members licence to quarrel between themselves, and this Jolliff has refused to give in until his prosecution against you has passed.

Angelica I have never seen him. How can he hate me so much that he wants to persecute me to death?

Rainsborough As you say, he suffers from some kind of fixation. The accusation against you is that you by witchcraft and in league with the devil cast a spell on men so that they become dependent on you and seduced just by seeing you and that you in that manner cause a common sedition to such a degree that it grows to a threat against the government and the people.

Angelica And the evidence?

Rainsborough The murder of his best friend, which he holds up as an example of what must happen to any man who gets close enough to you. Even your husband claimed that his misfortunes were only because of you.

Angelica He gave way to me when I refused to obey him. That's why they cut off his head. So far Jolliff is right. But he was executed with no right. He had done nothing.

Rainsborough How could he be executed for showing you consideration?

Angelica When Cromwell and his soldiers seized our castle, he wanted to make armed resistance and therefore wanted to send me to security in Oxford. I refused to abandon the home of my ancestors. To avoid putting my life at risk, he therefore had to surrender to Cromwell. He never thought the King would show himself unreasonable enough to never forgive him the surrender, but for that he was executed.

Rainsborough And you were forced to watch it.

Angelica No, I did it willingly, for I did not want to abandon my husband in his life's most difficult moment of death.

Rainsborough You are a brave woman who has only acted rationally. To surrender a castle in order to avoid bloodshed and violence is the only right thing to do from a woman's standpoint, and you killed your violator unintentionally in self-defence. Colonel Cromwell could have no objection against your defence.

Angelica And what about parliament and the rogue Jolliff? I suspect that he is only eager to get hold of my property.

Rainsborough That's what I suspect as well, but we have plans of procedure against such men as he. If Cromwell will allow us, we intend to distribute the lands of the country equally between the farmers, so that each one may till his own land. In that way we can avoid ever again getting starvation as a problem in the country, and it's perhaps the only way, since squires who own too much land. tend to prioritize the enlargement of their property to allowing people to survive by tilling them.

Angelica The starvation disasters are only caused by the civil war.

Rainsborough Not only. The distribution and sharing of lands has always been unfair, and thereby the maintenance of support for the country has always been limited and cut short.

Angelica You want to accomplish a revolution.

Rainsborough A most urgent and necessary one.

Angelica Is Cromwell in favour of your program?

Rainsborough Not yet, but if we only reach an end to the civil war, we will start dealing with the problem for serious.

Angelica I was always on the King's side, but with such an interesting program, I would feel inclined to change sides.

Rainsborough Nothing can stop Cromwell from winning.

Angelica Yes, to begin with, but how will it be in the long run? You can't eradicate the royalists, and they fight for a broader freedom of religion than yours.

Rainsborough Cromwell only wishes to do away with the Catholics. But the cavaliers want to do away with the Puritans.

Angelica You have to admit that they are dull and stupid in their fanatical piety.

Rainsborough I did not hear that statement, my lady. Consider, that you are accused of being in league with Satan.

Angelica A stolid superstition founded on an imagined fancy I had as a child.

Rainsborough Unfortunately the accusation is in writing, and as long as Jolliff is in parliament he will not forget it.

Angelica Bring my case to Cromwell, and I will do what I can to further your reforms.

Rainsborough That's better. I will return to him at once, but allow me to leave a bodyguard with you, in case Jolliff or other villains would show up.

Angelica Is it anyone I know?

Rainsborough An old faithful servant. He has served you before. (*gives a sign, and Sexby is shown in.*)

Angelica I know you well.

Sexby It's a pleasure to serve you, madam.

Rainsborough Guard and protect her with your life, Sexby. If she is really in league with the devil, she might be indispensable for us. (*blinks*) I will soon be back, my lady.

Angelica I hope so. We have much to talk about, and I owe you more details in my case.

Rainsborough I shall be at your and my colonel Cromwell's service. (*bows and leaves*)

Angelica (to Sexby) Do I know that clumsy fool Jolliff?

Sexby He is an arch puritan who lives on the misfortunes of others. He has already made some fortunes on acquiring properties of escaped cavaliers.

Angelica In other words a vulture and a disgrace for the puritan government. Well, shall we prepare ourselves for his intrigues, so that we never might be taken by surprise?

Sexby You have two protectors who warrant your safety.

Angelica Who?

Sexby Oliver Cromwell and Thomas Rainsborough.

Angelica Something tells me I will need them both. I hope they never will be divided.

Sexby They must stick together for the sake of the realm. Or else there will be more civil wars.

Angelica Anything but not that.
Sexby I am sure we'll manage, madam.
Angelica For the time being.

Scene 2. Whitehall.

Cromwell Well, how is our female ally?
Rainsborough How is the King, with whom you constantly negotiate behind the backs of our people?
Cromwell Don't I have the right to give him a chance?
Rainsborough He is a hopeless case, and you know it. Everybody knows it who knows him. He will never budge one inch, and he deigns to negotiate with us just to gain time and find new ways of fooling us. He will use any means. So should we.
Cromwell In politics you must proceed with caution and careful calculation, for the least mistake could cost more than you could ever pay. We must not commit the same mistake as Charles Stuart.
Rainsborough The only thing I believe in is honesty. If we abandon or neglect it, we are no better than Charles Stuart.
Cromwell Well, Thomas. I shall be honest with you. We could reach an agreement with Charles and have peace and start cooperating together, if you were not in the way.
Rainsborough So you wish to cringe to him?
Cromwell I didn't say that.
Rainsborough What more didn't you say?
Cromwell He is still the King, and as long as he lives he will remain the King, whose royal authority we will never get away from, no matter how much we humiliate him. He believes he could reach an agreement with me but opposes my radicalism. He demands your removal, if we are to reach an agreement.
Rainsborough So remove me then, and reach an agreement with him and restore the monarchy and crawl to him again as the slave you were under him from the beginning.
Cromwell I can't do that, Thomas. We can never go back. We can never allow him to practise his arbitrary tyranny again.
Rainsborough You can't have us both. You must get one of us out of the way.
Cromwell And if I were allowed to choose which one to keep, it would be you.
Rainsborough What stops you?
Cromwell Thomas, if we are to carry through the political program we both desire, and you will get your radical reforms through, then we must walk the whole way and make an end of monarchy once and for all.
Rainsborough I have nothing against it.
Cromwell The consequences would be a continued unsurveyable civil war in both England and Ireland.

Rainsborough You are the military mind among us. You can carry it through.

Cromwell You must understand that I have second thoughts about it. No Englishman wants to shed the blood of other Englishmen, and when it comes to civil war, it's not only the blood of countrymen that is being shed, but the blood of brothers and sisters.

Rainsborough Militaries exist to kill without personal considerations.

Cromwell Can you support it by my side?

Rainsborough Oliver, we have the chance now and might never get it back if we miss it. We have a golden opportunity to at last implement social justice in the entire country by radical land reforms, so that no one will own too much land and none too little, so that no one will be forced to starvation. Yes, I want to fight for it, for I know it's worth fighting for. If a civil war of many years is needed to reach that ideal goal, so let it happen. I will stand for it.

Cromwell Then I must ask you to lay siege to the King in Pontefract while I concentrate on stamping out all rebellions.

Rainsborough So you don't want to take care of the King yourself?

Cromwell I am better needed at other tasks. I am thinking as a military strategist.

Rainsborough And why won't you first take care of the King, bring him to a settlement to later more easily be able to deal with his spoilt followers? You don't have to answer. You are still in diplomatic contact with him. You want to keep up that appearance. Therefore you send me against him, whom he fears more than you.

Cromwell If we'll only get him finally defeated politically and strategically, we can then devote ourselves to your land reforms.

Rainsborough (looks down) Well, Oliver, I will do it for you. I don't understand how you are thinking politically, for I myself am incapable of thinking politically. I am too honest for that, and you know it. If you want to use me for this, I accept it because I trust you. So it's just to get started. Give me an order.

Cromwell (milder) How far did you get with our beautiful ally at Fanshawe?

Rainsborough Why do you ask?

Cromwell I would gladly grant you two to have each other. You go well together. The King definitely made himself impossible by executing her husband only because he would not defend his castle for his wife's sake, who didn't want to abandon her ancestral home. She is a woman of importance, perhaps the only woman of importance in our country since the Queen was sent away. If we could have her safely on our side, it would mean much to the good morals of our cause.

Rainsborough You want me to propose to her for political reasons?

Cromwell Thomas, she is unique. No man could but love her. They say she is the devil's own, I don't care if she is or not, but her influence is undeniable. Take some time off before you settle with the King, help her with her estate, make it prosper and work out well, and do whatever you can for her. That's my order.

Rainsborough Your weakness for this woman amazes me.

Cromwell I am no womanizer, perhaps the least womanizer in the country, but I do respect her, since she has enemies. There are powerful men in the parliament who for

some reason are obsessed with the fixed idea that she must be annihilated, because they fear her for some reason, maybe because she has turned them down for their desire. She needs our protection.

Rainsborough I will offer her our protection.

Cromwell With you and her on our side we can but prevail.

Rainsborough I only sense one danger.

Cromwell Well?

Rainsborough Your ambition for power, Oliver. Don't you think I can see it? Don't become like the king, when you conquer.

Cromwell That's the last thing I will be.

Rainsborough It's easy enough to say, and you certainly mean it, but power corrupts, and when you have it in your hands, you will refuse to let it go as long as you live. Then there will be some risk for the same abuse of power that we now are fighting.

Cromwell Our aim is freedom and equal rights for all.

Rainsborough Yes, Thomas. You intend to impose complete freedom of religion and conscience in the country, but at the same time you wish to expel all Catholics.

Cromwell All evil comes from the Catholics.

Rainsborough While they mean that all evil comes from the Puritans. That's us, you know. In their eyes we are the evil robbers and ruffians who wish to destroy and bereave them of their country, and from their point of view they are right, for that's exactly what you wish to do.

Cromwell Don't you want it then?

Rainsborough Honestly speaking, Oliver, I unfortunately believe that the ideal justice and equality for the law never will be accomplished in reality. Yes, you wish to give these rights to the people, but at the same bereave the last Catholics of their last rights as human beings. Is that justice and equality?

Cromwell It is necessary.

Rainsborough There you are. The end justifies the means, for us as well as for the Jesuits on the continent. I am with you, Oliver, and I will do everything you ask for, but only with the reservation, that when I have done what was required and no longer can accept your politics, I must reserve for my self the right to retire and disappear.

Cromwell Disappear to where?

Rainsborough More and more are those who find a better alternative for themselves in the colonies, when they give up England as a hopelessly lost country that has hopelessly sacrificed all ideals for political arbitrariness. *(starts to move away.)*

Cromwell Give Mistress Fanshawe my very best regards.

Rainsborough I will tell her that she enjoys both your highest protection and my own by your authority.

Cromwell Farewell, brother. Come back when I need you.

Rainsborough Promptly. *(leaves)*

Cromwell (alone) He is invaluable but at the same time the most dangerous man in England after the King, for he is the only one who can vie with me about power, for

the people loves him more than me. We must cooperate or both get lost in the civil war. The King demands that I sacrifice him for peace and for our necessary compromises with the crown. I would rather sacrifice the King, even if that would be more troublesome...

Scene 3.

Sexby What really do you want from me?

Jolliff You could be of service to the government.

Sexby I already am. What more could I do?

Jolliff You are in the service of Mistress Fanshawe, better known as the Devil's Whore.

Sexby I take no part in the spreading of rumours. I am only a soldier.

Jolliff But you serve her and should know more than most men about her.

Sexby I serve colonel Thomas Rainsborough.

Jolliff Of course. But he is her lover.

Sexby By order of colonel Cromwell he makes sure that mistress Fanshawe may live in peace from such as you. He is her friend and nothing else.

Jolliff Are you so naïve? Listen. I know a great deal about her that colonel Rainsborough probably has no idea of. Her first husband was executed by the King. Why? Because she betrayed him by refusing to obey him.

Sexby That story is well known by all. It did not add to the King's honour but rather added speed to his fall.

Jolliff He was just her first victim. A good friend of mine was the second.

Sexby I know that she killed an obsessively impertinent man in self-defence who tried to rape her. According to our new government a woman has the right of self-defence.

Jolliff It was not self-defence. I happened to be there and caught them red-handed. They had just consummated the act when I arrived to interrupt them before it was too late. Unfortunately it was too late. At that very moment she struck the knife in his throat. It was no less than a murder of lust.

Sexby Couldn't it have been the case, that she for a moment was distracted by your importuning, which she saw at last as a chance for her to stop him?

Jolliff She murdered him. Period. Who will be her next victim? Perhaps colonel Rainsborough, your master?

Sexby What do you want me to do?

Jolliff We are working on a prosecution case against her in parliament together with other witches. We are collecting evidence, but we need more evidence. Have you seen anything? Does she have any secret altar to the devil for her fornications? Is colonel Rainsborough a participant in her black masses?

Sexby You don't know what you are talking about.

Jolliff Could you assert that she is a good Christian?

Sexby No. She is neither. She was cured of all the presumptions of Christianity when her mother deserted her family to become a nun. She never forgave Christianity or her mother for that, whom she never saw again in her life, but that did not turn her into any devil worshipper.

Jolliff How do you know?

Sexby She still maintains her mother's altar with the virgin Mary in a secret chapel of the castle which she tends with affection and piety.

Jolliff So, she is a Catholic? That is even worse than being a Satanist.

Sexby No, she is not a Catholic.

Jolliff What is she then?

Sexby She is a humanist.

Jolliff What's that? That's no religion.

Sexby It is to serve man before religion.

Jolliff So she is a free-thinker.

Sexby Yes, like colonel Rainsborough, like colonel Cromwell, like most roundheads around him.

Jolliff I know that she is a witch. I have seen her in action. She must be brought to trial for the murder of my best friend. She will not be able to escape it.

Sexby My order is to protect her against such as you, and the same order was given to colonel Rainsborough by colonel Cromwell.

Jolliff Just you wait. All her men will end up in trouble. When even your master colonel Rainsborough has hit the ground because of her, we shall strike, and then not even you will be able to save her.

Sexby You are obsessed with her. Your lovesickness has turned you blind. Just because you never can have her, you want her dead.

Jolliff I only want justice.

Sexby Is it justice to burn innocent women at the stake just because they have been the object of some suspicion which made some envious man report them with some charges that never can be proved?

Jolliff No witch is burnt at the stake without having confessed her witchcraft.

Sexby Extracted by the force of torture.

Jolliff A confession is a confession.

Sexby Even you would confess to anything under torture. You are insane, Sir.
(leaves in fury before he loses control entirely)

Jolliff No help to be expected there. But sooner or later she will get caught. I know you, bitch. You absconded my friend by murdering him, but a man like me, you can never get away from.

Scene 4.

Charles All negotiations are meaningless as long as you keep colonel Rainsborough.

Cromwell I will not be extorted.

Charles The man is impossible. You must realize that. You can't rob an entire class of landowners of their lands.

Cromwell He only wishes to distribute the lands with more equal sharing, so that all can be cultivated to avoid national starvation disasters. It's not more than rational and reasonable.

Charles Such a reform would only raise rebellions in all parts of the country and has done so already.

Cromwell Don't you see that I am trying to save your life? You must compromise. That's your only chance to survive.

Charles You have no chance of survival the way you go on. You can never achieve any peace in the country, and even if you murder me you will have the monarchy back when the people have grown tired of your civil wars. Your military dictatorship is doomed.

Cromwell In that case you give us no other choice than to bring you to trial and sentence you as the murderer of the people you are, for you were the one who initiated the civil war.

Charles Don't try to deny your responsibility. The arbitrary parliament brought on the civil war as a logical consequence.

Cromwell You are defending an impossible cause.

Charles That will be a matter for history to show. I claim that your struggle against history is in vain. If you make sure that I am sentenced and executed, it will seal your own destruction as a bloody interim government, since there is no power or force greater in history than martyrdom.

Cromwell Your efforts at extortion and bribes will only lead to your own destruction the more certainly, while it will only fortify the positions of honest men like Rainsborough. He is much urgent and needed as a necessity against such a corruption as yours.

Charles (laughs scornfully) Poor man, don't you see that you yourself are already thoroughly corrupted by the power you acquired by force?

Cromwell Take him away!

Charles (scornfully and self-assuredly) You can't defeat me. *(is brought out)*

Cromwell We shall have no peace in the country as long as we have a king who is alive. Rainsborough is right. Not until he is out of the way we can start creating the ideal state.

Act III scene 1.

Rainsborough My love, you must not worry.

Angelica But no one knows how long you will be away. The war consumes people so that they just disappear without themselves even understanding how.

Rainsborough Cromwell knows what he is doing.

Angelica Still it feels as if you violated your own nature by following him.

Rainsborough Yes, we are very different. We strive in different directions, and none of us can reach his goal as long as the King is in the way. As long as I can believe in him and trust him and we are agreed I will follow him, hoping to achieve and reach my aims at least partly by him. I cannot fail all the others who believe in both him and me.

Angelica You are the better man of you. I think he will only use you. He needs you to ultimately be able to prevail, but when he has defeated all he will enforce his plutocracy and drive over your ideals, which will be ditched.

Rainsborough As long as he hasn't done that yet, I can still believe and trust in him.

Angelica You are too good for him. And what shall I do if I lose you? Jolliff is still possessed with the idea of annihilating me.

Rainsborough I know. I have been thinking of it. If I would fall in battle, you will not be safe here. In that case you should apply for safety with idealistic sects like the Diggers or Ranters, who take better care of each other than the Puritans do.

Angelica You must come back.

Rainsborough Yes, I must. I promise to never let you down even if I should die.

Angelica In that case you must haunt me and tell me what happened to you.

Rainsborough Do you have any presentiments?

Angelica No, but I worry.

Rainsborough That's a woman's privilege. Farewell, my love. One last kiss. (*They kiss sincerely and for long.*) We are one soul, you and me.

Angelica And will forever remain so.

Rainsborough Farewell. (*They separate after one last embrace. He rides off.*)

Angelica I know that I will lose him and yet not. Jolliff prophesied that I would never be able to love anyone without his destruction. My first man was executed, but this one is so much superior to him in everything and actually the best man in England. Colonel Rainsborough, you are mine, only mine, and will always remain so. You are the only one who really owned me, and if Satan himself wants me for himself, you will still always have precedence.

Scene 2. Pontefract.

Cavalier 1 It's hopeless, your majesty. Colonel Rainsborough will never surrender, and we will never break this siege.

Charles He is Cromwell's best soldier, and Cromwell knows whom he has commissioned to lay siege to me. But Cromwell and Rainsborough represent different ideals. Unfortunately Rainsborough has been duped by him to follow him. There is a way out, though.

Cavalier 1 Advise us, your majesty.

Charles Kidnap him. Bring him here. I will explain Cromwell's real intentions to him. Rainsborough wants to share the lands of the kingdom equally between its farmers, while Cromwell wants to confirm the plutocracy of the landowners. This will not work, and colonel Rainsborough must be brought to understand this. Dress up as Cromwell's men and fetch him here. When he realizes how Cromwell has deceived him, he will immediately go emigrating to America.

Cavalier We hear, and we obey, your majesty! It shall be done!

Charles Right so!

(A group of his men depart with the cavalier.)

Scene 3. Rainsborough sitting by an open window in meditation.

Rainsborough Where will he bring us, this iron chancellor of an iron will and no heart? What drives him on except his hatred of power? And at the same time he desires all power for himself in a kind of demonic egoism without limits, where the end justifies all means while the end is only himself and the power of his will. Was it politics or the war or his hatred that turned him that way? And I follow him blindly in good faith for the sake of the good cause to still be able to carry through my land reforms by him. It might be of no matter if we succeed or not. Either we will never get rid of the King, or we will never get rid of him. – What's that noise down there?

Voices from the court Let us pass! We come from Cromwell!

Rainsborough (rising) Why would Cromwell send his men here? Has something happened?

(enter some cavaliers dressed up as roundheads)

What do you want? You are not Cromwell's men. It's obvious from afar.

Cavalier 1 Just come with us, Sir, for your own good.

Rainsborough Why? Who are you? Are you trying to kidnap me?

Cavalier 2 Cromwell has asked you to come with us.

Rainsborough Why? Have I done something to displease him? Does he want to break the siege of Pontefract?

Cavalier 1 Just come with us, Sir, *(threatens with his sword)* for your own good.

Rainsborough You keep repeating yourself. Don't you know that I am a soldier, and that a British soldier never gives in without defending himself? Take me by force, if

you can. I don't trust you. (*assails them with his sword. He is one against five and unprotected and is soon mortally wounded. He falls.*)

Cavalier 2 This went all wrong.

Cavalier 1 It's worse than that. Now the King will be very displeased, and we have given Cromwell a great martyr. Come! We are finished here! (*They hastily leave.*)

Scene 4. Fanshawe. Angelica dressed in black in the hall by a black coffin.

Angelica I shouldn't have let you go, but power and duty called you away, and you were too good to think of yourself. Is Cromwell satisfied now, when he at last has got you for his constantly infallible and unswerving ally and greatest martyr? Everyone who knew you knew that you were better than Cromwell, and it wouldn't surprise me if Cromwell himself had something to do with your death. He feared you and envied you as much as he loved you, for you were beautiful and noble while he was cruel and ugly.

Sexby (enters) Pardon me, madam, but you have to escape.

Angelica I will not abandon my husband.

Sexby Jolliff is on his way here with an edict from parliament.

Angelica Cromwell's parliament. The King is now his prisoner. Does Cromwell intend to cut off his head simultaneously with Jolliff's intention to hang me? What does it matter. Let the fanatics come and rave out enough, so that it then will be over.

Sexby I am thinking of your life. I was urged by colonel Rainsborough to account for your life while he was away. (*noise outside*)

Angelica Thank you, Sexby. They seem to be in a hurry with rushing their enforced judicial murders.

Jolliff (breaks in with his armed followers) There she is! Arrest her!

Angelica May I ask you to show some respect for my deceased husband's death, who was as good a colonel as Oliver Cromwell and his best man.

Jolliff You can't fool us with your witchcraft, madam. If it hadn't been for you, colonel Rainsborough would never have been murdered. You became his destruction by your curse as the devil's own whore!

Angelica You know as little what you are saying as what you are doing. You are desecrating a dead man's house and violating his widow.

Jolliff Who is violating who? He was never your husband! You seduced him, corrupted him and destroyed him! He would have betrayed Cromwell and taken sides with the King, your protector and friend, if he hadn't been murdered in time!

Angelica From where do you get your fairy tales? We were married the night before he left commissioned by Cromwell to lay siege to the King in Pontefract.

Jolliff You are just imagining things. You shall be brought to trial in London and hanged as that the devil's own witch and murderess you are!

Angelica So you seem to quite certainly already know the sentence beforehand. Good luck with your trial, which you appear to have fixed so perfectly. I make no

resistance, since I any way don't have anything left to live for. (*offers her hands to be fettered*)

Jolliff Seize her! Have her carefully shackled! You are never safe with a witch!

Angelica I have no broomstick to fly away with, if that is what you expect.

Jolliff I expect nothing but take no risks. I only know there are no more dangerous beings than you, and that your ilk never can be exterminated properly!

Angelica You are really most generous with your compliments. Don't you have any more accusations to offer for my pleasure!

Jolliff That you are the devil's own witch should do well enough.

Angelica I thought it was a far more serious crime to be a Catholic, according to Cromwell's new laws. It should be punishable that my mother turned a nun and went into a nunnery, shouldn't it?

Jolliff It pleases you to scorn and ridicule Cromwell's laws. Away with her!
(*Angelica is brutally taken away.*)

(*to Sexby*) And you, Sir, what are you doing here?

Sexby I am just her servant by the order of colonel Rainsborough.

Jolliff He is dead. Don't you know? Haven't you understood that the body she has satisfied herself with here is his? You are not needed any more. By the trial, Fanshawe passes to me, and I acquire all her property. (*Sexby leaves without a word.*)

Triumph! At last! No man was safe from that woman, not even an old scarred soldier like that old survival from the German battlefields of the thirty years' war. Let him vanish in the shadows of all her consumed and wasted men! Ha! Only I have managed out of her reach! (*spits at the coffin*) Go to hell, Rainsborough! Cromwell was finished with you already before you were sent to death by him. You were stupid enough to be a good soldier.

Act IV scene 1. The trial.

Judge Bring in the accused! (*Angelica is brought in between two soldiers.*)

You are accused of witchcraft, sorcery and causing the death of others. What have to say for your defence?

Angelica A great deal. The accusations are biased and groundless and only motivated by my adversary master Jolliff's greed, who wants to have me hanged as a witch just to be able to seize my property and lands.

Judge Is master Jolliff present? (*He rises from a bench.*) The accused has defended herself by accusing you. You have heard her accusation. Have you anything to say for an answer?

Jolliff I am not the only witness to the fact that she is a witch and as such a mortal danger to all around her, especially to those men who she bewitches and call to her side, which already make out a number, of which most of them faced an evil and sudden death.

Angelica I have been married twice. My first husband was executed by the King without right, since he had committed no other crime than to surrender to Cromwell. My second husband was likewise killed because of the king, when an effort to kidnap him by his men failed, since my colonel Rainsborough fought for his defence to his death.

Jolliff Wrong. You caused your first husband's death by refusing to obey him, forcing him to surrender to the chancellor's troops. Thereby he committed treason against the king because of you, why the king had no other choice according to the law than to have him executed. And your second husband was never your husband.

Angelica That he was indeed!

Jolliff That you made him go to bed with you did not make you legally married.

Angelica We married the evening before he was called out on war duty.

Jolliff Where is the marriage certificate?

Angelica It was a private ceremony at my home.

Jolliff Who conducted the ceremony?

Angelica A good puritan army chaplain among my husband's men.

Jolliff Where is he?

Angelica With the army.

Jolliff So you can't call him as a witness. So you are lying. What you cannot prove is a lie.

Angelica There were witnesses!

Jolliff Where are they?

Angelica Not here.

Jolliff How misfortunate for you. This the devil's own chosen whore, gentlemen, had visits by the devil already as a child, which she has told a number of witnesses during the years. The devil's promise was the she should be his, but if she betrayed him with mortal men they would all meet with a violent death, and his protection of her would be withdrawn. That's exactly what has happened. She can't deny the truth.

Angelica Can you even prove that this so called mister devil even exists? If you can, why then not call him as a witness? What child does not have fantasies? You claim that I lie because I have no witnesses. Where are *your* witnesses?

Jolliff I witnessed myself that she murdered my best friend captain Carrington with a knife through his throat. The case has been legally ratified since many years, and not until now the legal force can be executed.

Angelica It was in self-defence! He tried to rape me and started using violence himself to force me.

Judge So you confess the murder of captain Carrington at Oxford in November 1644?

Angelica It was in self-defence!

Jolliff She has confessed!

Judge Your witnesses?

Angelica We were alone. He wanted no witnesses.

Jolliff I am the only witness. She was alone with him, and therefore only she could have murdered him. The motive doesn't matter.

Judge The case is clear then. I sentence you, Mistress Angelica Fanshawe, to death by hanging for the murder of His Lordship Charles Carrington. (*knocks*) The court is adjourned. (*rises. The court officers bring out Angelica, who is allowed no more expression. Jolliff is congratulated by his friends.*)

Sexby (*unseen so far, still hidden to most*) By this procedure, Jolliff, you seal your own fate. Nothing can save you now.

Scene 2. Whitehall.

Cromwell Now colonel Rainsborough should have been alive, when we at last can realize the total republic by the king's execution. At the same time he couldn't have done me a greater service than dying in the right moment as the foremost martyr of the republic. If he had lived we would probably have disagreed and been divided. If he then had insisted on his reforms, it could have developed into an indefinitely prolonged civil war. Now it's finished, he is dead, and it's best what happened. Instead I get burdened by such problems as Freeborn John Lilburne's free speech. Not even the king would have been able to silence him, and now he assails me for the sins of the king. – Yes, what is it?

Soldier Edward Sexby is here.

Cromwell Colonel Rainsborough's closest man. Show him in. Is he for or against us?

Soldier That's the question. (*leaves*)

Cromwell Let me guess. He sticks to Rainsborough's ideals.

(*enter Sexby. Cromwell greets him cordially.*)

Welcome, brother! What is on your mind?

Sexby Many questions.

Cromwell Start with the first.

Sexby Why have you imprisoned Freeborn John Lilburne?

Cromwell Intrigues against the state. His pamphlets are subversive.

Sexby The King had him whipped for the same reason.

Cromwell I know. Next question.

Sexby Shouldn't the republic show greater tolerance than the tyranny we shed so much blood to get rid of?

Cromwell No government can tolerate rebels.

Sexby He only speaks his mind. I thought that if there was anything we fought for, it was for freedom of conscience and speech.

Cromwell He accuses me in public for having taken over the king's absolutism and betrayed the cause of the republic.

Sexby Haven't you?

Cromwell What do you mean?

Sexby Colonel Rainsborough, whom I served and could have given my life for, died formally as a martyr for the cause of you and the republic, but what he really died for was the political freedom he dreamt of as an ideal, in wishing to share the lands of the country in a fairer and agronomically more sensible way to avoid starvation calamities. Instead of honouring his ideal you confirm the class of the landowners and their privileges, and you bypass parliament with your arbitrary decisions to establish a plutocracy as the ruling class of the country.

Cromwell That's the only way to save our economy. If you have anything against it you can emigrate to America. Rainsborough would have done that if he had lived.

Sexby So Freeborn John Lilburne is right.

Cromwell More questions?

Sexby No.

Cromwell Then I have a question for you. What happened to Angelica Fanshawe, once a favourite of the king's, who Rainsborough later took care of? Wasn't she executed as a witch? Still I hear a rumour that she is alive.

Sexby A higher authority intervened and averted the hanging.

Cromwell The parliament member Jolliff insists that he saw her hanged.

Sexby As soon as he had left, she was cut down and had her life saved by a hair's breadth.

Cromwell That pleases me. Jolliff is a greedy scoundrel. Where is she now?

Sexby With the Diggers.

Cromwell I thought so, the sect that fulfils Rainsborough's ideals. Well, it's best as it is and what happens. That sect is harmless. The Ranters are worse. I suppose Jolliff is now established as the proprietor of Fanshawe?

Sexby Until further.

Cornwall Do you have a relationship with mistress Fanshawe?

Sexby She has lost two husbands and could never love a third one, least of all an old ugly and scarred veteran like me.

Cromwell You were in the thirty years' war.

Sexby I fought with other Scotsmen for king Gustavus Adolphus in Germany.

Cromwell Do you intend to go against me like Freeborn John Lilburne?

Sexby I was colonel Rainsborough's most faithful servant and will continue to honour his memory in all matters.

Cromwell As Angelica Fanshawe's protector?

Sexby That was his last wish.

Cromwell Give her my greetings. But I must warn you. If you take a stand against me like Freeborn Lilburne, I must exile you.

Sexby You can't exile all of us.

Cromwell Get out of here! (*Sexby bows and leaves.*)

Damn! I have more hidden enemies now in peacetime than I had open enemies in wartime! Not one more! (*calls*) – Sexby! Come back!

Sexby (comes back) Have you changed your mind?

Cromwell Come with me to Ireland. Rainsborough would not have hesitated to back me up and follow me there to definitely put an end to the civil war. Then we can start working for peace, reforms and growth.

Sexby If you pardon and liberate Freeborn Lilburne.

Cromwell I give him free for the sake of Angelica Fanshawe, if you continue protecting her.

Sexby Then I am your man.

Cromwell Welcome, brother. (*embraces him and brings him friendlily with him out.*)

Scene 3. Ireland. A miserable army camp.

Soldier 1 What are we doing here really?

2 Fighting for Cromwell.

1 Why are we fighting for Cromwell?

2 Because he asks us to.

1 And we do it willingly?

2 Why else would we do it? Do we have any choice? He has the whole army in his hands.

1 And what is he doing with it? Replacing an old tyranny with a new one? Making war for the sake of war to make sure it never ends? Massacring poor innocent Irishmen in battle after battle, village after village and town after town because they don't want his tyranny?

2 You speak high treason.

1 No, I say what everyone here is thinking but none dares to say for fear of being executed by Cromwell like the King. And what wrong did he do except that he defended the right he had inherited from his father?

2 He refused to govern with the Parliament.

1 And was that a crime deserving decapitation? Half the parliament is in constant opposition to the governing half, but no one gets decapitated for that.

2 They are ordinary people.

1 Wasn't the King an ordinary human being also? Wasn't he human? Did he not have a wife and children like everybody else? Didn't he eat like everyone else and fart and poo like everyone else?

2 He had a title and a position.

1 Which he defended to the utmost and was decapitated for without legal right. More and more Englishmen are longing for the day when they will be able to restore his legal son on the throne.

2 Quiet. Someone is sneaking in the bushes, perhaps an informer.

1 (*charges his rifle*) Who is there?

Sexby (appearing) Don't worry. I have heard everything you said, but you are not alone. The complaints against this Irish war keep increasing day by day. But

Cromwell will be here in a moment. It's best for you that he doesn't hear what you have to say.

1 Thanks for the warning. Come, Gilbert. We don't want to get too close to Cromwell. (*leaves with 2*)

Sexby Thus has the King's adversary become a worse ruler than the King. Charles Stuart was not capable of such cruel and bloody, utterly unnecessary and ruthless wars. Here we have the hard man now.

Cromwell My faithful Sexby, soon this war will be over.

Sexby And in what war will you then sacrifice your men? In France? The executed King's family are residing there.

Cromwell Don't remind me. You sound bitter. Have you any complaints?

Sexby All your men are dissatisfied about this war except you, and that's nothing in comparison with what the Irish are.

Cromwell I admit that this war didn't quite come off as it should have, but it was necessary. Now Britain can remain united with a permanently growing economy for hundreds of years ahead. Consider it like a troublesome deliverance.

Sexby Of what?

Cromwell What do you mean?

Sexby A boy or a girl? You talked of a troublesome deliverance. There was no human child. There were only many traumas for nothing with a bleeding Ireland which never will forgive us and with a mass emigration from England to America so that hardly any competence is left.

Cromwell We remain and will lead the country right.

Sexby Talk for yourself. You are the only one left and are getting lonelier all the time. No one can challenge you any longer. You have yourself put the parliament out of order, the rights of which you defended by executing a king. And nothing could have suited you better than the perfect moment for the departure of colonel Rainsborough.

Cromwell He was my best friend and closest man.

Sexby Your only equal and in certain aspects your overlord, who would have turned against you if he had lived. But he was murdered.

Cromwell By the king's men.

Sexby They claimed to have been sent by you.

Cromwell Do you believe in that reputation? Do I have to exile you or put you in jail like Freeborn Lilburne?

Sexby Is he back in prison?

Cromwell We had no choice. He couldn't keep quiet about what was the only sensible thing to keep quiet about.

Sexby His and my demands for freedom have not been more than reasonable, but you have replaced the king with a worse king.

Cromwell Sexby, if this is your way you'll have to walk it without me.

Sexby Since the days of John Lackland the English have never again tolerated a dictator. That's why we allowed you to murder the King, but you have now grown a worse dictator than he.

Cromwell Leave the country at once, Sexby. I give you ten days. If you after that ever are located within the confines of the republic, you are dead.

Sexby Then I will return when England turns into a monarchy again. (*hands over his sword to Cromwell and leaves.*)

Cromwell He was my most faithful and toughest soldier. Ireland became too much for the veterans of the civil war. Well, your story will soon be finished, Oliver Cromwell, you have lost your health in the bargain, and England will soon be able to look forward to be left in peace from me. He is right. The republic turned out a miscarriage that never will be able to survive its infancy. (*leaves worn out.*)

Act V scene 1. A grave outside Fanshawe,
which Angelica, simply dressed as a worker in the field, tenderly maintains.

Christian (*comes up behind her*) You demonstrate a tender care for the former patron's grave.

Angelica No one else cares for these family graves. Even dead royalists were at least human beings, and they took care of all who worked for them.

Christian You have been long with us now, but I saw you already before you arrived.

Angelica How so?

Christian I know that you are our former matron Angelica Fanshawe herself. But don't worry. No one else knows your secret.

Angelica The times are hard. That's why I have to be anonymous. It's not good if we are seen like this together.

Christian I care for you very much. I will protect you.

Angelica I have indeed had enough protectors during the years. I was usually over-protected. I don't want anything to happen to you.

Christian What could happen to me? I am just an ordinary farmer.

Angelica Those who know me know that I bring bad luck.

Christian That I don't believe. Let me take care of you.

Angelica Haven't you heard the true story of the devil's own whore Angelica Fanshawe, who was so protected by the devil, that every man who came in touch with her was murdered for her sake by destiny?

Christian I don't believe in fairy tales. Bitterness does not become you. You are still too beautiful to be bitter.

Angelica I am not free.

Christian Your husband is dead.

Angelica Not to me. I want to stay faithful to his memory.

Christian That shall be your honour and glory.

Angelica Then be my friend, brother, but don't come too close.

Christian You can be as safe from me as from any of your deceased husbands. The way you still so faithfully associate with them, they must protect you better than any mortal can do.

Angelica Leave them to their peace. And believe me, my friend, it is also safest for you to leave me in peace.

Christian You are mourning.

Angelica If I am.

Christian Your sorrow makes you vulnerable.

Angelica And nothing can heal it.

Christian I know that you sometimes are visited by a certain colonel Sexby.

Angelica He is out of grace, banished and officially exiled by Cromwell like all who dare to say what they think. He is not in the country any more for that reason.

Christian Still he sometimes visits the country incognito.

Angelica What do you really want?

Christian Protect you.

Angelica You are not one of Jolliff's paid spies?

Christian What do you really think of me?

Angelica The same as I have reason to think about everyone else, namely the worst.

Christian You are mistaken.

Angelica Unfortunately I never was.

Christian You have the right to be suspicious. I shall not bother you any more.
(leaves)

Angelica Poor Harry, my first innocent and real husband, who was murdered by the King for his love of him! Now the King has been murdered himself while no one grieves for him. Instead he has been elevated to a state of martyr for the royal cause, and more and more want the monarchy back, since Cromwell has proved harder and more unbearable than the King. And Sexby does his best to sow new rebellions in the country. Alas, what a mad merry-go-round the world is which always only could do one single thing: blindly bolt towards constantly more ruins.

Sexby (turning up) I knew I could find you here.

Angelica Sexby! You must not be seen here! Jolliff keeps spies everywhere.

Sexby I know. One of them was just talking with you. You are no longer safe among the Diggers. Hide in London instead, where Jolliff can't reach or find you.

Angelica And would I then allow him to live here in peace? I have chosen to work incognito among the Diggers here just to one day be able to get at him and out of the way.

Sexby Leave that to me.

Angelica If you are recognized you are dead.

Sexby I know. I will not be recognized.

Angelica No, I wish to see him dead personally.

Sexby How could you possibly do any harm to any human being?

Angelica Only him, no one else.

Sexby Dare I trust that you could make it?

Angelica Here he has bodyguards and is protected. The Diggers hate him, and he does all he can to sabotage their activity. Well then, Sexby, I will go to London and join the Ranters. Jolliff must already know that I am here, if the man you pointed out really is a spy, and in that case he would do anything to get at me and finish me off. Let him find a trace of me in London. There you could kill him more easily, especially if he dares to approach the Ranters.

Sexby Do you want an escort to London?

Angelica Thank you, I am nowadays used to manage by myself. Look me up again when you hear that Jolliff is dead.

Sexby I always believed in you and trusted you.

Angelica Take care of yourself. No one is safe in England and least of all you.

Sexby Thank you, I know. Till we meet again.

Angelica That will be soon enough. (*Sexby vanishes as discreetly as he turned up.*)

I have any number of friends and in all imaginable camps, from Cromwell to Sexby and from the Diggers to the Ranters, but only one enemy. The question is who will get the other one first.

Scene 2. London. A meeting with the Ranters.

Leader Welcome all, to our association! More and more are joining us as the only real movement that applies the cause of freedom in practice! We are all disappointed with the official order, which principally always just deceived the people by under the appearance of order impose tyranny and abuse of power and efforts at slavery by binding them under the force of absolute laws! (*cheers and acclamation*) But justice and freedom will prevail! We challenge and defy all authorities! We denounce the power of violence by military dictatorship and enforced wars against the will of every honest and reasonable person and declare ourselves free pacifists! (*cheers and acclamation*) And as a token that we always may be victorious in the name of freedom, we have here a new member who has joined us, our beloved colonel Rainsborough's beautiful widow, one of the most persecuted and heroic women of our country, known among her fearful persecutors as the devil's own whore, a title which only serves to augment her honour! (*cheers and acclamation*) Tread forth, sister Angelica, and speak to us, your new and most faithful friends!

Angelica (treads forth and joins him) My friends, brothers and sisters, although you suggest that the outrageous title 'the devil's whore' only honours me by being given me as the most extreme insult a woman can endure, I must maintain, that I never deserved it. I have had two husbands with whom I was legally married. (*cheers and acclamations*) That does not mean that I am a Puritan. I was born a Catholic, from the

beginning I belonged to the court circles of the King and Prince Rupert, the King himself had my first husband executed by intolerant short-sightedness, while I deeply learned to love my second husband, colonel Rainsborough, who was the origin of both your and the Diggers' movement. Therefore I feel very much at home here. (*cheers and acclamation*) If I personally detach myself from your way of life without rules, with free love, free relationships and the denouncement of all authorities including the Church, Christianity and the government, it does not mean that I have anything against your unlimited and just demands for freedom. On the contrary. I endorse and encourage them. (*resounding cheers and acclamation*)

Leader We have all heard sister Angelica's irresistible speech, by which we would fain make her our high priestess and guiding star for our movement. What do you say?

All Yes! Yes! (*resounding acclamation*)

(*enter Sexby*)

Angelica What is the matter, Sexby? Are we threatened by some official raid?

Sexby On the contrary – such a threat has been thwarted. Its originator is lying here outside murdered. I want to advise you all to disperse before soldiers come here asking useless questions. We all know that we are innocent of anyone's death.

Angelica (privately to Sexby) Who is it? Is it Jolliff?

Sexby Who else? You can now return to your estate and bring it in order. No one will threaten you any more.

Angelica But you are threatening Cromwell.

Sexby That's another issue. Cromwell and I guarantee your safety, no matter what I might have against Cromwell.

Angelica I think his days are numbered as well. He made a formidable mess of all Ireland.

Sexby I know. I was there with him and saw too many of his massacres. He is mortally ill. I leave the country to allow him to die in peace.

Angelica That's the wisest thing you can do. Come back when he is gone.

Sexby If I am still alive then.

Angelica Live for me, like we both have Rainsborough's memory to live for.

Sexby I will live for you and for him, like I always did. Cromwell is a finished chapter.

Angelica What will come next? The King's return?

Sexby Probably. The republic became to much of an autocracy. The King was at least more fun.

Angelica If we live we shall see. Let's both live for that.

Sexby We survived so far.

Angelica Let's go on with that. Come back.

Sexby I always come back. I have never let you down.

Angelica No, you are the only one who never did. I don't want to lose you.

Sexby There is hardly any risk. We are now out of all danger.

Angelica Cromwell isn't dead yet.

Sexby Just you wait. (*kisses her*) Until we meet again.
Angelica For ever.
(*They separate. The hall has been evacuated. She leaves as the last one.*)

The End

(*Virhamn, June 2012,*
translated in February 2020.)

Comment

A few years ago BBC produced a historical dramatic series in four episodes about Cromwell's civil war, where the main character was a certain Angelica Fanshawe, notorious as 'the devil's whore', which was the title of the series. There was no documentary evidence of her suggested life and activities as the wife of first her cousin Harry Fanshawe, a nobleman at court, and then colonel Thomas Rainsborough, colonel Cromwell's closest man, but except the King, Cromwell and Rainsborough and their fates there was also her (according to the film) third husband Edward Sexby in reality as first Rainsborough's closest man and then in sharp opposition against Cromwell together with Freeborn John Lilburne, who in the film almost was given a lead, while the others could not be bypassed, but rather called for more careful attention, especially the murder of Rainsborough and how it really happened, which in the film is overloaded with question marks. We have also chosen to refrain from the exaggerations of the film and its most glaring irregularities. Thus John Lilburne did not die in exile in prison on Jersey but at home in England, where he constantly went in and out of different prisons. In the film Edward Sexby attempts a murder of Cromwell, who in reality never tried to make himself king, while Sexby as a matter of fact died of old age and bitter remorse in prison. Instead of observing such miserable endings we concentrated on the idealistic ingredients of the story, in which the Diggers and Ranters played an important part.

The Diggers were a kind of farmers' community who simply wanted to till the earth in peace and share its fruits equally. The Ranters was a much more controversial society active in the cities, that demonstratively rejected all authorities, both religious and secular, to indulge in all possible liberties. Both these and the Diggers gradually evolved into the sect of the Quakers later on after the restoration.

John Lilburne's modern relative, who plays his outspoken ancestor in the film, was asked in an interview how historical a character like Angelica Fanshawe actually could be. His answer was, that it can't be proven that she did *not* exist.