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directed by

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Maid CHRISTINE EVANS

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THE PLAY IS IN FIVE ACTS, WITH ONE INTERVAL OF TWENTY MINUTES

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Sir John Vanbrugh

Sir John Vanbrugh, dramatist and architect, was born in London and baptized on 24 January 1664. He was the fourth of nineteen children of a wealthy sugar refiner of Flemish descent and his wellborn English wife. The family moved to Chester when Vanbrugh was still a boy. Little else is known of his youth except that he studied in France between 1683 and 1685. He received a commission in the army in 1686 but resigned it by 1689. In Calais in 1690 he was arrested for reasons that are obscure. Subsequently, he spent eighteen months in French prisons; his last confinement was in the Bastille, where he began writing sketches for a comedy. He was finally released in 1692.

In 1695 in London, he saw a production of Cibber's comedy 'Love's Last Shift'. This inspired him to write a sequel to it, 'The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger' which was an immediate success in 1696. The following year 'The Provok'd Wife' (thought to be the play started in the Bastille) was presented and became one of Vanbrugh's biggest triumphs. Most of his succeeding plays were translations or adaptations from the French.

By 1699, having secured for himself a place in the theatre, Vanbrugh embarked on a career as an architect, and, as such, he achieved considerable renown, a remarkable achievement since, as far as is known, he had had no formal training. He first designed Castle Howard, built for the Earle of Carlisle; his most famous work is Blenheim Palace, built for the 1st Duke of Marlborough. In addition, he was the architect of his own theatre, the Queen's Theatre, in 1704. In 1702 he was appointed Comptroller of the Board of Works, and he was knighted in 1714.

In 1719 Vanbrugh married Henrietta Yarborough. They had one or possibly two sons. Vanbrugh died in London on 26 March, 1726.

Avington Park

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FOR THE MASKERS

DIRECTOR: PHILIPPA TAYLOR

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