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Scenes

- Scene 1 Mary arrives at her sister's home and is shocked to learn she has been tricked into leaving a comfortable position, the lifestyle and lewdness of her sister who hints that Mary could have a generous beau. Sarah begins to groom Mary for such a role.
- Scene 2 There is a supper party and Mary helps Phoebe to cope with the guests' demands. The partygoers are gentlemen and ladies but as coarse as Sarah. Mary meets Lord Berkeley who makes serious attempts to tempt her to be his mistress, but she rebuffs him.
- Scene 3 Mary and Sarah are at home reminiscing when intruders break in and attempt to arrest Sarah for debt. Mary is upset and when Lord Berkeley appears suddenly she begs him to help so that her sister is not imprisoned. She promises him anything and unwillingly becomes his mistress unaware that she has again been tricked.
- Scene 4 The eldest son, Fitz, after the death of his father, inherits all except the title and privileges of Lord when he learns of the mock marriage – making him illegitimate. Mary displeases the King's brother's advances and afraid of being accused of perjury, Mary flees the country.
- Scene 5 Mary returns, and Fitz gives her permission to stay at Cranford. Still very afraid of being arrested she makes plans for a hasty escape should an attempt be made to do so.