



# The Busy Body: A Comedy (Classic Reprint)

*Susanna Centlivre*

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Excerpt from The Busy Body: A Comedy

The Busy Body is a comedy that has now held possession of the stage above a hundred years, (the best test of excellence:) and the merit that has enabled it to do so consists in the ingenuity of the contrivance, the liveliness of the plot, and the striking effect of the situations. Mrs. Centlivre, in this and her other plays, could do nothing without a stratagem; but she could do every thing with one. She delights in putting her dramatis personæ continually at their wit's end, and in helping them off with a new evasion; and the subtlety of her resources is in proportion to the criticalness of the situation and the shortness of the notice for resorting to an expedient. Twenty times in seeing or reading one of her plays your pulse beats quick, and you become restless and apprehensive for the event; but with a fine theatrical sleight of hand, she lets you off, undoes the knot of the difficulty, and you breathe freely again, and have a hearty laugh into the bargain.

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