

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Love's Labours Lost, All's Well That

William Shakespeare

Table of Contents

<u>The Merry Wives of Windsor, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Love's Labours Lost, All's Well That Ends Well, The Comedy of Errors</u>	1
<u>William Shakespeare</u>	1
<u>The Merry Wives of Windsor</u>	2
<u>Act 1, Scene 1</u>	2
<u>Act 1, Scene 2</u>	17
<u>Act 1, Scene 3</u>	17
<u>Act 1, Scene 4</u>	23
<u>Act 2, Scene 1</u>	31
<u>Act 2, Scene 2</u>	41
<u>Act 2, Scene 3</u>	53
<u>Act 3, Scene 1</u>	58
<u>Act 3, Scene 2</u>	64
<u>Act 3, Scene 3</u>	68
<u>Act 3, Scene 4</u>	80
<u>Act 3, Scene 5</u>	85
<u>Act 4, Scene 1</u>	91
<u>Act 4, Scene 2</u>	96
<u>Act 4, Scene 3</u>	107
<u>Act 4, Scene 4</u>	108
<u>Act 4, Scene 5</u>	112
<u>Act 4, Scene 6</u>	118
<u>Act 5, Scene 1</u>	120
<u>Act 5, Scene 2</u>	121
<u>Act 5, Scene 3</u>	122
<u>Act 5, Scene 4</u>	123
<u>Act 5, Scene 5</u>	123
<u>A Midsummer Night's Dream</u>	135
<u>Act 1, Scene 1</u>	135
<u>Act 1, Scene 2</u>	143
<u>Act 2, Scene 1</u>	148
<u>Act 2, Scene 2</u>	157
<u>Act 3, Scene 1</u>	162
<u>Act 3, Scene 2</u>	172
<u>Act 4, Scene 1</u>	190
<u>Act 4, Scene 2</u>	199
<u>Act 5, Scene 1</u>	201
<u>Love's Labours Lost</u>	219
<u>Act 1, Scene 1</u>	219
<u>Act 1, Scene 2</u>	232
<u>Act 2, Scene 1</u>	241
<u>Act 3, Scene 1</u>	254
<u>Act 4, Scene 1</u>	264
<u>Act 4, Scene 2</u>	272
<u>Act 4, Scene 3</u>	278

Table of Contents

Love's Labours Lost

<u>Act 5, Scene 1</u>	294
<u>Act 5, Scene 2</u>	301

All's Well That Ends Well.....**349**

<u>Act 1, Scene 1</u>	349
<u>Act 1, Scene 2</u>	358
<u>Act 1, Scene 3</u>	361
<u>Act 2, Scene 1</u>	371
<u>Act 2, Scene 2</u>	380
<u>Act 2, Scene 3</u>	383
<u>Act 2, Scene 4</u>	397
<u>Act 2, Scene 5</u>	400
<u>Act 3, Scene 1</u>	405
<u>Act 3, Scene 2</u>	406
<u>Act 3, Scene 3</u>	412
<u>Act 3, Scene 4</u>	412
<u>Act 3, Scene 5</u>	414
<u>Act 3, Scene 6</u>	420
<u>Act 3, Scene 7</u>	425
<u>Act 4, Scene 1</u>	427
<u>Act 4, Scene 2</u>	432
<u>Act 4, Scene 3</u>	435
<u>Act 4, Scene 4</u>	451
<u>Act 4, Scene 5</u>	452
<u>Act 5, Scene 1</u>	457
<u>Act 5, Scene 2</u>	459
<u>Act 5, Scene 3</u>	462

The Comedy of Errors.....**479**

<u>Act 1, Scene 1</u>	479
<u>Act 1, Scene 2</u>	483
<u>Act 2, Scene 1</u>	487
<u>Act 2, Scene 2</u>	492
<u>Act 3, Scene 1</u>	503
<u>Act 3, Scene 2</u>	510
<u>Act 4, Scene 1</u>	518
<u>Act 4, Scene 2</u>	524
<u>Act 4, Scene 3</u>	528
<u>Act 4, Scene 4</u>	532
<u>Act 5, Scene 1</u>	542

**The Merry Wives of Windsor, A Midsummer Night's
Dream, Love's Labours Lost, All's Well That Ends
Well, The Comedy of Errors**

William Shakespeare

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Act 1, Scene 1

Windsor. Before PAGE's house.

Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS

SHALLOW

Sir Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star-chamber matter of it: if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

SLENDER

In the county of Gloucester, justice of peace and 'Coram.'

SHALLOW

Ay, cousin Slender, and 'Custalourum.

SLENDER

Ay, and 'Rato-lorum' too; and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself 'Armigero,' in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, 'Armigero.'

SHALLOW

Ay, that I do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

SLENDER

All his successors gone before him hath done't; and all his ancestors that come after him may: they may give the dozen white luces in their coat.

SHALLOW

It is an old coat.

SIR HUGH EVANS

The dozen white louses do become an old coat well;
it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to
man, and signifies love.

SHALLOW

The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat.

SLENDER

I may quarter, coz.

SHALLOW

You may, by marrying.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

SHALLOW

Not a whit.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Yes, py'r lady; if he has a quarter of your coat,
there is but three skirts for yourself, in my
simple conjectures: but that is all one. If Sir
John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto
you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my
benevolence to make atonements and compromises
between you.

SHALLOW

The council shall bear it; it is a riot.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is not meet the council hear a riot; there is no
fear of Got in a riot: the council, look you, shall
desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a
riot; take your vizaments in that.

SHALLOW

Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword
should end it.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it:
and there is also another device in my prain, which
peradventure prings goot discretions with it: there
is Anne Page, which is daughter to Master Thomas
Page, which is pretty virginity.

SLENDER

Mistress Anne Page? She has brown hair, and speaks
small like a woman.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is that fery person for all the orld, as just as
you will desire; and seven hundred pounds of moneys,
and gold and silver, is her grandsire upon his
death's-bed—Got deliver to a joyful resurrections!
—give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years
old: it were a goot motion if we leave our pribbles
and prabbles, and desire a marriage between Master
Abraham and Mistress Anne Page.

SLENDER

Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

SIR HUGH EVANS

Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

SLENDER

I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

SHALLOW

Well, let us see honest Master Page. Is Falstaff there?

SIR HUGH EVANS

Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar as I do despise one that is false, or as I despise one that is not true. The knight, Sir John, is there; and, I beseech you, be ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door for Master Page.

Knocks

What, hoa! Got pless your house here!

PAGE

[Within] Who's there?

Enter PAGE

SIR HUGH EVANS

Here is Got's plessing, and your friend, and Justice Shallow; and here young Master Slender, that peradventures shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

PAGE

I am glad to see your worships well.
I thank you for my venison, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW

Master Page, I am glad to see you: much good do it your good heart! I wished your venison better; it was ill killed. How doth good Mistress Page?—and I thank you always with my heart, la! with my heart.

PAGE

Sir, I thank you.

SHALLOW

Sir, I thank you; by yea and no, I do.

PAGE

I am glad to see you, good Master Slender.

SLENDER

How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun on Cotsall.

PAGE

It could not be judged, sir.

SLENDER

You'll not confess, you'll not confess.

SHALLOW

That he will not. 'Tis your fault, 'tis your fault; 'tis a good dog.

PAGE

A cur, sir.

SHALLOW

Sir, he's a good dog, and a fair dog: can there be more said? he is good and fair. Is Sir John Falstaff here?

PAGE

Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office between you.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is spoke as a Christians ought to speak.

SHALLOW

He hath wronged me, Master Page.

PAGE

Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

SHALLOW

If it be confessed, it is not redress'd: is not that
so, Master Page? He hath wronged me; indeed he
hath, at a word, he hath, believe me: Robert
Shallow, esquire, saith, he is wronged.

PAGE

Here comes Sir John.

Enter FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, NYM, and PISTOL

FALSTAFF

Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the king?

SHALLOW

Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and
broke open my lodge.

FALSTAFF

But not kissed your keeper's daughter?

SHALLOW

Tut, a pin! this shall be answered.

FALSTAFF

I will answer it straight; I have done all this.
That is now answered.

SHALLOW

The council shall know this.

FALSTAFF

'Twere better for you if it were known in counsel:
you'll be laughed at.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Pauca verba, Sir John; goot worts.

FALSTAFF

Good worts! good cabbage. Slender, I broke your head: what matter have you against me?

SLENDER

Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you; and against your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.

BARDOLPH

You Banbury cheese!

SLENDER

Ay, it is no matter.

PISTOL

How now, Mephostophilus!

SLENDER

Ay, it is no matter.

NYM

Slice, I say! pauca, pauca: slice! that's my humour.

SLENDER

Where's Simple, my man? Can you tell, cousin?

SIR HUGH EVANS

Peace, I pray you. Now let us understand. There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand; that is, Master Page, fidelicet Master Page; and there is myself, fidelicet myself; and the three party is, lastly and finally, mine host of the Garter.

PAGE

We three, to hear it and end it between them.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Fery goot: I will make a prief of it in my note–
book; and we will afterwards ork upon the cause with
as great discreetly as we can.

FALSTAFF

Pistol!

PISTOL

He hears with ears.

SIR HUGH EVANS

The tevil and his tam! what phrase is this, 'He
hears with ear'? why, it is affectations.

FALSTAFF

Pistol, did you pick Master Slender's purse?

SLENDER

Ay, by these gloves, did he, or I would I might
never come in mine own great chamber again else, of
seven groats in mill–sixpences, and two Edward
shovel–boards, that cost me two shilling and two
pence apiece of Yead Miller, by these gloves.

FALSTAFF

Is this true, Pistol?

SIR HUGH EVANS

No; it is false, if it is a pick–purse.

PISTOL

Ha, thou mountain–foreigner! Sir John and Master mine,
I combat challenge of this latten bilbo.
Word of denial in thy labras here!
Word of denial: froth and scum, thou liest!

SLENDER

By these gloves, then, 'twas he.

NYM

Be advised, sir, and pass good humours: I will say
'marry trap' with you, if you run the nuthook's
humour on me; that is the very note of it.

SLENDER

By this hat, then, he in the red face had it; for
though I cannot remember what I did when you made me
drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

FALSTAFF

What say you, Scarlet and John?

BARDOLPH

Why, sir, for my part I say the gentleman had drunk
himself out of his five senses.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is his five senses: fie, what the ignorance is!

BARDOLPH

And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashiered; and
so conclusions passed the careires.

SLENDER

Ay, you spake in Latin then too; but 'tis no
matter: I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again,
but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick:
if I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have
the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.

SIR HUGH EVANS

So Got udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

FALSTAFF

You hear all these matters denied, gentlemen; you hear it.

Enter ANNE PAGE, with wine; MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE, following

PAGE

Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within.

Exit ANNE PAGE

SLENDER

O heaven! this is Mistress Anne Page.

PAGE

How now, Mistress Ford!

FALSTAFF

Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met:
by your leave, good mistress.

Kisses her

PAGE

Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome. Come, we have a
hot venison pasty to dinner: come, gentlemen, I hope
we shall drink down all unkindness.

Exeunt all except SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS

SLENDER

I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of
Songs and Sonnets here.

Enter SIMPLE

How now, Simple! where have you been? I must wait
on myself, must I? You have not the Book of Riddles
about you, have you?

SIMPLE

Book of Riddles! why, did you not lend it to Alice
Shortcake upon All-hallowmas last, a fortnight
afore Michaelmas?

SHALLOW

Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you. A word with you, coz; marry, this, coz: there is, as 'twere, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by Sir Hugh here. Do you understand me?

SLENDER

Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

SHALLOW

Nay, but understand me.

SLENDER

So I do, sir.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Give ear to his motions, Master Slender: I will description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

SLENDER

Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says: I pray you, pardon me; he's a justice of peace in his country, simple though I stand here.

SIR HUGH EVANS

But that is not the question: the question is concerning your marriage.

SHALLOW

Ay, there's the point, sir.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Marry, is it; the very point of it; to Mistress Anne Page.

SLENDER

Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.

SIR HUGH EVANS

But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to know that of your mouth or of your lips; for divers philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth. Therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

SHALLOW

Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

SLENDER

I hope, sir, I will do as it shall become one that would do reason.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Nay, Got's lords and his ladies! you must speak possitable, if you can carry her your desires towards her.

SHALLOW

That you must. Will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

SLENDER

I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

SHALLOW

Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz: what I do is to pleasure you, coz. Can you love the maid?

SLENDER

I will marry her, sir, at your request: but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another; I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt: but if you say, 'Marry her,' I will marry her; that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is a fery discretion answer; save the fall is in the ort 'dissolutely:' the ort is, according to our meaning, 'resolutely:' his meaning is good.

SHALLOW

Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

SLENDER

Ay, or else I would I might be hanged, la!

SHALLOW

Here comes fair Mistress Anne.

Re-enter ANNE PAGE

Would I were young for your sake, Mistress Anne!

ANNE PAGE

The dinner is on the table; my father desires your worships' company.

SHALLOW

I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace.

Exeunt SHALLOW and SIR HUGH EVANS

ANNE PAGE

Will't please your worship to come in, sir?

SLENDER

No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

ANNE PAGE

The dinner attends you, sir.

SLENDER

I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth. Go, sirrah, for all you are my man, go wait upon my cousin Shallow.

Exit SIMPLE

A justice of peace sometimes may be beholding to his friend for a man. I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead: but what though? Yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

ANNE PAGE

I may not go in without your worship: they will not sit till you come.

SLENDER

I' faith, I'll eat nothing; I thank you as much as though I did.

ANNE PAGE

I pray you, sir, walk in.

SLENDER

I had rather walk here, I thank you. I bruised my shin th' other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; three veneyes for a dish of stewed prunes; and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so? be there bears i' the town?

ANNE PAGE

I think there are, sir; I heard them talked of.

SLENDER

I love the sport well but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in England. You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

ANNE PAGE

Ay, indeed, sir.

SLENDER

That's meat and drink to me, now. I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain; but, I warrant you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it, that it passed: but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favored rough things.

Re-enter PAGE

PAGE

Come, gentle Master Slender, come; we stay for you.

SLENDER

I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir.

PAGE

By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir! come, come.

SLENDER

Nay, pray you, lead the way.

PAGE

Come on, sir.

SLENDER

Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

ANNE PAGE

Not I, sir; pray you, keep on.

SLENDER

I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome.
You do yourself wrong, indeed, la!

Exeunt

Act 1, Scene 2

The same.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE

SIR HUGH EVANS

Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house which is the way: and there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

SIMPLE

Well, sir.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Nay, it is petter yet. Give her this letter; for it is a 'oman that altogether's acquaintance with Mistress Anne Page: and the letter is, to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to Mistress Anne Page. I pray you, be gone: I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and cheese to come.

Exeunt

Act 1, Scene 3

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF, Host, BARDOLPH, NYM, PISTOL, and ROBIN

FALSTAFF

Act 1, Scene 2

Mine host of the Garter!

Host

What says my bully-rook? speak scholarly and wisely.

FALSTAFF

Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

Host

Discard, bully Hercules; cashier: let them wag; trot, trot.

FALSTAFF

I sit at ten pounds a week.

Host

Thou'rt an emperor, Caesar, Keisar, and Pheezar. I will entertain Bardolph; he shall draw, he shall tap: said I well, bully Hector?

FALSTAFF

Do so, good mine host.

Host

I have spoke; let him follow.

To BARDOLPH

Let me see thee froth and lime: I am at a word; follow.

Exit

FALSTAFF

Bardolph, follow him. A tapster is a good trade: an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a withered serving-man a fresh tapster. Go; adieu.

BARDOLPH

It is a life that I have desired: I will thrive.

PISTOL

O base Hungarian wight! wilt thou the spigot wield?

Exit BARDOLPH

NYM

He was gotten in drink: is not the humour conceited?

FALSTAFF

I am glad I am so acquit of this tinderbox: his thefts were too open; his filching was like an unskilful singer; he kept not time.

NYM

The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest.

PISTOL

'Convey,' the wise it call. 'Steal!' foh! a fico for the phrase!

FALSTAFF

Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.

PISTOL

Why, then, let kibes ensue.

FALSTAFF

There is no remedy; I must cony-catch; I must shift.

PISTOL

Young ravens must have food.

FALSTAFF

Which of you know Ford of this town?

PISTOL

I ken the wight: he is of substance good.

FALSTAFF

My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

PISTOL

Two yards, and more.

FALSTAFF

No quips now, Pistol! Indeed, I am in the waist two yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife: I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation: I can construe the action of her familiar style; and the hardest voice of her behavior, to be Englished rightly, is, 'I am Sir John Falstaff's.'

PISTOL

He hath studied her will, and translated her will, out of honesty into English.

NYM

The anchor is deep: will that humour pass?

FALSTAFF

Now, the report goes she has all the rule of her husband's purse: he hath a legion of angels.

PISTOL

As many devils entertain; and 'To her, boy,' say I.

NYM

The humour rises; it is good: humour me the angels.

FALSTAFF

I have writ me here a letter to her: and here another to Page's wife, who even now gave me good eyes too, examined my parts with most judicious

oeillades; sometimes the beam of her view gilded my
foot, sometimes my portly belly.

PISTOL

Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

NYM

I thank thee for that humour.

FALSTAFF

O, she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a
greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did
seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass! Here's
another letter to her: she bears the purse too; she
is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will
be cheater to them both, and they shall be
exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West
Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go bear thou
this letter to Mistress Page; and thou this to
Mistress Ford: we will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

PISTOL

Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,
And by my side wear steel? then, Lucifer take all!

NYM

I will run no base humour: here, take the
humour-letter: I will keep the havior of reputation.

FALSTAFF

[To ROBIN] Hold, sirrah, bear you these letters tightly;
Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.
Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hailstones, go;
Trudge, plod away o' the hoof; seek shelter, pack!
Falstaff will learn the humour of the age,
French thrift, you rogues; myself and skirted page.

Exeunt FALSTAFF and ROBIN

PISTOL

Let vultures gripe thy guts! for gourd and fullam holds,
And high and low beguiles the rich and poor:
Tester I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack,
Base Phrygian Turk!

NYM

I have operations which be humours of revenge.

PISTOL

Wilt thou revenge?

NYM

By welkin and her star!

PISTOL

With wit or steel?

NYM

With both the humours, I:
I will discuss the humour of this love to Page.

PISTOL

And I to Ford shall eke unfold
How Falstaff, varlet vile,
His dove will prove, his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile.

NYM

My humour shall not cool: I will incense Page to
deal with poison; I will possess him with
yellowness, for the revolt of mine is dangerous:
that is my true humour.

PISTOL

Thou art the Mars of malecontents: I second thee; troop on.

Exeunt

Act 1, Scene 4

A room in DOCTOR CAIUS' house.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY, SIMPLE, and RUGBY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

What, John Rugby! I pray thee, go to the casement,
and see if you can see my master, Master Doctor
Caius, coming. If he do, i' faith, and find any
body in the house, here will be an old abusing of
God's patience and the king's English.

RUGBY

I'll go watch.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Go; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in
faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire.

Exit RUGBY

An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant
shall come in house withal, and, I warrant you, no
tell-tale nor no breed-bate: his worst fault is,
that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish
that way: but nobody but has his fault; but let
that pass. Peter Simple, you say your name is?

SIMPLE

Ay, for fault of a better.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

And Master Slender's your master?

SIMPLE

Ay, forsooth.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Does he not wear a great round beard, like a
glover's paring-knife?

SIMPLE

No, forsooth: he hath but a little wee face, with a
little yellow beard, a Cain-coloured beard.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

A softly-sprighted man, is he not?

SIMPLE

Ay, forsooth: but he is as tall a man of his hands
as any is between this and his head; he hath fought
with a warrener.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

How say you? O, I should remember him: does he not
hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait?

SIMPLE

Yes, indeed, does he.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell
Master Parson Evans I will do what I can for your
master: Anne is a good girl, and I wish—

Re-enter RUGBY

RUGBY

Out, alas! here comes my master.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

We shall all be shent. Run in here, good young man;
go into this closet: he will not stay long.

Shuts SIMPLE in the closet

What, John Rugby! John! what, John, I say!
Go, John, go inquire for my master; I doubt
he be not well, that he comes not home.

Singing

And down, down, adown—a,

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys. Pray you,
go and vetch me in my closet un boitier vert, a box,
a green—a box: do intend vat I speak? a green—a box.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Ay, forsooth; I'll fetch it you.

Aside

I am glad he went not in himself: if he had found
the young man, he would have been horn—mad.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Fe, fe, fe, fe! ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je
m'en vais a la cour—la grande affaire.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Is it this, sir?

DOCTOR CAIUS

Oui; mette le au mon pocket: depeche, quickly. Vere
is dat knave Rugby?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

What, John Rugby! John!

RUGBY

Here, sir!

DOCTOR CAIUS

You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby. Come,
take—a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.

RUGBY

'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By my trot, I tarry too long. Od's me!
Qu'ai—j'oublie! dere is some simples in my closet,
dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Ay me, he'll find the young man here, and be mad!

DOCTOR CAIUS

O diable, diable! vat is in my closet? Villain! larron!

Pulling SIMPLE out

Rugby, my rapier!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Good master, be content.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Wherefore shall I be content—a?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

The young man is an honest man.

DOCTOR CAIUS

What shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is
no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic. Hear the truth
of it: he came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vell.

SIMPLE

Ay, forsooth; to desire her to—

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Peace, I pray you.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Peace—a your tongue. Speak—a your tale.

SIMPLE

To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to
speak a good word to Mistress Anne Page for my
master in the way of marriage.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

This is all, indeed, la! but I'll ne'er put my
finger in the fire, and need not.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Sir Hugh send—a you? Rugby, baille me some paper.
Tarry you a little—a while.

Writes

MISTRESS QUICKLY

[Aside to SIMPLE] I am glad he is so quiet: if he
had been thoroughly moved, you should have heard him
so loud and so melancholy. But notwithstanding,
man, I'll do you your master what good I can: and
the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my
master,—I may call him my master, look you, for I
keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake,
scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds and do

all myself,—

SIMPLE

[Aside to MISTRESS QUICKLY] 'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

[Aside to SIMPLE] Are you avised o' that? you shall find it a great charge: and to be up early and down late; but notwithstanding,—to tell you in your ear; I would have no words of it,—my master himself is in love with Mistress Anne Page: but notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind,—that's neither here nor there.

DOCTOR CAIUS

You jack'nape, give—a this letter to Sir Hugh; by gar, it is a shallenge: I will cut his troat in dee park; and I will teach a scurvy jack—a—nape priest to meddle or make. You may be gone; it is not good you tarry here. By gar, I will cut all his two stones; by gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog:

Exit SIMPLE

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

DOCTOR CAIUS

It is no matter—a ver dat: do not you tell—a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar, I vill kill de Jack priest; and I have appointed mine host of de Jarteer to measure our weapon. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well. We must give folks leave to prate: what, the good—jer!

DOCTOR CAIUS

Rugby, come to the court with me. By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door. Follow my heels, Rugby.

Exeunt DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

You shall have An fool's-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that: never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank heaven.

FENTON

[Within] Who's within there? ho!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Who's there, I trow! Come near the house, I pray you.

Enter FENTON

FENTON

How now, good woman? how dost thou?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

The better that it pleases your good worship to ask.

FENTON

What news? how does pretty Mistress Anne?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way; I praise heaven for it.

FENTON

Shall I do any good, thinkest thou? shall I not lose my suit?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Troth, sir, all is in his hands above: but notwithstanding, Master Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book, she loves you. Have not your worship a wart above your eye?

FENTON

Yes, marry, have I; what of that?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Well, thereby hangs a tale: good faith, it is such another Nan; but, I detest, an honest maid as ever broke bread: we had an hour's talk of that wart. I shall never laugh but in that maid's company! But indeed she is given too much to allicholy and musing: but for you--well, go to.

FENTON

Well, I shall see her to-day. Hold, there's money for thee; let me have thy voice in my behalf: if thou seest her before me, commend me.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Will I? i'faith, that we will; and I will tell your worship more of the wart the next time we have confidence; and of other woovers.

FENTON

Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Farewell to your worship.

Exit FENTON

Truly, an honest gentleman: but Anne loves him not; for I know Anne's mind as well as another does. Out upon't! what have I forgot?

Exit

Act 2, Scene 1

Before PAGE'S house.

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, with a letter

MISTRESS PAGE

What, have I scaped love-letters in the holiday-time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them? Let me see.

Reads

'Ask me no reason why I love you; for though Love use Reason for his physician, he admits him not for his counsellor. You are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's sympathy: you are merry, so am I; ha, ha! then there's more sympathy: you love sack, and so do I; would you desire better sympathy? Let it suffice thee, Mistress Page,—at the least, if the love of soldier can suffice,—that I love thee. I will not say, pity me; 'tis not a soldier-like phrase: but I say, love me. By me, Thine own true knight,
By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might
For thee to fight, JOHN FALSTAFF'
What a Herod of Jewry is this! O wicked world! One that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age to show himself a young gallant! What an unweighed behavior hath this Flemish drunkard picked—with the devil's name!—out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company! What should I say to him? I was then frugal of my mirth: Heaven forgive me! Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of men. How shall I be revenged on him? for revenged I will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

Enter MISTRESS FORD

MISTRESS FORD

Mistress Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

MISTRESS PAGE

And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

MISTRESS PAGE

Faith, but you do, in my mind.

MISTRESS FORD

Well, I do then; yet I say I could show you to the contrary. O Mistress Page, give me some counsel!

MISTRESS PAGE

What's the matter, woman?

MISTRESS FORD

O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honour!

MISTRESS PAGE

Hang the trifle, woman! take the honour. What is it? dispense with trifles; what is it?

MISTRESS FORD

If I would but go to hell for an eternal moment or so, I could be knighted.

MISTRESS PAGE

What? thou liest! Sir Alice Ford! These knights will hack; and so thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry.

MISTRESS FORD

We burn daylight: here, read, read; perceive how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking: and yet he would not swear; praised women's modesty; and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness, that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of 'Green Sleeves.' What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be revenged on him? I think the best way were to entertain him with hope, till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease. Did you ever hear the like?

MISTRESS PAGE

Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs! To thy great comfort in this mystery of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy letter: but let thine inherit first; for, I protest, mine never shall. I warrant he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names—sure, more,—and these are of the second edition: he will print them, out of doubt; for he cares not what he puts into the press, when he would put us two. I had rather be a giantess, and lie under Mount Pelion. Well, I will find you twenty lascivious turtles ere one chaste man.

MISTRESS FORD

Why, this is the very same; the very hand, the very words. What doth he think of us?

MISTRESS PAGE

Nay, I know not: it makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he know some strain in me, that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

MISTRESS FORD

'Boarding,' call you it? I'll be sure to keep him
above deck.

MISTRESS PAGE *So will I*

if he come under my hatches, I'll never
to sea again. Let's be revenged on him: let's
appoint him a meeting; give him a show of comfort in
his suit and lead him on with a fine-baited delay,
till he hath pawned his horses to mine host of the Garter.

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, I will consent to act any villany against him,
that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. O,
that my husband saw this letter! it would give
eternal food to his jealousy.

MISTRESS PAGE

Why, look where he comes; and my good man too: he's
as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause;
and that I hope is an unmeasurable distance.

MISTRESS FORD

You are the happier woman.

MISTRESS PAGE

Let's consult together against this greasy knight.
Come hither.

They retire

Enter FORD with PISTOL, and PAGE with NYM

FORD

Well, I hope it be not so.

PISTOL

Hope is a curtal dog in some affairs:
Sir John affects thy wife.

FORD

Why, sir, my wife is not young.

PISTOL

He wooes both high and low, both rich and poor,
Both young and old, one with another, Ford;
He loves the gallimaufry: Ford, perpend.

FORD

Love my wife!

PISTOL

With liver burning hot. Prevent, or go thou,
Like Sir Actaeon he, with Ringwood at thy heels:
O, odious is the name!

FORD

What name, sir?

PISTOL

The horn, I say. Farewell.
Take heed, have open eye, for thieves do foot by night:
Take heed, ere summer comes or cuckoo-birds do sing.
Away, Sir Corporal Nym!
Believe it, Page; he speaks sense.

Exit

FORD

[Aside] I will be patient; I will find out this.

NYM

[To PAGE] And this is true; I like not the humour
of lying. He hath wronged me in some humours: I
should have borne the humoured letter to her; but I
have a sword and it shall bite upon my necessity.
He loves your wife; there's the short and the long.
My name is Corporal Nym; I speak and I avouch; 'tis
true: my name is Nym and Falstaff loves your wife.
Adieu. I love not the humour of bread and cheese,

and there's the humour of it. Adieu.

Exit

PAGE

'The humour of it,' quoth a'! here's a fellow
frights English out of his wits.

FORD

I will seek out Falstaff.

PAGE

I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

FORD

If I do find it: well.

PAGE

I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest
o' the town commended him for a true man.

FORD

'Twas a good sensible fellow: well.

PAGE

How now, Meg!

MISTRESS PAGE and MISTRESS FORD come forward

MISTRESS PAGE

Whither go you, George? Hark you.

MISTRESS FORD

How now, sweet Frank! why art thou melancholy?

FORD

I melancholy! I am not melancholy. Get you home, go.

MISTRESS FORD

Faith, thou hast some crotchets in thy head. Now,
will you go, Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

Have with you. You'll come to dinner, George.

Aside to MISTRESS FORD

Look who comes yonder: she shall be our messenger
to this paltry knight.

MISTRESS FORD

[Aside to MISTRESS PAGE] Trust me, I thought on her:
she'll fit it.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS PAGE

You are come to see my daughter Anne?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Ay, forsooth; and, I pray, how does good Mistress Anne?

MISTRESS PAGE

Go in with us and see: we have an hour's talk with
you.

Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and MISTRESS QUICKLY

PAGE

How now, Master Ford!

FORD

You heard what this knave told me, did you not?

PAGE

Yes: and you heard what the other told me?

FORD

Do you think there is truth in them?

PAGE

Hang 'em, slaves! I do not think the knight would offer it: but these that accuse him in his intent towards our wives are a yoke of his discarded men; very rogues, now they be out of service.

FORD

Were they his men?

PAGE

Marry, were they.

FORD

I like it never the better for that. Does he lie at the Garter?

PAGE

Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend this voyage towards my wife, I would turn her loose to him; and what he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.

FORD

I do not misdoubt my wife; but I would be loath to turn them together. A man may be too confident: I would have nothing lie on my head: I cannot be thus satisfied.

PAGE

Look where my ranting host of the Garter comes: there is either liquor in his pate or money in his purse when he looks so merrily.

Enter Host

How now, mine host!

Host

How now, bully-rook! thou'rt a gentleman.
Cavaleiro—justice, I say!

Enter SHALLOW

SHALLOW

I follow, mine host, I follow. Good even and
twenty, good Master Page! Master Page, will you go
with us? we have sport in hand.

Host

Tell him, cavaleiro—justice; tell him, bully-rook.

SHALLOW

Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh
the Welsh priest and Caius the French doctor.

FORD

Good mine host o' the Garter, a word with you.

Drawing him aside

Host

What sayest thou, my bully-rook?

SHALLOW

[To PAGE] Will you go with us to behold it? My
merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons;
and, I think, hath appointed them contrary places;
for, believe me, I hear the parson is no jester.
Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be.

They converse apart

Host

Hast thou no suit against my knight, my
guest-cavaleire?

FORD

None, I protest: but I'll give you a pottle of
burnt sack to give me recourse to him and tell him
my name is Brook; only for a jest.

Host

My hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress;
—said I well?—and thy name shall be Brook. It is
a merry knight. Will you go, An—heires?

SHALLOW

Have with you, mine host.

PAGE

I have heard the Frenchman hath good skill in
his rapier.

SHALLOW

Tut, sir, I could have told you more. In these times
you stand on distance, your passes, stoccadoes, and
I know not what: 'tis the heart, Master Page; 'tis
here, 'tis here. I have seen the time, with my long
sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

Host

Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag?

PAGE

Have with you. I would rather hear them scold than fight.

Exeunt Host, SHALLOW, and PAGE

FORD

Though Page be a secure fool, an stands so firmly
on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my

opinion so easily: she was in his company at Page's house; and what they made there, I know not. Well, I will look further into't: and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff. If I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestowed.

Exit

Act 2, Scene 2

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF and PISTOL

FALSTAFF

I will not lend thee a penny.

PISTOL

Why, then the world's mine oyster.
Which I with sword will open.

FALSTAFF

Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn; I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow Nym; or else you had looked through the grate, like a geminy of baboons. I am damned in hell for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good soldiers and tall fellows; and when Mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took't upon mine honour thou hadst it not.

PISTOL

Didst not thou share? hadst thou not fifteen pence?

FALSTAFF

Reason, you rogue, reason: thinkest thou I'll endanger my soul gratis? At a word, hang no more about me, I am no gibbet for you. Go. A short knife and a throng! To your manor of Picket-hatch! Go. You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue! you stand upon your honour! Why, thou unconfined

baseness, it is as much as I can do to keep the terms of my honour precise: I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour! You will not do it, you!

PISTOL

I do relent: what would thou more of man?

Enter ROBIN

ROBIN

Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

FALSTAFF

Let her approach.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Give your worship good morrow.

FALSTAFF

Good morrow, good wife.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Not so, an't please your worship.

FALSTAFF

Good maid, then.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I'll be sworn,
As my mother was, the first hour I was born.

FALSTAFF

I do believe the swearer. What with me?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

FALSTAFF

Two thousand, fair woman: and I'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

There is one Mistress Ford, sir:—I pray, come a little nearer this ways:—I myself dwell with master Doctor Caius,—

FALSTAFF

Well, on: Mistress Ford, you say,—

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Your worship says very true: I pray your worship, come a little nearer this ways.

FALSTAFF

I warrant thee, nobody hears; mine own people, mine own people.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Are they so? God bless them and make them his servants!

FALSTAFF

Well, Mistress Ford; what of her?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord Lord! your worship's a wanton! Well, heaven forgive you and all of us, I pray!

FALSTAFF

Mistress Ford; come, Mistress Ford,—

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Marry, this is the short and the long of it; you have brought her into such a canaries as 'tis wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches, I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift; smelling so sweetly, all musk, and so rushling, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her: I had myself twenty angels given me this morning; but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, but in the way of honesty: and, I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all: and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners; but, I warrant you, all is one with her.

FALSTAFF

But what says she to me? be brief, my good she—Mercury.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Marry, she hath received your letter, for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

FALSTAFF

Ten and eleven?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of: Master Ford, her husband, will be from home. Alas! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him: he's a very jealousy man: she leads a very frampold life with him, good heart.

FALSTAFF

Ten and eleven. Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Why, you say well. But I have another messenger to your worship. Mistress Page hath her hearty commendations to you too: and let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other: and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom from home; but she hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man: surely I think you have charms, la; yes, in truth.

FALSTAFF

Not I, I assure thee: setting the attractions of my good parts aside I have no other charms.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Blessing on your heart for't!

FALSTAFF

But, I pray thee, tell me this: has Ford's wife and Page's wife acquainted each other how they love me?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

That were a jest indeed! they have not so little grace, I hope: that were a trick indeed! but Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves: her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page; and truly Master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does: do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will: and truly she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one. You must

send her your page; no remedy.

FALSTAFF

Why, I will.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Nay, but do so, then: and, look you, he may come and go between you both; and in any case have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand any thing; for 'tis not good that children should know any wickedness: old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

FALSTAFF

Fare thee well: commend me to them both: there's my purse; I am yet thy debtor. Boy, go along with this woman.

Exeunt MISTRESS QUICKLY and ROBIN

This news distracts me!

PISTOL

This punk is one of Cupid's carriers:
Clap on more sails; pursue; up with your fights:
Give fire: she is my prize, or ocean overwhelm them all!

Exit

FALSTAFF

Sayest thou so, old Jack? go thy ways; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee. Let them say 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

Enter BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH

Sir John, there's one Master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

FALSTAFF

Brook is his name?

BARDOLPH

Ay, sir.

FALSTAFF

Call him in.

Exit BARDOLPH

Such Brooks are welcome to me, that o'erflow such liquor. Ah, ha! Mistress Ford and Mistress Page have I encompassed you? go to; via!

Re-enter BARDOLPH, with FORD disguised

FORD

Bless you, sir!

FALSTAFF

And you, sir! Would you speak with me?

FORD

I make bold to press with so little preparation upon you.

FALSTAFF

You're welcome. What's your will? Give us leave, drawer.

Exit BARDOLPH

FORD

Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.

FALSTAFF

Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.

FORD

Good Sir John, I sue for yours: not to charge you; for I must let you understand I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are: the which hath something embolden'd me to this unseasoned intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

FALSTAFF

Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on.

FORD

Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me: if you will help to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

FALSTAFF

Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

FORD

I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

FALSTAFF

Speak, good Master Brook: I shall be glad to be your servant.

FORD

Sir, I hear you are a scholar,—I will be brief with you,—and you have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means, as desire, to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection: but, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own; that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you yourself know how easy it is to be such an offender.

FALSTAFF

Very well, sir; proceed.

FORD

There is a gentlewoman in this town; her husband's name is Ford.

FALSTAFF

Well, sir.

FORD

I have long loved her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a dotting observance; engrossed opportunities to meet her; fee'd every slight occasion that could but niggardly give me sight of her; not only bought many presents to give her, but have given largely to many to know what she would have given; briefly, I have pursued her as love hath pursued me; which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or, in my means, meed, I am sure, I have received none; unless experience be a jewel that I have purchased at an infinite rate, and that hath taught me to say this:

'Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues;
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.'

FALSTAFF

Have you received no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

FORD

Never.

FALSTAFF

Have you importuned her to such a purpose?

FORD

Never.

FALSTAFF

Of what quality was your love, then?

FORD

Like a fair house built on another man's ground; so that I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.

FALSTAFF

To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?

FORD

When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say, that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allowed for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

FALSTAFF

O, sir!

FORD

Believe it, for you know it. There is money; spend it, spend it; spend more; spend all I have; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife: use your art of wooing; win her to consent to you: if any man may, you may as soon as any.

FALSTAFF

Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? Methinks you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

FORD

O, understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself: she is too bright to be looked against. Now, could I could come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves: I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too too strongly embattled against me. What say you to't, Sir John?

FALSTAFF

Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

FORD

O good sir!

FALSTAFF

I say you shall.

FORD

Want no money, Sir John; you shall want none.

FALSTAFF

Want no Mistress Ford, Master Brook; you shall want none. I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment; even as you came in to me, her assistant or go-between parted from me: I say I shall be with her between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave her husband will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

FORD

I am blest in your acquaintance. Do you know Ford, sir?

FALSTAFF

Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not:
yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the
jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money; for the
which his wife seems to me well-favored. I will
use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer;
and there's my harvest-home.

FORD

I would you knew Ford, sir, that you might avoid him
if you saw him.

FALSTAFF

Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will
stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my
cudgel: it shall hang like a meteor o'er the
cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know I
will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt
lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night.
Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style;
thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for knave and
cuckold. Come to me soon at night.

Exit

FORD

What a damned Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is
ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is
improvident jealousy? my wife hath sent to him; the
hour is fixed; the match is made. Would any man
have thought this? See the hell of having a false
woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers
ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not
only receive this villanous wrong, but stand under
the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that
does me this wrong. Terms! names! Amaimon sounds
well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well; yet they are
devils' additions, the names of fiends: but
Cuckold! Wittol!--Cuckold! the devil himself hath
not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass: he
will trust his wife; he will not be jealous. I will
rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh
the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my
aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling
gelding, than my wife with herself; then she plots,
then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they

think in their hearts they may effect, they will
break their hearts but they will effect. God be
praised for my jealousy! Eleven o'clock the hour.
I will prevent this, detect my wife, be revenged on
Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it;
better three hours too soon than a minute too late.
Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

Exit

Act 2, Scene 3

A field near Windsor.

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY

DOCTOR CAIUS

Jack Rugby!

RUGBY

Sir?

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vat is de clock, Jack?

RUGBY

'Tis past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come; he
has pray his Pible well, dat he is no come: by gar,
Jack Rugby, he is dead already, if he be come.

RUGBY

He is wise, sir; he knew your worship would kill
him, if he came.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, de herring is no dead so as I vill kill him.
Take your rapier, Jack; I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

RUGBY

Alas, sir, I cannot fence.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Villany, take your rapier.

RUGBY

Forbear; here's company.

Enter Host, SHALLOW, SLENDER, and PAGE

Host

Bless thee, bully doctor!

SHALLOW

Save you, Master Doctor Caius!

PAGE

Now, good master doctor!

SLENDER

Give you good morrow, sir.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

Host

To see thee fight, to see thee foin, to see thee
traverse; to see thee here, to see thee there; to
see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy
distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my Ethiopian? is
he dead, my Francisco? ha, bully! What says my
AEsculapius? my Galen? my heart of elder? ha! is
he dead, bully stale? is he dead?

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de vorld; he
is not show his face.

Host

Thou art a Castalion–King–Urinal. Hector of Greece, my boy!

DOCTOR CAIUS

I pray you, bear witness that me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

SHALLOW

He is the wiser man, master doctor: he is a curer of souls, and you a curer of bodies; if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions. Is it not true, Master Page?

PAGE

Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter, though now a man of peace.

SHALLOW

Bodykins, Master Page, though I now be old and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one. Though we are justices and doctors and churchmen, Master Page, we have some salt of our youth in us; we are the sons of women, Master Page.

PAGE

'Tis true, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW

It will be found so, Master Page. Master Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace: you have showed yourself a wise physician, and Sir Hugh hath shown himself a wise and patient churchman. You must go with me, master doctor.

Host

Pardon, guest–justice. A word, Mounseur Mockwater.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Mock–vater! vat is dat?

Host

Mock–water, in our English tongue, is valour, bully.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, den, I have as mush mock–vater as de Englishman. Scurvy jack–dog priest! by gar, me vill cut his ears.

Host

He will clapper–claw thee tightly, bully.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Clapper–de–claw! vat is dat?

Host

That is, he will make thee amends.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, me do look he shall clapper–de–claw me; for, by gar, me vill have it.

Host

And I will provoke him to't, or let him wag.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Me tank you for dat.

Host

And, moreover, bully,—but first, master guest, and Master Page, and eke Cavaleiro Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore.

Aside to them

PAGE

Sir Hugh is there, is he?

Host

He is there: see what humour he is in; and I will bring the doctor about by the fields. Will it do well?

SHALLOW

We will do it.

PAGE

|
|

SHALLOW

| Adieu, good master doctor.
|

SLENDER

|

Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

Host

Let him die: sheathe thy impatience, throw cold water on thy choler: go about the fields with me through Frogmore: I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a-feasting; and thou shalt woo her. Cried I aim? said I well?

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, me dank you for dat: by gar, I love you; and I shall procure—a you de good guest, de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

Host

For the which I will be thy adversary toward Anne
Page. Said I well?

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

Host

Let us wag, then.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Come at my heels, Jack Rugby.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 1

A field near Frogmore.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE

SIR HUGH EVANS

I pray you now, good master Slender's serving-man,
and friend Simple by your name, which way have you
looked for Master Caius, that calls himself doctor of physic?

SIMPLE

Marry, sir, the pittie-ward, the park-ward, every
way; old Windsor way, and every way but the town
way.

SIR HUGH EVANS

I most feheemently desire you you will also look that
way.

SIMPLE

I will, sir.

Exit

SIR HUGH EVANS

'Pless my soul, how full of chollors I am, and
trempling of mind! I shall be glad if he have
deceived me. How melancholies I am! I will knog
his urinals about his knave's costard when I have
good opportunities for the ork. 'Pless my soul!

Sings

To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sings madrigals;
There will we make our peds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies.
To shallow—

Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry.

Sings

Melodious birds sing madrigals—
When as I sat in Pabylon—
And a thousand vagram posies.
To shallow

Re-enter SIMPLE

SIMPLE

Yonder he is coming, this way, Sir Hugh.

SIR HUGH EVANS

He's welcome.

Sings

To shallow rivers, to whose falls—
Heaven prosper the right! What weapons is he?

SIMPLE

No weapons, sir. There comes my master, Master
Shallow, and another gentleman, from Frogmore, over
the stile, this way.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Pray you, give me my gown; or else keep it in your arms.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

SHALLOW

How now, master Parson! Good morrow, good Sir Hugh.
Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student
from his book, and it is wonderful.

SLENDER

[Aside] Ah, sweet Anne Page!

PAGE

'Save you, good Sir Hugh!

SIR HUGH EVANS

'Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

SHALLOW

What, the sword and the word! do you study them
both, master parson?

PAGE

And youthful still! in your doublet and hose this
raw rheumatic day!

SIR HUGH EVANS

There is reasons and causes for it.

PAGE

We are come to you to do a good office, master parson.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Fery well: what is it?

PAGE

Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike
having received wrong by some person, is at most

odds with his own gravity and patience that ever you saw.

SHALLOW

I have lived fourscore years and upward; I never heard a man of his place, gravity and learning, so wide of his own respect.

SIR HUGH EVANS

What is he?

PAGE

I think you know him; Master Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Got's will, and his passion of my heart! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge.

PAGE

Why?

SIR HUGH EVANS

He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and Galen, —and he is a knave besides; a cowardly knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

PAGE

I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

SHALLOW

[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

SHALLOW

It appears so by his weapons. Keep them asunder: here comes Doctor Caius.

Enter Host, DOCTOR CAIUS, and RUGBY

PAGE

Nay, good master parson, keep in your weapon.

SHALLOW

So do you, good master doctor.

Host

Disarm them, and let them question: let them keep
their limbs whole and hack our English.

DOCTOR CAIUS

I pray you, let—a me speak a word with your ear.
Wherefore vill you not meet—a me?

SIR HUGH EVANS

[Aside to DOCTOR CAIUS] Pray you, use your patience:
in good time.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

SIR HUGH EVANS

[Aside to DOCTOR CAIUS] Pray you let us not be
laughing—stocks to other men's humours; I desire you
in friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends.

Aloud

I will knog your urinals about your knave's cockscomb
for missing your meetings and appointments.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Diable! Jack Rugby,—mine host de Jarteer,—have I
not stay for him to kill him? have I not, at de place
I did appoint?

SIR HUGH EVANS

As I am a Christians soul now, look you, this is the place appointed: I'll be judgement by mine host of the Garter.

Host

Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer!

DOCTOR CAIUS

Ay, dat is very good; excellent.

Host

Peace, I say! hear mine host of the Garter. Am I politic? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my doctor? no; he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir Hugh? no; he gives me the proverbs and the no-verbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so. Give me thy hand, celestial; so. Boys of art, I have deceived you both; I have directed you to wrong places: your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue. Come, lay their swords to pawn. Follow me, lads of peace; follow, follow, follow.

SHALLOW

Trust me, a mad host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

SLENDER

[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

Exeunt SHALLOW, SLENDER, PAGE, and Host

DOCTOR CAIUS

Ha, do I perceive dat? have you make-a de sot of us, ha, ha?

SIR HUGH EVANS

This is well; he has made us his v'louting–stog. I desire you that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together to be revenge on this same scall, scurvy cogging companion, the host of the Garter.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, with all my heart. He promise to bring me where is Anne Page; by gar, he deceive me too.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Well, I will smite his noddles. Pray you, follow.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 2

A street.

Enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN

MISTRESS PAGE

Nay, keep your way, little gallant; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

ROBIN

I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man than follow him like a dwarf.

MISTRESS PAGE

O, you are a flattering boy: now I see you'll be a courtier.

Enter FORD

FORD

Well met, Mistress Page. Whither go you?

MISTRESS PAGE

Truly, sir, to see your wife. Is she at home?

FORD

Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company. I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

MISTRESS PAGE

Be sure of that,—two other husbands.

FORD

Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

MISTRESS PAGE

I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my husband had him of. What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

ROBIN

Sir John Falstaff.

FORD

Sir John Falstaff!

MISTRESS PAGE

He, he; I can never hit on's name. There is such a league between my good man and he! Is your wife at home indeed?

FORD

Indeed she is.

MISTRESS PAGE

By your leave, sir: I am sick till I see her.

Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN

FORD

Has Page any brains? hath he any eyes? hath he any thinking? Sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them.

Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty mile, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score. He pieces out his wife's inclination; he gives her folly motion and advantage: and now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind. And Falstaff's boy with her! Good plots, they are laid; and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well; I will take him, then torture my wife, pluck the borrowed veil of modesty from the so seeming Mistress Page, divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actaeon; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbours shall cry aim.

Clock heard

The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search: there I shall find Falstaff: I shall be rather praised for this than mocked; for it is as positive as the earth is firm that Falstaff is there: I will go.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, SLENDER, Host, SIR HUGH EVANS, DOCTOR CAIUS, and RUGBY

SHALLOW

|
|

PAGE

| Well met, Master Ford.
|

/

FORD

Trust me, a good knot: I have good cheer at home; and I pray you all go with me.

SHALLOW

I must excuse myself, Master Ford.

SLENDER

And so must I, sir: we have appointed to dine with Mistress Anne, and I would not break with her for more money than I'll speak of.

SHALLOW

We have lingered about a match between Anne Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer.

SLENDER

I hope I have your good will, father Page.

PAGE

You have, Master Slender; I stand wholly for you: but my wife, master doctor, is for you altogether.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Ay, be-gar; and de maid is love—a me: my nursh—a Quickly tell me so mush.

Host

What say you to young Master Fenton? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday, he smells April and May: he will carry't, he will carry't; 'tis in his buttons; he will carry't.

PAGE

Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having: he kept company with the wild prince and Poins; he is of too high a region; he knows too much. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance: if he take her, let him take her simply; the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

FORD

I beseech you heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner: besides your cheer, you shall have

sport; I will show you a monster. Master doctor,
you shall go; so shall you, Master Page; and you, Sir Hugh.

SHALLOW

Well, fare you well: we shall have the freer wooing
at Master Page's.

Exeunt SHALLOW, and SLENDER

DOCTOR CAIUS

Go home, John Rugby; I come anon.

Exit RUGBY

Host

Farewell, my hearts: I will to my honest knight
Falstaff, and drink canary with him.

Exit

FORD

[Aside] I think I shall drink in pipe wine first
with him; I'll make him dance. Will you go, gentles?

All

Have with you to see this monster.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 3

A room in FORD'S house.

Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS FORD

What, John! What, Robert!

MISTRESS PAGE

Quickly, quickly! is the buck–basket—

MISTRESS FORD

I warrant. What, Robin, I say!

Enter Servants with a basket

MISTRESS PAGE

Come, come, come.

MISTRESS FORD

Here, set it down.

MISTRESS PAGE

Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

MISTRESS FORD

Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard by in the brew–house: and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and without any pause or staggering take this basket on your shoulders: that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in Datchet–mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch close by the Thames side.

MISTRESS PAGE

You will do it?

MISTRESS FORD

I ha' told them over and over; they lack no direction. Be gone, and come when you are called.

Exeunt Servants

MISTRESS PAGE

Here comes little Robin.

Enter ROBIN

MISTRESS FORD

How now, my eyes—musket! what news with you?

ROBIN

My master, Sir John, is come in at your back-door,
Mistress Ford, and requests your company.

MISTRESS PAGE

You little Jack—a—Lent, have you been true to us?

ROBIN

Ay, I'll be sworn. My master knows not of your
being here and hath threatened to put me into
everlasting liberty if I tell you of it; for he
swears he'll turn me away.

MISTRESS PAGE

Thou'rt a good boy: this secrecy of thine shall be
a tailor to thee and shall make thee a new doublet
and hose. I'll go hide me.

MISTRESS FORD

Do so. Go tell thy master I am alone.

Exit ROBIN

Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

MISTRESS PAGE

I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me.

Exit

MISTRESS FORD

Go to, then: we'll use this unwholesome humidity,
this gross watery pumpion; we'll teach him to know
turtles from jays.

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? Why, now let me die, for I have lived long enough: this is the period of my ambition: O this blessed hour!

MISTRESS FORD

O sweet Sir John!

FALSTAFF

Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, Mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish: I would thy husband were dead: I'll speak it before the best lord; I would make thee my lady.

MISTRESS FORD

I your lady, Sir John! alas, I should be a pitiful lady!

FALSTAFF

Let the court of France show me such another. I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond: thou hast the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.

MISTRESS FORD

A plain kerchief, Sir John: my brows become nothing else; nor that well neither.

FALSTAFF

By the Lord, thou art a traitor to say so: thou wouldst make an absolute courtier; and the firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait in a semi-circled farthingale. I see what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were not, Nature thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

MISTRESS FORD

Believe me, there is no such thing in me.

FALSTAFF

What made me love thee? let that persuade thee
there's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I
cannot cog and say thou art this and that, like a
many of these lipping hawthorn-buds, that come like
women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury
in simple time; I cannot: but I love thee; none
but thee; and thou deservest it.

MISTRESS FORD

Do not betray me, sir. I fear you love Mistress Page.

FALSTAFF

Thou mightst as well say I love to walk by the
Counter-gate, which is as hateful to me as the reek
of a lime-kiln.

MISTRESS FORD

Well, heaven knows how I love you; and you shall one
day find it.

FALSTAFF

Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not
be in that mind.

ROBIN

[Within] Mistress Ford, Mistress Ford! here's
Mistress Page at the door, sweating and blowing and
looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

FALSTAFF

She shall not see me: I will ensconce me behind the arras.

MISTRESS FORD

Pray you, do so: she's a very tattling woman.

FALSTAFF hides himself

Re-enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN

What's the matter? how now!

MISTRESS PAGE

O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're shamed,
you're overthrown, you're undone for ever!

MISTRESS FORD

What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

O well—a—day, Mistress Ford! having an honest man
to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

MISTRESS FORD

What cause of suspicion?

MISTRESS PAGE

What cause of suspicion! Out pon you! how am I
mistook in you!

MISTRESS FORD

Why, alas, what's the matter?

MISTRESS PAGE

Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the
officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that
he says is here now in the house by your consent, to
take an ill advantage of his assence: you are undone.

MISTRESS FORD

'Tis not so, I hope.

MISTRESS PAGE

Pray heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here! but 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here convey, convey him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

MISTRESS FORD

What shall I do? There is a gentleman my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

MISTRESS PAGE

For shame! never stand 'you had rather' and 'you had rather:' your husband's here at hand, bethink you of some conveyance: in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me! Look, here is a basket: if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or—it is whiting—time—send him by your two men to Datchet—mead.

MISTRESS FORD

He's too big to go in there. What shall I do?

FALSTAFF

[Coming forward] Let me see't, let me see't, O, let me see't! I'll in, I'll in. Follow your friend's counsel. I'll in.

MISTRESS PAGE

What, Sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight?

FALSTAFF

I love thee. Help me away. Let me creep in here. I'll never—

Gets into the basket; they cover him with foul linen

MISTRESS PAGE

Help to cover your master, boy. Call your men,
Mistress Ford. You dissembling knight!

MISTRESS FORD

What, John! Robert! John!

Exit ROBIN

Re-enter Servants

Go take up these clothes here quickly. Where's the
cowl—staff? look, how you drumble! Carry them to
the laundress in Datchet—meat; quickly, come.

Enter FORD, PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD

Pray you, come near: if I suspect without cause,
why then make sport at me; then let me be your jest;
I deserve it. How now! whither bear you this?

Servant

To the laundress, forsooth.

MISTRESS FORD

Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? You
were best meddle with buck—washing.

FORD

Buck! I would I could wash myself of the buck!
Buck, buck, buck! Ay, buck; I warrant you, buck;
and of the season too, it shall appear.

Exeunt Servants with the basket

Gentlemen, I have dreamed to-night; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here be my keys: ascend my chambers; search, seek, find out: I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this way first.

Locking the door

So, now uncape.

PAGE

Good Master Ford, be contented: you wrong yourself too much.

FORD

True, Master Page. Up, gentlemen: you shall see sport anon: follow me, gentlemen.

Exit

SIR HUGH EVANS

This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous in France.

PAGE

Nay, follow him, gentlemen; see the issue of his search.

Exeunt PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

MISTRESS PAGE

Is there not a double excellency in this?

MISTRESS FORD

I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or Sir John.

MISTRESS PAGE

What a taking was he in when your husband asked who was in the basket!

MISTRESS FORD

I am half afraid he will have need of washing; so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit.

MISTRESS PAGE

Hang him, dishonest rascal! I would all of the same strain were in the same distress.

MISTRESS FORD

I think my husband hath some special suspicion of Falstaff's being here; for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

MISTRESS PAGE

I will lay a plot to try that; and we will yet have more tricks with Falstaff: his dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine.

MISTRESS FORD

Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water; and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment?

MISTRESS PAGE

We will do it: let him be sent for to-morrow, eight o'clock, to have amends.

Re-enter FORD, PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD

I cannot find him: may be the knave bragged of that he could not compass.

MISTRESS PAGE

[Aside to MISTRESS FORD] Heard you that?

MISTRESS FORD

You use me well, Master Ford, do you?

FORD

Ay, I do so.

MISTRESS FORD

Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

FORD

Amen!

MISTRESS PAGE

You do yourself mighty wrong, Master Ford.

FORD

Ay, ay; I must bear it.

SIR HUGH EVANS

If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, nor I too: there is no bodies.

PAGE

Fie, fie, Master Ford! are you not ashamed? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not ha' your distemper in this kind for the wealth of Windsor Castle.

FORD

'Tis my fault, Master Page: I suffer for it.

SIR HUGH EVANS

You suffer for a pad conscience: your wife is as honest a 'omans as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

FORD

Well, I promised you a dinner. Come, come, walk in the Park: I pray you, pardon me; I will hereafter make known to you why I have done this. Come, wife; come, Mistress Page. I pray you, pardon me; pray heartily, pardon me.

PAGE

Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll mock him. I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast: after, we'll a-birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush. Shall it be so?

FORD

Any thing.

SIR HUGH EVANS

If there is one, I shall make two in the company.

DOCTOR CAIUS

If dere be one or two, I shall make—a the turd.

FORD

Pray you, go, Master Page.

SIR HUGH EVANS

I pray you now, remembrance tomorrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart!

SIR HUGH EVANS

A lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 4

A room in PAGE'S house.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE

FENTON

I see I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

ANNE PAGE

Alas, how then?

FENTON

Why, thou must be thyself.
He doth object I am too great of birth—,
And that, my state being gall'd with my expense,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth:
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,
My riots past, my wild societies;
And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property.

ANNE PAGE

May be he tells you true.

FENTON

No, heaven so speed me in my time to come!
Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth
Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne:
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value
Than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags;
And 'tis the very riches of thyself
That now I aim at.

ANNE PAGE

Gentle Master Fenton,
Yet seek my father's love; still seek it, sir:
If opportunity and humblest suit
Cannot attain it, why, then,—hark you hither!

They converse apart

Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and MISTRESS QUICKLY

SHALLOW

Break their talk, Mistress Quickly: my kinsman shall
speak for himself.

SLENDER

I'll make a shaft or a bolt on't: 'slid, 'tis but
venturing.

SHALLOW

Be not dismayed.

SLENDER

No, she shall not dismay me: I care not for that,
but that I am afeard.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Hark ye; Master Slender would speak a word with you.

ANNE PAGE

I come to him.

Aside

This is my father's choice.
O, what a world of vile ill-favor'd faults
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a-year!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

And how does good Master Fenton? Pray you, a word with you.

SHALLOW

She's coming; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father!

SLENDER

I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell you
good jests of him. Pray you, uncle, tell Mistress
Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out of
a pen, good uncle.

SHALLOW

Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

SLENDER

Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in
Gloucestershire.

SHALLOW

He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

SLENDER

Ay, that I will, come cut and long-tail, under the
degree of a squire.

SHALLOW

He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

ANNE PAGE

Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

SHALLOW

Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that good
comfort. She calls you, coz: I'll leave you.

ANNE PAGE

Now, Master Slender,—

SLENDER

Now, good Mistress Anne,--

ANNE PAGE

What is your will?

SLENDER

My will! 'od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven; I am not such a sickly creature, I give heaven praise.

ANNE PAGE

I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

SLENDER

Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions: if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They can tell you how things go better than I can: you may ask your father; here he comes.

Enter PAGE and MISTRESS PAGE

PAGE

Now, Master Slender: love him, daughter Anne. Why, how now! what does Master Fenton here? You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house: I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of.

FENTON

Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

MISTRESS PAGE

Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.

PAGE

She is no match for you.

FENTON

Sir, will you hear me?

PAGE

No, good Master Fenton.
Come, Master Shallow; come, son Slender, in.
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, Master Fenton.

Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Speak to Mistress Page.

FENTON

Good Mistress Page, for that I love your daughter
In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce, against all cheques, rebukes and manners,
I must advance the colours of my love
And not retire: let me have your good will.

ANNE PAGE

Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

MISTRESS PAGE

I mean it not; I seek you a better husband.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

That's my master, master doctor.

ANNE PAGE

Alas, I had rather be set quick i' the earth
And bowl'd to death with turnips!

MISTRESS PAGE

Come, trouble not yourself. Good Master Fenton,
I will not be your friend nor enemy:
My daughter will I question how she loves you,
And as I find her, so am I affected.
Till then farewell, sir: she must needs go in;
Her father will be angry.

FENTON

Farewell, gentle mistress: farewell, Nan.

Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ANNE PAGE

MISTRESS QUICKLY

This is my doing, now: 'Nay,' said I, 'will you cast away your child on a fool, and a physician? Look on Master Fenton:' this is my doing.

FENTON

I thank thee; and I pray thee, once to-night
Give my sweet Nan this ring: there's for thy pains.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now heaven send thee good fortune!

Exit FENTON

A kind heart he hath: a woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet I would my master had Mistress Anne; or I would Master Slender had her; or, in sooth, I would Master Fenton had her; I will do what I can for them all three; for so I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word; but speciously for Master Fenton. Well, I must of another errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses: what a beast am I to slack it!

Exit

Act 3, Scene 5

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF

Bardolph, I say,—

BARDOLPH

Here, sir.

FALSTAFF

Go fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in't.

Exit BARDOLPH

Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? Well, if I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and buttered, and give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a blind bitch's puppies, fifteen i' the litter: and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drowned, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow,—a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Re-enter BARDOLPH with sack

BARDOLPH

Here's Mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you.

FALSTAFF

Let me pour in some sack to the Thames water; for my belly's as cold as if I had swallowed snowballs for pills to cool the reins. Call her in.

BARDOLPH

Come in, woman!

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

By your leave; I cry you mercy: give your worship good morrow.

FALSTAFF

Take away these chalices. Go brew me a pottle of sack finely.

BARDOLPH

With eggs, sir?

FALSTAFF

Simple of itself; I'll no pullet-sperm in my brewage.

Exit BARDOLPH

How now!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Marry, sir, I come to your worship from Mistress Ford.

FALSTAFF

Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough; I was thrown into the ford; I have my belly full of ford.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: she does so take on with her men; they mistook their erection.

FALSTAFF

So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman's promise.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a-birding; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine: I must carry her word quickly: she'll make you amends, I warrant you.

FALSTAFF

Well, I will visit her: tell her so; and bid her think what a man is: let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I will tell her.

FALSTAFF

Do so. Between nine and ten, sayest thou?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Eight and nine, sir.

FALSTAFF

Well, be gone: I will not miss her.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Peace be with you, sir.

Exit

FALSTAFF

I marvel I hear not of Master Brook; he sent me word
to stay within: I like his money well. O, here he comes.

Enter FORD

FORD

Bless you, sir!

FALSTAFF

Now, master Brook, you come to know what hath passed
between me and Ford's wife?

FORD

That, indeed, Sir John, is my business.

FALSTAFF

Master Brook, I will not lie to you: I was at her
house the hour she appointed me.

FORD

And sped you, sir?

FALSTAFF

Very ill-favoredly, Master Brook.

FORD

How so, sir? Did she change her determination?

FALSTAFF

No, Master Brook; but the peaking Cornuto her husband, Master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter, after we had embraced, kissed, protested, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and instigated by his distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

FORD

What, while you were there?

FALSTAFF

While I was there.

FORD

And did he search for you, and could not find you?

FALSTAFF

You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one Mistress Page; gives intelligence of Ford's approach; and, in her invention and Ford's wife's distraction, they conveyed me into a buck-basket.

FORD

A buck-basket!

FALSTAFF

By the Lord, a buck–basket! rammed me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, greasy napkins; that, Master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villanous smell that ever offended nostril.

FORD

And how long lay you there?

FALSTAFF

Nay, you shall hear, Master Brook, what I have suffered to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were called forth by their mistress to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet–lane: they took me on their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the door, who asked them once or twice what they had in their basket: I quaked for fear, lest the lunatic knave would have searched it; but fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well: on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, Master Brook: I suffered the pangs of three several deaths; first, an intolerable fright, to be detected with a jealous rotten bell–wether; next, to be compassed, like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head; and then, to be stopped in, like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease: think of that,—a man of my kidney,—think of that,—that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw: it was a miracle to scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse–shoe; think of that,—hissing hot,—think of that, Master Brook.

FORD

In good sadness, I am sorry that for my sake you have suffered all this. My suit then is desperate; you'll undertake her no more?

FALSTAFF

Master Brook, I will be thrown into Etna, as I have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a-birding: I have received from her another embassy of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, Master Brook.

FORD

'Tis past eight already, sir.

FALSTAFF

Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed; and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her. Adieu. You shall have her, Master Brook; Master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford.

Exit

FORD

Hum! ha! is this a vision? is this a dream? do I sleep? Master Ford awake! awake, Master Ford! there's a hole made in your best coat, Master Ford. This 'tis to be married! this 'tis to have linen and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am: I will now take the lecher; he is at my house; he cannot 'scape me; 'tis impossible he should; he cannot creep into a halfpenny purse, nor into a pepper-box: but, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not shall not make me tame: if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me: I'll be horn-mad.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 1

A street.

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS QUICKLY, and WILLIAM PAGE

MISTRESS PAGE

Is he at Master Ford's already, think'st thou?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Sure he is by this, or will be presently: but, truly, he is very courageous mad about his throwing into the water. Mistress Ford desires you to come suddenly.

MISTRESS PAGE

I'll be with her by and by; I'll but bring my young man here to school. Look, where his master comes; 'tis a playing-day, I see.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS

How now, Sir Hugh! no school to-day?

SIR HUGH EVANS

No; Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Blessing of his heart!

MISTRESS PAGE

Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you, ask him some questions in his accidence.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Come hither, William; hold up your head; come.

MISTRESS PAGE

Come on, sirrah; hold up your head; answer your master, be not afraid.

SIR HUGH EVANS

William, how many numbers is in nouns?

WILLIAM PAGE

Two.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Truly, I thought there had been one number more,
because they say, "Od's nouns."

SIR HUGH EVANS

Peace your tattlings! What is 'fair,' William?

WILLIAM PAGE

Pulcher.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Polecats! there are fairer things than polecats, sure.

SIR HUGH EVANS

You are a very simplicity 'oman: I pray you peace.
What is 'lapis,' William?

WILLIAM PAGE

A stone.

SIR HUGH EVANS

And what is 'a stone,' William?

WILLIAM PAGE

A pebble.

SIR HUGH EVANS

No, it is 'lapis:' I pray you, remember in your prain.

WILLIAM PAGE

Lapis.

SIR HUGH EVANS

That is a good William. What is he, William, that
does lend articles?

WILLIAM PAGE

Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined, Singulariter, nominativo, hic, haec, hoc.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Nominativo, hig, hag, hog; pray you, mark:
genitivo, hujus. Well, what is your accusative case?

WILLIAM PAGE

Accusativo, hinc.

SIR HUGH EVANS

I pray you, have your remembrance, child,
accusative, hung, hang, hog.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

'Hang-hog' is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Leave your prabbles, 'oman. What is the focative
case, William?

WILLIAM PAGE

O,—vocativo, O.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Remember, William; focative is caret.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

And that's a good root.

SIR HUGH EVANS

'Oman, forbear.

MISTRESS PAGE

Peace!

SIR HUGH EVANS

What is your genitive case plural, William?

WILLIAM PAGE

Genitive case!

SIR HUGH EVANS

Ay.

WILLIAM PAGE

Genitive,—horum, harum, horum.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Vengeance of Jenny's case! fie on her! never name
her, child, if she be a whore.

SIR HUGH EVANS

For shame, 'oman.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

You do ill to teach the child such words: he
teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do
fast enough of themselves, and to call 'horum:' fie upon you!

SIR HUGH EVANS

'Oman, art thou lunatics? hast thou no
understandings for thy cases and the numbers of the
genders? Thou art as foolish Christian creatures as
I would desires.

MISTRESS PAGE

Prithee, hold thy peace.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

WILLIAM PAGE

Forsooth, I have forgot.

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is qui, quae, quod: if you forget your 'quies,'
your 'quaes,' and your 'quods,' you must be
preeches. Go your ways, and play; go.

MISTRESS PAGE

He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

SIR HUGH EVANS

He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.

MISTRESS PAGE

Adieu, good Sir Hugh.

Exit SIR HUGH EVANS

Get you home, boy. Come, we stay too long.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 2

A room in FORD'S house.

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS FORD

FALSTAFF

Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my
sufferance. I see you are obsequious in your love,
and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not
only, Mistress Ford, in the simple
office of love, but in all the accoutrement,
complement and ceremony of it. But are you
sure of your husband now?

MISTRESS FORD

He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

MISTRESS PAGE

[Within] What, ho, gossip Ford! what, ho!

MISTRESS FORD

Step into the chamber, Sir John.

Exit FALSTAFF

Enter MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS PAGE

How now, sweetheart! who's at home besides yourself?

MISTRESS FORD

Why, none but mine own people.

MISTRESS PAGE

Indeed!

MISTRESS FORD

No, certainly.

Aside to her

Speak louder.

MISTRESS PAGE

Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

MISTRESS FORD

Why?

MISTRESS PAGE

Why, woman, your husband is in his old luns again: he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, of what complexion soever; and so buffets himself on the forehead, crying, 'Peer out, peer out!' that any madness I ever yet beheld seemed but tameness, civility and patience, to this his distemper he is in now: I am glad the fat knight is not here.

MISTRESS FORD

Why, does he talk of him?

MISTRESS PAGE

Of none but him; and swears he was carried out, the last time he searched for him, in a basket; protests to my husband he is now here, and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion: but I am glad the knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

MISTRESS FORD

How near is he, Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

Hard by; at street end; he will be here anon.

MISTRESS FORD

I am undone! The knight is here.

MISTRESS PAGE

Why then you are utterly shamed, and he's but a dead man. What a woman are you!—Away with him, away with him! better shame than murder.

FORD

Which way should he go? how should I bestow him?
Shall I put him into the basket again?

Re-enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

No, I'll come no more i' the basket. May I not go out ere he come?

MISTRESS PAGE

Alas, three of Master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none shall issue out; otherwise

you might slip away ere he came. But what make you here?

FALSTAFF

What shall I do? I'll creep up into the chimney.

MISTRESS FORD

There they always use to discharge their
birding-pieces. Creep into the kiln-hole.

FALSTAFF

Where is it?

MISTRESS FORD

He will seek there, on my word. Neither press,
coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an
abstract for the remembrance of such places, and
goes to them by his note: there is no hiding you in the house.

FALSTAFF

I'll go out then.

MISTRESS PAGE

If you go out in your own semblance, you die, Sir
John. Unless you go out disguised—

MISTRESS FORD

How might we disguise him?

MISTRESS PAGE

Alas the day, I know not! There is no woman's gown
big enough for him otherwise he might put on a hat,
a muffler and a kerchief, and so escape.

FALSTAFF

Good hearts, devise something: any extremity rather
than a mischief.

MISTRESS FORD

My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a gown above.

MISTRESS PAGE

On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he is: and there's her thrummed hat and her muffler too. Run up, Sir John.

MISTRESS FORD

Go, go, sweet Sir John: Mistress Page and I will look some linen for your head.

MISTRESS PAGE

Quick, quick! we'll come dress you straight: put on the gown the while.

Exit FALSTAFF

MISTRESS FORD

I would my husband would meet him in this shape: he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears she's a witch; forbade her my house and hath threatened to beat her.

MISTRESS PAGE

Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel, and the devil guide his cudgel afterwards!

MISTRESS FORD

But is my husband coming?

MISTRESS PAGE

Ah, in good sadness, is he; and talks of the basket too, howsoever he hath had intelligence.

MISTRESS FORD

We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

MISTRESS PAGE

Nay, but he'll be here presently: let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.

MISTRESS FORD

I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket. Go up; I'll bring linen for him straight.

Exit

MISTRESS PAGE

Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough. We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do, Wives may be merry, and yet honest too: We do not act that often jest and laugh; 'Tis old, but true, Still swine eat all the draff.

Exit

Re-enter MISTRESS FORD with two Servants

MISTRESS FORD

Go, sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders: your master is hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey him: quickly, dispatch.

Exit

First Servant

Come, come, take it up.

Second Servant

Pray heaven it be not full of knight again.

First Servant

I hope not; I had as lief bear so much lead.

Enter FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD

Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villain! Somebody call my wife. Youth in a basket! O you panderly rascals! there's a knot, a ging, a pack, a conspiracy against me: now shall the devil be shamed. What, wife, I say! Come, come forth! Behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching!

PAGE

Why, this passes, Master Ford; you are not to go loose any longer; you must be pinioned.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Why, this is lunatics! this is mad as a mad dog!

SHALLOW

Indeed, Master Ford, this is not well, indeed.

FORD

So say I too, sir.

Re-enter MISTRESS FORD

Come hither, Mistress Ford; Mistress Ford the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

MISTRESS FORD

Heaven be my witness you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

FORD

Well said, brazen-face! hold it out. Come forth, sirrah!

Pulling clothes out of the basket

PAGE

This passes!

MISTRESS FORD

Are you not ashamed? let the clothes alone.

FORD

I shall find you anon.

SIR HUGH EVANS

'Tis unreasonable! Will you take up your wife's clothes? Come away.

FORD

Empty the basket, I say!

MISTRESS FORD

Why, man, why?

FORD

Master Page, as I am a man, there was one conveyed out of my house yesterday in this basket: why may not he be there again? In my house I am sure he is: my intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable. Pluck me out all the linen.

MISTRESS FORD

If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

PAGE

Here's no man.

SHALLOW

By my fidelity, this is not well, Master Ford; this wrongs you.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Master Ford, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart: this is jealousies.

FORD

Well, he's not here I seek for.

PAGE

No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

FORD

Help to search my house this one time. If I find not what I seek, show no colour for my extremity; let me for ever be your table-sport; let them say of me, 'As jealous as Ford, Chat searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.' Satisfy me once more; once more search with me.

MISTRESS FORD

What, ho, Mistress Page! come you and the old woman down; my husband will come into the chamber.

FORD

Old woman! what old woman's that?

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, it is my maid's aunt of Brentford.

FORD

A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element we know nothing. Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down, I say!

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, good, sweet husband! Good gentlemen, let him
not strike the old woman.

Re-enter FALSTAFF in woman's clothes, and MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS PAGE

Come, Mother Prat; come, give me your hand.

FORD

I'll prat her.

Beating him

Out of my door, you witch, you hag, you baggage, you
polecat, you runyon! out, out! I'll conjure you,
I'll fortune-tell you.

Exit FALSTAFF

MISTRESS PAGE

Are you not ashamed? I think you have killed the
poor woman.

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, he will do it. 'Tis a goodly credit for you.

FORD

Hang her, witch!

SIR HUGH EVANS

By the yea and no, I think the 'oman is a witch
indeed: I like not when a 'oman has a great peard;
I spy a great peard under his muffler.

FORD

Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you, follow;
see but the issue of my jealousy: if I cry out thus
upon no trail, never trust me when I open again.

PAGE

Let's obey his humour a little further: come,
gentlemen.

Exeunt FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

MISTRESS PAGE

Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, by the mass, that he did not; he beat him most
unpitifully, methought.

MISTRESS PAGE

I'll have the cudgel hallowed and hung o'er the
altar; it hath done meritorious service.

MISTRESS FORD

What think you? may we, with the warrant of
womanhood and the witness of a good conscience,
pursue him with any further revenge?

MISTRESS PAGE

The spirit of wantonness is, sure, scared out of
him: if the devil have him not in fee-simple, with
fine and recovery, he will never, I think, in the
way of waste, attempt us again.

MISTRESS FORD

Shall we tell our husbands how we have served him?

MISTRESS PAGE

Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape the
figures out of your husband's brains. If they can
find in their hearts the poor unvirtuous fat knight
shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be

the ministers.

MISTRESS FORD

I'll warrant they'll have him publicly shamed: and methinks there would be no period to the jest, should he not be publicly shamed.

MISTRESS PAGE

Come, to the forge with it then; shape it: I would not have things cool.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 3

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter Host and BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH

Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your horses: the duke himself will be to-morrow at court, and they are going to meet him.

Host

What duke should that be comes so secretly? I hear not of him in the court. Let me speak with the gentlemen: they speak English?

BARDOLPH

Ay, sir; I'll call them to you.

Host

They shall have my horses; but I'll make them pay; I'll sauce them: they have had my house a week at command; I have turned away my other guests: they must come off; I'll sauce them. Come.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 4

A room in FORD'S house.

Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS

SIR HUGH EVANS

'Tis one of the best discretions of a 'oman as ever
I did look upon.

PAGE

And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

MISTRESS PAGE

Within a quarter of an hour.

FORD

Pardon me, wife. Henceforth do what thou wilt;
I rather will suspect the sun with cold
Than thee with wantonness: now doth thy honour stand
In him that was of late an heretic,
As firm as faith.

PAGE

'Tis well, 'tis well; no more:
Be not as extreme in submission
As in offence.
But let our plot go forward: let our wives
Yet once again, to make us public sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him and disgrace him for it.

FORD

There is no better way than that they spoke of.

PAGE

How? to send him word they'll meet him in the park
at midnight? Fie, fie! he'll never come.

SIR HUGH EVANS

You say he has been thrown in the rivers and has
been grievously peaten as an old 'oman: methinks
there should be terrors in him that he should not
come; methinks his flesh is punished, he shall have
no desires.

PAGE

So think I too.

MISTRESS FORD

Devise but how you'll use him when he comes,
And let us two devise to bring him thither.

MISTRESS PAGE

There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree and takes the cattle
And makes milch-kine yield blood and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner:
You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Received and did deliver to our age
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

PAGE

Why, yet there want not many that do fear
In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak:
But what of this?

MISTRESS FORD

Marry, this is our device;
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us.

PAGE

Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come:
And in this shape when you have brought him thither,
What shall be done with him? what is your plot?

MISTRESS PAGE

That likewise have we thought upon, and thus:
Nan Page my daughter and my little son
And three or four more of their growth we'll dress
Like urchins, ouphes and fairies, green and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,
And rattles in their hands: upon a sudden,
As Falstaff, she and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a sawpit rush at once
With some diffused song: upon their sight,
We two in great amazedness will fly:
Then let them all encircle him about
And, fairy-like, to-pinch the unclean knight,
And ask him why, that hour of fairy revel,
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread
In shape profane.

MISTRESS FORD

And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound
And burn him with their tapers.

MISTRESS PAGE

The truth being known,
We'll all present ourselves, dis-horn the spirit,
And mock him home to Windsor.

FORD

The children must
Be practised well to this, or they'll ne'er do't.

SIR HUGH EVANS

I will teach the children their behaviors; and I
will be like a jack-an-apes also, to burn the
knight with my taber.

FORD

That will be excellent. I'll go and buy them vizards.

MISTRESS PAGE

My Nan shall be the queen of all the fairies,
Finely attired in a robe of white.

PAGE

That silk will I go buy.

Aside

And in that time
Shall Master Slender steal my Nan away
And marry her at Eton. Go send to Falstaff straight.

FORD

Nay I'll to him again in name of Brook
He'll tell me all his purpose: sure, he'll come.

MISTRESS PAGE

Fear not you that. Go get us properties
And tricking for our fairies.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Let us about it: it is admirable pleasures and fery
honest knaveries.

Exeunt PAGE, FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS

MISTRESS PAGE

Go, Mistress Ford,
Send quickly to Sir John, to know his mind.

Exit MISTRESS FORD

I'll to the doctor: he hath my good will,
And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.

That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot;
And he my husband best of all affects.
The doctor is well money'd, and his friends
Potent at court: he, none but he, shall have her,
Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 5

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter Host and SIMPLE

Host

What wouldst thou have, boor? what: thick-skin?
speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

SIMPLE

Marry, sir, I come to speak with Sir John Falstaff
from Master Slender.

Host

There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his
standing-bed and truckle-bed; 'tis painted about
with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new. Go
knock and call; he'll speak like an Anthropophaginian
unto thee: knock, I say.

SIMPLE

There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into his
chamber: I'll be so bold as stay, sir, till she come
down; I come to speak with her, indeed.

Host

Ha! a fat woman! the knight may be robbed: I'll
call. Bully knight! bully Sir John! speak from
thy lungs military: art thou there? it is thine
host, thine Ephesian, calls.

FALSTAFF

[Above] How now, mine host!

Host

Here's a Bohemian—Tartar carries the coming down of
thy fat woman. Let her descend, bully, let her
descend; my chambers are honourable: fie! privacy?
fie!

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

There was, mine host, an old fat woman even now with
me; but she's gone.

SIMPLE

Pray you, sir, was't not the wise woman of
Brentford?

FALSTAFF

Ay, marry, was it, mussel—shell: what would you with her?

SIMPLE

My master, sir, Master Slender, sent to her, seeing
her go through the streets, to know, sir, whether
one Nym, sir, that beguiled him of a chain, had the
chain or no.

FALSTAFF

I spake with the old woman about it.

SIMPLE

And what says she, I pray, sir?

FALSTAFF

Marry, she says that the very same man that
beguiled Master Slender of his chain cozened him of
it.

SIMPLE

I would I could have spoken with the woman herself;
I had other things to have spoken with her too from
him.

FALSTAFF

What are they? let us know.

Host

Ay, come; quick.

SIMPLE

I may not conceal them, sir.

Host

Conceal them, or thou diest.

SIMPLE

Why, sir, they were nothing but about Mistress Anne
Page; to know if it were my master's fortune to
have her or no.

FALSTAFF

'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

SIMPLE

What, sir?

FALSTAFF

To have her, or no. Go; say the woman told me so.

SIMPLE

May I be bold to say so, sir?

FALSTAFF

Ay, sir; like who more bold.

SIMPLE

I thank your worship: I shall make my master glad
with these tidings.

Exit

Host

Thou art clerkly, thou art clerkly, Sir John. Was
there a wise woman with thee?

FALSTAFF

Ay, that there was, mine host; one that hath taught
me more wit than ever I learned before in my life;
and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for
my learning.

Enter BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH

Out, alas, sir! cozenage, mere cozenage!

Host

Where be my horses? speak well of them, varletto.

BARDOLPH

Run away with the cozeners; for so soon as I came
beyond Eton, they threw me off from behind one of
them, in a slough of mire; and set spurs and away,
like three German devils, three Doctor Faustus.

Host

They are gone but to meet the duke, villain: do not
say they be fled; Germans are honest men.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS

SIR HUGH EVANS

Where is mine host?

Host

What is the matter, sir?

SIR HUGH EVANS

Have a care of your entertainments: there is a friend of mine come to town tells me there is three cozen-germans that has cozened all the hosts of Readins, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you: you are wise and full of gibes and vlouting-stocks, and 'tis not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well.

Exit

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vere is mine host de Jarteer?

Host

Here, master doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.

DOCTOR CAIUS

I cannot tell vat is dat: but it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany: by my trot, dere is no duke dat the court is know to come. I tell you for good vill: adieu.

Exit

Host

Hue and cry, villain, go! Assist me, knight. I am undone! Fly, run, hue and cry, villain! I am undone!

Exeunt Host and BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF

I would all the world might be cozened; for I have been cozened and beaten too. If it should come to the ear of the court, how I have been transformed and how my transformation hath been washed and

cudgelled, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop and liquor fishermen's boots with me; I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now, whence come you?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

From the two parties, forsooth.

FALSTAFF

The devil take one party and his dam the other! and so they shall be both bestowed. I have suffered more for their sakes, more than the villanous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to bear.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

And have not they suffered? Yes, I warrant; speciously one of them; Mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

FALSTAFF

What tellest thou me of black and blue? I was beaten myself into all the colours of the rainbow; and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford: but that my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the action of an old woman, delivered me, the knave constable had set me i' the stocks, i' the common stocks, for a witch.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Sir, let me speak with you in your chamber: you shall hear how things go; and, I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat. Good hearts, what ado here is to bring you together! Sure, one of you does not serve heaven well, that

you are so crossed.

FALSTAFF

Come up into my chamber.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 6

Another room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FENTON and Host

Host

Master Fenton, talk not to me; my mind is heavy: I will give over all.

FENTON

Yet hear me speak. Assist me in my purpose,
And, as I am a gentleman, I'll give thee
A hundred pound in gold more than your loss.

Host

I will hear you, Master Fenton; and I will at the least keep your counsel.

FENTON

From time to time I have acquainted you
With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page;
Who mutually hath answer'd my affection,
So far forth as herself might be her chooser,
Even to my wish: I have a letter from her
Of such contents as you will wonder at;
The mirth whereof so larded with my matter,
That neither singly can be manifested,
Without the show of both; fat Falstaff
Hath a great scene: the image of the jest
I'll show you here at large. Hark, good mine host.
To-night at Herne's oak, just 'twixt twelve and one,
Must my sweet Nan present the Fairy Queen;
The purpose why, is here: in which disguise,

While other jests are something rank on foot,
Her father hath commanded her to slip
Away with Slender and with him at Eton
Immediately to marry: she hath consented: Now, sir,
Her mother, ever strong against that match
And firm for Doctor Caius, hath appointed
That he shall likewise shuffle her away,
While other sports are tasking of their minds,
And at the deanery, where a priest attends,
Straight marry her: to this her mother's plot
She seemingly obedient likewise hath
Made promise to the doctor. Now, thus it rests:
Her father means she shall be all in white,
And in that habit, when Slender sees his time
To take her by the hand and bid her go,
She shall go with him: her mother hath intended,
The better to denote her to the doctor,
For they must all be mask'd and vizarded,
That quaint in green she shall be loose enrobed,
With ribands pendent, flaring 'bout her head;
And when the doctor spies his vantage ripe,
To pinch her by the hand, and, on that token,
The maid hath given consent to go with him.

Host

Which means she to deceive, father or mother?

FENTON

Both, my good host, to go along with me:
And here it rests, that you'll procure the vicar
To stay for me at church 'twixt twelve and one,
And, in the lawful name of marrying,
To give our hearts united ceremony.

Host

Well, husband your device; I'll to the vicar:
Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

FENTON

So shall I evermore be bound to thee;
Besides, I'll make a present recompense.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 1

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS QUICKLY

FALSTAFF

Prithee, no more prattling; go. I'll hold. This is the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. Away I go. They say there is divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death. Away!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I'll provide you a chain; and I'll do what I can to get you a pair of horns.

FALSTAFF

Away, I say; time wears: hold up your head, and mince.

Exit MISTRESS QUICKLY

Enter FORD

How now, Master Brook! Master Brook, the matter will be known to-night, or never. Be you in the Park about midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see wonders.

FORD

Went you not to her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had appointed?

FALSTAFF

I went to her, Master Brook, as you see, like a poor old man: but I came from her, Master Brook, like a poor old woman. That same knave Ford, her husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, Master Brook, that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you: he beat me grievously, in the shape of a woman; for in the shape of man, Master Brook, I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam; because I know

also life is a shuttle. I am in haste; go along
with me: I'll tell you all, Master Brook. Since I
plucked geese, played truant and whipped top, I knew
not what 'twas to be beaten till lately. Follow
me: I'll tell you strange things of this knave
Ford, on whom to-night I will be revenged, and I
will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow.
Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 2

Windsor Park.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

PAGE

Come, come; we'll couch i' the castle-ditch till we
see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender,
my daughter.

SLENDER

Ay, forsooth; I have spoke with her and we have a
nay-word how to know one another: I come to her in
white, and cry 'mum;' she cries 'budget;' and by
that we know one another.

SHALLOW

That's good too: but what needs either your 'mum'
or her 'budget?' the white will decipher her well
enough. It hath struck ten o'clock.

PAGE

The night is dark; light and spirits will become it
well. Heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil
but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns.
Let's away; follow me.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 3

A street leading to the Park.

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and DOCTOR CAIUS

MISTRESS PAGE

Master doctor, my daughter is in green: when you see your time, take her by the band, away with her to the deanery, and dispatch it quickly. Go before into the Park: we two must go together.

DOCTOR CAIUS

I know vat I have to do. Adieu.

MISTRESS PAGE

Fare you well, sir.

Exit DOCTOR CAIUS

My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter: but 'tis no matter; better a little chiding than a great deal of heart-break.

MISTRESS FORD

Where is Nan now and her troop of fairies, and the Welsh devil Hugh?

MISTRESS PAGE

They are all couched in a pit hard by Herne's oak, with obscured lights; which, at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

MISTRESS FORD

That cannot choose but amaze him.

MISTRESS PAGE

If he be not amazed, he will be mocked; if he be amazed, he will every way be mocked.

MISTRESS FORD

We'll betray him finely.

MISTRESS PAGE

Against such lewdsters and their lechery
Those that betray them do no treachery.

MISTRESS FORD

The hour draws on. To the oak, to the oak!

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 4

Windsor Park.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised, with others as Fairies

SIR HUGH EVANS

Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts:
be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and
when I give the watch-ords, do as I bid you:
come, come; trib, trib.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 5

Another part of the Park.

Enter FALSTAFF disguised as Herne

FALSTAFF

The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute
draws on. Now, the hot-blooded gods assist me!
Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love
set on thy horns. O powerful love! that, in some
respects, makes a beast a man, in some other, a man
a beast. You were also, Jupiter, a swan for the love

of Leda. O omnipotent Love! how near the god drew
to the complexion of a goose! A fault done first in
the form of a beast. O Jove, a beastly fault! And
then another fault in the semblance of a fowl; think
on 't, Jove; a foul fault! When gods have hot
backs, what shall poor men do? For me, I am here a
Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the
forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can
blame me to piss my tallow? Who comes here? my
doe?

Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS FORD

Sir John! art thou there, my deer? my male deer?

FALSTAFF

My doe with the black scut! Let the sky rain
potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of Green
Sleeves, hail kissing-comfits and snow eringoes; let
there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.

MISTRESS FORD

Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.

FALSTAFF

Divide me like a bribe buck, each a haunch: I will
keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow
of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands.
Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like Herne the hunter?
Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes
restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome!

Noise within

MISTRESS PAGE

Alas, what noise?

MISTRESS FORD

Heaven forgive our sins

FALSTAFF

What should this be?

MISTRESS FORD

|
| Away, away!

MISTRESS PAGE

|
They run off

FALSTAFF

I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the
oil that's in me should set hell on fire; he would
never else cross me thus.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised as before; PISTOL, as Hobgoblin; MISTRESS QUICKLY,
ANNE PAGE, and others, as Fairies, with tapers*

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine revellers and shades of night,
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,
Attend your office and your quality.
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy eyes.

PISTOL

Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys.
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap:
Where fires thou find'st unraked and hearths unswept,
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:
Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.

FALSTAFF

They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:
I'll wink and cough: no man their works must eye.

Lies down upon his face

SIR HUGH EVANS

Where's Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy;
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy:
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides and shins.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

About, about;
Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out:
Strew good luck, o'phes, on every sacred room:
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,
In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,
Worthy the owner, and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm and every precious flower:
Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,
With loyal blazon, evermore be blest!
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring:
The expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;
And 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' write
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue and white;
Let sapphire, pearl and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee:
Fairies use flowers for their character.
Away; disperse: but till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Pray you, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.
But, stay; I smell a man of middle-earth.

FALSTAFF

Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he
transform me to a piece of cheese!

PISTOL

Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy birth.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

With trial–fire touch me his finger–end:
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend
And turn him to no pain; but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

PISTOL

A trial, come.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Come, will this wood take fire?

They burn him with their tapers

FALSTAFF

Oh, Oh, Oh!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!
About him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme;
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

SONG.

Fie on sinful fantasy!
Fie on lust and luxury!
Lust is but a bloody fire,
Kindled with unchaste desire,
Fed in heart, whose flames aspire
As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.
Pinch him, fairies, mutually;
Pinch him for his villany;
Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.

During this song they pinch FALSTAFF. DOCTOR CAIUS comes one way, and steals away a boy in green; SLENDER another way, and takes off a boy in white; and FENTON comes and steals away ANN PAGE. A noise of hunting is heard within. All the Fairies run away. FALSTAFF pulls off his buck's head, and rises

Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, and MISTRESS FORD

PAGE

Nay, do not fly; I think we have watch'd you now
Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn?

MISTRESS PAGE

I pray you, come, hold up the jest no higher
Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?
See you these, husband? do not these fair yokes
Become the forest better than the town?

FORD

Now, sir, who's a cuckold now? Master Brook,
Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave; here are his
horns, Master Brook: and, Master Brook, he hath
enjoyed nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his
cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be
paid to Master Brook; his horses are arrested for
it, Master Brook.

MISTRESS FORD

Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet.
I will never take you for my love again; but I will
always count you my deer.

FALSTAFF

I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

FORD

Ay, and an ox too: both the proofs are extant.

FALSTAFF

And these are not fairies? I was three or four
times in the thought they were not fairies: and yet
the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my
powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a
received belief, in despite of the teeth of all
rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now
how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon
ill employment!

SIR HUGH EVANS

Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

FORD

Well said, fairy Hugh.

SIR HUGH EVANS

And leave your jealousies too, I pray you.

FORD

I will never mistrust my wife again till thou art able to woo her in good English.

FALSTAFF

Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'erreaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? shall I have a coxcomb of frize? 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Seese is not good to give putter; your belly is all putter.

FALSTAFF

'Seese' and 'putter'! have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm.

MISTRESS PAGE

Why Sir John, do you think, though we would have the virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders and have given ourselves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

FORD

What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?

MISTRESS PAGE

A puffed man?

PAGE

Old, cold, withered and of intolerable entrails?

FORD

And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

PAGE

And as poor as Job?

FORD

And as wicked as his wife?

SIR HUGH EVANS

And given to fornications, and to taverns and sack
and wine and metheglins, and to drinkings and
swearings and starings, pribbles and prabbles?

FALSTAFF

Well, I am your theme: you have the start of me; I
am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh
flannel; ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me: use
me as you will.

FORD

Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one
Master Brook, that you have cozened of money, to
whom you should have been a pander: over and above
that you have suffered, I think to repay that money
will be a biting affliction.

PAGE

Yet be cheerful, knight: thou shalt eat a posset
to-night at my house; where I will desire thee to
laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee: tell her
Master Slender hath married her daughter.

MISTRESS PAGE

[Aside] Doctors doubt that: if Anne Page be my daughter, she is, by this, Doctor Caius' wife.

Enter SLENDER

SLENDER

Whoa ho! ho, father Page!

PAGE

Son, how now! how now, son! have you dispatched?

SLENDER

Dispatched! I'll make the best in Gloucestershire know on't; would I were hanged, la, else.

PAGE

Of what, son?

SLENDER

I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had not been i' the church, I would have swung him, or he should have swung me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never stir!—and 'tis a postmaster's boy.

PAGE

Upon my life, then, you took the wrong.

SLENDER

What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

PAGE

Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you how you should know my daughter by her garments?

SLENDER

I went to her in white, and cried 'mum,' and she cried 'budget,' as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

MISTRESS PAGE

Good George, be not angry: I knew of your purpose; turned my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married.

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vere is Mistress Page? By gar, I am cozened: I ha' married un garcon, a boy; un paysan, by gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cozened.

MISTRESS PAGE

Why, did you take her in green?

DOCTOR CAIUS

Ay, by gar, and 'tis a boy: by gar, I'll raise all Windsor.

Exit

FORD

This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

PAGE

My heart misgives me: here comes Master Fenton.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE

How now, Master Fenton!

ANNE PAGE

Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

PAGE

Now, mistress, how chance you went not with Master Slender?

MISTRESS PAGE

Why went you not with master doctor, maid?

FENTON

You do amaze her: hear the truth of it.
You would have married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy that she hath committed;
And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

FORD

Stand not amazed; here is no remedy:
In love the heavens themselves do guide the state;
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

FALSTAFF

I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to
strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.

PAGE

Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!
What cannot be eschew'd must be embraced.

FALSTAFF

When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chased.

MISTRESS PAGE

Well, I will muse no further. Master Fenton,
Heaven give you many, many merry days!
Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

FORD

Let it be so. Sir John,
To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word
For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

Exeunt

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act 1, Scene 1

Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man revenue.

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS

Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp.

Exit PHILOSTRATE

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child;
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nose-gays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she; will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? be advised fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,

The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

Either to die the death or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon—
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship—
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,

My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—
Which by no means we may extenuate—
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.

Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HERMIA

Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYSANDER

Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,—

HERMIA

O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

LYSANDER

Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—

HERMIA

O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

LYSANDER

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—

HERMIA

O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.

LYSANDER

Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

HERMIA

If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

LYSANDER

A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA

My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HERMIA

God speed fair Helena! whither away?

HELENA

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA

O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA

None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

HERMIA

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

LYSANDER

Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA

And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight

From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER

I will, my Hermia.

Exit HERMIA

Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

Exit

HELENA

How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, folding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured every where:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

Exit

Act 1, Scene 2

Athens. QUINCE'S house.

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM

You were best to call them generally, man by man,
according to the scrip.

QUINCE

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is
thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our
interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his
wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats
on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow
to a point.

QUINCE

Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and
most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a
merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your
actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

QUINCE

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM

Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE

A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Eracles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.
This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUINCE

That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

QUINCE

No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.
Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father:
Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I
hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG

Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE

You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM

Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE

An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL

That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE

Why, what you will.

BOTTOM

I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

QUINCE

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM

We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

QUINCE

At the duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM

Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 1

A wood near Athens.

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK

PUCK

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

Fairy

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

PUCK

The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling;
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But, they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

Fairy

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,

You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

PUCK

Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fairy

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with hers

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love

To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest Steppe of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
And make him with fair AEgle break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
Have every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds

Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.

OBERON

Do you amend it then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

Exit TITANIA with her train

OBERON

Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK

I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

Exit

OBERON

Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEMETRIUS

Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

HELENA

And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love,--
And yet a place of high respect with me,--
Than to be used as you use your dog?

DEMETRIUS

Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS

You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night
And the ill counsel of a desert place
With the rich worth of your virginity.

HELENA

Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA

The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

DEMETRIUS

I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA

Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be wood and were not made to woo.

Exit DEMETRIUS

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well.

Exit

OBERON

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,

Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 2

Another part of the wood.

Enter TITANIA, with her train

TITANIA

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

The Fairies sing

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.
Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.
Philomel, with melody,

Fairy

Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.

Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps

Enter OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's eyelids

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take,
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near.

Exit

Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

HERMIA

Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.

HERMIA

Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

LYSANDER

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit
So that but one heart we can make of it;
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA

Lysander riddles very prettily:
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

They sleep

Enter PUCK

PUCK

Through the forest have I gone.
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence.—Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wakest, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon.

Exit

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

HELENA

O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

DEMETRIUS

Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

Exit

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;

For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

LYSANDER

[Awaking] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

HELENA

Do not say so, Lysander; say not so
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

LYSANDER

Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.

HELENA

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,

That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refused.
Should of another therefore be abused!

Exit

LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as tie heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight!

Exit

HERMIA

[Awaking] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you all not nigh
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

Exit

Act 3, Scene 1

The wood. TITANIA lying asleep.

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

BOTTOM

Are we all met?

QUINCE

Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

BOTTOM

Peter Quince,—

QUINCE

What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOTTOM

There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

SNOUT

By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STARVELING

I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOTTOM

Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

QUINCE

Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM

No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING

I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM

Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in—God shield us!—a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to 't.

SNOUT

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM

Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—'Ladies,'—or 'Fair-ladies—I would wish You,'—or 'I would request you,'—or 'I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are;' and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

QUINCE

Well it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM

A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE

Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM

Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUINCE

Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT

You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

BOTTOM

Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK

What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,—

QUINCE

Odours, odours.

BOTTOM

—odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear.

Exit

PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

Exit

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes
but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily–white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE

'Ninus' tomb,' man: why, you must not speak that
yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your
part at once, cues and all Pyramus enter: your cue
is past; it is, 'never tire.'

FLUTE

O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would
never tire.

Re–enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head

BOTTOM

If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUINCE

O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray,
masters! fly, masters! Help!

Exeunt QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

PUCK

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Exit

BOTTOM

Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to
make me afraid.

Re-enter SNOOT

SNOOT

O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

BOTTOM

What do you see? you see an asshead of your own, do you?

Exit SNOOT

Re-enter QUINCE

QUINCE

Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.

Exit

BOTTOM

I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

Sings

The ousel cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill,—

TITANIA

[Awaking] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOTTOM

[Sings]

The finch, the sparrow and the lark,

The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—
for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish
a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry
'cuckoo' never so?

TITANIA

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason
for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and
love keep little company together now—a-days; the
more the pity that some honest neighbours will not
make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

TITANIA

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM

Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out
of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA

Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate;
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

COBWEB

And I.

MOTH

And I.

MUSTARDSEED

And I.

ALL

Where shall we go?

TITANIA

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from Painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM

Hail, mortal!

COBWEB

Hail!

MOTH

Hail!

MUSTARDSEED

Hail!

BOTTOM

I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name.

COBWEB

Cobweb.

BOTTOM

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Peaseblossom.

BOTTOM

I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

BOTTOM

Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred had made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue bring him silently.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 2

Another part of the wood.

Enter OBERON

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

PUCK

My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nolle I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears
thus strong,

Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all
things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked and straightway loved an ass.

OBERON

This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK

I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side:
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS

OBERON

Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

PUCK

This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEMETRIUS

O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HERMIA

Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse,
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored and that the moon

May through the centre creep and so displease
Her brother's noontide with Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS

So should the murder'd look, and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HERMIA

What's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA

Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEMETRIUS

You spend your passion on a misprised mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HERMIA

I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

DEMETRIUS

An if I could, what should I get therefore?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

Exit

DEMETRIUS

There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe:
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

Lies down and sleeps

OBERON

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.

PUCK

Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBERON

About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

Exit

OBERON

Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK

PUCK

Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBERON

Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK

Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

HELENA

You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS

[Awaking] O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort

Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

HELENA

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS

Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA

Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER

Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER

Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all you fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is it all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grow together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA

I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What thought I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unloved?
This you should pity rather than despise.

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do, persevere, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER

Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come!

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Away, you Ethiope!

DEMETRIUS

No, no; he'll [/]
Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

LYSANDER

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?
Sweet love,--

LYSANDER

Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, sooth; and so do you.

LYSANDER

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS

I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER

What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left
me:
Why, then you left me--O, the gods forbid!--
In earnest, shall I say?

LYSANDER

Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;

Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Fine, i'faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem;
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower! hark, again.

HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA

Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HERMIA

What, with Lysander?

HELENA

With Demetrius.

LYSANDER

Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA

'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS

You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

LYSANDER

Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS

Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA

You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
Nay, go not back.

HELENA

I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away.

Exit

HERMIA

I am amazed, and know not what to say.

Exit

OBERON

This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

PUCK

Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garment he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBERON

Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron,
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,

Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They willfully themselves exile from light
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

OBERON

But we are spirits of another sort:
I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day.

Exit

PUCK

Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER

Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

PUCK

Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER

I will be with thee straight.

PUCK

Follow me, then,
To plainer ground.

Exit LYSANDER, as following the voice

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS

Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled
That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there?

PUCK

Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

Exeunt

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER

He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me.

Lies down

Come, thou gentle day!
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite.

Sleeps

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS

PUCK

Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

DEMETRIUS

Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

PUCK

Come hither: I am here.

DEMETRIUS

Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.

Lies down and sleeps

Re-enter HELENA

HELENA

O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hour! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

Lies down and sleeps

PUCK

Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds make up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA

Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

Lies down and sleeps

PUCK

On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER's eyes

When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 1

The same. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA

lying asleep.

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, and other Fairies attending; OBERON behind unseen

TITANIA

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM

Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your
weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped
humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good
mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret
yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and,
good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not;
I would be loath to have you overflown with a
honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready.

BOTTOM

Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you,
leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

MUSTARDSEED

What's your Will?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb
to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for
methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I
am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me,
I must scratch.

TITANIA

What, wilt thou hear some music,
my sweet love?

BOTTOM

I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have
the tongs and the bones.

TITANIA

Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good
dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle
of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITANIA

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOTTOM

I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.
But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I
have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

Exeunt fairies

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barks fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

They sleep

Enter PUCK

OBERON

[Advancing] Welcome, good Robin.
See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours from this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA

My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBERON

There lies your love.

TITANIA

How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON

Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

TITANIA

Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!

Music, still

PUCK

Now, when thou wakest, with thine
own fool's eyes peep.

OBERON

Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

PUCK

Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

OBERON

Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade:

We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

TITANIA

Come, my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.

Exeunt

Horns winded within

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

Exit an Attendant

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding: for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THESEUS

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;

Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

EGEUS

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

THESEUS

No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May, and hearing our intent,
Came here in grace our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

Horns and shout within. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start up

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

LYSANDER

My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think,—for truly would I speak,
And now do I bethink me, so it is,—
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law.

EGEUS

Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

DEMETRIUS

My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—
But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple by and by with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
And, for the morning now is something worn,

Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train

DEMETRIUS

These things seem small and undistinguishable,

HERMIA

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

HELENA

So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS

Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HERMIA

Yea; and my father.

HELENA

And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEMETRIUS

Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

Exeunt

BOTTOM

[Awaking] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh—ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows—mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,—and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 2

Athens. QUINCE'S house.

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE

Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

STARVELING

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

QUINCE

It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLUTE

No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yea and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE

You must say 'paragon:' a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG

SNUG

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 'scaped sixpence a day: an the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

QUINCE

Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

QUINCE

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM

Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away!

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 1

Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords and Attendants

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THESEUS

More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

THESEUS

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

LYSANDER

More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THESEUS

Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?

Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE

Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS

Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHILOSTRATE

There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

Giving a paper

THESEUS

[Reads] 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'
We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

Reads

'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'
That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

Reads

'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.'
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

Reads

'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS

What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE

Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THESEUS

And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE

No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

THESEUS

I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

Exit PHILOSTRATE

HIPPOLYTA

I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged
And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practised accent in their fears
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE

PHILOSTRATE

So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

Flourish of trumpets

Enter QUINCE for the Prologue

Prologue

If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to contest you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

THESEUS

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows
not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not
enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIPPOLYTA

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child
on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS

His speech, was like a tangled chain; nothing
impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion

Prologue

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisbe is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine

THESEUS

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS

No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall

In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard
discourse, my lord.

Enter Pyramus

THESEUS

Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Pyramus

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

Wall holds up his fingers

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyramus

No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me'
is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to
spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will
fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyramus

I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face. Thisby!

Thisbe

My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyramus

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

Thisbe

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyramus

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

Thisbe

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyramus

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

Thisbe

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyramus

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

Thisbe

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe

Wall

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

Exit

THESEUS

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEMETRIUS

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear
without warning.

HIPPOLYTA

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS

The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst
are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS

If we imagine no worse of them than they of
themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here
come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Enter Lion and Moonshine

Lion

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS

A very gentle beast, of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYSANDER

This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THESEUS

True; and a goose for his discretion.

DEMETRIUS

Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

THESEUS

His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Moonshine

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;—

DEMETRIUS

He should have worn the horns on his head.

THESEUS

He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moonshine

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THESEUS

This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon?

DEMETRIUS

He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

HIPPOLYTA

I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

THESEUS

It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYSANDER

Proceed, Moon.

Moonshine

All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS

Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion

[Roaring] Oh—

Thisbe runs off

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, Lion.

THESEUS

Well run, Thisbe.

HIPPOLYTA

Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit

THESEUS

Well moused, Lion.

LYSANDER

And so the lion vanished.

DEMETRIUS

And then came Pyramus.

Enter Pyramus

Pyramus

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisbe's sight.
But stay, O spite!
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS

This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyramus

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd
with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:

Stabs himself

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon take thy flight:

Exit Moonshine

Now die, die, die, die, die.

Dies

DEMETRIUS

No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

LYSANDER

Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

THESEUS

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and
prove an ass.

HIPPOLYTA

How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes
back and finds her lover?

THESEUS

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and
her passion ends the play.

Re-enter Thisbe

HIPPOLYTA

Methinks she should not use a long one for such a
Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS

A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which
Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us;
she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS

And thus she means, videlicet:--

Thisbe

Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These My lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

Stabs herself

And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Dies

THESEUS

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM

[Starting up] No assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

THESEUS

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

A dance

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity.

Exeunt

Enter PUCK

PUCK

Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON and TITANIA with their train

OBERON

Through the house give gathering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire:
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

TITANIA

First, rehearse your song by rote
To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

Song and dance

OBERON

Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and train

PUCK

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

Love's Labours Lost

Act 1, Scene 1

The king of Navarre's park.

Enter FERDINAND king of Navarre, BIRON, LONGAVILLE and DUMAIN

FERDINAND

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs
And then grace us in the disgrace of death;
When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,
The endeavor of this present breath may buy
That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge
And make us heirs of all eternity.
Therefore, brave conquerors,—for so you are,
That war against your own affections
And the huge army of the world's desires,—
Our late edict shall strongly stand in force:
Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
Our court shall be a little Academe,
Still and contemplative in living art.
You three, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville,
Have sworn for three years' term to live with me
My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes
That are recorded in this schedule here:
Your oaths are pass'd; and now subscribe your names,
That his own hand may strike his honour down
That violates the smallest branch herein:
If you are arm'd to do as sworn to do,
Subscribe to your deep oaths, and keep it too.

LONGAVILLE

I am resolved; 'tis but a three years' fast:
The mind shall banquet, though the body pine:
Fat paunches have lean pates, and dainty bits
Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.

DUMAIN

My loving lord, Dumain is mortified:
The grosser manner of these world's delights
He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves:
To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die;

With all these living in philosophy.

BIRON

I can but say their protestation over;
So much, dear liege, I have already sworn,
That is, to live and study here three years.
But there are other strict observances;
As, not to see a woman in that term,
Which I hope well is not enrolled there;
And one day in a week to touch no food
And but one meal on every day beside,
The which I hope is not enrolled there;
And then, to sleep but three hours in the night,
And not be seen to wink of all the day—
When I was wont to think no harm all night
And make a dark night too of half the day—
Which I hope well is not enrolled there:
O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep!

FERDINAND

Your oath is pass'd to pass away from these.

BIRON

Let me say no, my liege, an if you please:
I only swore to study with your grace
And stay here in your court for three years' space.

LONGAVILLE

You swore to that, Biron, and to the rest.

BIRON

By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest.
What is the end of study? let me know.

FERDINAND

Why, that to know, which else we should not know.

BIRON

Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense?

FERDINAND

Ay, that is study's godlike recompense.

BIRON

Come on, then; I will swear to study so,
To know the thing I am forbid to know:
As thus,—to study where I well may dine,
When I to feast expressly am forbid;
Or study where to meet some mistress fine,
When mistresses from common sense are hid;
Or, having sworn too hard a keeping oath,
Study to break it and not break my troth.
If study's gain be thus and this be so,
Study knows that which yet it doth not know:
Swear me to this, and I will ne'er say no.

FERDINAND

These be the stops that hinder study quite
And train our intellects to vain delight.

BIRON

Why, all delights are vain; but that most vain,
Which with pain purchased doth inherit pain:
As, painfully to pore upon a book
To seek the light of truth; while truth the while
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look:
Light seeking light doth light of light beguile:
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
Study me how to please the eye indeed
By fixing it upon a fairer eye,
Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed
And give him light that it was blinded by.
Study is like the heaven's glorious sun
That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks:
Small have continual plodders ever won
Save base authority from others' books
These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights
That give a name to every fixed star
Have no more profit of their shining nights
Than those that walk and wot not what they are.
Too much to know is to know nought but fame;
And every godfather can give a name.

FERDINAND

How well he's read, to reason against reading!

DUMAIN

Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding!

LONGAVILLE

He weeds the corn and still lets grow the weeding.

BIRON

The spring is near when green geese are a-breeding.

DUMAIN

How follows that?

BIRON

Fit in his place and time.

DUMAIN

In reason nothing.

BIRON

Something then in rhyme.

FERDINAND

Biron is like an envious sneaping frost,
That bites the first-born infants of the spring.

BIRON

Well, say I am; why should proud summer boast
Before the birds have any cause to sing?
Why should I joy in any abortive birth?
At Christmas I no more desire a rose
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth;
But like of each thing that in season grows.
So you, to study now it is too late,
Climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate.

FERDINAND

Well, sit you out: go home, Biron: adieu.

BIRON

No, my good lord; I have sworn to stay with you:
And though I have for barbarism spoke more
Than for that angel knowledge you can say,
Yet confident I'll keep what I have swore
And bide the penance of each three years' day.
Give me the paper; let me read the same;
And to the strict'st decrees I'll write my name.

FERDINAND

How well this yielding rescues thee from shame!

BIRON

[Reads] 'Item, That no woman shall come within a
mile of my court:' Hath this been proclaimed?

LONGAVILLE

Four days ago.

BIRON

Let's see the penalty.

Reads

'On pain of losing her tongue.' Who devised this penalty?

LONGAVILLE

Marry, that did I.

BIRON

Sweet lord, and why?

LONGAVILLE

To fright them hence with that dread penalty.

BIRON

A dangerous law against gentility!

Reads

'Item, If any man be seen to talk with a woman
within the term of three years, he shall endure such
public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise.'
This article, my liege, yourself must break;
For well you know here comes in embassy
The French king's daughter with yourself to speak--
A maid of grace and complete majesty--
About surrender up of Aquitaine
To her decrepit, sick and bedrid father:
Therefore this article is made in vain,
Or vainly comes the admired princess hither.

FERDINAND

What say you, lords? Why, this was quite forgot.

BIRON

So study evermore is overshot:
While it doth study to have what it would
It doth forget to do the thing it should,
And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,
'Tis won as towns with fire, so won, so lost.

FERDINAND

We must of force dispense with this decree;
She must lie here on mere necessity.

BIRON

Necessity will make us all forsworn
Three thousand times within this three years' space;
For every man with his affects is born,
Not by might master'd but by special grace:
If I break faith, this word shall speak for me;
I am forsworn on 'mere necessity.'
So to the laws at large I write my name:

Subscribes

And he that breaks them in the least degree
Stands in attainder of eternal shame:
Suggestions are to other as to me;
But I believe, although I seem so loath,

I am the last that will last keep his oath.
But is there no quick recreation granted?

FERDINAND

Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is haunted
With a refined traveller of Spain;
A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;
One whom the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony;
A man of complements, whom right and wrong
Have chose as umpire of their mutiny:
This child of fancy, that Armado hight,
For interim to our studies shall relate
In high-born words the worth of many a knight
From tawny Spain lost in the world's debate.
How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;
But, I protest, I love to hear him lie
And I will use him for my minstrelsy.

BIRON

Armado is a most illustrious wight,
A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight.

LONGAVILLE

Costard the swain and he shall be our sport;
And so to study, three years is but short.

Enter DULL with a letter, and COSTARD

DULL

Which is the duke's own person?

BIRON

This, fellow: what wouldst?

DULL

I myself reprehend his own person, for I am his
grace's tharborough: but I would see his own person
in flesh and blood.

BIRON

This is he.

DULL

Signior Arme—Arme—commends you. There's villany abroad: this letter will tell you more.

COSTARD

Sir, the contempts thereof are as touching me.

FERDINAND

A letter from the magnificent Armado.

BIRON

How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high words.

LONGAVILLE

A high hope for a low heaven: God grant us patience!

BIRON

To hear? or forbear laughing?

LONGAVILLE

To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately; or to forbear both.

BIRON

Well, sir, be it as the style shall give us cause to climb in the merriness.

COSTARD

The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

BIRON

In what manner?

COSTARD

In manner and form following, sir; all those three:
I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with
her upon the form, and taken following her into the
park; which, put together, is in manner and form
following. Now, sir, for the manner,—it is the
manner of a man to speak to a woman: for the form,—
in some form.

BIRON

For the following, sir?

COSTARD

As it shall follow in my correction: and God defend
the right!

FERDINAND

Will you hear this letter with attention?

BIRON

As we would hear an oracle.

COSTARD

Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'Great deputy, the welkin's vicegerent and
sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god,
and body's fostering patron.'

COSTARD

Not a word of Costard yet.

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'So it is,'—

COSTARD

It may be so: but if he say it is so, he is, in
telling true, but so.

FERDINAND

Peace!

COSTARD

Be to me and every man that dares not fight!

FERDINAND

No words!

COSTARD

Of other men's secrets, I beseech you.

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'So it is, besieged with sable-coloured melancholy, I did commend the black-oppressing humour to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. The time when. About the sixth hour; when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper: so much for the time when. Now for the ground which; which, I mean, I walked upon: it is y-cleped thy park. Then for the place where; where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene and preposterous event, that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebon-coloured ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest; but to the place where; it standeth north-north-east and by east from the west corner of thy curious-knotted garden: there did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth,'--

COSTARD

Me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'that unlettered small-knowing soul,'--

COSTARD

Me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'that shallow vassal,'—

COSTARD

Still me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'which, as I remember, hight Costard,'—

COSTARD

O, me!

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and continent canon, which with,—O, with—but with this I passion to say wherewith,—

COSTARD

With a wench.

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment, by thy sweet grace's officer, Anthony Dull; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation.'

DULL

'Me, an't shall please you; I am Anthony Dull.

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'For Jaquenetta,—so is the weaker vessel called which I apprehended with the aforesaid swain,—I keep her as a vessel of the law's fury; and shall, at the least of thy sweet notice, bring

her to trial. Thine, in all compliments of devoted
and heart-burning heat of duty.
DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'

BIRON

This is not so well as I looked for, but the best
that ever I heard.

FERDINAND

Ay, the best for the worst. But, sirrah, what say
you to this?

COSTARD

Sir, I confess the wench.

FERDINAND

Did you hear the proclamation?

COSTARD

I do confess much of the hearing it but little of
the marking of it.

FERDINAND

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken
with a wench.

COSTARD

I was taken with none, sir: I was taken with a damsel.

FERDINAND

Well, it was proclaimed 'damsel.'

COSTARD

This was no damsel, neither, sir; she was a virgin.

FERDINAND

It is so varied, too; for it was proclaimed 'virgin.'

COSTARD

If it were, I deny her virginity: I was taken with a maid.

FERDINAND

This maid will not serve your turn, sir.

COSTARD

This maid will serve my turn, sir.

FERDINAND

Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast
a week with bran and water.

COSTARD

I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge.

FERDINAND

And Don Armado shall be your keeper.
My Lord Biron, see him deliver'd o'er:
And go we, lords, to put in practise that
Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

Exeunt FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN

BIRON

I'll lay my head to any good man's hat,
These oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn.
Sirrah, come on.

COSTARD

I suffer for the truth, sir; for true it is, I was
taken with Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true
girl; and therefore welcome the sour cup of
prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and
till then, sit thee down, sorrow!

Exeunt

Act 1, Scene 2

The same.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and MOTH

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit
grows melancholy?

MOTH

A great sign, sir, that he will look sad.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Why, sadness is one and the self-same thing, dear imp.

MOTH

No, no; O Lord, sir, no.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

How canst thou part sadness and melancholy, my
tender juvenal?

MOTH

By a familiar demonstration of the working, my tough senior.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Why tough senior? why tough senior?

MOTH

Why tender juvenal? why tender juvenal?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I spoke it, tender juvenal, as a congruent epitheton
appertaining to thy young days, which we may
nominate tender.

MOTH

And I, tough senior, as an appertinent title to your
old time, which we may name tough.

ARMADO

Pretty and apt.

MOTH

How mean you, sir? I pretty, and my saying apt? or
I apt, and my saying pretty?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Thou pretty, because little.

MOTH

Little pretty, because little. Wherefore apt?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

And therefore apt, because quick.

MOTH

Speak you this in my praise, master?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

In thy condign praise.

MOTH

I will praise an eel with the same praise.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

What, that an eel is ingenious?

MOTH

That an eel is quick.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do say thou art quick in answers: thou heatest my blood.

MOTH

I am answered, sir.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I love not to be crossed.

MOTH

[Aside] He speaks the mere contrary; crosses love not him.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I have promised to study three years with the duke.

MOTH

You may do it in an hour, sir.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Impossible.

MOTH

How many is one thrice told?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I am ill at reckoning; it fitteth the spirit of a tapster.

MOTH

You are a gentleman and a gamester, sir.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I confess both: they are both the varnish of a complete man.

MOTH

Then, I am sure, you know how much the gross sum of deuce-ace amounts to.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

It doth amount to one more than two.

MOTH

Which the base vulgar do call three.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

True.

MOTH

Why, sir, is this such a piece of study? Now here is three studied, ere ye'll thrice wink: and how easy it is to put 'years' to the word 'three,' and study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

A most fine figure!

MOTH

To prove you a cipher.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will hereupon confess I am in love: and as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base wench. If drawing my sword against the humour of affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought of it, I would take Desire prisoner, and ransom him to any French courtier for a new-devised courtesy. I think scorn to sigh: methinks I should outswear Cupid. Comfort, me, boy: what great men have been in love?

MOTH

Hercules, master.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Most sweet Hercules! More authority, dear boy, name more; and, sweet my child, let them be men of good repute and carriage.

MOTH

Samson, master: he was a man of good carriage, great carriage, for he carried the town-gates on his back like a porter: and he was in love.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

O well-knit Samson! strong-jointed Samson! I do excel thee in my rapier as much as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in love too. Who was Samson's love, my dear Moth?

MOTH

A woman, master.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Of what complexion?

MOTH

Of all the four, or the three, or the two, or one of the four.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Tell me precisely of what complexion.

MOTH

Of the sea-water green, sir.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Is that one of the four complexions?

MOTH

As I have read, sir; and the best of them too.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Green indeed is the colour of lovers; but to have a love of that colour, methinks Samson had small reason for it. He surely affected her for her wit.

MOTH

It was so, sir; for she had a green wit.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

My love is most immaculate white and red.

MOTH

Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked under
such colours.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Define, define, well-educated infant.

MOTH

My father's wit and my mother's tongue, assist me!

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet invocation of a child; most pretty and
pathetical!

MOTH

If she be made of white and red,
Her faults will ne'er be known,
For blushing cheeks by faults are bred
And fears by pale white shown:
Then if she fear, or be to blame,
By this you shall not know,
For still her cheeks possess the same
Which native she doth owe.
A dangerous rhyme, master, against the reason of
white and red.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?

MOTH

The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages since: but I think now 'tis not to be found; or, if it were, it would neither serve for the writing nor the tune.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will have that subject newly writ o'er, that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent. Boy, I do love that country girl that I took in the park with the rational hind Costard: she deserves well.

MOTH

[Aside] To be whipped; and yet a better love than my master.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sing, boy; my spirit grows heavy in love.

MOTH

And that's great marvel, loving a light wench.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I say, sing.

MOTH

Forbear till this company be past.

Enter DULL, COSTARD, and JAQUENETTA

DULL

Sir, the duke's pleasure is, that you keep Costard safe: and you must suffer him to take no delight nor no penance; but a' must fast three days a week. For this damsel, I must keep her at the park: she is allowed for the day—woman. Fare you well.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!

JAQUENETTA

Man?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will visit thee at the lodge.

JAQUENETTA

That's hereby.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I know where it is situate.

JAQUENETTA

Lord, how wise you are!

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will tell thee wonders.

JAQUENETTA

With that face?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I love thee.

JAQUENETTA

So I heard you say.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

And so, farewell.

JAQUENETTA

Fair weather after you!

DULL

Come, Jaquenetta, away!

Exeunt DULL and JAQUENETTA

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences ere thou
be pardoned.

COSTARD

Well, sir, I hope, when I do it, I shall do it on a
full stomach.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Thou shalt be heavily punished.

COSTARD

I am more bound to you than your fellows, for they
are but lightly rewarded.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Take away this villain; shut him up.

MOTH

Come, you transgressing slave; away!

COSTARD

Let me not be pent up, sir: I will fast, being loose.

MOTH

No, sir; that were fast and loose: thou shalt to prison.

COSTARD

Well, if ever I do see the merry days of desolation
that I have seen, some shall see.

MOTH

What shall some see?

COSTARD

Nay, nothing, Master Moth, but what they look upon.
It is not for prisoners to be too silent in their
words; and therefore I will say nothing: I thank
God I have as little patience as another man; and
therefore I can be quiet.

Exeunt MOTH and COSTARD

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do affect the very ground, which is base, where
her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which
is basest, doth tread. I shall be forsworn, which
is a great argument of falsehood, if I love. And
how can that be true love which is falsely
attempted? Love is a familiar; Love is a devil:
there is no evil angel but Love. Yet was Samson so
tempted, and he had an excellent strength; yet was
Solomon so seduced, and he had a very good wit.
Cupid's butt-shaft is too hard for Hercules' club;
and therefore too much odds for a Spaniard's rapier.
The first and second cause will not serve my turn;
the passado he respects not, the duello he regards
not: his disgrace is to be called boy; but his
glory is to subdue men. Adieu, valour! rust rapier!
be still, drum! for your manager is in love; yea,
he loveth. Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme,
for I am sure I shall turn sonnet. Devise, wit;
write, pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio.

Exit

Act 2, Scene 1

The same.

Enter the PRINCESS of France, ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, BOYET, Lords, and other Attendants

BOYET

Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits:
Consider who the king your father sends,
To whom he sends, and what's his embassy:
Yourself, held precious in the world's esteem,
To parley with the sole inheritor
Of all perfections that a man may owe,
Matchless Navarre; the plea of no less weight

Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.
Be now as prodigal of all dear grace
As Nature was in making graces dear
When she did starve the general world beside
And prodigally gave them all to you.

PRINCESS

Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:
Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye,
Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues:
I am less proud to hear you tell my worth
Than you much willing to be counted wise
In spending your wit in the praise of mine.
But now to task the tasker: good Boyet,
You are not ignorant, all-telling fame
Doth noise abroad, Navarre hath made a vow,
Till painful study shall outwear three years,
No woman may approach his silent court:
Therefore to's seemeth it a needful course,
Before we enter his forbidden gates,
To know his pleasure; and in that behalf,
Bold of your worthiness, we single you
As our best-moving fair solicitor.
Tell him, the daughter of the King of France,
On serious business, craving quick dispatch,
Importunes personal conference with his grace:
Haste, signify so much; while we attend,
Like humble-visaged suitors, his high will.

BOYET

Proud of employment, willingly I go.

PRINCESS

All pride is willing pride, and yours is so.

Exit BOYET

Who are the votaries, my loving lords,
That are vow-fellows with this virtuous duke?

First Lord

Lord Longaville is one.

PRINCESS

Know you the man?

MARIA

I know him, madam: at a marriage-feast,
Between Lord Perigort and the beauteous heir
Of Jaques Falconbridge, solemnized
In Normandy, saw I this Longaville:
A man of sovereign parts he is esteem'd;
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms:
Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.
The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,
If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,
Is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will;
Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills
It should none spare that come within his power.

PRINCESS

Some merry mocking lord, belike; is't so?

MARIA

They say so most that most his humours know.

PRINCESS

Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow.
Who are the rest?

KATHARINE

The young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth,
Of all that virtue love for virtue loved:
Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill;
For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,
And shape to win grace though he had no wit.
I saw him at the Duke Alencon's once;
And much too little of that good I saw
Is my report to his great worthiness.

ROSALINE

Another of these students at that time
Was there with him, if I have heard a truth.
Biron they call him; but a merrier man,

Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one doth catch
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
Delivers in such apt and gracious words
That aged ears play truant at his tales
And younger hearings are quite ravished;
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

PRINCESS

God bless my ladies! are they all in love,
That every one her own hath garnished
With such bedecking ornaments of praise?

First Lord

Here comes Boyet.

Re-enter BOYET

PRINCESS

Now, what admittance, lord?

BOYET

Navarre had notice of your fair approach;
And he and his competitors in oath
Were all address'd to meet you, gentle lady,
Before I came. Marry, thus much I have learnt:
He rather means to lodge you in the field,
Like one that comes here to besiege his court,
Than seek a dispensation for his oath,
To let you enter his unpeopled house.
Here comes Navarre.

Enter FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, DUMAIN, BIRON, and Attendants

FERDINAND

Fair princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.

PRINCESS

'Fair' I give you back again; and 'welcome' I have not yet: the roof of this court is too high to be yours; and welcome to the wide fields too base to be mine.

FERDINAND

You shall be welcome, madam, to my court.

PRINCESS

I will be welcome, then: conduct me thither.

FERDINAND

Hear me, dear lady; I have sworn an oath.

PRINCESS

Our Lady help my lord! he'll be forsworn.

FERDINAND

Not for the world, fair madam, by my will.

PRINCESS

Why, will shall break it; will and nothing else.

FERDINAND

Your ladyship is ignorant what it is.

PRINCESS

Were my lord so, his ignorance were wise,
Where now his knowledge must prove ignorance.
I hear your grace hath sworn out house-keeping:
Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord,
And sin to break it.
But pardon me. I am too sudden-bold:
To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me.
Vouchsafe to read the purpose of my coming,
And suddenly resolve me in my suit.

FERDINAND

Madam, I will, if suddenly I may.

PRINCESS

You will the sooner, that I were away;
For you'll prove perjured if you make me stay.

BIRON

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

ROSALINE

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

BIRON

I know you did.

ROSALINE

How needless was it then to ask the question!

BIRON

You must not be so quick.

ROSALINE

'Tis 'long of you that spur me with such questions.

BIRON

Your wit's too hot, it speeds too fast, 'twill tire.

ROSALINE

Not till it leave the rider in the mire.

BIRON

What time o' day?

ROSALINE

The hour that fools should ask.

BIRON

Now fair befall your mask!

ROSALINE

Fair fall the face it covers!

BIRON

And send you many lovers!

ROSALINE

Amen, so you be none.

BIRON

Nay, then will I be gone.

FERDINAND

Madam, your father here doth intimate
The payment of a hundred thousand crowns;
Being but the one half of an entire sum
Disbursed by my father in his wars.
But say that he or we, as neither have,
Received that sum, yet there remains unpaid
A hundred thousand more; in surety of the which,
One part of Aquitaine is bound to us,
Although not valued to the money's worth.
If then the king your father will restore
But that one half which is unsatisfied,
We will give up our right in Aquitaine,
And hold fair friendship with his majesty.
But that, it seems, he little purposeth,
For here he doth demand to have repaid
A hundred thousand crowns; and not demands,
On payment of a hundred thousand crowns,
To have his title live in Aquitaine;
Which we much rather had depart withal
And have the money by our father lent
Than Aquitaine so gelded as it is.
Dear Princess, were not his requests so far
From reason's yielding, your fair self should make
A yielding 'gainst some reason in my breast
And go well satisfied to France again.

PRINCESS

You do the king my father too much wrong
And wrong the reputation of your name,
In so unseemingly to confess receipt
Of that which hath so faithfully been paid.

FERDINAND

I do protest I never heard of it;
And if you prove it, I'll repay it back
Or yield up Aquitaine.

PRINCESS

We arrest your word.
Boyet, you can produce acquittances
For such a sum from special officers
Of Charles his father.

FERDINAND

Satisfy me so.

BOYET

So please your grace, the packet is not come
Where that and other specialties are bound:
To-morrow you shall have a sight of them.

FERDINAND

It shall suffice me: at which interview
All liberal reason I will yield unto.
Meantime receive such welcome at my hand
As honour without breach of honour may
Make tender of to thy true worthiness:
You may not come, fair princess, in my gates;
But here without you shall be so received
As you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart,
Though so denied fair harbour in my house.
Your own good thoughts excuse me, and farewell:
To-morrow shall we visit you again.

PRINCESS

Sweet health and fair desires consort your grace!

FERDINAND

Thy own wish wish I thee in every place!

Exit

BIRON

Lady, I will commend you to mine own heart.

ROSALINE

Pray you, do my commendations; I would be glad to see it.

BIRON

I would you heard it groan.

ROSALINE

Is the fool sick?

BIRON

Sick at the heart.

ROSALINE

Alack, let it blood.

BIRON

Would that do it good?

ROSALINE

My physic says 'ay.'

BIRON

Will you prick't with your eye?

ROSALINE

No point, with my knife.

BIRON

Now, God save thy life!

ROSALINE

And yours from long living!

BIRON

I cannot stay thanksgiving.

Retiring

DUMAIN

Sir, I pray you, a word: what lady is that same?

BOYET

The heir of Alencon, Katharine her name.

DUMAIN

A gallant lady. Monsieur, fare you well.

Exit

LONGAVILLE

I beseech you a word: what is she in the white?

BOYET

A woman sometimes, an you saw her in the light.

LONGAVILLE

Perchance light in the light. I desire her name.

BOYET

She hath but one for herself; to desire that were a shame.

LONGAVILLE

Pray you, sir, whose daughter?

BOYET

Her mother's, I have heard.

LONGAVILLE

God's blessing on your beard!

BOYET

Good sir, be not offended.
She is an heir of Falconbridge.

LONGAVILLE

Nay, my choler is ended.
She is a most sweet lady.

BOYET

Not unlike, sir, that may be.

Exit LONGAVILLE

BIRON

What's her name in the cap?

BOYET

Rosaline, by good hap.

BIRON

Is she wedded or no?

BOYET

To her will, sir, or so.

BIRON

You are welcome, sir: adieu.

BOYET

Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you.

Exit BIRON

MARIA

That last is Biron, the merry madcap lord:
Not a word with him but a jest.

BOYET

And every jest but a word.

PRINCESS

It was well done of you to take him at his word.

BOYET

I was as willing to grapple as he was to board.

MARIA

Two hot sheeps, marry.

BOYET

And wherefore not ships?
No sheep, sweet lamb, unless we feed on your lips.

MARIA

You sheep, and I pasture: shall that finish the jest?

BOYET

So you grant pasture for me.

Offering to kiss her

MARIA

Not so, gentle beast:
My lips are no common, though several they be.

BOYET

Belonging to whom?

MARIA

To my fortunes and me.

PRINCESS

Good wits will be jangling; but, gentles, agree:
This civil war of wits were much better used
On Navarre and his book-men; for here 'tis abused.

BOYET

If my observation, which very seldom lies,
By the heart's still rhetoric disclosed with eyes,
Deceive me not now, Navarre is infected.

PRINCESS

With what?

BOYET

With that which we lovers entitle affected.

PRINCESS

Your reason?

BOYET

Why, all his behaviors did make their retire
To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire:
His heart, like an agate, with your print impress'd,
Proud with his form, in his eye pride express'd:
His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,
Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be;
All senses to that sense did make their repair,
To feel only looking on fairest of fair:
Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,
As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy;
Who, tendering their own worth from where they were glass'd,
Did point you to buy them, along as you pass'd:
His face's own margent did quote such amazes
That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.
I'll give you Aquitaine and all that is his,
An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.

PRINCESS

Come to our pavilion: Boyet is disposed.

BOYET

But to speak that in words which his eye hath
disclosed.
I only have made a mouth of his eye,
By adding a tongue which I know will not lie.

ROSALINE

Thou art an old love-monger and speakest skilfully.

MARIA

He is Cupid's grandfather and learns news of him.

ROSALINE

Then was Venus like her mother, for her father is but grim.

BOYET

Do you hear, my mad wenches?

MARIA

No.

BOYET

What then, do you see?

ROSALINE

Ay, our way to be gone.

BOYET

You are too hard for me.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 1

The same.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and MOTH

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Warble, child; make passionate my sense of hearing.

MOTH

Concolinel.

Singing

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet air! Go, tenderness of years; take this key,
give enlargement to the swain, bring him festinately
hither: I must employ him in a letter to my love.

MOTH

Master, will you win your love with a French brawl?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

How meanest thou? brawling in French?

MOTH

No, my complete master: but to jig off a tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humour it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note, sometime through the throat, as if you swallowed love with singing love, sometime through the nose, as if you snuffed up love by smelling love; with your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of your eyes; with your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in your pocket like a man after the old painting; and keep not too long in one tune, but a snip and away. These are complements, these are humours; these betray nice wenches, that would be betrayed without these; and make them men of note—do you note me?—that most are affected to these.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

How hast thou purchased this experience?

MOTH

By my penny of observation.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

But O,—but O,—

MOTH

'The hobby-horse is forgot.'

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Callest thou my love 'hobby-horse'?

MOTH

No, master; the hobby-horse is but a colt, and your love perhaps a hackney. But have you forgot your love?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Almost I had.

MOTH

Negligent student! learn her by heart.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By heart and in heart, boy.

MOTH

And out of heart, master: all those three I will prove.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

What wilt thou prove?

MOTH

A man, if I live; and this, by, in, and without, upon the instant: by heart you love her, because your heart cannot come by her; in heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her; and out of heart you love her, being out of heart that you cannot enjoy her.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I am all these three.

MOTH

And three times as much more, and yet nothing at all.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Fetch hither the swain: he must carry me a letter.

MOTH

A message well sympathized; a horse to be ambassador for an ass.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Ha, ha! what sayest thou?

MOTH

Marry, sir, you must send the ass upon the horse,
for he is very slow-gaited. But I go.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The way is but short: away!

MOTH

As swift as lead, sir.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The meaning, pretty ingenious?
Is not lead a metal heavy, dull, and slow?

MOTH

Minime, honest master; or rather, master, no.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I say lead is slow.

MOTH

You are too swift, sir, to say so:
Is that lead slow which is fired from a gun?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet smoke of rhetoric!
He reutes me a cannon; and the bullet, that's he:
I shoot thee at the swain.

MOTH

Thump then and I flee.

Exit

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

A most acute juvenal; voluble and free of grace!
By thy favour, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face:
Most rude melancholy, valour gives thee place.
My herald is return'd.

Re-enter MOTH with COSTARD

MOTH

A wonder, master! here's a costard broken in a shin.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Some enigma, some riddle: come, thy l'envoy; begin.

COSTARD

No enigma, no riddle, no l'envoy; no salve in the
mail, sir: O, sir, plantain, a plain plantain! no
l'envoy, no l'envoy; no salve, sir, but a plantain!

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By virtue, thou enforcest laughter; thy silly
thought my spleen; the heaving of my lungs provokes
me to ridiculous smiling. O, pardon me, my stars!
Doth the inconsiderate take salve for l'envoy, and
the word l'envoy for a salve?

MOTH

Do the wise think them other? is not l'envoy a salve?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

No, page: it is an epilogue or discourse, to make plain
Some obscure precedence that hath tofore been said.
I will example it:
The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,
Were still at odds, being but three.
There's the moral. Now the l'envoy.

MOTH

I will add the l'envoy. Say the moral again.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,
Were still at odds, being but three.

MOTH

Until the goose came out of door,
And stay'd the odds by adding four.
Now will I begin your moral, and do you follow with
my l'envoy.
The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,
Were still at odds, being but three.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Until the goose came out of door,
Staying the odds by adding four.

MOTH

A good l'envoy, ending in the goose: would you
desire more?

COSTARD

The boy hath sold him a bargain, a goose, that's flat.
Sir, your pennyworth is good, an your goose be fat.
To sell a bargain well is as cunning as fast and loose:
Let me see; a fat l'envoy; ay, that's a fat goose.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Come hither, come hither. How did this argument begin?

MOTH

By saying that a costard was broken in a shin.
Then call'd you for the l'envoy.

COSTARD

True, and I for a plantain: thus came your
argument in;
Then the boy's fat l'envoy, the goose that you bought;
And he ended the market.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

But tell me; how was there a costard broken in a shin?

MOTH

I will tell you sensibly.

COSTARD

Thou hast no feeling of it, Moth: I will speak that l'envoy:
I Costard, running out, that was safely within,
Fell over the threshold and broke my shin.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

We will talk no more of this matter.

COSTARD

Till there be more matter in the shin.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee.

COSTARD

O, marry me to one Frances: I smell some l'envoy,
some goose, in this.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty,
enfreesing thy person; thou wert immured,
restrained, captivated, bound.

COSTARD

True, true; and now you will be my purgation and let me loose.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I give thee thy liberty, set thee from durance; and,
in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this:
bear this significant

Giving a letter

to the country maid Jaquenetta:
there is remuneration; for the best ward of mine
honour is rewarding my dependents. Moth, follow.

Exit

MOTH

Like the sequel, I, Signior Costard, adieu.

COSTARD

My sweet ounce of man's flesh! my incony Jew!

Exit MOTH

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration!
O, that's the Latin word for three farthings: three
farthings—remuneration.—'What's the price of this
inkle?'—'One penny.'—'No, I'll give you a
remuneration:' why, it carries it. Remuneration!
why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will
never buy and sell out of this word.

Enter BIRON

BIRON

O, my good knave Costard! exceedingly well met.

COSTARD

Pray you, sir, how much carnation ribbon may a man
buy for a remuneration?

BIRON

What is a remuneration?

COSTARD

Marry, sir, halfpenny farthing.

BIRON

Why, then, three-farthing worth of silk.

COSTARD

I thank your worship: God be wi' you!

BIRON

Stay, slave; I must employ thee:
As thou wilt win my favour, good my knave,
Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.

COSTARD

When would you have it done, sir?

BIRON

This afternoon.

COSTARD

Well, I will do it, sir: fare you well.

BIRON

Thou knowest not what it is.

COSTARD

I shall know, sir, when I have done it.

BIRON

Why, villain, thou must know first.

COSTARD

I will come to your worship to-morrow morning.

BIRON

It must be done this afternoon.
Hark, slave, it is but this:
The princess comes to hunt here in the park,
And in her train there is a gentle lady;
When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,
And Rosaline they call her: ask for her;
And to her white hand see thou do commend
This seal'd-up counsel. There's thy guerdon; go.

Giving him a shilling

COSTARD

Gardon, O sweet gardon! better than remuneration,
a'leven-pence farthing better: most sweet gardon! I
will do it sir, in print. Gardon! Remuneration!

Exit

BIRON

And I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been love's whip;
A very beadle to a humorous sigh;
A critic, nay, a night-watch constable;
A domineering pedant o'er the boy;
Than whom no mortal so magnificent!
This whimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy;
This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid;
Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms,
The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,
Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,
Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,
Sole imperator and great general
Of trotting 'paritors:—O my little heart:—
And I to be a corporal of his field,
And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop!
What, I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
A woman, that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,
And never going aright, being a watch,
But being watch'd that it may still go right!
Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all;
And, among three, to love the worst of all;
A wightly wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;

Ay, and by heaven, one that will do the deed
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard:
And I to sigh for her! to watch for her!
To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
That Cupid will impose for my neglect
Of his almighty dreadful little might.
Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan:
Some men must love my lady and some Joan.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 1

The same.

Enter the PRINCESS, and her train, a Forester, BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE

PRINCESS

Was that the king, that spurred his horse so hard
Against the steep uprising of the hill?

BOYET

I know not; but I think it was not he.

PRINCESS

Whoe'er a' was, a' show'd a mounting mind.
Well, lords, to-day we shall have our dispatch:
On Saturday we will return to France.
Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush
That we must stand and play the murderer in?

Forester

Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice;
A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.

PRINCESS

I thank my beauty, I am fair that shoot,
And thereupon thou speak'st the fairest shoot.

Forester

Pardon me, madam, for I meant not so.

PRINCESS

What, what? first praise me and again say no?
O short-lived pride! Not fair? alack for woe!

Forester

Yes, madam, fair.

PRINCESS

Nay, never paint me now:
Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.
Here, good my glass, take this for telling true:
Fair payment for foul words is more than due.

Forester

Nothing but fair is that which you inherit.

PRINCESS

See see, my beauty will be saved by merit!
O heresy in fair, fit for these days!
A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.
But come, the bow: now mercy goes to kill,
And shooting well is then accounted ill.
Thus will I save my credit in the shoot:
Not wounding, pity would not let me do't;
If wounding, then it was to show my skill,
That more for praise than purpose meant to kill.
And out of question so it is sometimes,
Glory grows guilty of detested crimes,
When, for fame's sake, for praise, an outward part,
We bend to that the working of the heart;
As I for praise alone now seek to spill
The poor deer's blood, that my heart means no ill.

BOYET

Do not curst wives hold that self-sovereignty
Only for praise sake, when they strive to be
Lords o'er their lords?

PRINCESS

Only for praise: and praise we may afford
To any lady that subdues a lord.

BOYET

Here comes a member of the commonwealth.

Enter COSTARD

COSTARD

God dig–you–den all! Pray you, which is the head lady?

PRINCESS

Thou shalt know her, fellow, by the rest that have no heads.

COSTARD

Which is the greatest lady, the highest?

PRINCESS

The thickest and the tallest.

COSTARD

The thickest and the tallest! it is so; truth is truth.
An your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit,
One o' these maids' girdles for your waist should be fit.
Are not you the chief woman? you are the thickest here.

PRINCESS

What's your will, sir? what's your will?

COSTARD

I have a letter from Monsieur Biron to one Lady Rosaline.

PRINCESS

O, thy letter, thy letter! he's a good friend of mine:
Stand aside, good bearer. Boyet, you can carve;
Break up this capon.

BOYET

I am bound to serve.
This letter is mistook, it importeth none here;
It is writ to Jaquenetta.

PRINCESS

We will read it, I swear.
Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.

Reads

BOYET

'By heaven, that thou art fair, is most infallible;
true, that thou art beauteous; truth itself, that
thou art lovely. More fairer than fair, beautiful
than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have
commiseration on thy heroical vassal! The
magnanimous and most illustrious king Cophetua set
eye upon the pernicious and indubitable beggar
Zenelophon; and he it was that might rightly say,
Veni, vidi, vici; which to annothimize in the
vulgar,—O base and obscure vulgar!—videlicet, He
came, saw, and overcame: he came, one; saw two;
overcame, three. Who came? the king: why did he
come? to see: why did he see? to overcome: to
whom came he? to the beggar: what saw he? the
beggar: who overcame he? the beggar. The
conclusion is victory: on whose side? the king's.
The captive is enriched: on whose side? the
beggar's. The catastrophe is a nuptial: on whose
side? the king's: no, on both in one, or one in
both. I am the king; for so stands the comparison:
thou the beggar; for so witnesseth thy lowliness.
Shall I command thy love? I may: shall I enforce
thy love? I could: shall I entreat thy love? I
will. What shalt thou exchange for rags? robes;
for tittles? titles; for thyself? me. Thus,
expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot,
my eyes on thy picture. and my heart on thy every
part. Thine, in the dearest design of industry,
DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'

Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar
'Gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey.
Submissive fall his princely feet before,
And he from forage will incline to play:
But if thou strive, poor soul, what art thou then?
Food for his rage, repasture for his den.

PRINCESS

What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?
What vane? what weathercock? did you ever hear better?

BOYET

I am much deceived but I remember the style.

PRINCESS

Else your memory is bad, going o'er it erewhile.

BOYET

This Armado is a Spaniard, that keeps here in court;
A phantasime, a Monarcho, and one that makes sport
To the prince and his bookmates.

PRINCESS

Thou fellow, a word:
Who gave thee this letter?

COSTARD

I told you; my lord.

PRINCESS

To whom shouldst thou give it?

COSTARD

From my lord to my lady.

PRINCESS

From which lord to which lady?

COSTARD

From my lord Biron, a good master of mine,
To a lady of France that he call'd Rosaline.

PRINCESS

Thou hast mistaken his letter. Come, lords, away.

To ROSALINE

Here, sweet, put up this: 'twill be thine another day.

Exeunt PRINCESS and train

BOYET

Who is the suitor? who is the suitor?

ROSALINE

Shall I teach you to know?

BOYET

Ay, my continent of beauty.

ROSALINE

Why, she that bears the bow.
Finely put off!

BOYET

My lady goes to kill horns; but, if thou marry,
Hang me by the neck, if horns that year miscarry.
Finely put on!

ROSALINE

Well, then, I am the shooter.

BOYET

And who is your deer?

ROSALINE

If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near.
Finely put on, indeed!

MARIA

You still wrangle with her, Boyet, and she strikes
at the brow.

BOYET

But she herself is hit lower: have I hit her now?

ROSALINE

Shall I come upon thee with an old saying, that was
a man when King Pepin of France was a little boy, as
touching the hit it?

BOYET

So I may answer thee with one as old, that was a
woman when Queen Guinover of Britain was a little
wench, as touching the hit it.

ROSALINE

Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it,
Thou canst not hit it, my good man.

BOYET

An I cannot, cannot, cannot,
An I cannot, another can.

Exeunt ROSALINE and KATHARINE

COSTARD

By my troth, most pleasant: how both did fit it!

MARIA

A mark marvellous well shot, for they both did hit it.

BOYET

A mark! O, mark but that mark! A mark, says my lady!
Let the mark have a prick in't, to mete at, if it may be.

MARIA

Wide o' the bow hand! i' faith, your hand is out.

COSTARD

Indeed, a' must shoot nearer, or he'll ne'er hit the clout.

BOYET

An if my hand be out, then belike your hand is in.

COSTARD

Then will she get the upshoot by cleaving the pin.

MARIA

Come, come, you talk greasily; your lips grow foul.

COSTARD

She's too hard for you at pricks, sir: challenge her to bowl.

BOYET

I fear too much rubbing. Good night, my good owl.

Exeunt BOYET and MARIA

COSTARD

By my soul, a swain! a most simple clown!
Lord, Lord, how the ladies and I have put him down!
O' my troth, most sweet jests! most incony
vulgar wit!
When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it
were, so fit.
Armado o' th' one side,—O, a most dainty man!
To see him walk before a lady and to bear her fan!
To see him kiss his hand! and how most sweetly a'
will swear!
And his page o' t' other side, that handful of wit!
Ah, heavens, it is a most pathological nit!
Sola, sola!

Shout within

Exit COSTARD, running

Act 4, Scene 2

The same.

Enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and DULL

SIR NATHANIEL

Very reverend sport, truly; and done in the testimony
of a good conscience.

HOLOFERNES

The deer was, as you know, sanguis, in blood; ripe
as the pomewater, who now hangeth like a jewel in
the ear of caelo, the sky, the welkin, the heaven;
and anon falleth like a crab on the face of terra,
the soil, the land, the earth.

SIR NATHANIEL

Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets are sweetly
varied, like a scholar at the least: but, sir, I
assure ye, it was a buck of the first head.

HOLOFERNES

Sir Nathaniel, haud credo.

DULL

'Twas not a haud credo; 'twas a pricket.

HOLOFERNES

Most barbarous intimation! yet a kind of
insinuation, as it were, in via, in way, of
explication; facere, as it were, replication, or
rather, ostentare, to show, as it were, his
inclination, after his undressed, unpolished,
uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or rather,
unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed fashion, to
insert again my haud credo for a deer.

DULL

I said the deer was not a haud credo; twas a pricket.

HOLOFERNES

Twice—sod simplicity, his coctus!
O thou monster Ignorance, how deformed dost thou look!

SIR NATHANIEL

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred
in a book; he hath not eat paper, as it were; he
hath not drunk ink: his intellect is not
replenished; he is only an animal, only sensible in
the duller parts:
And such barren plants are set before us, that we
thankful should be,
Which we of taste and feeling are, for those parts that
do fructify in us more than he.
For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool,
So were there a patch set on learning, to see him in a school:
But omne bene, say I; being of an old father's mind,
Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.

DULL

You two are book—men: can you tell me by your wit
What was a month old at Cain's birth, that's not five
weeks old as yet?

HOLOFERNES

Dictynna, goodman Dull; Dictynna, goodman Dull.

DULL

What is Dictynna?

SIR NATHANIEL

A title to Phoebe, to Luna, to the moon.

HOLOFERNES

The moon was a month old when Adam was no more,
And raught not to five weeks when he came to
five—score.
The allusion holds in the exchange.

DULL

'Tis true indeed; the collusion holds in the exchange.

HOLOFERNES

God comfort thy capacity! I say, the allusion holds
in the exchange.

DULL

And I say, the pollution holds in the exchange; for
the moon is never but a month old: and I say beside
that, 'twas a pricket that the princess killed.

HOLOFERNES

Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph
on the death of the deer? And, to humour the
ignorant, call I the deer the princess killed a pricket.

SIR NATHANIEL

Perge, good Master Holofernes, perge; so it shall
please you to abrogate scurrility.

HOLOFERNES

I will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.
The preylful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty
pleasing pricket;
Some say a sore; but not a sore, till now made
sore with shooting.
The dogs did yell: put L to sore, then sorel jumps
from thicket;
Or pricket sore, or else sorel; the people fall a-hooting.
If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores
one sorel.
Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one more L.

SIR NATHANIEL

A rare talent!

DULL

[Aside] If a talent be a claw, look how he claws
him with a talent.

HOLOFERNES

This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a
foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures,
shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions,
revolutions: these are begot in the ventricle of
memory, nourished in the womb of pia mater, and
delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the
gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am
thankful for it.

SIR NATHANIEL

Sir, I praise the Lord for you; and so may my
parishioners; for their sons are well tutored by
you, and their daughters profit very greatly under
you: you are a good member of the commonwealth.

HOLOFERNES

Mehercle, if their sons be ingenuous, they shall
want no instruction; if their daughters be capable,
I will put it to them: but *vir sapit qui pauca*
loquitur; a soul feminine saluteth us.

Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD

JAQUENETTA

God give you good morrow, master Parson.

HOLOFERNES

Master Parson, quasi pers—on. An if one should be
pierced, which is the one?

COSTARD

Marry, master schoolmaster, he that is likest to a hogshead.

HOLOFERNES

Piercing a hogshead! a good lustre of conceit in a tuft of earth; fire enough for a flint, pearl enough for a swine: 'tis pretty; it is well.

JAQUENETTA

Good master Parson, be so good as read me this letter: it was given me by Costard, and sent me from Don Armado: I beseech you, read it.

HOLOFERNES

Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra
Ruminat,—and so forth. Ah, good old Mantuan! I
may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice;
Venetia, Venetia,
Chi non ti vede non ti pretia.
Old Mantuan, old Mantuan! who understandeth thee
not, loves thee not. Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa.
Under pardon, sir, what are the contents? or rather,
as Horace says in his—What, my soul, verses?

SIR NATHANIEL

Ay, sir, and very learned.

HOLOFERNES

Let me hear a staff, a stanze, a verse; lege, domine.

SIR NATHANIEL

[Reads]

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?
Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd!
Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove:
Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like
osiers bow'd.
Study his bias leaves and makes his book thine eyes,
Where all those pleasures live that art would
comprehend:
If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;
Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend,
All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;
Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire:
Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,
Which not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
Celestial as thou art, O, pardon, love, this wrong,

That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.

HOLOFERNES

You find not the apostrophas, and so miss the accent: let me supervise the canzonet. Here are only numbers ratified; but, for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, caret. Ovidius Naso was the man: and why, indeed, Naso, but for smelling out the odouriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention? Imitari is nothing: so doth the hound his master, the ape his keeper, the tired horse his rider. But, damosella virgin, was this directed to you?

JAQUENETTA

Ay, sir, from one Monsieur Biron, one of the strange queen's lords.

HOLOFERNES

I will overglance the superscript: 'To the snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady Rosaline.' I will look again on the intellect of the letter, for the nomination of the party writing to the person written unto: 'Your ladyship's in all desired employment, BIRON.' Sir Nathaniel, this Biron is one of the votaries with the king; and here he hath framed a letter to a sequent of the stranger queen's, which accidentally, or by the way of progression, hath miscarried. Trip and go, my sweet; deliver this paper into the royal hand of the king: it may concern much. Stay not thy compliment; I forgive thy duty; adieu.

JAQUENETTA

Good Costard, go with me. Sir, God save your life!

COSTARD

Have with thee, my girl.

Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA

SIR NATHANIEL

Sir, you have done this in the fear of God, very religiously; and, as a certain father saith,—

HOLOFERNES

Sir tell me not of the father; I do fear colourable colours. But to return to the verses: did they please you, Sir Nathaniel?

SIR NATHANIEL

Marvellous well for the pen.

HOLOFERNES

I do dine to-day at the father's of a certain pupil of mine; where, if, before repast, it shall please you to gratify the table with a grace, I will, on my privilege I have with the parents of the foresaid child or pupil, undertake your ben venuto; where I will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor invention: I beseech your society.

SIR NATHANIEL

And thank you too; for society, saith the text, is the happiness of life.

HOLOFERNES

And, certes, the text most infallibly concludes it.

To DULL

Sir, I do invite you too; you shall not say me nay: pauca verba. Away! the gentles are at their game, and we will to our recreation.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 3

The same.

Enter BIRON, with a paper

BIRON

The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch,—pitch that defiles: defile! a foul word. Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say the fool said, and so say I, and I the fool: well proved, wit! By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax: it kills sheep; it kills me, I a sheep: well proved again o' my side! I will not love: if I do, hang me; i' faith, I will not. O, but her eye,—by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. By heaven, I do love: and it hath taught me to rhyme and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady! By the world, I would not care a pin, if the other three were in. Here comes one with a paper: God give him grace to groan!

Stands aside

Enter FERDINAND, with a paper

FERDINAND

Ay me!

BIRON

[Aside] Shot, by heaven! Proceed, sweet Cupid: thou hast thumped him with thy bird-bolt under the left pap. In faith, secrets!

FERDINAND

[Reads]

So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not
To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,
As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote
The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows:
Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright
Through the transparent bosom of the deep,
As doth thy face through tears of mine give light;

Thou shinest in every tear that I do weep:
No drop but as a coach doth carry thee;
So ridest thou triumphing in my woe.
Do but behold the tears that swell in me,
And they thy glory through my grief will show:
But do not love thyself; then thou wilt keep
My tears for glasses, and still make me weep.
O queen of queens! how far dost thou excel,
No thought can think, nor tongue of mortal tell.
How shall she know my griefs? I'll drop the paper:
Sweet leaves, shade folly. Who is he comes here?

Steps aside

What, Longaville! and reading! listen, ear.

BIRON

Now, in thy likeness, one more fool appear!

Enter LONGAVILLE, with a paper

LONGAVILLE

Ay me, I am forsworn!

BIRON

Why, he comes in like a perjurer, wearing papers.

FERDINAND

In love, I hope: sweet fellowship in shame!

BIRON

One drunkard loves another of the name.

LONGAVILLE

Am I the first that have been perjured so?

BIRON

I could put thee in comfort. Not by two that I know:
Thou makest the triumvir, the corner-cap of society,
The shape of Love's Tyburn that hangs up simplicity.

LONGAVILLE

I fear these stubborn lines lack power to move:
O sweet Maria, empress of my love!
These numbers will I tear, and write in prose.

BIRON

O, rhymes are guards on wanton Cupid's hose:
Disfigure not his slop.

LONGAVILLE

This same shall go.

Reads

Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?
Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.
A woman I forswore; but I will prove,
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;
Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.
Vows are but breath, and breath a vapour is:
Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth dost shine,
Exhalest this vapour-vow; in thee it is:
If broken then, it is no fault of mine:
If by me broke, what fool is not so wise
To lose an oath to win a paradise?

BIRON

This is the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity,
A green goose a goddess: pure, pure idolatry.
God amend us, God amend! we are much out o' the way.

LONGAVILLE

By whom shall I send this?—Company! stay.

Steps aside

BIRON

All hid, all hid; an old infant play.
Like a demigod here sit I in the sky.
And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'ereye.
More sacks to the mill! O heavens, I have my wish!

Enter DUMAIN, with a paper

Dumain transform'd! four woodcocks in a dish!

DUMAIN

O most divine Kate!

BIRON

O most profane coxcomb!

DUMAIN

By heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!

BIRON

By earth, she is not, corporal, there you lie.

DUMAIN

Her amber hair for foul hath amber quoted.

BIRON

An amber-colour'd raven was well noted.

DUMAIN

As upright as the cedar.

BIRON

Stoop, I say;
Her shoulder is with child.

DUMAIN

As fair as day.

BIRON

Ay, as some days; but then no sun must shine.

DUMAIN

O that I had my wish!

LONGAVILLE

And I had mine!

FERDINAND

And I mine too, good Lord!

BIRON

Amen, so I had mine: is not that a good word?

DUMAIN

I would forget her; but a fever she
Reigns in my blood and will remember'd be.

BIRON

A fever in your blood! why, then incision
Would let her out in saucers: sweet misprision!

DUMAIN

Once more I'll read the ode that I have writ.

BIRON

Once more I'll mark how love can vary wit.

DUMAIN

[Reads]

On a day--alack the day!--
Love, whose month is ever May,
Spied a blossom passing fair
Playing in the wanton air:
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, can passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish himself the heaven's breath.
Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!

But, alack, my hand is sworn
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn;
Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,
Youth so apt to pluck a sweet!
Do not call it sin in me,
That I am forsworn for thee;
Thou for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiopie were;
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love.
This will I send, and something else more plain,
That shall express my true love's fasting pain.
O, would the king, Biron, and Longaville,
Were lovers too! Ill, to example ill,
Would from my forehead wipe a perjured note;
For none offend where all alike do dote.

LONGAVILLE

[Advancing] Dumain, thy love is far from charity.
You may look pale, but I should blush, I know,
To be o'erheard and taken napping so.

FERDINAND

[Advancing] Come, sir, you blush; as his your case is such;
You chide at him, offending twice as much;
You do not love Maria; Longaville
Did never sonnet for her sake compile,
Nor never lay his wreathed arms athwart
His loving bosom to keep down his heart.
I have been closely shrouded in this bush
And mark'd you both and for you both did blush:
I heard your guilty rhymes, observed your fashion,
Saw sighs reek from you, noted well your passion:
Ay me! says one; O Jove! the other cries;
One, her hairs were gold, crystal the other's eyes:

To LONGAVILLE

You would for paradise break faith, and troth;

To DUMAIN

And Jove, for your love, would infringe an oath.
What will Biron say when that he shall hear
Faith so infringed, which such zeal did swear?

How will he scorn! how will he spend his wit!
How will he triumph, leap and laugh at it!
For all the wealth that ever I did see,
I would not have him know so much by me.

BIRON

Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy.

Advancing

Ah, good my liege, I pray thee, pardon me!
Good heart, what grace hast thou, thus to reprove
These worms for loving, that art most in love?
Your eyes do make no coaches; in your tears
There is no certain princess that appears;
You'll not be perjured, 'tis a hateful thing;
Tush, none but minstrels like of sonneting!
But are you not ashamed? nay, are you not,
All three of you, to be thus much o'ershot?
You found his mote; the king your mote did see;
But I a beam do find in each of three.
O, what a scene of foolery have I seen,
Of sighs, of groans, of sorrow and of teen!
O me, with what strict patience have I sat,
To see a king transformed to a gnat!
To see great Hercules whipping a gig,
And profound Solomon to tune a jig,
And Nestor play at push-pin with the boys,
And critic Timon laugh at idle toys!
Where lies thy grief, O, tell me, good Dumain?
And gentle Longaville, where lies thy pain?
And where my liege's? all about the breast:
A caudle, ho!

FERDINAND

Too bitter is thy jest.
Are we betray'd thus to thy over-view?

BIRON

Not you to me, but I betray'd by you:
I, that am honest; I, that hold it sin
To break the vow I am engaged in;
I am betray'd, by keeping company
With men like men of inconstancy.
When shall you see me write a thing in rhyme?

Or groan for love? or spend a minute's time
In pruning me? When shall you hear that I
Will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye,
A gait, a state, a brow, a breast, a waist,
A leg, a limb?

FERDINAND

Soft! whither away so fast?
A true man or a thief that gallops so?

BIRON

I post from love: good lover, let me go.

Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD

JAQUENETTA

God bless the king!

FERDINAND

What present hast thou there?

COSTARD

Some certain treason.

FERDINAND

What makes treason here?

COSTARD

Nay, it makes nothing, sir.

FERDINAND

If it mar nothing neither,
The treason and you go in peace away together.

JAQUENETTA

I beseech your grace, let this letter be read:
Our parson misdoubts it; 'twas treason, he said.

FERDINAND

Biron, read it over.

Giving him the paper

Where hadst thou it?

JAQUENETTA

Of Costard.

FERDINAND

Where hadst thou it?

COSTARD

Of Dun Adramadio, Dun Adramadio.

BIRON tears the letter

FERDINAND

How now! what is in you? why dost thou tear it?

BIRON

A toy, my liege, a toy: your grace needs not fear it.

LONGAVILLE

It did move him to passion, and therefore let's hear it.

DUMAIN

It is Biron's writing, and here is his name.

Gathering up the pieces

BIRON

[To COSTARD] Ah, you whoreson loggerhead! you were born to do me shame.

Guilty, my lord, guilty! I confess, I confess.

FERDINAND

What?

BIRON

That you three fools lack'd me fool to make up the mess:
He, he, and you, and you, my liege, and I,
Are pick-purses in love, and we deserve to die.
O, dismiss this audience, and I shall tell you more.

DUMAIN

Now the number is even.

BIRON

True, true; we are four.
Will these turtles be gone?

FERDINAND

Hence, sirs; away!

COSTARD

Walk aside the true folk, and let the traitors stay.

Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA

BIRON

Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O, let us embrace!
As true we are as flesh and blood can be:
The sea will ebb and flow, heaven show his face;
Young blood doth not obey an old decree:
We cannot cross the cause why we were born;
Therefore of all hands must we be forsworn.

FERDINAND

What, did these rent lines show some love of thine?

BIRON

Did they, quoth you? Who sees the heavenly Rosaline,
That, like a rude and savage man of Inde,
At the first opening of the gorgeous east,
Bows not his vassal head and stricken blind
Kisses the base ground with obedient breast?
What peremptory eagle-sighted eye
Dares look upon the heaven of her brow,

That is not blinded by her majesty?

FERDINAND

What zeal, what fury hath inspired thee now?
My love, her mistress, is a gracious moon;
She an attending star, scarce seen a light.

BIRON

My eyes are then no eyes, nor I Biron:
O, but for my love, day would turn to night!
Of all complexions the cull'd sovereignty
Do meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek,
Where several worthies make one dignity,
Where nothing wants that want itself doth seek.
Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues,—
Fie, painted rhetoric! O, she needs it not:
To things of sale a seller's praise belongs,
She passes praise; then praise too short doth blot.
A wither'd hermit, five-score winters worn,
Might shake off fifty, looking in her eye:
Beauty doth varnish age, as if new-born,
And gives the crutch the cradle's infancy:
O, 'tis the sun that maketh all things shine.

FERDINAND

By heaven, thy love is black as ebony.

BIRON

Is ebony like her? O wood divine!
A wife of such wood were felicity.
O, who can give an oath? where is a book?
That I may swear beauty doth beauty lack,
If that she learn not of her eye to look:
No face is fair that is not full so black.

FERDINAND

O paradox! Black is the badge of hell,
The hue of dungeons and the suit of night;
And beauty's crest becomes the heavens well.

BIRON

Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light.
O, if in black my lady's brows be deck'd,
It mourns that painting and usurping hair
Should ravish doters with a false aspect;
And therefore is she born to make black fair.
Her favour turns the fashion of the days,
For native blood is counted painting now;
And therefore red, that would avoid dispraise,
Paints itself black, to imitate her brow.

DUMAIN

To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.

LONGAVILLE

And since her time are colliers counted bright.

FERDINAND

And Ethiopes of their sweet complexion crack.

DUMAIN

Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.

BIRON

Your mistresses dare never come in rain,
For fear their colours should be wash'd away.

FERDINAND

'Twere good, yours did; for, sir, to tell you plain,
I'll find a fairer face not wash'd to-day.

BIRON

I'll prove her fair, or talk till doomsday here.

FERDINAND

No devil will fright thee then so much as she.

DUMAIN

I never knew man hold vile stuff so dear.

LONGAVILLE

Look, here's thy love: my foot and her face see.

BIRON

O, if the streets were paved with thine eyes,
Her feet were much too dainty for such tread!

DUMAIN

O, vile! then, as she goes, what upward lies
The street should see as she walk'd overhead.

FERDINAND

But what of this? are we not all in love?

BIRON

Nothing so sure; and thereby all forsworn.

FERDINAND

Then leave this chat; and, good Biron, now prove
Our loving lawful, and our faith not torn.

DUMAIN

Ay, marry, there; some flattery for this evil.

LONGAVILLE

O, some authority how to proceed;
Some tricks, some quilllets, how to cheat the devil.

DUMAIN

Some salve for perjury.

BIRON

'Tis more than need.
Have at you, then, affection's men at arms.
Consider what you first did swear unto,
To fast, to study, and to see no woman;
Flat treason 'gainst the kingly state of youth.

Say, can you fast? your stomachs are too young;
And abstinence engenders maladies.
And where that you have vow'd to study, lords,
In that each of you have forsworn his book,
Can you still dream and pore and thereon look?
For when would you, my lord, or you, or you,
Have found the ground of study's excellence
Without the beauty of a woman's face?

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive; They are the ground, the books, the academes From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire

Why, universal plodding poisons up
The nimble spirits in the arteries,
As motion and long-during action tires
The sinewy vigour of the traveller.
Now, for not looking on a woman's face,
You have in that forsworn the use of eyes
And study too, the causer of your vow;
For where is any author in the world
Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?
Learning is but an adjunct to ourself
And where we are our learning likewise is:
Then when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,
Do we not likewise see our learning there?
O, we have made a vow to study, lords,
And in that vow we have forsworn our books.
For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,
In leaden contemplation have found out
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes
Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain;
And therefore, finding barren practisers,
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil:
But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain;
But, with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
And gives to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye;
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd:
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockl'd snails;
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste:
For valour, is not Love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair:

And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs;
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears
And plant in tyrants mild humility.
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain and nourish all the world:
Else none at all in ought proves excellent.
Then fools you were these women to forswear,
Or keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.
For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,
Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men,
Or for men's sake, the authors of these women,
Or women's sake, by whom we men are men,
Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.
It is religion to be thus forsworn,
For charity itself fulfills the law,
And who can sever love from charity?

FERDINAND

Saint Cupid, then! and, soldiers, to the field!

BIRON

Advance your standards, and upon them, lords;
Pell-mell, down with them! but be first advised,
In conflict that you get the sun of them.

LONGAVILLE

Now to plain-dealing; lay these glozes by:
Shall we resolve to woo these girls of France?

FERDINAND

And win them too: therefore let us devise
Some entertainment for them in their tents.

BIRON

First, from the park let us conduct them thither;
Then homeward every man attach the hand

Of his fair mistress: in the afternoon
We will with some strange pastime solace them,
Such as the shortness of the time can shape;
For revels, dances, masks and merry hours
Forerun fair Love, strewing her way with flowers.

FERDINAND

Away, away! no time shall be omitted
That will betime, and may by us be fitted.

BIRON

Allons! allons! Sow'd cockle reap'd no corn;
And justice always whirls in equal measure:
Light wenches may prove plagues to men forsworn;
If so, our copper buys no better treasure.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 1

The same.

Enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and DULL

HOLOFERNES

Satis quod sufficit.

SIR NATHANIEL

I praise God for you, sir: your reasons at dinner
have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without
scurrility, witty without affection, audacious without
impudency, learned without opinion, and strange with-
out heresy. I did converse this quondam day with
a companion of the king's, who is intituled, nomi-
nated, or called, Don Adriano de Armado.

HOLOFERNES

Novi hominem tanquam te: his humour is lofty, his
discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye
ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general
behavior vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is

too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.

SIR NATHANIEL

A most singular and choice epithet.

Draws out his table-book

HOLOFERNES

He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasies, such insociable and point-devise companions; such rackers of orthography, as to speak dout, fine, when he should say doubt; det, when he should pronounce debt,—d, e, b, t, not d, e, t: he clepeth a calf, cauf; half, hauf; neighbour vocatur nebor; neigh abbreviated ne. This is abhominable,—which he would call abbominable: it insinuateth me of insanie: anne intelligis, domine? to make frantic, lunatic.

SIR NATHANIEL

Laus Deo, bene intelligo.

HOLOFERNES

Bon, bon, fort bon, Priscian! a little scratch'd, 'twill serve.

SIR NATHANIEL

Videsne quis venit?

HOLOFERNES

Video, et gaudeo.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, MOTH, and COSTARD

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Chirrah!

To MOTH

HOLOFERNES

Quare chirrah, not sirrah?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Men of peace, well encountered.

HOLOFERNES

Most military sir, salutation.

MOTH

[Aside to COSTARD] They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.

COSTARD

O, they have lived long on the alms–basket of words.
I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word;
for thou art not so long by the head as
honorificabilitudinitatibus: thou art easier
swallowed than a flap–dragon.

MOTH

Peace! the peal begins.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

[To HOLOFERNES] Monsieur, are you not lettered?

MOTH

Yes, yes; he teaches boys the hornbook. What is a,
b, spelt backward, with the horn on his head?

HOLOFERNES

Ba, pueritia, with a horn added.

MOTH

Ba, most silly sheep with a horn. You hear his learning.

HOLOFERNES

Quis, quis, thou consonant?

MOTH

The third of the five vowels, if you repeat them; or the fifth, if I.

HOLOFERNES

I will repeat them,—a, e, i,—

MOTH

The sheep: the other two concludes it,—o, u.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterraneum, a sweet touch, a quick venue of wit! snip, snap, quick and home! it rejoiceth my intellect: true wit!

MOTH

Offered by a child to an old man; which is wit—old.

HOLOFERNES

What is the figure? what is the figure?

MOTH

Horns.

HOLOFERNES

Thou disputest like an infant: go, whip thy gig.

MOTH

Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about your infamy circum circa,—a gig of a cuckold's horn.

COSTARD

An I had but one penny in the world, thou shouldst have it to buy gingerbread: hold, there is the very remuneration I had of thy master, thou halfpenny purse of wit, thou pigeon—egg of discretion. O, an

the heavens were so pleased that thou wert but my
bastard, what a joyful father wouldst thou make me!
Go to; thou hast it ad dunghill, at the fingers'
ends, as they say.

HOLOFERNES

O, I smell false Latin; dunghill for unguem.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Arts—man, preambulate, we will be singled from the
barbarous. Do you not educate youth at the
charge—house on the top of the mountain?

HOLOFERNES

Or mons, the hill.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain.

HOLOFERNES

I do, sans question.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sir, it is the king's most sweet pleasure and
affection to congratulate the princess at her
pavilion in the posteriors of this day, which the
rude multitude call the afternoon.

HOLOFERNES

The posterior of the day, most generous sir, is
liable, congruent and measurable for the afternoon:
the word is well culled, chose, sweet and apt, I do
assure you, sir, I do assure.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sir, the king is a noble gentleman, and my familiar,
I do assure ye, very good friend: for what is
inward between us, let it pass. I do beseech thee,

remember thy courtesy; I beseech thee, apparel thy head: and among other important and most serious designs, and of great import indeed, too, but let that pass: for I must tell thee, it will please his grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder, and with his royal finger, thus, dally with my excrement, with my mustachio; but, sweet heart, let that pass. By the world, I recount no fable: some certain special honours it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Armado, a soldier, a man of travel, that hath seen the world; but let that pass. The very all of all is,—but, sweet heart, I do implore secrecy,—that the king would have me present the princess, sweet chuck, with some delightful ostentation, or show, or pageant, or antique, or firework. Now, understanding that the curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions and sudden breaking out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you withal, to the end to crave your assistance.

HOLOFERNES

Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies. Sir, as concerning some entertainment of time, some show in the posterior of this day, to be rendered by our assistants, at the king's command, and this most gallant, illustrate, and learned gentleman, before the princess; I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.

SIR NATHANIEL

Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?

HOLOFERNES

Joshua, yourself; myself and this gallant gentleman, Judas Maccabaeus; this swain, because of his great limb or joint, shall pass Pompey the Great; the page, Hercules,—

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Pardon, sir; error: he is not quantity enough for that Worthy's thumb: he is not so big as the end of his club.

HOLOFERNES

Shall I have audience? he shall present Hercules in minority: his enter and exit shall be strangling a snake; and I will have an apology for that purpose.

MOTH

An excellent device! so, if any of the audience hiss, you may cry 'Well done, Hercules! now thou crushest the snake!' that is the way to make an offence gracious, though few have the grace to do it.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

For the rest of the Worthies?—

HOLOFERNES

I will play three myself.

MOTH

Thrice-worthy gentleman!

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Shall I tell you a thing?

HOLOFERNES

We attend.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

We will have, if this fadge not, an antique. I beseech you, follow.

HOLOFERNES

Via, goodman Dull! thou hast spoken no word all this while.

DULL

Nor understood none neither, sir.

HOLOFERNES

Allons! we will employ thee.

DULL

I'll make one in a dance, or so; or I will play
On the tabour to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.

HOLOFERNES

Most dull, honest Dull! To our sport, away!

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 2

The same.

Enter the PRINCESS, KATHARINE, ROSALINE, and MARIA

PRINCESS

Sweet hearts, we shall be rich ere we depart,
If fairings come thus plentifully in:
A lady wall'd about with diamonds!
Look you what I have from the loving king.

ROSALINE

Madame, came nothing else along with that?

PRINCESS

Nothing but this! yes, as much love in rhyme
As would be cramm'd up in a sheet of paper,
Writ o' both sides the leaf, margent and all,
That he was fain to seal on Cupid's name.

ROSALINE

That was the way to make his godhead wax,
For he hath been five thousand years a boy.

KATHARINE

Ay, and a shrewd unhappy gallows too.

ROSALINE

You'll ne'er be friends with him; a' kill'd your sister.

KATHARINE

He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy;
And so she died: had she been light, like you,
Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,
She might ha' been a grandam ere she died:
And so may you; for a light heart lives long.

ROSALINE

What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?

KATHARINE

A light condition in a beauty dark.

ROSALINE

We need more light to find your meaning out.

KATHARINE

You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff;
Therefore I'll darkly end the argument.

ROSALINE

Look what you do, you do it still i' the dark.

KATHARINE

So do not you, for you are a light wench.

ROSALINE

Indeed I weigh not you, and therefore light.

KATHARINE

You weigh me not? O, that's you care not for me.

ROSALINE

Great reason; for 'past cure is still past care.'

PRINCESS

Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd.
But Rosaline, you have a favour too:
Who sent it? and what is it?

ROSALINE

I would you knew:
An if my face were but as fair as yours,
My favour were as great; be witness this.
Nay, I have verses too, I thank Biron:
The numbers true; and, were the numbering too,
I were the fairest goddess on the ground:
I am compared to twenty thousand fairs.
O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter!

PRINCESS

Any thing like?

ROSALINE

Much in the letters; nothing in the praise.

PRINCESS

Beauteous as ink; a good conclusion.

KATHARINE

Fair as a text B in a copy-book.

ROSALINE

'Ware pencils, ho! let me not die your debtor,
My red dominical, my golden letter:
O, that your face were not so full of O's!

KATHARINE

A pox of that jest! and I beshrew all shrows.

PRINCESS

But, Katharine, what was sent to you from fair Dumain?

KATHARINE

Madam, this glove.

PRINCESS

Did he not send you twain?

KATHARINE

Yes, madam, and moreover
Some thousand verses of a faithful lover,
A huge translation of hypocrisy,
Vilely compiled, profound simplicity.

MARIA

This and these pearls to me sent Longaville:
The letter is too long by half a mile.

PRINCESS

I think no less. Dost thou not wish in heart
The chain were longer and the letter short?

MARIA

Ay, or I would these hands might never part.

PRINCESS

We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.

ROSALINE

They are worse fools to purchase mocking so.
That same Biron I'll torture ere I go:
O that I knew he were but in by the week!
How I would make him fawn and beg and seek
And wait the season and observe the times
And spend his prodigal wits in bootless rhymes
And shape his service wholly to my hests
And make him proud to make me proud that jests!
So perttaunt-like would I o'ersway his state
That he should be my fool and I his fate.

PRINCESS

None are so surely caught, when they are catch'd,
As wit turn'd fool: folly, in wisdom hatch'd,
Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school
And wit's own grace to grace a learned fool.

ROSALINE

The blood of youth burns not with such excess
As gravity's revolt to wantonness.

MARIA

Folly in fools bears not so strong a note
As foolery in the wise, when wit doth dote;
Since all the power thereof it doth apply
To prove, by wit, worth in simplicity.

PRINCESS

Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in his face.

Enter BOYET

BOYET

O, I am stabb'd with laughter! Where's her grace?

PRINCESS

Thy news Boyet?

BOYET

Prepare, madam, prepare!
Arm, wenches, arm! encounters mounted are
Against your peace: Love doth approach disguised,
Armed in arguments; you'll be surprised:
Muster your wits; stand in your own defence;
Or hide your heads like cowards, and fly hence.

PRINCESS

Saint Denis to Saint Cupid! What are they
That charge their breath against us? say, scout, say.

BOYET

Under the cool shade of a sycamore
I thought to close mine eyes some half an hour;
When, lo! to interrupt my purposed rest,
Toward that shade I might behold address
The king and his companions: warily
I stole into a neighbour thicket by,
And overheard what you shall overhear,
That, by and by, disguised they will be here.
Their herald is a pretty knavish page,
That well by heart hath conn'd his embassy:
Action and accent did they teach him there;
'Thus must thou speak,' and 'thus thy body bear:'
And ever and anon they made a doubt
Presence majestical would put him out,
'For,' quoth the king, 'an angel shalt thou see;
Yet fear not thou, but speak audaciously.'
The boy replied, 'An angel is not evil;
I should have fear'd her had she been a devil.'
With that, all laugh'd and clapp'd him on the shoulder,
Making the bold wag by their praises bolder:
One rubb'd his elbow thus, and fleer'd and swore
A better speech was never spoke before;
Another, with his finger and his thumb,
Cried, 'Via! we will do't, come what will come;'
The third he caper'd, and cried, 'All goes well;'
The fourth turn'd on the toe, and down he fell.
With that, they all did tumble on the ground,
With such a zealous laughter, so profound,
That in this spleen ridiculous appears,
To cheque their folly, passion's solemn tears.

PRINCESS

But what, but what, come they to visit us?

BOYET

They do, they do: and are apparell'd thus.
Like Muscovites or Russians, as I guess.
Their purpose is to parle, to court and dance;
And every one his love-feat will advance
Unto his several mistress, which they'll know
By favours several which they did bestow.

PRINCESS

And will they so? the gallants shall be task'd;
For, ladies, we shall every one be mask'd;
And not a man of them shall have the grace,

Despite of suit, to see a lady's face.
Hold, Rosaline, this favour thou shalt wear,
And then the king will court thee for his dear;
Hold, take thou this, my sweet, and give me thine,
So shall Biron take me for Rosaline.
And change your favours too; so shall your loves
Woo contrary, deceived by these removes.

ROSALINE

Come on, then; wear the favours most in sight.

KATHARINE

But in this changing what is your intent?

PRINCESS

The effect of my intent is to cross theirs:
They do it but in mocking merriment;
And mock for mock is only my intent.
Their several counsels they unbosom shall
To loves mistook, and so be mock'd withal
Upon the next occasion that we meet,
With visages displayed, to talk and greet.

ROSALINE

But shall we dance, if they desire to't?

PRINCESS

No, to the death, we will not move a foot;
Nor to their penn'd speech render we no grace,
But while 'tis spoke each turn away her face.

BOYET

Why, that contempt will kill the speaker's heart,
And quite divorce his memory from his part.

PRINCESS

Therefore I do it; and I make no doubt
The rest will ne'er come in, if he be out
There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown,
To make theirs ours and ours none but our own:

So shall we stay, mocking intended game,
And they, well mock'd, depart away with shame.

Trumpets sound within

BOYET

The trumpet sounds: be mask'd; the maskers come.

The Ladies mask

Enter Blackamoors with music; MOTH; FERDINAND, BIRON, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN, in Russian habits, and masked

MOTH

All hail, the richest beauties on the earth!—

BOYET

Beauties no richer than rich taffeta.

MOTH

A holy parcel of the fairest dames.

The Ladies turn their backs to him

That ever turn'd their—backs—to mortal views!

BIRON

[Aside to MOTH] Their eyes, villain, their eyes!

MOTH

That ever turn'd their eyes to mortal views!—Out—

BOYET

True; out indeed.

MOTH

Out of your favours, heavenly spirits, vouchsafe
Not to behold—

BIRON

[Aside to MOTH] Once to behold, rogue.

MOTH

Once to behold with your sun-beamed eyes,
—with your sun-beamed eyes—

BOYET

They will not answer to that epithet;
You were best call it 'daughter-beamed eyes.'

MOTH

They do not mark me, and that brings me out.

BIRON

Is this your perfectness? be gone, you rogue!

Exit MOTH

ROSALINE

What would these strangers? know their minds, Boyet:
If they do speak our language, 'tis our will:
That some plain man recount their purposes
Know what they would.

BOYET

What would you with the princess?

BIRON

Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROSALINE

What would they, say they?

BOYET

Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROSALINE

Why, that they have; and bid them so be gone.

BOYET

She says, you have it, and you may be gone.

FERDINAND

Say to her, we have measured many miles
To tread a measure with her on this grass.

BOYET

They say, that they have measured many a mile
To tread a measure with you on this grass.

ROSALINE

It is not so. Ask them how many inches
Is in one mile: if they have measured many,
The measure then of one is easily told.

BOYET

If to come hither you have measured miles,
And many miles, the princess bids you tell
How many inches doth fill up one mile.

BIRON

Tell her, we measure them by weary steps.

BOYET

She hears herself.

ROSALINE

How many weary steps,
Of many weary miles you have o'ergone,
Are number'd in the travel of one mile?

BIRON

We number nothing that we spend for you:
Our duty is so rich, so infinite,
That we may do it still without accompt.
Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,

That we, like savages, may worship it.

ROSALINE

My face is but a moon, and clouded too.

FERDINAND

Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do!
Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars, to shine,
Those clouds removed, upon our watery eyne.

ROSALINE

O vain petitioner! beg a greater matter;
Thou now request'st but moonshine in the water.

FERDINAND

Then, in our measure do but vouchsafe one change.
Thou bid'st me beg: this begging is not strange.

ROSALINE

Play, music, then! Nay, you must do it soon.

Music plays

Not yet! no dance! Thus change I like the moon.

FERDINAND

Will you not dance? How come you thus estranged?

ROSALINE

You took the moon at full, but now she's changed.

FERDINAND

Yet still she is the moon, and I the man.
The music plays; vouchsafe some motion to it.

ROSALINE

Our ears vouchsafe it.

FERDINAND

But your legs should do it.

ROSALINE

Since you are strangers and come here by chance,
We'll not be nice: take hands. We will not dance.

FERDINAND

Why take we hands, then?

ROSALINE

Only to part friends:
Curtsy, sweet hearts; and so the measure ends.

FERDINAND

More measure of this measure; be not nice.

ROSALINE

We can afford no more at such a price.

FERDINAND

Prize you yourselves: what buys your company?

ROSALINE

Your absence only.

FERDINAND

That can never be.

ROSALINE

Then cannot we be bought: and so, adieu;
Twice to your visor, and half once to you.

FERDINAND

If you deny to dance, let's hold more chat.

ROSALINE

In private, then.

FERDINAND

I am best pleased with that.

They converse apart

BIRON

White-handed mistress, one sweet word with thee.

PRINCESS

Honey, and milk, and sugar; there is three.

BIRON

Nay then, two treys, and if you grow so nice,
Metheglin, wort, and malmsey: well run, dice!
There's half-a-dozen sweets.

PRINCESS

Seventh sweet, adieu:
Since you can cog, I'll play no more with you.

BIRON

One word in secret.

PRINCESS

Let it not be sweet.

BIRON

Thou grievest my gall.

PRINCESS

Gall! bitter.

BIRON

Therefore meet.

They converse apart

DUMAIN

Will you vouchsafe with me to change a word?

MARIA

Name it.

DUMAIN

Fair lady,—

MARIA

Say you so? Fair lord,—
Take that for your fair lady.

DUMAIN

Please it you,
As much in private, and I'll bid adieu.

They converse apart

KATHARINE

What, was your vizard made without a tongue?

LONGAVILLE

I know the reason, lady, why you ask.

KATHARINE

O for your reason! quickly, sir; I long.

LONGAVILLE

You have a double tongue within your mask,
And would afford my speechless vizard half.

KATHARINE

Veal, quoth the Dutchman. Is not 'veal' a calf?

LONGAVILLE

A calf, fair lady!

KATHARINE

No, a fair lord calf.

LONGAVILLE

Let's part the word.

KATHARINE

No, I'll not be your half
Take all, and wean it; it may prove an ox.

LONGAVILLE

Look, how you butt yourself in these sharp mocks!
Will you give horns, chaste lady? do not so.

KATHARINE

Then die a calf, before your horns do grow.

LONGAVILLE

One word in private with you, ere I die.

KATHARINE

Bleat softly then; the butcher hears you cry.

They converse apart

BOYET

The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen
As is the razor's edge invisible,
Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen,
Above the sense of sense; so sensible
Seemeth their conference; their conceits have wings
Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter things.

ROSALINE

Not one word more, my maids; break off, break off.

BIRON

By heaven, all dry-beaten with pure scoff!

FERDINAND

Farewell, mad wenches; you have simple wits.

PRINCESS

Twenty adieus, my frozen Muscovits.

Exeunt FERDINAND, Lords, and Blackamoors

Are these the breed of wits so wonder'd at?

BOYET

Tapers they are, with your sweet breaths puff'd out.

ROSALINE

Well-liking wits they have; gross, gross; fat, fat.

PRINCESS

O poverty in wit, kingly-poor flout!
Will they not, think you, hang themselves tonight?
Or ever, but in vizards, show their faces?
This pert Biron was out of countenance quite.

ROSALINE

O, they were all in lamentable cases!
The king was weeping-ripe for a good word.

PRINCESS

Biron did swear himself out of all suit.

MARIA

Dumain was at my service, and his sword:
No point, quoth I; my servant straight was mute.

KATHARINE

Lord Longaville said, I came o'er his heart;
And trow you what he called me?

PRINCESS

Qualm, perhaps.

KATHARINE

Yes, in good faith.

PRINCESS

Go, sickness as thou art!

ROSALINE

Well, better wits have worn plain statute-caps.
But will you hear? the king is my love sworn.

PRINCESS

And quick Biron hath plighted faith to me.

KATHARINE

And Longaville was for my service born.

MARIA

Dumain is mine, as sure as bark on tree.

BOYET

Madam, and pretty mistresses, give ear:
Immediately they will again be here
In their own shapes; for it can never be
They will digest this harsh indignity.

PRINCESS

Will they return?

BOYET

They will, they will, God knows,
And leap for joy, though they are lame with blows:
Therefore change favours; and, when they repair,
Blow like sweet roses in this summer air.

PRINCESS

How blow? how blow? speak to be understood.

BOYET

Fair ladies mask'd are roses in their bud;
Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shown,
Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown.

PRINCESS

Avaunt, perplexity! What shall we do,
If they return in their own shapes to woo?

ROSALINE

Good madam, if by me you'll be advised,
Let's, mock them still, as well known as disguised:
Let us complain to them what fools were here,
Disguised like Muscovites, in shapeless gear;
And wonder what they were and to what end
Their shallow shows and prologue vilely penn'd
And their rough carriage so ridiculous,
Should be presented at our tent to us.

BOYET

Ladies, withdraw: the gallants are at hand.

PRINCESS

Whip to our tents, as roes run o'er land.

Exeunt PRINCESS, ROSALINE, KATHARINE, and MARIA

Re-enter FERDINAND, BIRON, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN, in their proper habits

FERDINAND

Fair sir, God save you! Where's the princess?

BOYET

Gone to her tent. Please it your majesty
Command me any service to her thither?

FERDINAND

That she vouchsafe me audience for one word.

BOYET

I will; and so will she, I know, my lord.

Exit

BIRON

This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons pease,
And utters it again when God doth please:
He is wit's pedler, and retails his wares
At wakes and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs;
And we that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,
Have not the grace to grace it with such show.
This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve;
Had he been Adam, he had tempted Eve;
A' can carve too, and lisp: why, this is he
That kiss'd his hand away in courtesy;
This is the ape of form, monsieur the nice,
That, when he plays at tables, chides the dice
In honourable terms: nay, he can sing
A mean most meanly; and in ushering
Mend him who can: the ladies call him sweet;
The stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet:
This is the flower that smiles on every one,
To show his teeth as white as whale's bone;
And consciences, that will not die in debt,
Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet.

FERDINAND

A blister on his sweet tongue, with my heart,
That put Armado's page out of his part!

BIRON

See where it comes! Behavior, what wert thou
Till this madman show'd thee? and what art thou now?

Re-enter the PRINCESS, ushered by BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE

FERDINAND

All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!

PRINCESS

'Fair' in 'all hail' is foul, as I conceive.

FERDINAND

Construe my speeches better, if you may.

PRINCESS

Then wish me better; I will give you leave.

FERDINAND

We came to visit you, and purpose now
To lead you to our court; vouchsafe it then.

PRINCESS

This field shall hold me; and so hold your vow:
Nor God, nor I, delights in perjured men.

FERDINAND

Rebuke me not for that which you provoke:
The virtue of your eye must break my oath.

PRINCESS

You nickname virtue; vice you should have spoke;
For virtue's office never breaks men's troth.
Now by my maiden honour, yet as pure
As the unsullied lily, I protest,
A world of torments though I should endure,
I would not yield to be your house's guest;
So much I hate a breaking cause to be
Of heavenly oaths, vow'd with integrity.

FERDINAND

O, you have lived in desolation here,
Unseen, unvisited, much to our shame.

PRINCESS

Not so, my lord; it is not so, I swear;
We have had pastimes here and pleasant game:
A mess of Russians left us but of late.

FERDINAND

How, madam! Russians!

PRINCESS

Ay, in truth, my lord;
Trim gallants, full of courtship and of state.

ROSALINE

Madam, speak true. It is not so, my lord:
My lady, to the manner of the days,
In courtesy gives undeserving praise.
We four indeed confronted were with four
In Russian habit: here they stay'd an hour,
And talk'd apace; and in that hour, my lord,
They did not bless us with one happy word.
I dare not call them fools; but this I think,
When they are thirsty, fools would fain have drink.

BIRON

This jest is dry to me. Fair gentle sweet,
Your wit makes wise things foolish: when we greet,
With eyes best seeing, heaven's fiery eye,
By light we lose light: your capacity
Is of that nature that to your huge store
Wise things seem foolish and rich things but poor.

ROSALINE

This proves you wise and rich, for in my eye,—

BIRON

I am a fool, and full of poverty.

ROSALINE

But that you take what doth to you belong,
It were a fault to snatch words from my tongue.

BIRON

O, I am yours, and all that I possess!

ROSALINE

All the fool mine?

BIRON

I cannot give you less.

ROSALINE

Which of the vizards was it that you wore?

BIRON

Where? when? what vizard? why demand you this?

ROSALINE

There, then, that vizard; that superfluous case
That hid the worse and show'd the better face.

FERDINAND

We are descried; they'll mock us now downright.

DUMAIN

Let us confess and turn it to a jest.

PRINCESS

Amazed, my lord? why looks your highness sad?

ROSALINE

Help, hold his brows! he'll swoon! Why look you pale?
Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy.

BIRON

Thus pour the stars down plagues for perjury.
Can any face of brass hold longer out?
Here stand I lady, dart thy skill at me;
Bruise me with scorn, confound me with a flout;
Thrust thy sharp wit quite through my ignorance;

Cut me to pieces with thy keen conceit;
And I will wish thee never more to dance,
Nor never more in Russian habit wait.
O, never will I trust to speeches penn'd,
Nor to the motion of a schoolboy's tongue,
Nor never come in vizard to my friend,
Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song!
Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,
Figures pedantical; these summer-flies
Have blown me full of maggot ostentation:
I do forswear them; and I here protest,
By this white glove;—how white the hand, God knows!—
Henceforth my wooing mind shall be express'd
In russet yeas and honest kersey noes:
And, to begin, wench,—so God help me, la!—
My love to thee is sound, sans crack or flaw.

ROSALINE

Sans sans, I pray you.

BIRON

Yet I have a trick
Of the old rage: bear with me, I am sick;
I'll leave it by degrees. Soft, let us see:
Write, 'Lord have mercy on us' on those three;
They are infected; in their hearts it lies;
They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes;
These lords are visited; you are not free,
For the Lord's tokens on you do I see.

PRINCESS

No, they are free that gave these tokens to us.

BIRON

Our states are forfeit: seek not to undo us.

ROSALINE

It is not so; for how can this be true,
That you stand forfeit, being those that sue?

BIRON

Peace! for I will not have to do with you.

ROSALINE

Nor shall not, if I do as I intend.

BIRON

Speak for yourselves; my wit is at an end.

FERDINAND

Teach us, sweet madam, for our rude transgression
Some fair excuse.

PRINCESS

The fairest is confession.
Were not you here but even now disguised?

FERDINAND

Madam, I was.

PRINCESS

And were you well advised?

FERDINAND

I was, fair madam.

PRINCESS

When you then were here,
What did you whisper in your lady's ear?

FERDINAND

That more than all the world I did respect her.

PRINCESS

When she shall challenge this, you will reject her.

FERDINAND

Upon mine honour, no.

PRINCESS

Peace, peace! forbear:
Your oath once broke, you force not to forswear.

FERDINAND

Despise me, when I break this oath of mine.

PRINCESS

I will: and therefore keep it. Rosaline,
What did the Russian whisper in your ear?

ROSALINE

Madam, he swore that he did hold me dear
As precious eyesight, and did value me
Above this world; adding thereto moreover
That he would wed me, or else die my lover.

PRINCESS

God give thee joy of him! the noble lord
Most honourably doth unhold his word.

FERDINAND

What mean you, madam? by my life, my troth,
I never swore this lady such an oath.

ROSALINE

By heaven, you did; and to confirm it plain,
You gave me this: but take it, sir, again.

FERDINAND

My faith and this the princess I did give:
I knew her by this jewel on her sleeve.

PRINCESS

Pardon me, sir, this jewel did she wear;
And Lord Biron, I thank him, is my dear.
What, will you have me, or your pearl again?

BIRON

Neither of either; I remit both twain.
I see the trick on't: here was a consent,
Knowing aforehand of our merriment,
To dash it like a Christmas comedy:
Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany,
Some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some Dick,
That smiles his cheek in years and knows the trick
To make my lady laugh when she's disposed,
Told our intents before; which once disclosed,
The ladies did change favours: and then we,
Following the signs, woo'd but the sign of she.
Now, to our perjury to add more terror,
We are again forsworn, in will and error.
Much upon this it is: and might not you

To BOYET

Forestall our sport, to make us thus untrue?
Do not you know my lady's foot by the squier,
And laugh upon the apple of her eye?
And stand between her back, sir, and the fire,
Holding a trencher, jesting merrily?
You put our page out: go, you are allow'd;
Die when you will, a smock shall be your shroud.
You leer upon me, do you? there's an eye
Wounds like a leaden sword.

BOYET

Full merrily
Hath this brave manage, this career, been run.

BIRON

Lo, he is tilting straight! Peace! I have done.

Enter COSTARD

Welcome, pure wit! thou partest a fair fray.

COSTARD

O Lord, sir, they would know
Whether the three Worthies shall come in or no.

BIRON

What, are there but three?

COSTARD

No, sir; but it is vara fine,
For every one pursents three.

BIRON

And three times thrice is nine.

COSTARD

Not so, sir; under correction, sir; I hope it is not so.
You cannot beg us, sir, I can assure you, sir we know
what we know:
I hope, sir, three times thrice, sir,—

BIRON

Is not nine.

COSTARD

Under correction, sir, we know whereuntil it doth amount.

BIRON

By Jove, I always took three threes for nine.

COSTARD

O Lord, sir, it were pity you should get your living
by reckoning, sir.

BIRON

How much is it?

COSTARD

O Lord, sir, the parties themselves, the actors,
sir, will show whereuntil it doth amount: for mine
own part, I am, as they say, but to perfect one man
in one poor man, Pompion the Great, sir.

BIRON

Art thou one of the Worthies?

COSTARD

It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompion the
Great: for mine own part, I know not the degree of
the Worthy, but I am to stand for him.

BIRON

Go, bid them prepare.

COSTARD

We will turn it finely off, sir; we will take
some care.

Exit

FERDINAND

Biron, they will shame us: let them not approach.

BIRON

We are shame-proof, my lord: and tis some policy
To have one show worse than the king's and his company.

FERDINAND

I say they shall not come.

PRINCESS

Nay, my good lord, let me o'errule you now:
That sport best pleases that doth least know how:
Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
Dies in the zeal of that which it presents:
Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,
When great things labouring perish in their birth.

BIRON

A right description of our sport, my lord.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Anointed, I implore so much expense of thy royal
sweet breath as will utter a brace of words.

Converses apart with FERDINAND, and delivers him a paper

PRINCESS

Doth this man serve God?

BIRON

Why ask you?

PRINCESS

He speaks not like a man of God's making.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

That is all one, my fair, sweet, honey monarch; for,
I protest, the schoolmaster is exceeding
fantastical; too, too vain, too too vain: but we
will put it, as they say, to fortuna de la guerra.
I wish you the peace of mind, most royal complement!

Exit

FERDINAND

Here is like to be a good presence of Worthies. He
presents Hector of Troy; the swain, Pompey the
Great; the parish curate, Alexander; Armado's page,
Hercules; the pedant, Judas Maccabaeus: And if
these four Worthies in their first show thrive,
These four will change habits, and present the other five.

BIRON

There is five in the first show.

FERDINAND

You are deceived; 'tis not so.

BIRON

The pedant, the braggart, the hedge-priest, the fool
and the boy:—
Abate throw at novum, and the whole world again
Cannot pick out five such, take each one in his vein.

FERDINAND

The ship is under sail, and here she comes amain.

Enter COSTARD, for Pompey

COSTARD

I Pompey am,—

BOYET

You lie, you are not he.

COSTARD

I Pompey am,—

BOYET

With libbard's head on knee.

BIRON

Well said, old mocker: I must needs be friends
with thee.

COSTARD

I Pompey am, Pompey surnamed the Big—

DUMAIN

The Great.

COSTARD

It is, 'Great,' sir:—
Pompey surnamed the Great;
That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make
my foe to sweat:
And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance,
And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France,
If your ladyship would say, 'Thanks, Pompey,' I had done.

PRINCESS

Great thanks, great Pompey.

COSTARD

'Tis not so much worth; but I hope I was perfect: I
made a little fault in 'Great.'

BIRON

My hat to a halfpenny, Pompey proves the best Worthy.

Enter SIR NATHANIEL, for Alexander

SIR NATHANIEL

When in the world I lived, I was the world's
commander;
By east, west, north, and south, I spread my
conquering might:
My scutcheon plain declares that I am Alisander,—

BOYET

Your nose says, no, you are not for it stands too right.

BIRON

Your nose smells 'no' in this, most tender-smelling knight.

PRINCESS

The conqueror is dismay'd. Proceed, good Alexander.

SIR NATHANIEL

When in the world I lived, I was the world's
commander,—

BOYET

Most true, 'tis right; you were so, Alisander.

BIRON

Pompey the Great,—

COSTARD

Your servant, and Costard.

BIRON

Take away the conqueror, take away Alisander.

COSTARD

[To SIR NATHANIEL] O, sir, you have overthrown Alisander the conqueror! You will be scraped out of the painted cloth for this: your lion, that holds his poll—axe sitting on a close—stool, will be given to Ajax: he will be the ninth Worthy. A conqueror, and afeard to speak! run away for shame, Alisander.

SIR NATHANIEL retires

There, an't shall please you; a foolish mild man; an honest man, look you, and soon dashed. He is a marvellous good neighbour, faith, and a very good bowler: but, for Alisander,—alas, you see how 'tis,—a little o'erparted. But there are Worthies a—coming will speak their mind in some other sort.

Enter HOLOFERNES, for Judas; and MOTH, for Hercules

HOLOFERNES

Great Hercules is presented by this imp,
Whose club kill'd Cerberus, that three—headed canis;
And when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp,
Thus did he strangle serpents in his manus.
Quoniam he seemeth in minority,
Ergo I come with this apology.
Keep some state in thy exit, and vanish.

MOTH retires

Judas I am,—

DUMAIN

A Judas!

HOLOFERNES

Not Iscariot, sir.
Judas I am, ycliped Maccabaeus.

DUMAIN

Judas Maccabaeus clipt is plain Judas.

BIRON

A kissing traitor. How art thou proved Judas?

HOLOFERNES

Judas I am,—

DUMAIN

The more shame for you, Judas.

HOLOFERNES

What mean you, sir?

BOYET

To make Judas hang himself.

HOLOFERNES

Begin, sir; you are my elder.

BIRON

Well followed: Judas was hanged on an elder.

HOLOFERNES

I will not be put out of countenance.

BIRON

Because thou hast no face.

HOLOFERNES

What is this?

BOYET

A cittern-head.

DUMAIN

The head of a bodkin.

BIRON

A Death's face in a ring.

LONGAVILLE

The face of an old Roman coin, scarce seen.

BOYET

The pommel of Caesar's falchion.

DUMAIN

The carved-bone face on a flask.

BIRON

Saint George's half-cheek in a brooch.

DUMAIN

Ay, and in a brooch of lead.

BIRON

Ay, and worn in the cap of a tooth-drawer.
And now forward; for we have put thee in countenance.

HOLOFERNES

You have put me out of countenance.

BIRON

False; we have given thee faces.

HOLOFERNES

But you have out-faced them all.

BIRON

An thou wert a lion, we would do so.

BOYET

Therefore, as he is an ass, let him go.
And so adieu, sweet Jude! nay, why dost thou stay?

DUMAIN

For the latter end of his name.

BIRON

For the ass to the Jude; give it him:—Jud—as, away!

HOLOFERNES

This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

BOYET

A light for Monsieur Judas! it grows dark, he may stumble.

HOLOFERNES retires

PRINCESS

Alas, poor Maccabaeus, how hath he been baited!

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, for Hector

BIRON

Hide thy head, Achilles: here comes Hector in arms.

DUMAIN

Though my mocks come home by me, I will now be merry.

FERDINAND

Hector was but a Trojan in respect of this.

BOYET

But is this Hector?

FERDINAND

I think Hector was not so clean-timbered.

LONGAVILLE

His leg is too big for Hector's.

DUMAIN

More calf, certain.

BOYET

No; he is best endued in the small.

BIRON

This cannot be Hector.

DUMAIN

He's a god or a painter; for he makes faces.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,
Gave Hector a gift,—

DUMAIN

A gilt nutmeg.

BIRON

A lemon.

LONGAVILLE

Stuck with cloves.

DUMAIN

No, cloven.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Peace!—
The omnipotent Mars, of lances the almighty
Gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion;
A man so breathed, that certain he would fight; yea
From morn till night, out of his pavilion.
I am that flower,—

DUMAIN

That mint.

LONGAVILLE

That columbine.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet Lord Longaville, rein thy tongue.

LONGAVILLE

I must rather give it the rein, for it runs against Hector.

DUMAIN

Ay, and Hector's a greyhound.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The sweet war-man is dead and rotten; sweet chucks,
beat not the bones of the buried: when he breathed,
he was a man. But I will forward with my device.

To the PRINCESS

Sweet royalty, bestow on me the sense of hearing.

PRINCESS

Speak, brave Hector: we are much delighted.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do adore thy sweet grace's slipper.

BOYET

[Aside to DUMAIN] Loves her by the foot,—

DUMAIN

[*Aside to BOYET*] He may not by the yard.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

This Hector far surmounted Hannibal,—

COSTARD

The party is gone, fellow Hector, she is gone; she is two months on her way.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

What meanest thou?

COSTARD

Faith, unless you play the honest Troyan, the poor wench is cast away: she's quick; the child brags in her belly already: tis yours.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Dost thou infamozize me among potentates? thou shalt die.

COSTARD

Then shall Hector be whipped for Jaquenetta that is quick by him and hanged for Pompey that is dead by him.

DUMAIN

Most rare Pompey!

BOYET

Renowned Pompey!

BIRON

Greater than great, great, great, great Pompey!
Pompey the Huge!

DUMAIN

Hector trembles.

BIRON

Pompey is moved. More Ates, more Ates! stir them
on! stir them on!

DUMAIN

Hector will challenge him.

BIRON

Ay, if a' have no man's blood in's belly than will
sup a flea.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By the north pole, I do challenge thee.

COSTARD

I will not fight with a pole, like a northern man:
I'll slash; I'll do it by the sword. I bepray you,
let me borrow my arms again.

DUMAIN

Room for the incensed Worthies!

COSTARD

I'll do it in my shirt.

DUMAIN

Most resolute Pompey!

MOTH

Master, let me take you a buttonhole lower. Do you not see Pompey is uncasing for the combat? What mean you? You will lose your reputation.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Gentlemen and soldiers, pardon me; I will not combat in my shirt.

DUMAIN

You may not deny it: Pompey hath made the challenge.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet bloods, I both may and will.

BIRON

What reason have you for't?

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The naked truth of it is, I have no shirt; I go woolward for penance.

BOYET

True, and it was enjoined him in Rome for want of linen: since when, I'll be sworn, he wore none but a dishclout of Jaquenetta's, and that a' wears next his heart for a favour.

Enter MERCADE

MERCADE

God save you, madam!

PRINCESS

Welcome, Mercade;
But that thou interrupt'st our merriment.

MERCADE

I am sorry, madam; for the news I bring
Is heavy in my tongue. The king your father---

PRINCESS

Dead, for my life!

MERCADE

Even so; my tale is told.

BIRON

Worthies, away! the scene begins to cloud.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

For mine own part, I breathe free breath. I have
seen the day of wrong through the little hole of
discretion, and I will right myself like a soldier.

Exeunt Worthies

FERDINAND

How fares your majesty?

PRINCESS

Boyet, prepare; I will away tonight.

FERDINAND

Madam, not so; I do beseech you, stay.

PRINCESS

Prepare, I say. I thank you, gracious lords,
For all your fair endeavors; and entreat,
Out of a new-sad soul, that you vouchsafe
In your rich wisdom to excuse or hide
The liberal opposition of our spirits,
If over-boldly we have borne ourselves
In the converse of breath: your gentleness
Was guilty of it. Farewell worthy lord!
A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue:
Excuse me so, coming too short of thanks
For my great suit so easily obtain'd.

FERDINAND

The extreme parts of time extremely forms
All causes to the purpose of his speed,
And often at his very loose decides
That which long process could not arbitrate:
And though the mourning brow of progeny
Forbid the smiling courtesy of love
The holy suit which fain it would convince,
Yet, since love's argument was first on foot,
Let not the cloud of sorrow justle it
From what it purposed; since, to wail friends lost
Is not by much so wholesome—profitable
As to rejoice at friends but newly found.

PRINCESS

I understand you not: my griefs are double.

BIRON

Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief;
And by these badges understand the king.
For your fair sakes have we neglected time,
Play'd foul play with our oaths: your beauty, ladies,
Hath much deform'd us, fashioning our humours
Even to the opposed end of our intents:
And what in us hath seem'd ridiculous,—
As love is full of unbecoming strains,
All wanton as a child, skipping and vain,
Form'd by the eye and therefore, like the eye,
Full of strange shapes, of habits and of forms,
Varying in subjects as the eye doth roll
To every varied object in his glance:
Which parti-coated presence of loose love
Put on by us, if, in your heavenly eyes,
Have misbecomed our oaths and gravities,
Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,
Suggested us to make. Therefore, ladies,
Our love being yours, the error that love makes
Is likewise yours: we to ourselves prove false,
By being once false for ever to be true
To those that make us both,—fair ladies, you:
And even that falsehood, in itself a sin,
Thus purifies itself and turns to grace.

PRINCESS

We have received your letters full of love;
Your favours, the ambassadors of love;
And, in our maiden council, rated them
At courtship, pleasant jest and courtesy,
As bombast and as lining to the time:
But more devout than this in our respects
Have we not been; and therefore met your loves
In their own fashion, like a merriment.

DUMAIN

Our letters, madam, show'd much more than jest.

LONGAVILLE

So did our looks.

ROSALINE

We did not quote them so.

FERDINAND

Now, at the latest minute of the hour,
Grant us your loves.

PRINCESS

A time, methinks, too short
To make a world-without-end bargain in.
No, no, my lord, your grace is perjured much,
Full of dear guiltiness; and therefore this:
If for my love, as there is no such cause,
You will do aught, this shall you do for me:
Your oath I will not trust; but go with speed
To some forlorn and naked hermitage,
Remote from all the pleasures of the world;
There stay until the twelve celestial signs
Have brought about the annual reckoning.
If this austere insociable life
Change not your offer made in heat of blood;
If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds
Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love,
But that it bear this trial and last love;
Then, at the expiration of the year,
Come challenge me, challenge me by these deserts,
And, by this virgin palm now kissing thine
I will be thine; and till that instant shut
My woeful self up in a mourning house,

Raining the tears of lamentation
For the remembrance of my father's death.
If this thou do deny, let our hands part,
Neither entitled in the other's heart.

FERDINAND

If this, or more than this, I would deny,
To flatter up these powers of mine with rest,
The sudden hand of death close up mine eye!
Hence ever then my heart is in thy breast.

BIRON

[And what to me, my love? and what to me?]

ROSALINE

You must be purged too, your sins are rack'd,
You are attaint with faults and perjury:
Therefore if you my favour mean to get,
A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,
But seek the weary beds of people sick]

DUMAIN

But what to me, my love? but what to me? A wife?

KATHARINE

A beard, fair health, and honesty;
With three-fold love I wish you all these three.

DUMAIN

O, shall I say, I thank you, gentle wife?

KATHARINE

Not so, my lord; a twelvemonth and a day
I'll mark no words that smooth-faced wooers say:
Come when the king doth to my lady come;
Then, if I have much love, I'll give you some.

DUMAIN

I'll serve thee true and faithfully till then.

KATHARINE

Yet swear not, lest ye be forsworn again.

LONGAVILLE

What says Maria?

MARIA

At the twelvemonth's end
I'll change my black gown for a faithful friend.

LONGAVILLE

I'll stay with patience; but the time is long.

MARIA

The liker you; few taller are so young.

BIRON

Studies my lady? mistress, look on me;
Behold the window of my heart, mine eye,
What humble suit attends thy answer there:
Impose some service on me for thy love.

ROSALINE

Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Biron,
Before I saw you; and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit.
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
And therewithal to win me, if you please,
Without the which I am not to be won,
You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick and still converse
With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
With all the fierce endeavor of your wit
To enforce the pained impotent to smile.

BIRON

To move wild laughter in the throat of death?
It cannot be; it is impossible:
Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.

ROSALINE

Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,
Whose influence is begot of that loose grace
Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools:
A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it: then, if sickly ears,
Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
And I will have you and that fault withal;
But if they will not, throw away that spirit,
And I shall find you empty of that fault,
Right joyful of your reformation.

BIRON

A twelvemonth! well; befall what will befall,
I'll jest a twelvemonth in an hospital.

PRINCESS

[To FERDINAND] Ay, sweet my lord; and so I take my leave.

FERDINAND

No, madam; we will bring you on your way.

BIRON

Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
Jack hath not Jill: these ladies' courtesy
Might well have made our sport a comedy.

FERDINAND

Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth and a day,
And then 'twill end.

BIRON

That's too long for a play.

Re-enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet majesty, vouchsafe me,—

PRINCESS

Was not that Hector?

DUMAIN

The worthy knight of Troy.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will kiss thy royal finger, and take leave. I am a votary; I have vowed to Jaquenetta to hold the plough for her sweet love three years. But, most esteemed greatness, will you hear the dialogue that the two learned men have compiled in praise of the owl and the cuckoo? It should have followed in the end of our show.

FERDINAND

Call them forth quickly; we will do so.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Holla! approach.

Re-enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, MOTH, COSTARD, and others

This side is Hiems, Winter, this Ver, the Spring;
the one maintained by the owl, the other by the
cuckoo. Ver, begin.

THE SONG

SPRING.
When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he, Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,

Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he, Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

WINTER.

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail
And Tom bears logs into the hall
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow
And coughing drowns the parson's saw
And birds sit brooding in the snow
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of
Apollo. You that way: we this way.

Exeunt

All's Well That Ends Well

Act 1, Scene 1

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Enter BERTRAM, the COUNTESS of Rousillon, HELENA, and LAFEU, all in black

COUNTESS

In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

BERTRAM

And I in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew: but I must attend his majesty's command, to whom I am now in ward, evermore in subjection.

LAFEU

You shall find of the king a husband, madam; you, sir, a father: he that so generally is at all times good must of necessity hold his virtue to you; whose worthiness would stir it up where it wanted rather than lack it where there is such abundance.

COUNTESS

What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?

LAFEU

He hath abandoned his physicians, madam; under whose practises he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

COUNTESS

This young gentlewoman had a father,—O, that 'had'! how sad a passage 'tis!—whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for the king's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of the king's disease.

LAFEU

How called you the man you speak of, madam?

COUNTESS

He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so: Gerard de Narbon.

LAFEU

He was excellent indeed, madam: the king very lately spoke of him admiringly and mourningly: he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

BERTRAM

What is it, my good lord, the king languishes of?

LAFEU

A fistula, my lord.

BERTRAM

I heard not of it before.

LAFEU

I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

COUNTESS

His sole child, my lord, and bequeathed to my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education promises; her dispositions she inherits, which makes fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity; they are virtues and traitors too; in her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives her honesty and achieves her goodness.

LAFEU

Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

COUNTESS

'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise
in. The remembrance of her father never approaches
her heart but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all
livelihood from her cheek. No more of this, Helena;
go to, no more; lest it be rather thought you affect
a sorrow than have it.

HELENA

I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too.

LAFEU

Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead,
excessive grief the enemy to the living.

COUNTESS

If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess
makes it soon mortal.

BERTRAM

Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

LAFEU

How understand we that?

COUNTESS

Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father
In manners, as in shape! thy blood and virtue
Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness
Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few,
Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy
Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend
Under thy own life's key: be cheque'd for silence,
But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,
That thee may furnish and my prayers pluck down,
Fall on thy head! Farewell, my lord;
'Tis an unseason'd courtier; good my lord,
Advise him.

LAFEU

He cannot want the best
That shall attend his love.

COUNTESS

Heaven bless him! Farewell, Bertram.

Exit

BERTRAM

[To HELENA] The best wishes that can be forged in
your thoughts be servants to you! Be comfortable
to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.

LAFEU

Farewell, pretty lady: you must hold the credit of
your father.

Exeunt BERTRAM and LAFEU

HELENA

O, were that all! I think not on my father;
And these great tears grace his remembrance more
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?
I have forgot him: my imagination
Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.
I am undone: there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one
That I should love a bright particular star
And think to wed it, he is so above me:
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself:
The hind that would be mated by the lion
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though plague,
To see him every hour; to sit and draw
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
In our heart's table; heart too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour:
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here?

Enter PAROLLES

Aside

One that goes with him: I love him for his sake;
And yet I know him a notorious liar,
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward;
Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him,
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones
Look bleak i' the cold wind: withal, full oft we see
Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

PAROLLES

Save you, fair queen!

HELENA

And you, monarch!

PAROLLES

No.

HELENA

And no.

PAROLLES

Are you meditating on virginity?

HELENA

Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you: let me
ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity; how
may we barricado it against him?

PAROLLES

Keep him out.

HELENA

But he assails; and our virginity, though valiant,
in the defence yet is weak: unfold to us some
warlike resistance.

PAROLLES

There is none: man, sitting down before you, will undermine you and blow you up.

HELENA

Bless our poor virginity from underminers and blowers up! Is there no military policy, how virgins might blow up men?

PAROLLES

Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier be blown up: marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase and there was never virgin got till virginity was first lost. That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Virginity by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it is ever lost: 'tis too cold a companion; away with 't!

HELENA

I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a virgin.

PAROLLES

There's little can be said in 't; 'tis against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity, is to accuse your mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs himself is a virgin: virginity murders itself and should be buried in highways out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but loose by't: out with 't! within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase; and the principal itself not much the worse: away with 't!

HELENA

How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

PAROLLES

Let me see: marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth: off with 't while 'tis vendible; answer the time of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion: richly suited, but unsuitable: just like the brooch and the tooth-pick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek; and your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears, it looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 'tis a withered pear; it was formerly better; marry, yet 'tis a withered pear: will you anything with it?

HELENA

Not my virginity yet []
There shall your master have a thousand loves,
A mother and a mistress and a friend,
A phoenix, captain and an enemy,
A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,
A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;
His humble ambition, proud humility,
His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,
His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world
Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms,
That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he—
I know not what he shall. God send him well!
The court's a learning place, and he is one—

PAROLLES

What one, i' faith?

HELENA

That I wish well. 'Tis pity—

PAROLLES

What's pity?

HELENA

That wishing well had not a body in't,
Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born,
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,
Might with effects of them follow our friends,
And show what we alone must think, which never
Return us thanks.

Enter Page

Page

Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you.

Exit

PAROLLES

Little Helen, farewell; if I can remember thee, I
will think of thee at court.

HELENA

Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.

PAROLLES

Under Mars, I.

HELENA

I especially think, under Mars.

PAROLLES

Why under Mars?

HELENA

The wars have so kept you under that you must needs
be born under Mars.

PAROLLES

When he was predominant.

HELENA

When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

PAROLLES

Why think you so?

HELENA

You go so much backward when you fight.

PAROLLES

That's for advantage.

HELENA

So is running away, when fear proposes the safety;
but the composition that your valour and fear makes
in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well.

PAROLLES

I am so full of businesses, I cannot answer thee
acutely. I will return perfect courtier; in the
which, my instruction shall serve to naturalize
thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's
counsel and understand what advice shall thrust upon
thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and
thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When
thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast
none, remember thy friends; get thee a good husband,
and use him as he uses thee; so, farewell.

Exit

HELENA

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky
Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.
What power is it which mounts my love so high,
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?
The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
To join like likes and kiss like native things.
Impossible be strange attempts to those
That weigh their pains in sense and do suppose
What hath been cannot be: who ever strove
So show her merit, that did miss her love?
The king's disease—my project may deceive me,
But my intents are fix'd and will not leave me.

Exit

Act 1, Scene 2

Paris. The KING's palace.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING of France, with letters, and divers Attendants

KING

The Florentines and Senoys are by the ears;
Have fought with equal fortune and continue
A braving war.

First Lord

So 'tis reported, sir.

KING

Nay, 'tis most credible; we here received it
A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria,
With caution that the Florentine will move us
For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend
Prejudicates the business and would seem
To have us make denial.

First Lord

His love and wisdom,
Approved so to your majesty, may plead
For amplest credence.

KING

He hath arm'd our answer,
And Florence is denied before he comes:
Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see
The Tuscan service, freely have they leave
To stand on either part.

Second Lord

It well may serve
A nursery to our gentry, who are sick
For breathing and exploit.

KING

What's he comes here?

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

First Lord

It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord,
Young Bertram.

KING

Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face;
Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,
Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts
Mayst thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.

BERTRAM

My thanks and duty are your majesty's.

KING

I would I had that corporal soundness now,
As when thy father and myself in friendship
First tried our soldiership! He did look far
Into the service of the time and was
Disciplined of the bravest: he lasted long;
But on us both did haggish age steal on
And wore us out of act. It much repairs me
To talk of your good father. In his youth
He had the wit which I can well observe
To-day in our young lords; but they may jest
Till their own scorn return to them unnoted
Ere they can hide their levity in honour;
So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness
Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,
His equal had awaked them, and his honour,
Clock to itself, knew the true minute when
Exception bid him speak, and at this time
His tongue obey'd his hand: who were below him
He used as creatures of another place
And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,

Making them proud of his humility,
In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man
Might be a copy to these younger times;
Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now
But goers backward.

BERTRAM

His good remembrance, sir,
Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb;
So in approval lives not his epitaph
As in your royal speech.

KING

Would I were with him! He would always say—
Methinks I hear him now; his plausible words
He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,
To grow there and to bear,—'Let me not live,'—
This his good melancholy oft began,
On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,
When it was out,—'Let me not live,' quoth he,
'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff
Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses
All but new things disdain; whose judgments are
Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies
Expire before their fashions.' This he wish'd;
I after him do after him wish too,
Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home,
I quickly were dissolved from my hive,
To give some labourers room.

Second Lord

You are loved, sir:
They that least lend it you shall lack you first.

KING

I fill a place, I know't. How long is't, count,
Since the physician at your father's died?
He was much famed.

BERTRAM

Some six months since, my lord.

KING

If he were living, I would try him yet.
Lend me an arm; the rest have worn me out
With several applications; nature and sickness
Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, count;
My son's no dearer.

BERTRAM

Thank your majesty.

Exeunt. Flourish

Act 1, Scene 3

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Enter COUNTESS, Steward, and Clown

COUNTESS

I will now hear; what say you of this gentlewoman?

Steward

Madam, the care I have had to even your content, I
wish might be found in the calendar of my past
endeavours; for then we wound our modesty and make
foul the clearness of our deservings, when of
ourselves we publish them.

COUNTESS

What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah:
the complaints I have heard of you I do not all
believe: 'tis my slowness that I do not; for I know
you lack not folly to commit them, and have ability
enough to make such knaveries yours.

Clown

'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

COUNTESS

Well, sir.

Clown

No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor, though many of the rich are damned: but, if I may have your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

COUNTESS

Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

Clown

I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNTESS

In what case?

Clown

In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage: and I think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o' my body; for they say barnes are blessings.

COUNTESS

Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

Clown

My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

COUNTESS

Is this all your worship's reason?

Clown

Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons such as they are.

COUNTESS

May the world know them?

Clown

I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and
all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry
that I may repent.

COUNTESS

Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

Clown

I am out o' friends, madam; and I hope to have
friends for my wife's sake.

COUNTESS

Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

Clown

You're shallow, madam, in great friends; for the
knaves come to do that for me which I am weary of.
He that ears my land spares my team and gives me
leave to in the crop; if I be his cuckold, he's my
drudge: he that comforts my wife is the cherisher
of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh
and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my
flesh and blood is my friend: ergo, he that kisses
my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to
be what they are, there were no fear in marriage;
for young Charbon the Puritan and old Poysam the
Papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in
religion, their heads are both one; they may jowl
horns together, like any deer i' the herd.

COUNTESS

Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave?

Clown

A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next
way:
For I the ballad will repeat,
Which men full true shall find;
Your marriage comes by destiny,
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

COUNTESS

Get you gone, sir; I'll talk with you more anon.

Steward

May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you: of her I am to speak.

COUNTESS

Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her; Helen, I mean.

Clown

Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,
Why the Grecians sacked Troy?
Fond done, done fond,
Was this King Priam's joy?
With that she sighed as she stood,
With that she sighed as she stood,
And gave this sentence then;
Among nine bad if one be good,
Among nine bad if one be good,
There's yet one good in ten.

COUNTESS

What, one good in ten? you corrupt the song, sirrah.

Clown

One good woman in ten, madam; which is a purifying o' the song: would God would serve the world so all the year! we'd find no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson. One in ten, quoth a'! An we might have a good woman born but one every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man may draw his heart out, ere a' pluck one.

COUNTESS

You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you.

Clown

That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done! Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart. I am going, forsooth: the business is for Helen to come hither.

Exit

COUNTESS

Well, now.

Steward

I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNTESS

Faith, I do: her father bequeathed her to me; and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds: there is more owing her than is paid; and more shall be paid her than she'll demand.

Steward

Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she wished me: alone she was, and did communicate to herself her own words to her own ears; she thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son: Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two estates; Love no god, that would not extend his might, only where qualities were level; Dian no queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surprised, without rescue in the first assault or ransom afterward. This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in: which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you withal; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it.

COUNTESS

You have discharged this honestly; keep it to yourself: many likelihoods informed me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance that I could neither believe nor misdoubt. Pray you, leave me: stall this in your bosom; and I thank you for your honest care: I will speak with you further anon.

Exit Steward

Enter HELENA

Even so it was with me when I was young:
If ever we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born;
It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth:
By our remembrances of days foregone,
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.
Her eye is sick on't: I observe her now.

HELENA

What is your pleasure, madam?

COUNTESS

You know, Helen,
I am a mother to you.

HELENA

Mine honourable mistress.

COUNTESS

Nay, a mother:
Why not a mother? When I said 'a mother,'
Methought you saw a serpent: what's in 'mother,'
That you start at it? I say, I am your mother;
And put you in the catalogue of those
That were enwombed mine: 'tis often seen
Adoption strives with nature and choice breeds
A native slip to us from foreign seeds:
You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan,
Yet I express to you a mother's care:
God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood
To say I am thy mother? What's the matter,

That this distemper'd messenger of wet,
The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye?
Why? that you are my daughter?

HELENA

That I am not.

COUNTESS

I say, I am your mother.

HELENA

Pardon, madam;
The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother:
I am from humble, he from honour'd name;
No note upon my parents, his all noble:
My master, my dear lord he is; and I
His servant live, and will his vassal die:
He must not be my brother.

COUNTESS

Nor I your mother?

HELENA

You are my mother, madam; would you were,—
So that my lord your son were not my brother,—
Indeed my mother! or were you both our mothers,
I care no more for than I do for heaven,
So I were not his sister. Can't no other,
But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?

COUNTESS

Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law:
God shield you mean it not! daughter and mother
So strive upon your pulse. What, pale again?
My fear hath catch'd your fondness: now I see
The mystery of your loneliness, and find
Your salt tears' head: now to all sense 'tis gross
You love my son; invention is ashamed,
Against the proclamation of thy passion,
To say thou dost not: therefore tell me true;
But tell me then, 'tis so; for, look thy cheeks
Confess it, th' one to th' other; and thine eyes

See it so grossly shown in thy behaviors
That in their kind they speak it: only sin
And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,
That truth should be suspected. Speak, is't so?
If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew;
If it be not, forswear't: howe'er, I charge thee,
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,
Tell me truly.

HELENA

Good madam, pardon me!

COUNTESS

Do you love my son?

HELENA

Your pardon, noble mistress!

COUNTESS

Love you my son?

HELENA

Do not you love him, madam?

COUNTESS

Go not about; my love hath in't a bond,
Whereof the world takes note: come, come, disclose
The state of your affection; for your passions
Have to the full appeach'd.

HELENA

Then, I confess,
Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,
That before you, and next unto high heaven,
I love your son.
My friends were poor, but honest; so's my love:
Be not offended; for it hurts not him
That he is loved of me: I follow him not
By any token of presumptuous suit;
Nor would I have him till I do deserve him;
Yet never know how that desert should be.
I know I love in vain, strive against hope;

Yet in this captious and intenable sieve
I still pour in the waters of my love
And lack not to lose still: thus, Indian-like,
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,
But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,
Let not your hate encounter with my love
For loving where you do: but if yourself,
Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,
Did ever in so true a flame of liking
Wish chastely and love dearly, that your Dian
Was both herself and love: O, then, give pity
To her, whose state is such that cannot choose
But lend and give where she is sure to lose;
That seeks not to find that her search implies,
But riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies!

COUNTESS

Had you not lately an intent,—speak truly,—
To go to Paris?

HELENA

Madam, I had.

COUNTESS

Wherefore? tell true.

HELENA

I will tell truth; by grace itself I swear.
You know my father left me some prescriptions
Of rare and proved effects, such as his reading
And manifest experience had collected
For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me
In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them,
As notes whose faculties inclusive were
More than they were in note: amongst the rest,
There is a remedy, approved, set down,
To cure the desperate languishings whereof
The king is render'd lost.

COUNTESS

This was your motive
For Paris, was it? speak.

HELENA

My lord your son made me to think of this;
Else Paris and the medicine and the king
Had from the conversation of my thoughts
Haply been absent then.

COUNTESS

But think you, Helen,
If you should tender your supposed aid,
He would receive it? he and his physicians
Are of a mind; he, that they cannot help him,
They, that they cannot help: how shall they credit
A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,
Embowell'd of their doctrine, have left off
The danger to itself?

HELENA

There's something in't,
More than my father's skill, which was the greatest
Of his profession, that his good receipt
Shall for my legacy be sanctified
By the luckiest stars in heaven: and, would your honour
But give me leave to try success, I'd venture
The well-lost life of mine on his grace's cure
By such a day and hour.

COUNTESS

Dost thou believe't?

HELENA

Ay, madam, knowingly.

COUNTESS

Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and love,
Means and attendants and my loving greetings
To those of mine in court: I'll stay at home
And pray God's blessing into thy attempt:
Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this,
What I can help thee to thou shalt not miss.

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 1

Paris. The KING's palace.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING, attended with divers young Lords taking leave for the Florentine war; BERTRAM, and PAROLLES

KING

Farewell, young lords; these warlike principles
Do not throw from you: and you, my lords, farewell:
Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain, all
The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis received,
And is enough for both.

First Lord

'Tis our hope, sir,
After well enter'd soldiers, to return
And find your grace in health.

KING

No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart
Will not confess he owes the malady
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords;
Whether I live or die, be you the sons
Of worthy Frenchmen: let higher Italy,--
Those bated that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy,--see that you come
Not to woo honour, but to wed it; when
The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,
That fame may cry you loud: I say, farewell.

Second Lord

Health, at your bidding, serve your majesty!

KING

Those girls of Italy, take heed of them:
They say, our French lack language to deny,
If they demand: beware of being captives,
Before you serve.

Both

Our hearts receive your warnings.

KING

Farewell. Come hither to me.

Exit, attended

First Lord

O, my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us!

PAROLLES

'Tis not his fault, the spark.

Second Lord

O, 'tis brave wars!

PAROLLES

Most admirable: I have seen those wars.

BERTRAM

I am commanded here, and kept a coil with
'Too young' and 'the next year' and 'tis too early.'

PAROLLES

An thy mind stand to't, boy, steal away bravely.

BERTRAM

I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,
Till honour be bought up and no sword worn
But one to dance with! By heaven, I'll steal away.

First Lord

There's honour in the theft.

PAROLLES

Commit it, count.

Second Lord

I am your accessory; and so, farewell.

BERTRAM

I grow to you, and our parting is a tortured body.

First Lord

Farewell, captain.

Second Lord

Sweet Monsieur Parolles!

PAROLLES

Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. Good sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals: you shall find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on his sinister cheek; it was this very sword entrenched it: say to him, I live; and observe his reports for me.

First Lord

We shall, noble captain.

Exeunt Lords

PAROLLES

Mars dote on you for his novices! what will ye do?

BERTRAM

Stay: the king.

Re-enter KING. BERTRAM and PAROLLES retire

PAROLLES

[To BERTRAM] Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords; you have restrained yourself within the list of too cold an adieu: be more expressive to them: for they wear themselves in the cap of the time, there do muster true gait, eat, speak, and move under the influence of the most received star;

and though the devil lead the measure, such are to
be followed: after them, and take a more dilated farewell.

BERTRAM

And I will do so.

PAROLLES

Worthy fellows; and like to prove most sinewy sword-men.

Exeunt BERTRAM and PAROLLES

Enter LAFEU

LAFEU

[Kneeling] Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings.

KING

I'll fee thee to stand up.

LAFEU

Then here's a man stands, that has brought his pardon.
I would you had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy,
And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

KING

I would I had; so I had broke thy pate,
And ask'd thee mercy for't.

LAFEU

Good faith, across: but, my good lord 'tis thus;
Will you be cured of your infirmity?

KING

No.

LAFEU

O, will you eat no grapes, my royal fox?
Yes, but you will my noble grapes, an if

My royal fox could reach them: I have seen a medicine
That's able to breathe life into a stone,
Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary
With spritely fire and motion; whose simple touch,
Is powerful to araise King Pepin, nay,
To give great Charlemain a pen in's hand,
And write to her a love-line.

KING

What 'her' is this?

LAFEU

Why, Doctor She: my lord, there's one arrived,
If you will see her: now, by my faith and honour,
If seriously I may convey my thoughts
In this my light deliverance, I have spoke
With one that, in her sex, her years, profession,
Wisdom and constancy, hath amazed me more
Than I dare blame my weakness: will you see her
For that is her demand, and know her business?
That done, laugh well at me.

KING

Now, good Lafeu,
Bring in the admiration; that we with thee
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine
By wondering how thou took'st it.

LAFEU

Nay, I'll fit you,
And not be all day neither.

Exit

KING

Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

Re-enter LAFEU, with HELENA

LAFEU

Nay, come your ways.

KING

This haste hath wings indeed.

LAFEU

Nay, come your ways:
This is his majesty; say your mind to him:
A traitor you do look like; but such traitors
His majesty seldom fears: I am Cressid's uncle,
That dare leave two together; fare you well.

Exit

KING

Now, fair one, does your business follow us?

HELENA

Ay, my good lord.
Gerard de Narbon was my father;
In what he did profess, well found.

KING

I knew him.

HELENA

The rather will I spare my praises towards him:
Knowing him is enough. On's bed of death
Many receipts he gave me: chiefly one.
Which, as the dearest issue of his practise,
And of his old experience the oily darling,
He bade me store up, as a triple eye,
Safer than mine own two, more dear; I have so;
And hearing your high majesty is touch'd
With that malignant cause wherein the honour
Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,
I come to tender it and my appliance
With all bound humbleness.

KING

We thank you, maiden;
But may not be so credulous of cure,
When our most learned doctors leave us and

The congregated college have concluded
That labouring art can never ransom nature
From her inaidible estate; I say we must not
So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady
To empirics, or to dissever so
Our great self and our credit, to esteem
A senseless help when help past sense we deem.

HELENA

My duty then shall pay me for my pains:
I will no more enforce mine office on you.
Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts
A modest one, to bear me back a again.

KING

I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful:
Thou thought'st to help me; and such thanks I give
As one near death to those that wish him live:
But what at full I know, thou know'st no part,
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

HELENA

What I can do can do no hurt to try,
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.
He that of greatest works is finisher
Oft does them by the weakest minister:
So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,
When judges have been babes; great floods have flown
From simple sources, and great seas have dried
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.
Oft expectation fails and most oft there
Where most it promises, and oft it hits
Where hope is coldest and despair most fits.

KING

I must not hear thee; fare thee well, kind maid;
Thy pains not used must by thyself be paid:
Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

HELENA

Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd:
It is not so with Him that all things knows
As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows;
But most it is presumption in us when
The help of heaven we count the act of men.
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent;
Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.
I am not an impostor that proclaim
Myself against the level of mine aim;
But know I think and think I know most sure
My art is not past power nor you past cure.

KING

Are thou so confident? within what space
Hopedst thou my cure?

HELENA

The great'st grace lending grace
Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring,
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp
Moist Hesperus hath quenched his sleepy lamp,
Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass
Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,
What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,
Health shall live free and sickness freely die.

KING

Upon thy certainty and confidence
What dardest thou venture?

HELENA

Tax of impudence,
A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame
Traduced by odious ballads: my maiden's name
Sear'd otherwise; nay, worse—if worse—extended
With vilest torture let my life be ended.

KING

Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak
His powerful sound within an organ weak:

And what impossibility would slay
In common sense, sense saves another way.
Thy life is dear; for all that life can rate
Worth name of life in thee hath estimate,
Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all
That happiness and prime can happy call:
Thou this to hazard needs must intimate
Skill infinite or monstrous desperate.
Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try,
That ministers thine own death if I die.

HELENA

If I break time, or flinch in property
Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die,
And well deserved: not helping, death's my fee;
But, if I help, what do you promise me?

KING

Make thy demand.

HELENA

But will you make it even?

KING

Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of heaven.

HELENA

Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand
What husband in thy power I will command:
Exempted be from me the arrogance
To choose from forth the royal blood of France,
My low and humble name to propagate
With any branch or image of thy state;
But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know
Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow.

KING

Here is my hand; the premises observed,
Thy will by my performance shall be served:
So make the choice of thy own time, for I,
Thy resolved patient, on thee still rely.
More should I question thee, and more I must,

Though more to know could not be more to trust,
From whence thou camest, how tended on: but rest
Unquestion'd welcome and undoubted blest.
Give me some help here, ho! If thou proceed
As high as word, my deed shall match thy need.

Flourish. Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 2

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Enter COUNTESS and Clown

COUNTESS

Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of
your breeding.

Clown

I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught: I
know my business is but to the court.

COUNTESS

To the court! why, what place make you special,
when you put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

Clown

Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he
may easily put it off at court: he that cannot make
a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand and say nothing,
has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and indeed
such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the
court; but for me, I have an answer will serve all
men.

COUNTESS

Marry, that's a bountiful answer that fits all
questions.

Clown

It is like a barber's chair that fits all buttocks,
the pin-buttock, the quatch-buttock, the brawn
buttock, or any buttock.

COUNTESS

Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

Clown

As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney,
as your French crown for your taffeta punk, as Tib's
rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for Shrove
Tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his
hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding queen
to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the
friar's mouth, nay, as the pudding to his skin.

COUNTESS

Have you, I say, an answer of such fitness for all
questions?

Clown

From below your duke to beneath your constable, it
will fit any question.

COUNTESS

It must be an answer of most monstrous size that
must fit all demands.

Clown

But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned
should speak truth of it: here it is, and all that
belongs to't. Ask me if I am a courtier: it shall
do you no harm to learn.

COUNTESS

To be young again, if we could: I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier?

Clown

O Lord, sir! There's a simple putting off. More, more, a hundred of them.

COUNTESS

Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

Clown

O Lord, sir! Thick, thick, spare not me.

COUNTESS

I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

Clown

O Lord, sir! Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

COUNTESS

You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

Clown

O Lord, sir! spare not me.

COUNTESS

Do you cry, 'O Lord, sir!' at your whipping, and 'spare not me?' Indeed your 'O Lord, sir!' is very sequent to your whipping: you would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

Clown

I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my 'O Lord, sir!' I see things may serve long, but not serve ever.

COUNTESS

I play the noble housewife with the time
To entertain't so merrily with a fool.

Clown

O Lord, sir! why, there't serves well again.

COUNTESS

An end, sir; to your business. Give Helen this,
And urge her to a present answer back:
Commend me to my kinsmen and my son:
This is not much.

Clown

Not much commendation to them.

COUNTESS

Not much employment for you: you understand me?

Clown

Most fruitfully: I am there before my legs.

COUNTESS

Haste you again.

Exeunt severally

Act 2, Scene 3

Paris. The KING's palace.

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

LAFEU

They say miracles are past; and we have our
philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar,
things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that
we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves
into seeming knowledge, when we should submit
ourselves to an unknown fear.

PAROLLES

Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath
shot out in our latter times.

BERTRAM

And so 'tis.

LAFEU

To be relinquish'd of the artists,—

PAROLLES

So I say.

LAFEU

Both of Galen and Paracelsus.

PAROLLES

So I say.

LAFEU

Of all the learned and authentic fellows,—

PAROLLES

Right; so I say.

LAFEU

That gave him out incurable,—

PAROLLES

Why, there 'tis; so say I too.

LAFEU

Not to be helped,—

PAROLLES

Right; as 'twere, a man assured of a—

LAFEU

Uncertain life, and sure death.

PAROLLES

Just, you say well; so would I have said.

LAFEU

I may truly say, it is a novelty to the world.

PAROLLES

It is, indeed: if you will have it in showing, you shall read it in—what do you call there?

LAFEU

A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor.

PAROLLES

That's it; I would have said the very same.

LAFEU

Why, your dolphin is not lustier: 'fore me, I speak in respect—

PAROLLES

Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange, that is the brief and the tedious of it; and he's of a most facinorous spirit that will not acknowledge it to be the—

LAFEU

Very hand of heaven.

PAROLLES

Ay, so I say.

LAFEU

In a most weak—

pausing

and debile minister, great power, great
transcendence: which should, indeed, give us a
further use to be made than alone the recovery of
the king, as to be--

pausing

generally thankful.

PAROLLES

I would have said it; you say well. Here comes the king.

Enter KING, HELENA, and Attendants. LAFEU and PAROLLES retire

LAFEU

Lustig, as the Dutchman says: I'll like a maid the
better, whilst I have a tooth in my head: why, he's
able to lead her a coranto.

PAROLLES

Mort du vinaigre! is not this Helen?

LAFEU

'Fore God, I think so.

KING

Go, call before me all the lords in court.
Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side;
And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense
Thou hast repeal'd, a second time receive
The confirmation of my promised gift,
Which but attends thy naming.

Enter three or four Lords

Fair maid, send forth thine eye: this youthful parcel
Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,
O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice
I have to use: thy frank election make;
Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

HELENA

To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress
Fall, when Love please! marry, to each, but one!

LAFEU

I'd give bay Curtal and his furniture,
My mouth no more were broken than these boys',
And writ as little beard.

KING

Peruse them well:
Not one of those but had a noble father.

HELENA

Gentlemen,
Heaven hath through me restored the king to health.

All

We understand it, and thank heaven for you.

HELENA

I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest,
That I protest I simply am a maid.
Please it your majesty, I have done already:
The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,
'We blush that thou shouldst choose; but, be refused,
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever;
We'll ne'er come there again.'

KING

Make choice; and, see,
Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.

HELENA

Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly,
And to imperial Love, that god most high,
Do my sighs stream. Sir, will you hear my suit?

First Lord

And grant it.

HELENA

Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.

LAFEU

I had rather be in this choice than throw ames-ace
for my life.

HELENA

The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes,
Before I speak, too threateningly replies:
Love make your fortunes twenty times above
Her that so wishes and her humble love!

Second Lord

No better, if you please.

HELENA

My wish receive,
Which great Love grant! and so, I take my leave.

LAFEU

Do all they deny her? An they were sons of mine,
I'd have them whipped; or I would send them to the
Turk, to make eunuchs of.

HELENA

Be not afraid that I your hand should take;
I'll never do you wrong for your own sake:
Blessing upon your vows! and in your bed
Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!

LAFEU

These boys are boys of ice, they'll none have her:
sure, they are bastards to the English; the French
ne'er got 'em.

HELENA

You are too young, too happy, and too good,
To make yourself a son out of my blood.

Fourth Lord

Fair one, I think not so.

LAFEU

There's one grape yet; I am sure thy father drunk
wine: but if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth
of fourteen; I have known thee already.

HELENA

[*To BERTRAM*] I dare not say I take you; but I give
Me and my service, ever whilst I live,
Into your guiding power. This is the man.

KING

Why, then, young Bertram, take her; she's thy wife.

BERTRAM

My wife, my liege! I shall beseech your highness,
In such a business give me leave to use
The help of mine own eyes.

KING

Know'st thou not, Bertram,
What she has done for me?

BERTRAM

Yes, my good lord;
But never hope to know why I should marry her.

KING

Thou know'st she has raised me from my sickly bed.

BERTRAM

But follows it, my lord, to bring me down
Must answer for your raising? I know her well:
She had her breeding at my father's charge.
A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain
Rather corrupt me ever!

KING

'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which
I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,
Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off
In differences so mighty. If she be
All that is virtuous, save what thou dislikest,
A poor physician's daughter, thou dislikest
Of virtue for the name: but do not so:
From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed:
Where great additions swell's, and virtue none,
It is a dropsied honour. Good alone
Is good without a name. Vileness is so:
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;
In these to nature she's immediate heir,
And these breed honour: that is honour's scorn,
Which challenges itself as honour's born
And is not like the sire: honours thrive,
When rather from our acts we them derive
Than our foregoers: the mere word's a slave
Debosh'd on every tomb, on every grave
A lying trophy, and as oft is dumb
Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb
Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said?
If thou canst like this creature as a maid,
I can create the rest: virtue and she
Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.

BERTRAM

I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't.

KING

Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive to choose.

HELENA

That you are well restored, my lord, I'm glad:
Let the rest go.

KING

My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,
I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift;
That dost in vile misprision shackle up
My love and her desert; that canst not dream,
We, poisoning us in her defective scale,
Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know,
It is in us to plant thine honour where
We please to have it grow. Cheque thy contempt:
Obey our will, which travails in thy good:
Believe not thy disdain, but presently
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever
Into the staggers and the careless lapse
Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate
Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice,
Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.

BERTRAM

Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit
My fancy to your eyes: when I consider
What great creation and what dole of honour
Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late
Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now
The praised of the king; who, so ennobled,
Is as 'twere born so.

KING

Take her by the hand,
And tell her she is thine: to whom I promise
A counterpoise, if not to thy estate
A balance more replete.

BERTRAM

I take her hand.

KING

Good fortune and the favour of the king
Smile upon this contract; whose ceremony
Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,
And be perform'd to-night: the solemn feast
Shall more attend upon the coming space,
Expecting absent friends. As thou lovest her,
Thy love's to me religious; else, does err.

Exeunt all but LAFEU and PAROLLES

LAFEU

[Advancing] Do you hear, monsieur? a word with you.

PAROLLES

Your pleasure, sir?

LAFEU

Your lord and master did well to make his
recantation.

PAROLLES

Recantation! My lord! my master!

LAFEU

Ay; is it not a language I speak?

PAROLLES

A most harsh one, and not to be understood without
bloody succeeding. My master!

LAFEU

Are you companion to the Count Rousillon?

PAROLLES

To any count, to all counts, to what is man.

LAFEU

To what is count's man: count's master is of
another style.

PAROLLES

You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too old.

LAFEU

I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which
title age cannot bring thee.

PAROLLES

What I dare too well do, I dare not do.

LAFEU

I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty
wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy
travel; it might pass: yet the scarfs and the
bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from
believing thee a vessel of too great a burthen. I
have now found thee; when I lose thee again, I care
not: yet art thou good for nothing but taking up; and
that thou't scarce worth.

PAROLLES

Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee,---

LAFEU

Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou
hasten thy trial; which if--Lord have mercy on thee
for a hen! So, my good window of lattice, fare thee
well: thy casement I need not open, for I look
through thee. Give me thy hand.

PAROLLES

My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

LAFEU

Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

PAROLLES

I have not, my lord, deserved it.

LAFEU

Yes, good faith, every dram of it; and I will not
bate thee a scruple.

PAROLLES

Well, I shall be wiser.

LAFEU

Even as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at
a smack o' the contrary. If ever thou be'st bound
in thy scarf and beaten, thou shalt find what it is
to be proud of thy bondage. I have a desire to hold
my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge,
that I may say in the default, he is a man I know.

PAROLLES

My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

LAFEU

I would it were hell-pains for thy sake, and my poor
doing eternal: for doing I am past: as I will by
thee, in what motion age will give me leave.

Exit

PAROLLES

Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off
me; scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must
be patient; there is no fettering of authority.
I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with
any convenience, an he were double and double a
lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I
would of—I'll beat him, an if I could but meet him again.

Re-enter LAFEU

LAFEU

Sirrah, your lord and master's married; there's news
for you: you have a new mistress.

PAROLLES

I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make
some reservation of your wrongs: he is my good
lord: whom I serve above is my master.

LAFEU

Who? God?

PAROLLES

Ay, sir.

LAFEU

The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou
garter up thy arms o' this fashion? dost make hose of
sleeves? do other servants so? Thou wert best set
thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine
honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat
thee: methinks, thou art a general offence, and
every man should beat thee: I think thou wast
created for men to breathe themselves upon thee.

PAROLLES

This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

LAFEU

Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a
kernel out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond and
no true traveller: you are more saucy with lords
and honourable personages than the commission of your
birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are not
worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you.

Exit

PAROLLES

Good, very good; it is so then: good, very good;
let it be concealed awhile.

Re-enter BERTRAM

BERTRAM

Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever!

PAROLLES

What's the matter, sweet-heart?

BERTRAM

Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,
I will not bed her.

PAROLLES

What, what, sweet-heart?

BERTRAM

O my Parolles, they have married me!
I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

PAROLLES

France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits
The tread of a man's foot: to the wars!

BERTRAM

There's letters from my mother: what the import is,
I know not yet.

PAROLLES

Ay, that would be known. To the wars, my boy, to the wars!
He wears his honour in a box unseen,
That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet
Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions
France is a stable; we that dwell in't jades;

Therefore, to the war!

BERTRAM

It shall be so: I'll send her to my house,
Acquaint my mother with my hate to her,
And wherefore I am fled; write to the king
That which I durst not speak; his present gift
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields,
Where noble fellows strike: war is no strife
To the dark house and the detested wife.

PAROLLES

Will this capriccio hold in thee? art sure?

BERTRAM

Go with me to my chamber, and advise me.
I'll send her straight away: to-morrow
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

PAROLLES

Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it. 'Tis hard:
A young man married is a man that's marr'd:
Therefore away, and leave her bravely; go:
The king has done you wrong: but, hush, 'tis so.

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 4

Paris. The KING's palace.

Enter HELENA and Clown

HELENA

My mother greets me kindly; is she well?

Clown

She is not well; but yet she has her health: she's
very merry; but yet she is not well: but thanks be
given, she's very well and wants nothing i', the

world; but yet she is not well.

HELENA

If she be very well, what does she ail, that she's
not very well?

Clown

Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

HELENA

What two things?

Clown

One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send her
quickly! the other that she's in earth, from whence
God send her quickly!

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES

Bless you, my fortunate lady!

HELENA

I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own
good fortunes.

PAROLLES

You had my prayers to lead them on; and to keep them
on, have them still. O, my knave, how does my old lady?

Clown

So that you had her wrinkles and I her money,
I would she did as you say.

PAROLLES

Why, I say nothing.

Clown

Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing: to say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of your title; which is within a very little of nothing.

PAROLLES

Away! thou'rt a knave.

Clown

You should have said, sir, before a knave thou'rt a knave; that's, before me thou'rt a knave: this had been truth, sir.

PAROLLES

Go to, thou art a witty fool; I have found thee.

Clown

Did you find me in yourself, sir? or were you taught to find me? The search, sir, was profitable; and much fool may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of laughter.

PAROLLES

A good knave, i' faith, and well fed.
Madam, my lord will go away to-night;
A very serious business calls on him.
The great prerogative and rite of love,
Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge;
But puts it off to a compell'd restraint;
Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets,
Which they distil now in the curbed time,
To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy
And pleasure drown the brim.

HELENA

What's his will else?

PAROLLES

That you will take your instant leave o' the king
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,
Strengthen'd with what apology you think
May make it probable need.

HELENA

What more commands he?

PAROLLES

That, having this obtain'd, you presently
Attend his further pleasure.

HELENA

In every thing I wait upon his will.

PAROLLES

I shall report it so.

HELENA

I pray you.

Exit PAROLLES

Come, sirrah.

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 5

Paris. The KING's palace.

Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM

LAFEU

But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

BERTRAM

Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.

LAFEU

You have it from his own deliverance.

BERTRAM

And by other warranted testimony.

LAFEU

Then my dial goes not true: I took this lark for a bunting.

BERTRAM

I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge and accordingly valiant.

LAFEU

I have then sinned against his experience and transgressed against his valour; and my state that way is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes: I pray you, make us friends; I will pursue the amity.

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES

[To BERTRAM] These things shall be done, sir.

LAFEU

Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

PAROLLES

Sir?

LAFEU

O, I know him well, I, sir; he, sir, 's a good workman, a very good tailor.

BERTRAM

[Aside to PAROLLES] Is she gone to the king?

PAROLLES

She is.

BERTRAM

Will she away to-night?

PAROLLES

As you'll have her.

BERTRAM

I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,
Given order for our horses; and to-night,
When I should take possession of the bride,
End ere I do begin.

LAFEU

A good traveller is something at the latter end of a
dinner; but one that lies three thirds and uses a
known truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should
be once heard and thrice beaten. God save you, captain.

BERTRAM

Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur?

PAROLLES

I know not how I have deserved to run into my lord's
displeasure.

LAFEU

You have made shift to run into 't, boots and spurs
and all, like him that leaped into the custard; and
out of it you'll run again, rather than suffer
question for your residence.

BERTRAM

It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.

LAFEU

And shall do so ever, though I took him at 's prayers. Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of me, there can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes. Trust him not in matter of heavy consequence; I have kept of them tame, and know their natures. Farewell, monsieur: I have spoken better of you than you have or will to deserve at my hand; but we must do good against evil.

Exit

PAROLLES

An idle lord. I swear.

BERTRAM

I think so.

PAROLLES

Why, do you not know him?

BERTRAM

Yes, I do know him well, and common speech Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

Enter HELENA

HELENA

I have, sir, as I was commanded from you,
Spoke with the king and have procured his leave
For present parting; only he desires
Some private speech with you.

BERTRAM

I shall obey his will.
You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,
Which holds not colour with the time, nor does
The ministration and required office
On my particular. Prepared I was not
For such a business; therefore am I found
So much unsettled: this drives me to entreat you
That presently you take our way for home;
And rather muse than ask why I entreat you,

For my respects are better than they seem
And my appointments have in them a need
Greater than shows itself at the first view
To you that know them not. This to my mother:

Giving a letter

'Twill be two days ere I shall see you, so
I leave you to your wisdom.

HELENA

Sir, I can nothing say,
But that I am your most obedient servant.

BERTRAM

Come, come, no more of that.

HELENA

And ever shall
With true observance seek to eke out that
Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd
To equal my great fortune.

BERTRAM

Let that go:
My haste is very great: farewell; hie home.

HELENA

Pray, sir, your pardon.

BERTRAM

Well, what would you say?

HELENA

I am not worthy of the wealth I owe,
Nor dare I say 'tis mine, and yet it is;
But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal
What law does vouch mine own.

BERTRAM

What would you have?

HELENA

Something; and scarce so much: nothing, indeed.
I would not tell you what I would, my lord:
Faith yes;
Strangers and foes do sunder, and not kiss.

BERTRAM

I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

HELENA

I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.

BERTRAM

Where are my other men, monsieur? Farewell.

Exit HELENA

Go thou toward home; where I will never come
Whilst I can shake my sword or hear the drum.
Away, and for our flight.

PAROLLES

Bravely, coragio!

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 1

Florence. The DUKE's palace.

Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence attended; the two Frenchmen, with a troop of soldiers. DUKE So that from point to point now have you heard The fundamental reasons of this war, Whose great decision hath much blood let forth And more thirsts after. First Lord Holy seems the quarrel Upon your grace's part; black and fearful On the opposer. DUKE Therefore we marvel much our cousin France Would in so just a business shut his bosom Against our borrowing prayers. Second Lord Good my lord, The reasons of our state I cannot yield, But like a common and an outward man, That the great figure of a council frames By self-unable motion: therefore dare not Say what I think of it, since I have found Myself in my uncertain grounds to fail As often as I guess'd. DUKE Be it his pleasure. First Lord But I am sure the younger of our nature,

*That surfeit on their ease, will day by day Come here for physic. DUKE Welcome shall they be;
And all the honours that can fly from us Shall on them settle. You know your places well; When
better fall, for your avails they fell: To-morrow to the field. [Flourish. Exeunt*

Act 3, Scene 2

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Enter COUNTESS and Clown

COUNTESS

It hath happened all as I would have had it, save
that he comes not along with her.

Clown

By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very
melancholy man.

COUNTESS

By what observance, I pray you?

Clown

Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the
ruff and sing; ask questions and sing; pick his
teeth and sing. I know a man that had this trick of
melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

COUNTESS

Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come.

Opening a letter

Clown

I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court: our
old ling and our Isbels o' the country are nothing
like your old ling and your Isbels o' the court:
the brains of my Cupid's knocked out, and I begin to
love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

COUNTESS

What have we here?

Clown

E'en that you have there.

Exit

COUNTESS

[Reads] I have sent you a daughter-in-law: she hath recovered the king, and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her; and sworn to make the 'not' eternal. You shall hear I am run away: know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you. Your unfortunate son,
BERTRAM.

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy.
To fly the favours of so good a king;
To pluck his indignation on thy head
By the misprising of a maid too virtuous
For the contempt of empire.

Re-enter Clown

Clown

O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers and my young lady!

COUNTESS

What is the matter?

Clown

Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort; your son will not be killed so soon as I thought he would.

COUNTESS

Why should he be killed?

Clown

So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does:
the danger is in standing to't; that's the loss of
men, though it be the getting of children. Here
they come will tell you more: for my part, I only
hear your son was run away.

Exit

Enter HELENA, and two Gentlemen

First Gentleman

Save you, good madam.

HELENA

Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

Second Gentleman

Do not say so.

COUNTESS

Think upon patience. Pray you, gentlemen,
I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief,
That the first face of neither, on the start,
Can woman me unto't: where is my son, I pray you?

Second Gentleman

Madam, he's gone to serve the duke of Florence:
We met him thitherward; for thence we came,
And, after some dispatch in hand at court,
Thither we bend again.

HELENA

Look on his letter, madam; here's my passport.

Reads

When thou canst get the ring upon my finger which
never shall come off, and show me a child begotten
of thy body that I am father to, then call me
husband: but in such a 'then' I write a 'never.'
This is a dreadful sentence.

COUNTESS

Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

First Gentleman

Ay, madam;
And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pain.

COUNTESS

I prithee, lady, have a better cheer;
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,
Thou robb'st me of a moiety: he was my son;
But I do wash his name out of my blood,
And thou art all my child. Towards Florence is he?

Second Gentleman

Ay, madam.

COUNTESS

And to be a soldier?

Second Gentleman

Such is his noble purpose; and believe 't,
The duke will lay upon him all the honour
That good convenience claims.

COUNTESS

Return you thither?

First Gentleman

Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

HELENA

[Reads] Till I have no wife I have nothing in France.
'Tis bitter.

COUNTESS

Find you that there?

HELENA

Ay, madam.

First Gentleman

'Tis but the boldness of his hand, haply, which his
heart was not consenting to.

COUNTESS

Nothing in France, until he have no wife!
There's nothing here that is too good for him
But only she; and she deserves a lord
That twenty such rude boys might tend upon
And call her hourly mistress. Who was with him?

First Gentleman

A servant only, and a gentleman
Which I have sometime known.

COUNTESS

Parolles, was it not?

First Gentleman

Ay, my good lady, he.

COUNTESS

A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.
My son corrupts a well-derived nature
With his inducement.

First Gentleman

Indeed, good lady,
The fellow has a deal of that too much,
Which holds him much to have.

COUNTESS

You're welcome, gentlemen.
I will entreat you, when you see my son,

To tell him that his sword can never win
The honour that he loses: more I'll entreat you
Written to bear along.

Second Gentleman

We serve you, madam,
In that and all your worthiest affairs.

COUNTESS

Not so, but as we change our courtesies.
Will you draw near!

Exeunt COUNTESS and Gentlemen

HELENA

'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.'
Nothing in France, until he has no wife!
Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France;
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't I
That chase thee from thy country and expose
Those tender limbs of thine to the event
Of the none-sparing war? and is it I
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,
Fly with false aim; move the still-peering air,
That sings with piercing; do not touch my lord.
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there;
Whoever charges on his forward breast,
I am the caitiff that do hold him to't;
And, though I kill him not, I am the cause
His death was so effected: better 'twere
I met the ravin lion when he roar'd
With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere
That all the miseries which nature owes
Were mine at once. No, come thou home, Rousillon,
Whence honour but of danger wins a scar,
As oft it loses all: I will be gone;
My being here it is that holds thee hence:
Shall I stay here to do't? no, no, although
The air of paradise did fan the house
And angels officed all: I will be gone,
That pitiful rumour may report my flight,
To console thine ear. Come, night; end, day!

For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.

Exit

Act 3, Scene 3

Florence. Before the DUKE's palace.

Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, Soldiers, Drum, and Trumpets

DUKE

The general of our horse thou art; and we,
Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence
Upon thy promising fortune.

BERTRAM

Sir, it is
A charge too heavy for my strength, but yet
We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake
To the extreme edge of hazard.

DUKE

Then go thou forth;
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,
As thy auspicious mistress!

BERTRAM

This very day,
Great Mars, I put myself into thy file:
Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove
A lover of thy drum, hater of love.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 4

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Enter COUNTESS and Steward

COUNTESS

Alas! and would you take the letter of her?
Might you not know she would do as she has done,
By sending me a letter? Read it again.

Steward

[Reads]

I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone:
Ambitious love hath so in me offended,
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.
Write, write, that from the bloody course of war
My dearest master, your dear son, may hie:
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far
His name with zealous fervor sanctify:
His taken labours bid him me forgive;
I, his despiteful Juno, sent him forth
From courtly friends, with camping foes to live,
Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth:
He is too good and fair for death and me:
Whom I myself embrace, to set him free.

COUNTESS

Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words!
Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much,
As letting her pass so: had I spoke with her,
I could have well diverted her intents,
Which thus she hath prevented.

Steward

Pardon me, madam:
If I had given you this at over-night,
She might have been o'erta'en; and yet she writes,
Pursuit would be but vain.

COUNTESS

What angel shall
Bless this unworthy husband? he cannot thrive,
Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear
And loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath
Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,
To this unworthy husband of his wife;
Let every word weigh heavy of her worth
That he does weigh too light: my greatest grief.

Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.
Dispatch the most convenient messenger:
When haply he shall hear that she is gone,
He will return; and hope I may that she,
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,
Led hither by pure love: which of them both
Is dearest to me. I have no skill in sense
To make distinction: provide this messenger:
My heart is heavy and mine age is weak;
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 5

Florence. Without the walls. A tucket afar off.

Enter an old Widow of Florence, DIANA, VIOLENTA, and MARIANA, with other Citizens

Widow

Nay, come; for if they do approach the city, we
shall lose all the sight.

DIANA

They say the French count has done most honourable service.

Widow

It is reported that he has taken their greatest
commander; and that with his own hand he slew the
duke's brother.

Tucket

We have lost our labour; they are gone a contrary
way: hark! you may know by their trumpets.

MARIANA

Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with
the report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this
French earl: the honour of a maid is her name; and
no legacy is so rich as honesty.

Widow

I have told my neighbour how you have been solicited
by a gentleman his companion.

MARIANA

I know that knave; hang him! one Parolles: a
filthy officer he is in those suggestions for the
young earl. Beware of them, Diana; their promises,
enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these engines of
lust, are not the things they go under: many a maid
hath been seduced by them; and the misery is,
example, that so terrible shows in the wreck of
maidenhood, cannot for all that dissuade succession,
but that they are limed with the twigs that threaten
them. I hope I need not to advise you further; but
I hope your own grace will keep you where you are,
though there were no further danger known but the
modesty which is so lost.

DIANA

You shall not need to fear me.

Widow

I hope so.

Enter HELENA, disguised like a Pilgrim

Look, here comes a pilgrim: I know she will lie at
my house; thither they send one another: I'll
question her. God save you, pilgrim! whither are you bound?

HELENA

To Saint Jaques le Grand.
Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you?

Widow

At the Saint Francis here beside the port.

HELENA

Is this the way?

Widow

Ay, marry, is't.

A march afar

Hark you! they come this way.
If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,
But till the troops come by,
I will conduct you where you shall be lodged;
The rather, for I think I know your hostess
As ample as myself.

HELENA

Is it yourself?

Widow

If you shall please so, pilgrim.

HELENA

I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

Widow

You came, I think, from France?

HELENA

I did so.

Widow

Here you shall see a countryman of yours
That has done worthy service.

HELENA

His name, I pray you.

DIANA

The Count Rousillon: know you such a one?

HELENA

But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him:
His face I know not.

DIANA

Whatsome'er he is,
He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,
As 'tis reported, for the king had married him
Against his liking: think you it is so?

HELENA

Ay, surely, mere the truth: I know his lady.

DIANA

There is a gentleman that serves the count
Reports but coarsely of her.

HELENA

What's his name?

DIANA

Monsieur Parolles.

HELENA

O, I believe with him,
In argument of praise, or to the worth
Of the great count himself, she is too mean
To have her name repeated: all her deserving
Is a reserved honesty, and that
I have not heard examined.

DIANA

Alas, poor lady!
'Tis a hard bondage to become the wife
Of a detesting lord.

Widow

I warrant, good creature, wheresoe'er she is,
Her heart weighs sadly: this young maid might do her

A shrewd turn, if she pleased.

HELENA

How do you mean?
May be the amorous count solicits her
In the unlawful purpose.

Widow

He does indeed;
And brokes with all that can in such a suit
Corrupt the tender honour of a maid:
But she is arm'd for him and keeps her guard
In honestest defence.

MARIANA

The gods forbid else!

Widow

So, now they come:

Drum and Colours

Enter BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and the whole army

That is Antonio, the duke's eldest son;
That, Escalus.

HELENA

Which is the Frenchman?

DIANA

He;
That with the plume: 'tis a most gallant fellow.
I would he loved his wife: if he were honest
He were much goodlier: is't not a handsome gentleman?

HELENA

I like him well.

DIANA

'Tis pity he is not honest: yond's that same knave
That leads him to these places: were I his lady,
I would Poison that vile rascal.

HELENA

Which is he?

DIANA

That jack-an-apes with scarfs: why is he melancholy?

HELENA

Perchance he's hurt i' the battle.

PAROLLES

Lose our drum! well.

MARIANA

He's shrewdly vexed at something: look, he has spied us.

Widow

Marry, hang you!

MARIANA

And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier!

Exeunt BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and army

Widow

The troop is past. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you
Where you shall host: of enjoin'd penitents
There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,
Already at my house.

HELENA

I humbly thank you:
Please it this matron and this gentle maid
To eat with us to-night, the charge and thanking
Shall be for me; and, to requite you further,

I will bestow some precepts of this virgin
Worthy the note.

BOTH

We'll take your offer kindly.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 6

Camp before Florence.

Enter BERTRAM and the two French Lords

Second Lord

Nay, good my lord, put him to't; let him have his
way.

First Lord

If your lordship find him not a hilding, hold me no
more in your respect.

Second Lord

On my life, my lord, a bubble.

BERTRAM

Do you think I am so far deceived in him?

Second Lord

Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct knowledge,
without any malice, but to speak of him as my
kinsman, he's a most notable coward, an infinite and
endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner
of no one good quality worthy your lordship's
entertainment.

First Lord

It were fit you knew him; lest, reposing too far in
his virtue, which he hath not, he might at some

great and trusty business in a main danger fail you.

BERTRAM

I would I knew in what particular action to try him.

First Lord

None better than to let him fetch off his drum,
which you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

Second Lord

I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly
surprise him; such I will have, whom I am sure he
knows not from the enemy: we will bind and hoodwink
him so, that he shall suppose no other but that he
is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries, when
we bring him to our own tents. Be but your lordship
present at his examination: if he do not, for the
promise of his life and in the highest compulsion of
base fear, offer to betray you and deliver all the
intelligence in his power against you, and that with
the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never
trust my judgment in any thing.

First Lord

O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum;
he says he has a stratagem for't: when your
lordship sees the bottom of his success in't, and to
what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be
melted, if you give him not John Drum's
entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed.
Here he comes.

Enter PAROLLES

Second Lord

[Aside to BERTRAM] O, for the love of laughter,
hinder not the honour of his design: let him fetch
off his drum in any hand.

BERTRAM

How now, monsieur! this drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

First Lord

A pox on't, let it go; 'tis but a drum.

PAROLLES

'But a drum!' is't 'but a drum'? A drum so lost!
There was excellent command,—to charge in with our horse upon our own wings, and to rend our own soldiers!

First Lord

That was not to be blamed in the command of the service: it was a disaster of war that Caesar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.

BERTRAM

Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success: some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum; but it is not to be recovered.

PAROLLES

It might have been recovered.

BERTRAM

It might; but it is not now.

PAROLLES

It is to be recovered: but that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have that drum or another, or 'hic jacet.'

BERTRAM

Why, if you have a stomach, to't, monsieur: if you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour again into his native quarter,

be magnanimous in the enterprise and go on; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit: if you speed well in it, the duke shall both speak of it. and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness.

PAROLLES

By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

BERTRAM

But you must not now slumber in it.

PAROLLES

I'll about it this evening: and I will presently pen down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my certainty, put myself into my mortal preparation; and by midnight look to hear further from me.

BERTRAM

May I be bold to acquaint his grace you are gone about it?

PAROLLES

I know not what the success will be, my lord; but the attempt I vow.

BERTRAM

I know thou'rt valiant; and, to the possibility of thy soldiery, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAROLLES

I love not many words.

Exit

Second Lord

No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to

be done; damns himself to do and dares better be
damned than to do't?

First Lord

You do not know him, my lord, as we do: certain it
is that he will steal himself into a man's favour and
for a week escape a great deal of discoveries; but
when you find him out, you have him ever after.

BERTRAM

Why, do you think he will make no deed at all of
this that so seriously he does address himself unto?

Second Lord

None in the world; but return with an invention and
clap upon you two or three probable lies: but we
have almost embossed him; you shall see his fall
to-night; for indeed he is not for your lordship's respect.

First Lord

We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case
him. He was first smoked by the old lord Lafeu:
when his disguise and he is parted, tell me what a
sprat you shall find him; which you shall see this
very night.

Second Lord

I must go look my twigs: he shall be caught.

BERTRAM

Your brother he shall go along with me.

Second Lord

As't please your lordship: I'll leave you.

Exit

BERTRAM

Now will I lead you to the house, and show you
The lass I spoke of.

First Lord

But you say she's honest.

BERTRAM

That's all the fault: I spoke with her but once
And found her wondrous cold; but I sent to her,
By this same coxcomb that we have i' the wind,
Tokens and letters which she did re-send;
And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature:
Will you go see her?

First Lord

With all my heart, my lord.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 7

Florence. The Widow's house.

Enter HELENA and Widow

HELENA

If you misdoubt me that I am not she,
I know not how I shall assure you further,
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

Widow

Though my estate be fallen, I was well born,
Nothing acquainted with these businesses;
And would not put my reputation now
In any staining act.

HELENA

Nor would I wish you.
First, give me trust, the count he is my husband,
And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken

Is so from word to word; and then you cannot,
By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,
Err in bestowing it.

Widow

I should believe you:
For you have show'd me that which well approves
You're great in fortune.

HELENA

Take this purse of gold,
And let me buy your friendly help thus far,
Which I will over-pay and pay again
When I have found it. The count he woos your daughter,
Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,
Resolved to carry her: let her in fine consent,
As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it.
Now his important blood will nought deny
That she'll demand: a ring the county wears,
That downward hath succeeded in his house
From son to son, some four or five descents
Since the first father wore it: this ring he holds
In most rich choice; yet in his idle fire,
To buy his will, it would not seem too dear,
Howe'er repented after.

Widow

Now I see
The bottom of your purpose.

HELENA

You see it lawful, then: it is no more,
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,
Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,
Herself most chastely absent: after this,
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns
To what is passed already.

Widow

I have yielded:
Instruct my daughter how she shall persevere,
That time and place with this deceit so lawful
May prove coherent. Every night he comes
With musics of all sorts and songs composed
To her unworthiness: it nothing steads us
To chide him from our eaves; for he persists
As if his life lay on't.

HELENA

Why then to-night
Let us assay our plot; which, if it speed,
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed
And lawful meaning in a lawful act,
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact:
But let's about it.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 1

Without the Florentine camp.

Enter Second French Lord, with five or six other Soldiers in ambush

Second Lord

He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner.
When you sally upon him, speak what terrible
language you will: though you understand it not
yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to
understand him, unless some one among us whom we
must produce for an interpreter.

First Soldier

Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

Second Lord

Art not acquainted with him? knows he not thy voice?

First Soldier

No, sir, I warrant you.

Second Lord

But what linsey-woolsey hast thou to speak to us again?

First Soldier

E'en such as you speak to me.

Second Lord

He must think us some band of strangers i' the adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak one to another; so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: choughs' language, gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, ho! here he comes, to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES

Ten o'clock: within these three hours 'twill be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it: they begin to smoke me; and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

Second Lord

This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of.

PAROLLES

What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and say I got them in exploit: yet slight ones will not carry it; they will say, 'Came you off with so little?' and great ones I dare not give. Wherefore, what's the

instance? Tongue, I must put you into a
butter-woman's mouth and buy myself another of
Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils.

Second Lord

Is it possible he should know what he is, and be
that he is?

PAROLLES

I would the cutting of my garments would serve the
turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

Second Lord

We cannot afford you so.

PAROLLES

Or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in
stratagem.

Second Lord

'Twould not do.

PAROLLES

Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripped.

Second Lord

Hardly serve.

PAROLLES

Though I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel.

Second Lord

How deep?

PAROLLES

Thirty fathom.

Second Lord

Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

PAROLLES

I would I had any drum of the enemy's: I would swear
I recovered it.

Second Lord

You shall hear one anon.

PAROLLES

A drum now of the enemy's,—

Alarum within

Second Lord

Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

All

Cargo, cargo, cargo, villiando par corbo, cargo.

PAROLLES

O, ransom, ransom! do not hide mine eyes.

They seize and blindfold him

First Soldier

Boskos thromuldo boskos.

PAROLLES

I know you are the Muskos' regiment:
And I shall lose my life for want of language;
If there be here German, or Dane, low Dutch,
Italian, or French, let him speak to me; I'll
Discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

First Soldier

Boskos vauvado: I understand thee, and can speak
thy tongue. Kerely bonto, sir, betake thee to thy

faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.

PAROLLES

O!

First Soldier

O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania dulce.

Second Lord

Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

First Soldier

The general is content to spare thee yet;
And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on
To gather from thee: haply thou mayst inform
Something to save thy life.

PAROLLES

O, let me live!
And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,
Their force, their purposes; nay, I'll speak that
Which you will wonder at.

First Soldier

But wilt thou faithfully?

PAROLLES

If I do not, damn me.

First Soldier

Acordo linta.
Come on; thou art granted space.

Exit, with PAROLLES guarded. A short alarum within

Second Lord

Go, tell the Count Rousillon, and my brother,
We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled

Till we do hear from them.

Second Soldier

Captain, I will.

Second Lord

A' will betray us all unto ourselves:
Inform on that.

Second Soldier

So I will, sir.

Second Lord

Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 2

Florence. The Widow's house.

Enter BERTRAM and DIANA

BERTRAM

They told me that your name was Fontibell.

DIANA

No, my good lord, Diana.

BERTRAM

Titled goddess;
And worth it, with addition! But, fair soul,
In your fine frame hath love no quality?
If quick fire of youth light not your mind,
You are no maiden, but a monument:
When you are dead, you should be such a one
As you are now, for you are cold and stem;
And now you should be as your mother was
When your sweet self was got.

DIANA

She then was honest.

BERTRAM

So should you be.

DIANA

No:
My mother did but duty; such, my lord,
As you owe to your wife.

BERTRAM

No more o' that;
I prithee, do not strive against my vows:
I was compell'd to her; but I love thee
By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever
Do thee all rights of service.

DIANA

Ay, so you serve us
Till we serve you; but when you have our roses,
You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves
And mock us with our bareness.

BERTRAM

How have I sworn!

DIANA

'Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,
But the plain single vow that is vow'd true.
What is not holy, that we swear not by,
But take the High'st to witness: then, pray you, tell me,
If I should swear by God's great attributes,
I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths,
When I did love you ill? This has no holding,
To swear by him whom I protest to love,
That I will work against him: therefore your oaths
Are words and poor conditions, but unseal'd,
At least in my opinion.

BERTRAM

Change it, change it;
Be not so holy-cruel: love is holy;
And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts
That you do charge men with. Stand no more off,
But give thyself unto my sick desires,
Who then recover: say thou art mine, and ever
My love as it begins shall so persever.

DIANA

I see that men make ropes in such a scarre
That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

BERTRAM

I'll lend it thee, my dear; but have no power
To give it from me.

DIANA

Will you not, my lord?

BERTRAM

It is an honour 'longing to our house,
Bequeathed down from many ancestors;
Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world
In me to lose.

DIANA

Mine honour's such a ring:
My chastity's the jewel of our house,
Bequeathed down from many ancestors;
Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world
In me to lose: thus your own proper wisdom
Brings in the champion Honour on my part,
Against your vain assault.

BERTRAM

Here, take my ring:
My house, mine honour, yea, my life, be thine,
And I'll be bid by thee.

DIANA

When midnight comes, knock at my chamber–window:
I'll order take my mother shall not hear.
Now will I charge you in the band of truth,
When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed,
Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me:
My reasons are most strong; and you shall know them
When back again this ring shall be deliver'd:
And on your finger in the night I'll put
Another ring, that what in time proceeds
May token to the future our past deeds.
Adieu, till then; then, fail not. You have won
A wife of me, though there my hope be done.

BERTRAM

A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee.

Exit

DIANA

For which live long to thank both heaven and me!
You may so in the end.
My mother told me just how he would woo,
As if she sat in 's heart; she says all men
Have the like oaths: he had sworn to marry me
When his wife's dead; therefore I'll lie with him
When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,
Marry that will, I live and die a maid:
Only in this disguise I think't no sin
To cozen him that would unjustly win.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 3

The Florentine camp.

Enter the two French Lords and some two or three Soldiers

First Lord

You have not given him his mother's letter?

Second Lord

I have delivered it an hour since: there is something in't that stings his nature; for on the reading it he changed almost into another man.

First Lord

He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady.

Second Lord

Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure of the king, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly with you.

First Lord

When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.

Second Lord

He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste renown; and this night he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour: he hath given her his monumental ring, and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.

First Lord

Now, God delay our rebellion! as we are ourselves, what things are we!

Second Lord

Merely our own traitors. And as in the common course of all treasons, we still see them reveal themselves, till they attain to their abhorred ends, so he that in this action contrives against his own nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows himself.

First Lord

Is it not meant damnable in us, to be trumpeters of
our unlawful intents? We shall not then have his
company to-night?

Second Lord

Not till after midnight; for he is dieted to his hour.

First Lord

That approaches apace; I would gladly have him see
his company anatomized, that he might take a measure
of his own judgments, wherein so curiously he had
set this counterfeit.

Second Lord

We will not meddle with him till he come; for his
presence must be the whip of the other.

First Lord

In the mean time, what hear you of these wars?

Second Lord

I hear there is an overture of peace.

First Lord

Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

Second Lord

What will Count Rousillon do then? will he travel
higher, or return again into France?

First Lord

I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether
of his council.

Second Lord

Let it be forbid, sir; so should I be a great deal
of his act.

First Lord

Sir, his wife some two months since fled from his
house: her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques
le Grand; which holy undertaking with most austere
sanctimony she accomplished; and, there residing the
tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her
grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and
now she sings in heaven.

Second Lord

How is this justified?

First Lord

The stronger part of it by her own letters, which
makes her story true, even to the point of her
death: her death itself, which could not be her
office to say is come, was faithfully confirmed by
the rector of the place.

Second Lord

Hath the count all this intelligence?

First Lord

Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from
point, so to the full arming of the verity.

Second Lord

I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of this.

First Lord

How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our losses!

Second Lord

And how mightily some other times we drown our gain
in tears! The great dignity that his valour hath
here acquired for him shall at home be encountered

with a shame as ample.

First Lord

The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.

Enter a Messenger

How now! where's your master?

Servant

He met the duke in the street, sir, of whom he hath taken a solemn leave: his lordship will next morning for France. The duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the king.

Second Lord

They shall be no more than needful there, if they were more than they can commend.

First Lord

They cannot be too sweet for the king's tartness. Here's his lordship now.

Enter BERTRAM

How now, my lord! is't not after midnight?

BERTRAM

I have to-night dispatched sixteen businesses, a month's length a-piece, by an abstract of success: I have congied with the duke, done my adieu with his nearest; buried a wife, mourned for her; writ to my lady mother I am returning; entertained my convoy; and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many nicer needs; the last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet.

Second Lord

If the business be of any difficulty, and this morning your departure hence, it requires haste of your lordship.

BERTRAM

I mean, the business is not ended, as fearing to hear of it hereafter. But shall we have this dialogue between the fool and the soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit module, he has deceived me, like a double-meaning prophesier.

Second Lord

Bring him forth: has sat i' the stocks all night, poor gallant knave.

BERTRAM

No matter: his heels have deserved it, in usurping his spurs so long. How does he carry himself?

Second Lord

I have told your lordship already, the stocks carry him. But to answer you as you would be understood; he weeps like a wench that had shed her milk: he hath confessed himself to Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time of his remembrance to this very instant disaster of his setting i' the stocks: and what think you he hath confessed?

BERTRAM

Nothing of me, has a'?

Second Lord

His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his face: if your lordship be in't, as I believe you are, you must have the patience to hear it.

Enter PAROLLES guarded, and First Soldier

BERTRAM

A plague upon him! muffled! he can say nothing of me: hush, hush!

First Lord

Hoodman comes! Portotartarosa

First Soldier

He calls for the tortures: what will you say without 'em?

PAROLLES

I will confess what I know without constraint: if ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.

First Soldier

Bosko chimurcho.

First Lord

Boblibindo chicurmurco.

First Soldier

You are a merciful general. Our general bids you answer to what I shall ask you out of a note.

PAROLLES

And truly, as I hope to live.

First Soldier

[Reads] 'First demand of him how many horse the duke is strong.' What say you to that?

PAROLLES

Five or six thousand; but very weak and unserviceable: the troops are all scattered, and the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation and credit and as I hope to live.

First Soldier

Shall I set down your answer so?

PAROLLES

Do: I'll take the sacrament on't, how and which way you will.

BERTRAM

All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this!

First Lord

You're deceived, my lord: this is Monsieur Parolles, the gallant militarist,—that was his own phrase,—that had the whole theoretic of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practise in the chape of his dagger.

Second Lord

I will never trust a man again for keeping his sword clean. nor believe he can have every thing in him by wearing his apparel neatly.

First Soldier

Well, that's set down.

PAROLLES

Five or six thousand horse, I said,— I will say true,—or thereabouts, set down, for I'll speak truth.

First Lord

He's very near the truth in this.

BERTRAM

But I con him no thanks for't, in the nature he delivers it.

PAROLLES

Poor rogues, I pray you, say.

First Soldier

Well, that's set down.

PAROLLES

I humbly thank you, sir: a truth's a truth, the rogues are marvellous poor.

First Soldier

[Reads] 'Demand of him, of what strength they are a-foot.' What say you to that?

PAROLLES

By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see: Spurio, a hundred and fifty; Sebastian, so many; Corambus, so many; Jaques, so many; Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred and fifty each; mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred and fifty each: so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand poll; half of the which dare not shake snow from off their cassocks, lest they shake themselves to pieces.

BERTRAM

What shall be done to him?

First Lord

Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my condition, and what credit I have with the duke.

First Soldier

Well, that's set down.

Reads

'You shall demand of him, whether one Captain Dumain be i' the camp, a Frenchman; what his reputation is with the duke; what his valour, honesty, and expertness in wars; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to revolt.' What say you to this? what do you know of it?

PAROLLES

I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories: demand them singly.

First Soldier

Do you know this Captain Dumain?

PAROLLES

I know him: a' was a botcher's 'prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the shrieve's fool with child,—a dumb innocent, that could not say him nay.

BERTRAM

Nay, by your leave, hold your hands; though I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls.

First Soldier

Well, is this captain in the duke of Florence's camp?

PAROLLES

Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy.

First Lord

Nay look not so upon me; we shall hear of your lordship anon.

First Soldier

What is his reputation with the duke?

PAROLLES

The duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine; and writ to me this other day to turn him out o' the band: I think I have his letter in my pocket.

First Soldier

Marry, we'll search.

PAROLLES

In good sadness, I do not know; either it is there, or it is upon a file with the duke's other letters in my tent.

First Soldier

Here 'tis; here's a paper: shall I read it to you?

PAROLLES

I do not know if it be it or no.

BERTRAM

Our interpreter does it well.

First Lord

Excellently.

First Soldier

[Reads] 'Dian, the count's a fool, and full of gold,'--

PAROLLES

That is not the duke's letter, sir; that is an advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurements of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish: I pray you, sir, put it up again.

First Soldier

Nay, I'll read it first, by your favour.

PAROLLES

My meaning in't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf of the maid; for I knew the young count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity and devours up all the fry it finds.

BERTRAM

Damnably both-sides rogue!

First Soldier

[Reads] 'When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it; After he scores, he never pays the score: Half won is match well made; match, and well make it; He ne'er pays after-debts, take it before; And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this, Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss: For count of this, the count's a fool, I know it, Who pays before, but not when he does owe it. Thine, as he vowed to thee in thine ear, PAROLLES.'

BERTRAM

He shall be whipped through the army with this rhyme in's forehead.

Second Lord

This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold linguist and the armipotent soldier.

BERTRAM

I could endure any thing before but a cat, and now he's a cat to me.

First Soldier

I perceive, sir, by the general's looks, we shall be fain to hang you.

PAROLLES

My life, sir, in any case: not that I am afraid to die; but that, my offences being many, I would repent out the remainder of nature: let me live, sir, in a dungeon, i' the stocks, or any where, so I may live.

First Soldier

We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely; therefore, once more to this Captain Dumain: you have answered to his reputation with the duke and to his valour: what is his honesty?

PAROLLES

He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister: for rapes and ravishments he parallels Nessus: he professes not keeping of oaths; in breaking 'em he is stronger than Hercules: he will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool: drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bed-clothes about him; but they know his conditions and lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, of his honesty: he has every thing that an honest man should not have; what an honest man should have, he has nothing.

First Lord

I begin to love him for this.

BERTRAM

For this description of thine honesty? A pox upon him for me, he's more and more a cat.

First Soldier

What say you to his expertness in war?

PAROLLES

Faith, sir, he has led the drum before the English tragedians; to belie him, I will not, and more of his soldiership I know not; except, in that country

he had the honour to be the officer at a place there called Mile-end, to instruct for the doubling of files: I would do the man what honour I can, but of this I am not certain.

First Lord

He hath out-villained villany so far, that the rarity redeems him.

BERTRAM

A pox on him, he's a cat still.

First Soldier

His qualities being at this poor price, I need not to ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt.

PAROLLES

Sir, for a quart d'ecu he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it; and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.

First Soldier

What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain?

Second Lord

Why does he ask him of me?

First Soldier

What's he?

PAROLLES

E'en a crow o' the same nest; not altogether so great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil: he excels his brother for a coward, yet his brother is reputed one of the best that is: in a retreat he outruns any lackey; marry, in coming on he has the cramp.

First Soldier

If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray
the Florentine?

PAROLLES

Ay, and the captain of his horse, Count Rousillon.

First Soldier

I'll whisper with the general, and know his pleasure.

PAROLLES

[Aside] I'll no more drumming; a plague of all
drums! Only to seem to deserve well, and to
beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy
the count, have I run into this danger. Yet who
would have suspected an ambush where I was taken?

First Soldier

There is no remedy, sir, but you must die: the
general says, you that have so traitorously
discovered the secrets of your army and made such
pestiferous reports of men very nobly held, can
serve the world for no honest use; therefore you
must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.

PAROLLES

O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death!

First Lord

That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends.

Unblinding him

So, look about you: know you any here?

BERTRAM

Good morrow, noble captain.

Second Lord

God bless you, Captain Parolles.

First Lord

God save you, noble captain.

Second Lord

Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu?
I am for France.

First Lord

Good captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet
you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rousillon?
an I were not a very coward, I'd compel it of you:
but fare you well.

Exeunt BERTRAM and Lords

First Soldier

You are undone, captain, all but your scarf; that
has a knot on't yet

PAROLLES

Who cannot be crushed with a plot?

First Soldier

If you could find out a country where but women were
that had received so much shame, you might begin an
impudent nation. Fare ye well, sir; I am for France
too: we shall speak of you there.

Exit with Soldiers

PAROLLES

Yet am I thankful: if my heart were great,
'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more;
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
As captain shall: simply the thing I am
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this, for it will come to pass
that every braggart shall be found an ass.

Rust, sword? cool, blushes! and, Parolles, live
Safest in shame! being fool'd, by foolery thrive!
There's place and means for every man alive.
I'll after them.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 4

Florence. The Widow's house.

Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA

HELENA

That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd you,
One of the greatest in the Christian world
Shall be my surety; 'fore whose throne 'tis needful,
Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel:
Time was, I did him a desired office,
Dear almost as his life; which gratitude
Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,
And answer, thanks: I duly am inform'd
His grace is at Marseilles; to which place
We have convenient convoy. You must know
I am supposed dead: the army breaking,
My husband hies him home; where, heaven aiding,
And by the leave of my good lord the king,
We'll be before our welcome.

Widow

Gentle madam,
You never had a servant to whose trust
Your business was more welcome.

HELENA

Nor you, mistress,
Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour
To recompense your love: doubt not but heaven
Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,
As it hath fated her to be my motive
And helper to a husband. But, O strange men!
That can such sweet use make of what they hate,
When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts
Defiles the pitchy night: so lust doth play

With what it loathes for that which is away.
But more of this hereafter. You, Diana,
Under my poor instructions yet must suffer
Something in my behalf.

DIANA

Let death and honesty
Go with your impositions, I am yours
Upon your will to suffer.

HELENA

Yet, I pray you:
But with the word the time will bring on summer,
When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,
And be as sweet as sharp. We must away;
Our wagon is prepared, and time revives us:
All's well that ends well; still the fine's the crown;
Whate'er the course, the end is the renown.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 5

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Enter COUNTESS, LAFEU, and Clown

LAFEU

No, no, no, your son was misled with a snipt-taffeta
fellow there, whose villanous saffron would have
made all the unbaked and doughy youth of a nation in
his colour: your daughter-in-law had been alive at
this hour, and your son here at home, more advanced
by the king than by that red-tailed humble-bee I speak of.

COUNTESS

I would I had not known him; it was the death of the
most virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature had
praise for creating. If she had partaken of my
flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother, I
could not have owed her a more rooted love.

LAFEU

'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady: we may pick a thousand salads ere we light on such another herb.

Clown

Indeed, sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather, the herb of grace.

LAFEU

They are not herbs, you knave; they are nose-herbs.

Clown

I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in grass.

LAFEU

Whether dost thou profess thyself, a knave or a fool?

Clown

A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

LAFEU

Your distinction?

Clown

I would cozen the man of his wife and do his service.

LAFEU

So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

Clown

And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

LAFEU

I will subscribe for thee, thou art both knave and fool.

Clown

At your service.

LAFEU

No, no, no.

Clown

Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a prince as you are.

LAFEU

Who's that? a Frenchman?

Clown

Faith, sir, a' has an English name; but his fisnomy is more hotter in France than there.

LAFEU

What prince is that?

Clown

The black prince, sir; alias, the prince of darkness; alias, the devil.

LAFEU

Hold thee, there's my purse: I give thee not this to suggest thee from thy master thou talkest of; serve him still.

Clown

I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire; and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire. But, sure, he is the prince of the world; let his nobility remain in's court. I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter: some that humble themselves may; but the many will be too chill and tender, and they'll be for the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

LAFEU

Go thy ways, I begin to be weary of thee; and I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with thee. Go thy ways: let my horses be well looked to, without any tricks.

Clown

If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be jades' tricks; which are their own right by the law of nature.

Exit

LAFEU

A shrewd knave and an unhappy.

COUNTESS

So he is. My lord that's gone made himself much sport out of him: by his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness; and, indeed, he has no pace, but runs where he will.

LAFEU

I like him well; 'tis not amiss. And I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the king my master to speak in the behalf of my daughter; which, in the minority of them both, his majesty, out of a self-gracious remembrance, did first propose: his highness hath promised me to do it: and, to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it?

COUNTESS

With very much content, my lord; and I wish it happily effected.

LAFEU

His highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as when he numbered thirty: he will be here to-morrow, or I am deceived by him that in such intelligence hath seldom failed.

COUNTESS

It rejoices me, that I hope I shall see him ere I die. I have letters that my son will be here to-night: I shall beseech your lordship to remain with me till they meet together.

LAFEU

Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might safely be admitted.

COUNTESS

You need but plead your honourable privilege.

LAFEU

Lady, of that I have made a bold charter; but I thank my God it holds yet.

Re-enter Clown

Clown

O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet on's face: whether there be a scar under't or no, the velvet knows; but 'tis a goodly patch of velvet: his left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

LAFEU

A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good livery of honour; so belike is that.

Clown

But it is your carbonadoed face.

LAFEU

Let us go see your son, I pray you: I long to talk
with the young noble soldier.

Clown

Faith there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine
hats and most courteous feathers, which bow the head
and nod at every man.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 1

Marseilles. A street.

Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA, with two Attendants

HELENA

But this exceeding posting day and night
Must wear your spirits low; we cannot help it:
But since you have made the days and nights as one,
To wear your gentle limbs in my affairs,
Be bold you do so grow in my requital
As nothing can unroot you. In happy time;

Enter a Gentleman

This man may help me to his majesty's ear,
If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.

Gentleman

And you.

HELENA

Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.

Gentleman

I have been sometimes there.

HELENA

I do presume, sir, that you are not fallen
From the report that goes upon your goodness;
And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions,
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to
The use of your own virtues, for the which
I shall continue thankful.

Gentleman

What's your will?

HELENA

That it will please you
To give this poor petition to the king,
And aid me with that store of power you have
To come into his presence.

Gentleman

The king's not here.

HELENA

Not here, sir!

Gentleman

Not, indeed:
He hence removed last night and with more haste
Than is his use.

Widow

Lord, how we lose our pains!

HELENA

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL yet,
Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.
I do beseech you, whither is he gone?

Gentleman

Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon;
Whither I am going.

HELENA

I do beseech you, sir,
Since you are like to see the king before me,
Commend the paper to his gracious hand,
Which I presume shall render you no blame
But rather make you thank your pains for it.
I will come after you with what good speed
Our means will make us means.

Gentleman

This I'll do for you.

HELENA

And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd,
Whate'er falls more. We must to horse again.
Go, go, provide.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 2

Rousillon. Before the COUNT's palace.

Enter Clown, and PAROLLES, following

PAROLLES

Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this
letter: I have ere now, sir, been better known to
you, when I have held familiarity with fresher
clothes; but I am now, sir, muddied in fortune's
mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong
displeasure.

Clown

Truly, fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it
smell so strongly as thou speakest of: I will
henceforth eat no fish of fortune's buttering.
Prithee, allow the wind.

PAROLLES

Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir; I spake
but by a metaphor.

Clown

Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop my
nose; or against any man's metaphor. Prithee, get
thee further.

PAROLLES

Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

Clown

Foh! prithee, stand away: a paper from fortune's
close-stool to give to a nobleman! Look, here he
comes himself.

Enter LAFEU

Here is a purr of fortune's, sir, or of fortune's
cat,—but not a musk-cat,—that has fallen into the
unclean fishpond of her displeasure, and, as he
says, is muddied withal: pray you, sir, use the
carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed,
ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his
distress in my similes of comfort and leave him to
your lordship.

Exit

PAROLLES

My lord, I am a man whom fortune hath cruelly
scratched.

LAFEU

And what would you have me to do? 'Tis too late to
pare her nails now. Wherein have you played the
knave with fortune, that she should scratch you, who
of herself is a good lady and would not have knaves
thrive long under her? There's a quart d'ecu for
you: let the justices make you and fortune friends:
I am for other business.

PAROLLES

I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.

LAFEU

You beg a single penny more: come, you shall ha't;
save your word.

PAROLLES

My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

LAFEU

You beg more than 'word,' then. Cox my passion!
give me your hand. How does your drum?

PAROLLES

O my good lord, you were the first that found me!

LAFEU

Was I, in sooth? and I was the first that lost thee.

PAROLLES

It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace,
for you did bring me out.

LAFEU

Out upon thee, knave! dost thou put upon me at once
both the office of God and the devil? One brings
thee in grace and the other brings thee out.

Trumpets sound

The king's coming; I know by his trumpets. Sirrah,
inquire further after me; I had talk of you last
night: though you are a fool and a knave, you shall
eat; go to, follow.

PAROLLES

I praise God for you.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 3

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Flourish. Enter KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, the two French Lords, with Attendants

KING

We lost a jewel of her; and our esteem
Was made much poorer by it: but your son,
As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know
Her estimation home.

COUNTESS

'Tis past, my liege;
And I beseech your majesty to make it
Natural rebellion, done i' the blaze of youth;
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,
O'erbears it and burns on.

KING

My honour'd lady,
I have forgiven and forgotten all;
Though my revenges were high bent upon him,
And watch'd the time to shoot.

LAFEU

This I must say,
But first I beg my pardon, the young lord
Did to his majesty, his mother and his lady
Offence of mighty note; but to himself
The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife
Whose beauty did astonish the survey
Of richest eyes, whose words all ears took captive,
Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve
Humbly call'd mistress.

KING

Praising what is lost
Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither;
We are reconciled, and the first view shall kill
All repetition: let him not ask our pardon;
The nature of his great offence is dead,
And deeper than oblivion we do bury
The incensing relics of it: let him approach,
A stranger, no offender; and inform him
So 'tis our will he should.

Gentleman

I shall, my liege.

Exit

KING

What says he to your daughter? have you spoke?

LAFEU

All that he is hath reference to your highness.

KING

Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me
That set him high in fame.

Enter BERTRAM

LAFEU

He looks well on't.

KING

I am not a day of season,
For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail
In me at once: but to the brightest beams
Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth;
The time is fair again.

BERTRAM

My high-repented blames,
Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

KING

All is whole;
Not one word more of the consumed time.
Let's take the instant by the forward top;
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
The inaudible and noiseless foot of Time
Steals ere we can effect them. You remember
The daughter of this lord?

BERTRAM

Admiringly, my liege, at first
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,
Which warp'd the line of every other favour;
Scorn'd a fair colour, or express'd it stolen;
Extended or contracted all proportions
To a most hideous object: thence it came
That she whom all men praised and whom myself,
Since I have lost, have loved, was in mine eye
The dust that did offend it.

KING

Well excused:
That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away
From the great compt: but love that comes too late,
Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,
To the great sender turns a sour offence,
Crying, 'That's good that's gone.' Our rash faults
Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them until we know their grave:
Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends and after weep their dust
Our own love waking cries to see what's done,
While shame full late sleeps out the afternoon.
Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.
Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin:
The main consents are had; and here we'll stay
To see our widower's second marriage-day.

COUNTESS

Which better than the first, O dear heaven, bless!
Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse!

LAFEU

Come on, my son, in whom my house's name
Must be digested, give a favour from you
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,
That she may quickly come.

BERTRAM gives a ring

By my old beard,
And every hair that's on't, Helen, that's dead,
Was a sweet creature: such a ring as this,
The last that e'er I took her at court,
I saw upon her finger.

BERTRAM

Hers it was not.

KING

Now, pray you, let me see it; for mine eye,
While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to't.
This ring was mine; and, when I gave it Helen,
I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood
Necessitated to help, that by this token
I would relieve her. Had you that craft, to reave
her
Of what should stead her most?

BERTRAM

My gracious sovereign,
Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,
The ring was never hers.

COUNTESS

Son, on my life,
I have seen her wear it; and she reckon'd it
At her life's rate.

LAFEU

I am sure I saw her wear it.

BERTRAM

You are deceived, my lord; she never saw it:
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,
Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name
Of her that threw it: noble she was, and thought
I stood engaged: but when I had subscribed
To mine own fortune and inform'd her fully
I could not answer in that course of honour
As she had made the overture, she ceased
In heavy satisfaction and would never
Receive the ring again.

KING

Plutus himself,
That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine,
Hath not in nature's mystery more science
Than I have in this ring: 'twas mine, 'twas Helen's,
Whoever gave it you. Then, if you know
That you are well acquainted with yourself,
Confess 'twas hers, and by what rough enforcement
You got it from her: she call'd the saints to surety
That she would never put it from her finger,
Unless she gave it to yourself in bed,
Where you have never come, or sent it us
Upon her great disaster.

BERTRAM

She never saw it.

KING

Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour;
And makest conjectural fears to come into me
Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove
That thou art so inhuman,—'twill not prove so;—
And yet I know not: thou didst hate her deadly,
And she is dead; which nothing, but to close
Her eyes myself, could win me to believe,
More than to see this ring. Take him away.

Guards seize BERTRAM

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,
Shall tax my fears of little vanity,
Having vainly fear'd too little. Away with him!
We'll sift this matter further.

BERTRAM

If you shall prove
This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy
Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,
Where yet she never was.

Exit, guarded

KING

I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.

Enter a Gentleman

Gentleman

Gracious sovereign,
Whether I have been to blame or no, I know not:
Here's a petition from a Florentine,
Who hath for four or five removes come short
To tender it herself. I undertook it,
Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech
Of the poor suppliant, who by this I know
Is here attending: her business looks in her
With an importing visage; and she told me,
In a sweet verbal brief, it did concern
Your highness with herself.

KING

[Reads] Upon his many protestations to marry me
when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won
me. Now is the Count Rousillon a widower: his vows
are forfeited to me, and my honour's paid to him. He
stole from Florence, taking no leave, and I follow
him to his country for justice: grant it me, O
king! in you it best lies; otherwise a seducer
flourishes, and a poor maid is undone.
DIANA CAPILET.

LAFEU

I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll for
this: I'll none of him.

KING

The heavens have thought well on thee Lafeu,
To bring forth this discovery. Seek these suitors:
Go speedily and bring again the count.
I am afeard the life of Helen, lady,
Was foully snatch'd.

COUNTESS

Now, justice on the doers!

Re-enter BERTRAM, guarded

KING

I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to you,
And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,
Yet you desire to marry.

Enter Widow and DIANA

What woman's that?

DIANA

I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,
Derived from the ancient Capilet:
My suit, as I do understand, you know,
And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

Widow

I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour
Both suffer under this complaint we bring,
And both shall cease, without your remedy.

KING

Come hither, count; do you know these women?

BERTRAM

My lord, I neither can nor will deny
But that I know them: do they charge me further?

DIANA

Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

BERTRAM

She's none of mine, my lord.

DIANA

If you shall marry,
You give away this hand, and that is mine;
You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine;
You give away myself, which is known mine;
For I by vow am so embodied yours,
That she which marries you must marry me,
Either both or none.

LAFEU

Your reputation comes too short for my daughter; you
are no husband for her.

BERTRAM

My lord, this is a fond and desperate creature,
Whom sometime I have laugh'd with: let your highness
Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour
Than for to think that I would sink it here.

KING

Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to friend
Till your deeds gain them: fairer prove your honour
Than in my thought it lies.

DIANA

Good my lord,
Ask him upon his oath, if he does think
He had not my virginity.

KING

What say'st thou to her?

BERTRAM

She's impudent, my lord,
And was a common gamester to the camp.

DIANA

He does me wrong, my lord; if I were so,
He might have bought me at a common price:
Do not believe him. O, behold this ring,
Whose high respect and rich validity
Did lack a parallel; yet for all that
He gave it to a commoner o' the camp,
If I be one.

COUNTESS

He blushes, and 'tis it:
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem,
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,
Hath it been owed and worn. This is his wife;
That ring's a thousand proofs.

KING

Methought you said
You saw one here in court could witness it.

DIANA

I did, my lord, but loath am to produce
So bad an instrument: his name's Parolles.

LAFEU

I saw the man to-day, if man he be.

KING

Find him, and bring him hither.

Exit an Attendant

BERTRAM

What of him?
He's quoted for a most perfidious slave,
With all the spots o' the world tax'd and debosh'd;
Whose nature sickens but to speak a truth.
Am I or that or this for what he'll utter,
That will speak any thing?

KING

She hath that ring of yours.

BERTRAM

I think she has: certain it is I liked her,
And boarded her i' the wanton way of youth:
She knew her distance and did angle for me,
Madding my eagerness with her restraint,
As all impediments in fancy's course
Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,
Her infinite cunning, with her modern grace,
Subdued me to her rate: she got the ring;
And I had that which any inferior might
At market-price have bought.

DIANA

I must be patient:
You, that have turn'd off a first so noble wife,
May justly diet me. I pray you yet;
Since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband;
Send for your ring, I will return it home,
And give me mine again.

BERTRAM

I have it not.

KING

What ring was yours, I pray you?

DIANA

Sir, much like
The same upon your finger.

KING

Know you this ring? this ring was his of late.

DIANA

And this was it I gave him, being abed.

KING

The story then goes false, you threw it him
Out of a casement.

DIANA

I have spoke the truth.

Enter PAROLLES

BERTRAM

My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

KING

You boggle shrewdly, every feather stars you.
Is this the man you speak of?

DIANA

Ay, my lord.

KING

Tell me, sirrah, but tell me true, I charge you,
Not fearing the displeasure of your master,
Which on your just proceeding I'll keep off,
By him and by this woman here what know you?

PAROLLES

So please your majesty, my master hath been an
honourable gentleman: tricks he hath had in him,
which gentlemen have.

KING

Come, come, to the purpose: did he love this woman?

PAROLLES

Faith, sir, he did love her; but how?

KING

How, I pray you?

PAROLLES

He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman.

KING

How is that?

PAROLLES

He loved her, sir, and loved her not.

KING

As thou art a knave, and no knave. What an equivocal companion is this!

PAROLLES

I am a poor man, and at your majesty's command.

LAFEU

He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator.

DIANA

Do you know he promised me marriage?

PAROLLES

Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

KING

But wilt thou not speak all thou knowest?

PAROLLES

Yes, so please your majesty. I did go between them, as I said; but more than that, he loved her: for indeed he was mad for her, and talked of Satan and of Limbo and of Furies and I know not what: yet I was in that credit with them at that time that I knew of their going to bed, and of other motions, as promising her marriage, and things which would derive me ill will to speak of; therefore I will not speak what I know.

KING

Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are married: but thou art too fine in thy evidence; therefore stand aside.
This ring, you say, was yours?

DIANA

Ay, my good lord.

KING

Where did you buy it? or who gave it you?

DIANA

It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

KING

Who lent it you?

DIANA

It was not lent me neither.

KING

Where did you find it, then?

DIANA

I found it not.

KING

If it were yours by none of all these ways,
How could you give it him?

DIANA

I never gave it him.

LAFEU

This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she goes off
and on at pleasure.

KING

This ring was mine; I gave it his first wife.

DIANA

It might be yours or hers, for aught I know.

KING

Take her away; I do not like her now;
To prison with her: and away with him.
Unless thou tell'st me where thou hadst this ring,
Thou diest within this hour.

DIANA

I'll never tell you.

KING

Take her away.

DIANA

I'll put in bail, my liege.

KING

I think thee now some common customer.

DIANA

By Jove, if ever I knew man, 'twas you.

KING

Wherefore hast thou accused him all this while?

DIANA

Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty:
He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to't;
I'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.
Great king, I am no strumpet, by my life;
I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

KING

She does abuse our ears: to prison with her.

DIANA

Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, royal sir:

Exit Widow

The jeweller that owes the ring is sent for,
And he shall surety me. But for this lord,
Who hath abused me, as he knows himself,
Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him:
He knows himself my bed he hath defiled;
And at that time he got his wife with child:
Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick:
So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick:
And now behold the meaning.

Re-enter Widow, with HELENA

KING

Is there no exorcist
Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes?
Is't real that I see?

HELENA

No, my good lord;
'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see,
The name and not the thing.

BERTRAM

Both, both. O, pardon!

HELENA

O my good lord, when I was like this maid,
I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring;
And, look you, here's your letter; this it says:
'When from my finger you can get this ring
And are by me with child,' This is done:
Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?

BERTRAM

If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,
I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.

HELENA

If it appear not plain and prove untrue,
Deadly divorce step between me and you!
O my dear mother, do I see you living?

LAFEU

Mine eyes smell onions; I shall weep anon:

To PAROLLES

Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkercher: so,
I thank thee: wait on me home, I'll make sport with thee:
Let thy courtesies alone, they are scurvy ones.

KING

Let us from point to point this story know,
To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

To DIANA

If thou be'st yet a fresh uncropped flower,
Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower;
For I can guess that by thy honest aid
Thou keep'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.
Of that and all the progress, more or less,
Resolvedly more leisure shall express:
All yet seems well; and if it end so meet,
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

Flourish

EPILOGUE

KING

The king's a beggar, now the play is done:
All is well ended, if this suit be won,
That you express content; which we will pay,
With strife to please you, day exceeding day:
Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts;
Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

Exeunt

The Comedy of Errors

Act 1, Scene 1

A hall in DUKE SOLINUS'S palace.

Enter DUKE SOLINUS, AEGEON, Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants

AEGEON

Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall
And by the doom of death end woes and all.

DUKE SOLINUS

Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more;
I am not partial to infringe our laws:
The enmity and discord which of late
Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke
To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,
Who wanting guilders to redeem their lives
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,
Excludes all pity from our threatening looks.
For, since the mortal and intestine jars
'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,
It hath in solemn synods been decreed
Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,
To admit no traffic to our adverse towns Nay, more,
If any born at Ephesus be seen
At any Syracusian marts and fairs;
Again: if any Syracusian born
Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,
His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose,
Unless a thousand marks be levied,
To quit the penalty and to ransom him.
Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,
Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;
Therefore by law thou art condemned to die.

AEGEON

Yet this my comfort: when your words are done,
My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

DUKE SOLINUS

Well, Syracusan, say in brief the cause
Why thou departed'st from thy native home
And for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.

AEGEON

A heavier task could not have been imposed
Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable:
Yet, that the world may witness that my end
Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,
I'll utter what my sorrows give me leave.
In Syracuse was I born, and wed
Unto a woman, happy but for me,
And by me, had not our hap been bad.
With her I lived in joy; our wealth increased
By prosperous voyages I often made
To Epidamnum; till my factor's death
And the great care of goods at random left
Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse:
From whom my absence was not six months old
Before herself, almost at fainting under
The pleasing punishment that women bear,
Had made provision for her following me
And soon and safe arrived where I was.
There had she not been long, but she became
A joyful mother of two goodly sons;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other,
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.
That very hour, and in the self-same inn,
A meaner woman was delivered
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike:
Those,—for their parents were exceeding poor,—
I bought and brought up to attend my sons.
My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,
Made daily motions for our home return:
Unwilling I agreed. Alas! too soon,
We came aboard.
A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
Before the always wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm:
But longer did we not retain much hope;
For what obscured light the heavens did grant
Did but convey unto our fearful minds
A doubtful warrant of immediate death;
Which though myself would gladly have embraced,
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,
Weeping before for what she saw must come,
And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,
That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,
Forced me to seek delays for them and me.

And this it was, for other means was none:
The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the ship, then sinking—ripe, to us:
My wife, more careful for the latter—born,
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast,
Such as seafaring men provide for storms;
To him one of the other twins was bound,
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other:
The children thus disposed, my wife and I,
Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,
Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast;
And floating straight, obedient to the stream,
Was carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,
Dispersed those vapours that offended us;
And by the benefit of his wished light,
The seas wax'd calm, and we discovered
Two ships from far making amain to us,
Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this:
But ere they came,—O, let me say no more!
Gather the sequel by that went before.

DUKE SOLINUS

Nay, forward, old man; do not break off so;
For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

AEGEON

O, had the gods done so, I had not now
Worthily term'd them merciless to us!
For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,
We were encounter'd by a mighty rock;
Which being violently borne upon,
Our helpful ship was splitt'd in the midst;
So that, in this unjust divorce of us,
Fortune had left to both of us alike
What to delight in, what to sorrow for.
Her part, poor soul! seeming as burdened
With lesser weight but not with lesser woe,
Was carried with more speed before the wind;
And in our sight they three were taken up
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.
At length, another ship had seized on us;
And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,
Gave healthful welcome to their shipwreck'd guests;
And would have reft the fishers of their prey,
Had not their bark been very slow of sail;
And therefore homeward did they bend their course.

Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss;
That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd,
To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

DUKE SOLINUS

And for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,
Do me the favour to dilate at full
What hath befall'n of them and thee till now.

AEGEON

My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,
At eighteen years became inquisitive
After his brother: and importuned me
That his attendant—so his case was like,
Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name—
Might bear him company in the quest of him:
Whom whilst I labour'd of a love to see,
I hazarded the loss of whom I loved.
Five summers have I spent in furthest Greece,
Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,
And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus;
Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought
Or that or any place that harbours men.
But here must end the story of my life;
And happy were I in my timely death,
Could all my travels warrant me they live.

DUKE SOLINUS

Hapless AEgeon, whom the fates have mark'd
To bear the extremity of dire mishap!
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,
My soul would sue as advocate for thee.
But, though thou art adjudged to the death
And passed sentence may not be recall'd
But to our honour's great disparagement,
Yet I will favour thee in what I can.
Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day
To seek thy life by beneficial help:
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus;
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,
And live; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.
Gaoler, take him to thy custody.

Gaoler

I will, my lord.

AEGEON

Hopeless and helpless doth AEgeon wend,
But to procrastinate his lifeless end.

Exeunt

Act 1, Scene 2

The Mart.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, DROMIO of Syracuse, and First Merchant

First Merchant

Therefore give out you are of Epidamnum,
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.
This very day a Syracusian merchant
Is apprehended for arrival here;
And not being able to buy out his life
According to the statute of the town,
Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.
There is your money that I had to keep.

OF SYRACUSE

Go bear it to the Centaur, where we host,
And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.
Within this hour it will be dinner-time:
Till that, I'll view the manners of the town,
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
And then return and sleep within mine inn,
For with long travel I am stiff and weary.
Get thee away.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Many a man would take you at your word,
And go indeed, having so good a mean.

Exit

OF SYRACUSE

A trusty villain, sir, that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy,
Lightens my humour with his merry jests.
What, will you walk with me about the town,
And then go to my inn and dine with me?

First Merchant

I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,
Of whom I hope to make much benefit;
I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,
Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart
And afterward consort you till bed-time:
My present business calls me from you now.

OF SYRACUSE

Farewell till then: I will go lose myself
And wander up and down to view the city.

First Merchant

Sir, I commend you to your own content.

Exit

OF SYRACUSE

He that commends me to mine own content
Commends me to the thing I cannot get.
I to the world am like a drop of water
That in the ocean seeks another drop,
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself:
So I, to find a mother and a brother,
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus

Here comes the almanac of my true date.
What now? how chance thou art return'd so soon?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Return'd so soon! rather approach'd too late:
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit,
The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell;
My mistress made it one upon my cheek:
She is so hot because the meat is cold;
The meat is cold because you come not home;
You come not home because you have no stomach;
You have no stomach having broke your fast;
But we that know what 'tis to fast and pray
Are penitent for your default to-day.

OF SYRACUSE

Stop in your wind, sir: tell me this, I pray:
Where have you left the money that I gave you?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

O,—sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last
To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper?
The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.

OF SYRACUSE

I am not in a sportive humour now:
Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?
We being strangers here, how darest thou trust
So great a charge from thine own custody?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I pray you, air, as you sit at dinner:
I from my mistress come to you in post;
If I return, I shall be post indeed,
For she will score your fault upon my pate.
Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock,
And strike you home without a messenger.

OF SYRACUSE

Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season;
Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

To me, sir? why, you gave no gold to me.

OF SYRACUSE

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,
And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart
Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner:
My mistress and her sister stays for you.

OF SYRACUSE

In what safe place you have bestow'd my money,
Or I shall break that merry sconce of yours
That stands on tricks when I am undisposed:
Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,
But not a thousand marks between you both.
If I should pay your worship those again,
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

OF SYRACUSE

Thy mistress' marks? what mistress, slave, hast thou?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Your worship's wife, my mistress at the Phoenix;
She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

OF SYRACUSE

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,
Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

What mean you, sir? for God's sake, hold your hands!
Nay, and you will not, sir, I'll take my heels.

Exit

OF SYRACUSE

Upon my life, by some device or other
The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.
They say this town is full of cozenage,
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
And many such-like liberties of sin:
If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.
I'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave:
I greatly fear my money is not safe.

Exit

Act 2, Scene 1

The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA

ADRIANA

Neither my husband nor the slave return'd,
That in such haste I sent to seek his master!
Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

LUCIANA

Perhaps some merchant hath invited him,
And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.
Good sister, let us dine and never fret:
A man is master of his liberty:
Time is their master, and, when they see time,
They'll go or come: if so, be patient, sister.

ADRIANA

Why should their liberty than ours be more?

LUCIANA

Because their business still lies out o' door.

ADRIANA

Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.

LUCIANA

O, know he is the bridle of your will.

ADRIANA

There's none but asses will be bridled so.

LUCIANA

Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.
There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,
Are their males' subjects and at their controls:
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,
Indued with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more preeminence than fish and fowls,
Are masters to their females, and their lords:
Then let your will attend on their accords.

ADRIANA

This servitude makes you to keep unwed.

LUCIANA

Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.

ADRIANA

But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.

LUCIANA

Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.

ADRIANA

How if your husband start some other where?

LUCIANA

Till he come home again, I would forbear.

ADRIANA

Patience unmoved! no marvel though she pause;
They can be meek that have no other cause.
A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;
But were we burdened with like weight of pain,
As much or more would we ourselves complain:
So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,
With urging helpless patience wouldst relieve me,
But, if thou live to see like right bereft,
This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.

LUCIANA

Well, I will marry one day, but to try.
Here comes your man; now is your husband nigh.

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus

ADRIANA

Say, is your tardy master now at hand?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that my two ears
can witness.

ADRIANA

Say, didst thou speak with him? know'st thou his mind?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear:
Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

LUCIANA

Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel his meaning?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well feel his blows; and withal so doubtfully that I could scarce understand them.

ADRIANA

But say, I prithee, is he coming home? It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

ADRIANA

Horn-mad, thou villain!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I mean not cuckold-mad;
But, sure, he is stark mad.
When I desired him to come home to dinner,
He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold:
'Tis dinner-time,' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he;
'Your meat doth burn,' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he:
'Will you come home?' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he.
'Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?'
'The pig,' quoth I, 'is burn'd;' 'My gold!' quoth he:
'My mistress, sir' quoth I; 'Hang up thy mistress!
I know not thy mistress; out on thy mistress!'

LUCIANA

Quoth who?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Quoth my master:
'I know,' quoth he, 'no house, no wife, no mistress.'
So that my errand, due unto my tongue,
I thank him, I bare home upon my shoulders;
For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

ADRIANA

Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Go back again, and be new beaten home?
For God's sake, send some other messenger.

ADRIANA

Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

And he will bless that cross with other beating:
Between you I shall have a holy head.

ADRIANA

Hence, prating peasant! fetch thy master home.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Am I so round with you as you with me,
That like a football you do spurn me thus?
You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither:
If I last in this service, you must case me in leather.

Exit

LUCIANA

Fie, how impatience loureth in your face!

ADRIANA

His company must do his minions grace,
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
Hath homely age the alluring beauty took
From my poor cheek? then he hath wasted it:
Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?
If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,
Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard:
Do their gay vestments his affections bait?
That's not my fault: he's master of my state:

What ruins are in me that can be found,
By him not ruin'd? then is he the ground
Of my defeatures. My decayed fair
A sunny look of his would soon repair
But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale
And feeds from home; poor I am but his stale.

LUCIANA

Self-harming jealousy! fie, beat it hence!

ADRIANA

Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.
I know his eye doth homage elsewhere,
Or else what lets it but he would be here?
Sister, you know he promised me a chain;
Would that alone, alone he would detain,
So he would keep fair quarter with his bed!
I see the jewel best enamelled
Will lose his beauty; yet the gold bides still,
That others touch, and often touching will
Wear gold: and no man that hath a name,
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

LUCIANA

How many fond fools serve mad jealousy!

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 2

A public place.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

OF SYRACUSE

The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up
Safe at the Centaur; and the heedful slave
Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out
By computation and mine host's report.
I could not speak with Dromio since at first
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse

How now sir! is your merry humour alter'd?
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.
You know no Centaur? you received no gold?
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?
My house was at the Phoenix? Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

What answer, sir? when spake I such a word?

OF SYRACUSE

Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I did not see you since you sent me hence,
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.

OF SYRACUSE

Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeas'd.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I am glad to see you in this merry vein:
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.

OF SYRACUSE

Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth?
Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that, and that.

Beating him

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Hold, sir, for God's sake! now your jest is earnest:
Upon what bargain do you give it me?

OF SYRACUSE

Because that I familiarly sometimes
Do use you for my fool and chat with you,
Your sauciness will jest upon my love
And make a common of my serious hours.
When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,
And fashion your demeanor to my looks,
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Sconce call you it? so you would leave battering, I
had rather have it a head: an you use these blows
long, I must get a sconce for my head and ensconce
it too; or else I shall seek my wit in my shoulders.
But, I pray, sir why am I beaten?

OF SYRACUSE

Dost thou not know?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

OF SYRACUSE

Shall I tell you why?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath
a wherefore.

OF SYRACUSE

Why, first,—for flouting me; and then, wherefore—
For urging it the second time to me.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,
When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme
nor reason?
Well, sir, I thank you.

OF SYRACUSE

Thank me, sir, for what?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

OF SYRACUSE

I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for
something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No, sir; I think the meat wants that I have.

OF SYRACUSE

In good time, sir; what's that?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Basting.

OF SYRACUSE

Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

OF SYRACUSE

Your reason?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Lest it make you choleric and purchase me another
dry basting.

OF SYRACUSE

Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

OF SYRACUSE

By what rule, sir?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of father Time himself.

OF SYRACUSE

Let's hear it.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

There's no time for a man to recover his hair that grows bald by nature.

OF SYRACUSE

May he not do it by fine and recovery?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig and recover the lost hair of another man.

OF SYRACUSE

Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts;
and what he hath scanted men in hair he hath given them in wit.

OF SYRACUSE

Why, but there's many a man hath more hair than wit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

OF SYRACUSE

Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

The plainer dealer, the sooner lost: yet he loseth
it in a kind of jollity.

OF SYRACUSE

For what reason?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

For two; and sound ones too.

OF SYRACUSE

Nay, not sound, I pray you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Sure ones, then.

OF SYRACUSE

Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Certain ones then.

OF SYRACUSE

Name them.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

The one, to save the money that he spends in trimming; the other, that at dinner they should not drop in his porridge.

OF SYRACUSE

You would all this time have proved there is no time for all things.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, and did, sir; namely, no time to recover hair lost by nature.

OF SYRACUSE

But your reason was not substantial, why there is no time to recover.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Thus I mend it: Time himself is bald and therefore to the world's end will have bald followers.

OF SYRACUSE

I knew 'twould be a bald conclusion:
But, soft! who wafts us yonder?

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA

ADRIANA

Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown:
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow
That never words were music to thine ear,

That never object pleasing in thine eye,
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,
That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to thee.
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
That thou art thus estranged from thyself?
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,
That, undividable, incorporate,
Am better than thy dear self's better part.
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!
For know, my love, as easy mayest thou fall
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
And take unmingled that same drop again,
Without addition or diminishing,
As take from me thyself and not me too.
How dearly would it touch me to the quick,
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious
And that this body, consecrate to thee,
By ruffian lust should be contaminate!
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me
And hurl the name of husband in my face
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?
I know thou canst; and therefore see thou do it.
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot;
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust:
For if we too be one and thou play false,
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.
Keep then far league and truce with thy true bed;
I live unstain'd, thou undishonoured.

OF SYRACUSE

Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not:
In Ephesus I am but two hours old,
As strange unto your town as to your talk;
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,
Want wit in all one word to understand.

LUCIANA

Fie, brother! how the world is changed with you!
When were you wont to use my sister thus?
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

OF SYRACUSE

By Dromio?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

By me?

ADRIANA

By thee; and this thou didst return from him,
That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

OF SYRACUSE

Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?
What is the course and drift of your compact?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

OF SYRACUSE

Villain, thou liest; for even her very words
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I never spake with her in all my life.

OF SYRACUSE

How can she thus then call us by our names,
Unless it be by inspiration.

ADRIANA

How ill agrees it with your gravity
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,

Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:
If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss;
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion
Infect thy sap and live on thy confusion.

OF SYRACUSE

To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme:
What, was I married to her in my dream?
Or sleep I now and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?
Until I know this sure uncertainty,
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

LUCIANA

Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.
This is the fairy land: O spite of spite!
We talk with goblins, owls and sprites:
If we obey them not, this will ensue,
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

LUCIANA

Why pratest thou to thyself and answer'st not?
Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I am transformed, master, am I not?

OF SYRACUSE

I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

OF SYRACUSE

Thou hast thine own form.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No, I am an ape.

LUCIANA

If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

'Tis true; she rides me and I long for grass.
'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

ADRIANA

Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,
To put the finger in the eye and weep,
Whilst man and master laugh my woes to scorn.
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.

OF SYRACUSE

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised?
Known unto these, and to myself disguised!
I'll say as they say and persevere so,
And in this mist at all adventures go.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

ADRIANA

Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

LUCIANA

Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 1

Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, DROMIO of Ephesus, ANGELO, and BALTHAZAR

OF EPHEBUS

Good Signior Angelo, you must excuse us all;
My wife is shrewish when I keep not hours:
Say that I linger'd with you at your shop
To see the making of her carcanet,
And that to-morrow you will bring it home.
But here's a villain that would face me down
He met me on the mart, and that I beat him,
And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,
And that I did deny my wife and house.
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know;
That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand to show:
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave were ink,
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.

OF EPHEBUS

I think thou art an ass.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Marry, so it doth appear
By the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear.
I should kick, being kick'd; and, being at that pass,
You would keep from my heels and beware of an ass.

OF EPHEBUS

You're sad, Signior Balthazar: pray God our cheer
May answer my good will and your good welcome here.

BALTHAZAR

I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your
welcome dear.

OF EPHEBUS

O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish,
A table full of welcome make scarce one dainty dish.

BALTHAZAR

Good meat, sir, is common; that every churl affords.

OF EPHEBUS

And welcome more common; for that's nothing but words.

BALTHAZAR

Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.

OF EPHEBUS

Ay, to a niggardly host, and more sparing guest:
But though my cates be mean, take them in good part;
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.
But, soft! my door is lock'd. Go bid them let us in.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cice!, Gillian, Ginn!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] Mome, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb,
idiot, patch!
Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch.
Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st
for such store,
When one is one too many? Go, get thee from the door.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

What patch is made our porter? My master stays in
the street.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] Let him walk from whence he came, lest he catch cold on's feet.

OF EPHESUS

Who talks within there? ho, open the door!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] Right, sir; I'll tell you when, an you tell me wherefore.

OF EPHESUS

Wherefore? for my dinner: I have not dined to-day.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] Nor to-day here you must not; come again when you may.

OF EPHESUS

What art thou that keepest me out from the house I owe?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

O villain! thou hast stolen both mine office and my name.
The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.
If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,
Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name or thy name for an ass.

LUCE

[Within] What a coil is there, Dromio? who are those
at the gate?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Let my master in, Luce.

LUCE

[Within] Faith, no; he comes too late;
And so tell your master.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

O Lord, I must laugh!
Have at you with a proverb—Shall I set in my staff?

LUCE

[Within] Have at you with another; that's—When?
can you tell?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] If thy name be call'd Luce—Luce, thou hast
answered him well.

ANTIPHOLUS

Do you hear, you minion? you'll let us in, I hope?

LUCE

[Within] I thought to have asked you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] And you said no.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

So, come, help: well struck! there was blow for blow.

OF EPHESUS

Thou baggage, let me in.

LUCE

[Within] Can you tell for whose sake?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Master, knock the door hard.

LUCE

[Within] Let him knock till it ache.

OF EPHESUS

You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the door down.

LUCE

[Within] What needs all that, and a pair of stocks in the town?

ADRIANA

[Within] Who is that at the door that keeps all
this noise?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] By my troth, your town is troubled with
unruly boys.

OF EPHESUS

Are you there, wife? you might have come before.

ADRIANA

[Within] Your wife, sir knave! go get you from the door.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

If you went in pain, master, this 'knave' would go sore.

ANGELO

Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome: we would
fain have either.

BALTHAZAR

In debating which was best, we shall part with neither.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

They stand at the door, master; bid them welcome hither.

OF EPHESUS

There is something in the wind, that we cannot get in.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

You would say so, master, if your garments were thin.
Your cake there is warm within; you stand here in the cold:
It would make a man mad as a buck, to be so bought and sold.

OF EPHESUS

Go fetch me something: I'll break ope the gate.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] Break any breaking here, and I'll break your
knave's pate.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

A man may break a word with you, sir, and words are but wind,
Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] It seems thou want'st breaking: out upon
thee, hind!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Here's too much 'out upon thee!' I pray thee,
let me in.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] Ay, when fowls have no feathers and fish have no fin.

OF EPHEBUS

Well, I'll break in: go borrow me a crow.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

A crow without feather? Master, mean you so?
For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather;
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

OF EPHEBUS

Go get thee gone; fetch me an iron crow.

BALTHAZAR

Have patience, sir; O, let it not be so!
Herein you war against your reputation
And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honour of your wife.
Once this,—your long experience of her wisdom,
Her sober virtue, years and modesty,
Plead on her part some cause to you unknown:
And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse
Why at this time the doors are made against you.
Be ruled by me: depart in patience,
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner,
And about evening come yourself alone
To know the reason of this strange restraint.
If by strong hand you offer to break in
Now in the stirring passage of the day,
A vulgar comment will be made of it,
And that supposed by the common rout
Against your yet ungalled estimation
That may with foul intrusion enter in
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead;
For slander lives upon succession,
For ever housed where it gets possession.

OF EPHEBUS

You have prevailed: I will depart in quiet,
And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry.
I know a wench of excellent discourse,
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet, too, gentle:
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
My wife—but, I protest, without desert—

Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal:
To her will we to dinner.

To Angelo

Get you home
And fetch the chain; by this I know 'tis made:
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine;
For there's the house: that chain will I bestow—
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife—
Upon mine hostess there: good sir, make haste.
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

ANGELO

I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.

OF EPHEMUS

Do so. This jest shall cost me some expense.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 2

The same.

Enter LUCIANA and ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

LUCIANA

And may it be that you have quite forgot
A husband's office? shall, Antipholus.
Even in the spring of love, thy love—springs rot?
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness:
Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth;
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness:
Let not my sister read it in your eye;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
Look sweet, be fair, become disloyalty;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted;
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint;
Be secret—false: what need she be acquainted?
What simple thief brags of his own attain?

'Tis double wrong, to truant with your bed
And let her read it in thy looks at board:
Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed;
Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word.
Alas, poor women! make us but believe,
Being compact of credit, that you love us;
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve;
We in your motion turn and you may move us.
Then, gentle brother, get you in again;
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife:
'Tis holy sport to be a little vain,
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

OF SYRACUSE

Sweet mistress—what your name is else, I know not,
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,—
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not
Than our earth's wonder, more than earth divine.
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;
Lay open to my earthy—gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth why labour you
To make it wander in an unknown field?
Are you a god? would you create me new?
Transform me then, and to your power I'll yield.
But if that I am I, then well I know
Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe
Far more, far more to you do I decline.
O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears:
Sing, siren, for thyself and I will dote:
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,
And as a bed I'll take them and there lie,
And in that glorious supposition think
He gains by death that hath such means to die:
Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink!

LUCIANA

What, are you mad, that you do reason so?

OF SYRACUSE

Not mad, but mated; how, I do not know.

LUCIANA

It is a fault that springeth from your eye.

OF SYRACUSE

For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.

LUCIANA

Gaze where you should, and that will clear your sight.

OF SYRACUSE

As good to wink, sweet love, as look on night.

LUCIANA

Why call you me love? call my sister so.

OF SYRACUSE

Thy sister's sister.

LUCIANA

That's my sister.

OF SYRACUSE

No;
It is thyself, mine own self's better part,
Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,
My food, my fortune and my sweet hope's aim,
My sole earth's heaven and my heaven's claim.

LUCIANA

All this my sister is, or else should be.

OF SYRACUSE

Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee.
Thee will I love and with thee lead my life:
Thou hast no husband yet nor I no wife.
Give me thy hand.

LUCIANA

O, soft, air! hold you still:
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good will.

Exit

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse

OF SYRACUSE

Why, how now, Dromio! where runn'st thou so fast?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Do you know me, sir? am I Dromio? am I your man?
am I myself?

OF SYRACUSE

Thou art Dromio, thou art my man, thou art thyself.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I am an ass, I am a woman's man and besides myself.

ANTIPHOLUS

What woman's man? and how besides thyself? besides thyself?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due to a woman; one
that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me.

OF SYRACUSE

What claim lays she to thee?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry sir, such claim as you would lay to your
horse; and she would have me as a beast: not that, I
being a beast, she would have me; but that she,
being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

OF SYRACUSE

What is she?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

A very reverent body; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of without he say 'Sir—reverence.' I have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.

OF SYRACUSE

How dost thou mean a fat marriage?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, sir, she's the kitchen wench and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to but to make a lamp of her and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags and the tallow in them will burn a Poland winter: if she lives till doomsday, she'll burn a week longer than the whole world.

OF SYRACUSE

What complexion is she of?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing half so clean kept: for why, she sweats; a man may go over shoes in the grime of it.

OF SYRACUSE

That's a fault that water will mend.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No, sir, 'tis in grain; Noah's flood could not do it.

OF SYRACUSE

What's her name?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nell, sir; but her name and three quarters, that's
an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from
hip to hip.

OF SYRACUSE

Then she bears some breadth?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip:
she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out
countries in her.

OF SYRACUSE

In what part of her body stands Ireland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, in her buttocks: I found it out by the bogs.

OF SYRACUSE

Where Scotland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I found it by the barrenness; hard in the palm of the hand.

OF SYRACUSE

Where France?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

In her forehead; armed and reverted, making war
against her heir.

OF SYRACUSE

Where England?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no
whiteness in them; but I guess it stood in her chin,
by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

OF SYRACUSE

Where Spain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.

OF SYRACUSE

Where America, the Indies?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Oh, sir, upon her nose all o'er embellished with
rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich
aspect to the hot breath of Spain; who sent whole
armadoes of caracks to be ballast at her nose.

OF SYRACUSE

Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this
drudge, or diviner, laid claim to me, call'd me
Dromio; swore I was assured to her; told me what
privy marks I had about me, as, the mark of my
shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my
left arm, that I amazed ran from her as a witch:
And, I think, if my breast had not been made of
faith and my heart of steel,
She had transform'd me to a curtal dog and made
me turn i' the wheel.

OF SYRACUSE

Go hie thee presently, post to the road:
An if the wind blow any way from shore,
I will not harbour in this town to-night:
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,
Where I will walk till thou return to me.
If every one knows us and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack and be gone.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

As from a bear a man would run for life,
So fly I from her that would be my wife.

Exit

OF SYRACUSE

There's none but witches do inhabit here;
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.
She that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself:
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

Enter ANGELO with the chain

ANGELO

Master Antipholus,--

OF SYRACUSE

Ay, that's my name.

ANGELO

I know it well, sir, lo, here is the chain.
I thought to have ta'en you at the Porpentine:
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

OF SYRACUSE

What is your will that I shall do with this?

ANGELO

What please yourself, sir: I have made it for you.

OF SYRACUSE

Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

ANGELO

Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you have.
Go home with it and please your wife withal;
And soon at supper-time I'll visit you
And then receive my money for the chain.

OF SYRACUSE

I pray you, sir, receive the money now,
For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

ANGELO

You are a merry man, sir: fare you well.

Exit

OF SYRACUSE

What I should think of this, I cannot tell:
But this I think, there's no man is so vain
That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.
I see a man here needs not live by shifts,
When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.
I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay
If any ship put out, then straight away.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 1

A public place.

Enter Second Merchant, ANGELO, and an Officer

Second Merchant

You know since Pentecost the sum is due,
And since I have not much importuned you;
Nor now I had not, but that I am bound
To Persia, and want guilders for my voyage:
Therefore make present satisfaction,
Or I'll attach you by this officer.

ANGELO

Even just the sum that I do owe to you
Is growing to me by Antipholus,
And in the instant that I met with you
He had of me a chain: at five o'clock
I shall receive the money for the same.
Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,
I will discharge my bond and thank you too.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus from the courtesan's

Officer

That labour may you save: see where he comes.

OF EPHEBUS

While I go to the goldsmith's house, go thou
And buy a rope's end: that will I bestow
Among my wife and her confederates,
For locking me out of my doors by day.
But, soft! I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone;
Buy thou a rope and bring it home to me.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I buy a thousand pound a year: I buy a rope.

Exit

OF EPHEBUS

A man is well help up that trusts to you:
I promised your presence and the chain;
But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.
Belike you thought our love would last too long,
If it were chain'd together, and therefore came not.

ANGELO

Saving your merry humour, here's the note
How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,
The fineness of the gold and chargeful fashion.
Which doth amount to three odd ducats more
Than I stand debted to this gentleman:
I pray you, see him presently discharged,
For he is bound to sea and stays but for it.

OF EPHEBUS

I am not furnish'd with the present money;
Besides, I have some business in the town.
Good signior, take the stranger to my house
And with you take the chain and bid my wife
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof:
Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

ANGELO

Then you will bring the chain to her yourself?

OF EPHEBUS

No; bear it with you, lest I come not time enough.

ANGELO

Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about you?

OF EPHEBUS

An if I have not, sir, I hope you have;
Or else you may return without your money.

ANGELO

Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain:
Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

OF EPHEBUS

Good Lord! you use this dalliance to excuse
Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.
I should have chid you for not bringing it,

But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

Second Merchant

The hour steals on; I pray you, sir, dispatch.

ANGELO

You hear how he importunes me;--the chain!

OF EPHEBUS

Why, give it to my wife and fetch your money.

ANGELO

Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.
Either send the chain or send me by some token.

OF EPHEBUS

Fie, now you run this humour out of breath,
where's the chain? I pray you, let me see it.

Second Merchant

My business cannot brook this dalliance.
Good sir, say whether you'll answer me or no:
If not, I'll leave him to the officer.

OF EPHEBUS

I answer you! what should I answer you?

ANGELO

The money that you owe me for the chain.

OF EPHEBUS

I owe you none till I receive the chain.

ANGELO

You know I gave it you half an hour since.

OF EPHESUS

You gave me none: you wrong me much to say so.

ANGELO

You wrong me more, sir, in denying it:
Consider how it stands upon my credit.

Second Merchant

Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

Officer

I do; and charge you in the duke's name to obey me.

ANGELO

This touches me in reputation.
Either consent to pay this sum for me
Or I attach you by this officer.

OF EPHESUS

Consent to pay thee that I never had!
Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.

ANGELO

Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer,
I would not spare my brother in this case,
If he should scorn me so apparently.

Officer

I do arrest you, sir: you hear the suit.

OF EPHESUS

I do obey thee till I give thee bail.
But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear
As all the metal in your shop will answer.

ANGELO

Sir, sir, I will have law in Ephesus,
To your notorious shame; I doubt it not.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse, from the bay

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, there is a bark of Epidamnum
That stays but till her owner comes aboard,
And then, sir, she bears away. Our fraughtage, sir,
I have convey'd aboard; and I have bought
The oil, the balsamum and aqua-vitae.
The ship is in her trim; the merry wind
Blows fair from land: they stay for nought at all
But for their owner, master, and yourself.

OF EPHEBUS

How now! a madman! Why, thou peevish sheep,
What ship of Epidamnum stays for me?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.

OF EPHEBUS

Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a rope;
And told thee to what purpose and what end.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

You sent me for a rope's end as soon:
You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark.

OF EPHEBUS

I will debate this matter at more leisure
And teach your ears to list me with more heed.
To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight:
Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk
That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry,
There is a purse of ducats; let her send it:
Tell her I am arrested in the street

And that shall bail me; hie thee, slave, be gone!
On, officer, to prison till it come.

Exeunt Second Merchant, Angelo, Officer, and Antipholus of Ephesus

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

To Adriana! that is where we dined,
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband:
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.
Thither I must, although against my will,
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 2

The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA

ADRIANA

Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so?
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye
That he did plead in earnest? yea or no?
Look'd he or red or pale, or sad or merrily?
What observation madest thou in this case
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face?

LUCIANA

First he denied you had in him no right.

ADRIANA

He meant he did me none; the more my spite.

LUCIANA

Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

ADRIANA

And true he swore, though yet forsworn he were.

LUCIANA

Then pleaded I for you.

ADRIANA

And what said he?

LUCIANA

That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

ADRIANA

With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

LUCIANA

With words that in an honest suit might move.
First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

ADRIANA

Didst speak him fair?

LUCIANA

Have patience, I beseech.

ADRIANA

I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still;
My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.
He is deformed, crooked, old and sere,
Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere;
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind;
Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

LUCIANA

Who would be jealous then of such a one?
No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

ADRIANA

Ah, but I think him better than I say,
And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.
Far from her nest the lapwing cries away:
My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Here! go; the desk, the purse! sweet, now, make haste.

LUCIANA

How hast thou lost thy breath?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

By running fast.

ADRIANA

Where is thy master, Dromio? is he well?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No, he's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.
A devil in an everlasting garment hath him;
One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel;
A fiend, a fury, pitiless and rough;
A wolf, nay, worse, a fellow all in buff;
A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that
countermands
The passages of alleys, creeks and narrow lands;
A hound that runs counter and yet draws dryfoot well;
One that before the judgement carries poor souls to hell.

ADRIANA

Why, man, what is the matter?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I do not know the matter: he is 'rested on the case.

ADRIANA

What, is he arrested? Tell me at whose suit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I know not at whose suit he is arrested well;
But he's in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can I tell.
Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money in his desk?

ADRIANA

Go fetch it, sister.

Exit Luciana

This I wonder at,
That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.
Tell me, was he arrested on a band?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Not on a band, but on a stronger thing;
A chain, a chain! Do you not hear it ring?

ADRIANA

What, the chain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No, no, the bell: 'tis time that I were gone:
It was two ere I left him, and now the clock
strikes one.

ADRIANA

The hours come back! that did I never hear.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

O, yes; if any hour meet a sergeant, a' turns back for
very fear.

ADRIANA

As if Time were in debt! how fondly dost thou reason!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Time is a very bankrupt, and owes more than he's
worth, to season.
Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say
That Time comes stealing on by night and day?
If Time be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way,
Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

Re-enter LUCIANA with a purse

ADRIANA

Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear it straight;
And bring thy master home immediately.
Come, sister: I am press'd down with conceit—
Conceit, my comfort and my injury.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 3

A public place.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

OF SYRACUSE

There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
As if I were their well-acquainted friend;
And every one doth call me by my name.
Some tender money to me; some invite me;
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;
Some offer me commodities to buy:
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
And therewithal took measure of my body.
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, here's the gold you sent me for. What, have
you got the picture of old Adam new-apparelled?

OF SYRACUSE

What gold is this? what Adam dost thou mean?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Not that Adam that kept the Paradise but that Adam
that keeps the prison: he that goes in the calf's

skin that was killed for the Prodigal; he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

OF SYRACUSE

I understand thee not.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No? why, 'tis a plain case: he that went, like a bass-viol, in a case of leather; the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a sob and 'rests them; he, sir, that takes pity on decayed men and gives them suits of durance; he that sets up his rest to do more exploits with his mace than a morris-pike.

OF SYRACUSE

What, thou meanest an officer?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band, he that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band; one that thinks a man always going to bed, and says, 'God give you good rest!'

OF SYRACUSE

Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since that the bark Expedition put forth to-night; and then were you hindered by the sergeant, to tarry for the hoy Delay. Here are the angels that you sent for to deliver you.

OF SYRACUSE

The fellow is distract, and so am I;
And here we wander in illusions:
Some blessed power deliver us from hence!

Enter a Courtezan

Courtezan

Well met, well met, Master Antipholus.
I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now:
Is that the chain you promised me to-day?

OF SYRACUSE

Satan, avoid! I charge thee, tempt me not.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, is this Mistress Satan?

OF SYRACUSE

It is the devil.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam; and here
she comes in the habit of a light wench: and thereof
comes that the wenches say 'God damn me;' that's as
much to say 'God make me a light wench.' It is
written, they appear to men like angels of light:
light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn;
ergo, light wenches will burn. Come not near her.

Courtezan

Your man and you are marvellous merry, sir.
Will you go with me? We'll mend our dinner here?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat; or bespeak a
long spoon.

OF SYRACUSE

Why, Dromio?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, he must have a long spoon that must eat with the devil.

OF SYRACUSE

Avoid then, fiend! what tell'st thou me of supping?
Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress:
I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

Courtezan

Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,
Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised,
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,
A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,
A nut, a cherry-stone;
But she, more covetous, would have a chain.
Master, be wise: an if you give it her,
The devil will shake her chain and fright us with it.

Courtezan

I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain:
I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

OF SYRACUSE

Avaunt, thou witch! Come, Dromio, let us go.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

'Fly pride,' says the peacock: mistress, that you know.

Exeunt Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse

Courtezan

Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad,
Else would he never so demean himself.
A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
And for the same he promised me a chain:
Both one and other he denies me now.
The reason that I gather he is mad,
Besides this present instance of his rage,
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.
My way is now to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house and took perforce
My ring away. This course I fittest choose;
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 4

A street.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and the Officer

OF EPHESUS

Fear me not, man; I will not break away:
I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,
To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.
My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,
And will not lightly trust the messenger
That I should be attach'd in Ephesus,
I tell you, 'twill sound harshly in her ears.

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus with a rope's-end

Here comes my man; I think he brings the money.
How now, sir! have you that I sent you for?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all.

OF EPHESUS

But where's the money?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

OF EPHESUS

Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.

OF EPHESUS

To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

To a rope's-end, sir; and to that end am I returned.

OF EPHESUS

And to that end, sir, I will welcome you.

Beating him

Officer

Good sir, be patient.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in adversity.

Officer

Good, now, hold thy tongue.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

OF EPHESUS

Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I would I were senseless, sir, that I might not feel
your blows.

ANTIPHOLUS

Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and so is an
ass.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I am an ass, indeed; you may prove it by my long
ears. I have served him from the hour of my
nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his
hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he
heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me
with beating; I am waked with it when I sleep;
raised with it when I sit; driven out of doors with
it when I go from home; welcomed home with it when
I return; nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a
beggar wont her brat; and, I think when he hath
lamed me, I shall beg with it from door to door.

OF EPHESUS

Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and PINCH

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Mistress, 'respice finem,' respect your end; or
rather, the prophecy like the parrot, 'beware the
rope's-end.'

OF EPHESUS

Wilt thou still talk?

Beating him

Courtezan

How say you now? is not your husband mad?

ADRIANA

His incivility confirms no less.
Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer;
Establish him in his true sense again,
And I will please you what you will demand.

LUCIANA

Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

Courtezan

Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy!

PINCH

Give me your hand and let me feel your pulse.

OF EPHEBUS

There is my hand, and let it feel your ear.

Striking him

PINCH

I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,
To yield possession to my holy prayers
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight:
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven!

OF EPHEBUS

Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

ADRIANA

O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul!

OF EPHEBUS

You minion, you, are these your customers?
Did this companion with the saffron face
Revel and feast it at my house to-day,
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut
And I denied to enter in my house?

ADRIANA

O husband, God doth know you dined at home;
Where would you had remain'd until this time,
Free from these slanders and this open shame!

OF EPHEBUS

Dined at home! Thou villain, what sayest thou?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.

OF EPHEBUS

Were not my doors lock'd up and I shut out?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Perdie, your doors were lock'd and you shut out.

OF EPHEBUS

And did not she herself revile me there?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Sans fable, she herself reviled you there.

OF EPHEBUS

Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Certes, she did; the kitchen-vestal scorn'd you.

OF EPHEBUS

And did not I in rage depart from thence?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

In verity you did; my bones bear witness,
That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

ADRIANA

Is't good to soothe him in these contraries?

PINCH

It is no shame: the fellow finds his vein,
And yielding to him humours well his frenzy.

OF EPHESUS

Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

ADRIANA

Alas, I sent you money to redeem you,
By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Money by me! heart and goodwill you might;
But surely master, not a rag of money.

OF EPHESUS

Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats?

ADRIANA

He came to me and I deliver'd it.

LUCIANA

And I am witness with her that she did.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

God and the rope-maker bear me witness
That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

PINCH

Mistress, both man and master is possess'd;
I know it by their pale and deadly looks:
They must be bound and laid in some dark room.

OF EPHESUS

Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth to-day?
And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

ADRIANA

I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

And, gentle master, I received no gold;
But I confess, sir, that we were lock'd out.

ADRIANA

Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

OF EPHESUS

Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all;
And art confederate with a damned pack
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me:
But with these nails I'll pluck out these false eyes
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He strives

ADRIANA

O, bind him, bind him! let him not come near me.

PINCH

More company! The fiend is strong within him.

LUCIANA

Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks!

OF EPHESUS

What, will you murder me? Thou gaoler, thou,
I am thy prisoner: wilt thou suffer them
To make a rescue?

Officer

Masters, let him go
He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

PINCH

Go bind this man, for he is frantic too.

They offer to bind Dromio of Ephesus

ADRIANA

What wilt thou do, thou peevish officer?
Hast thou delight to see a wretched man
Do outrage and displeasure to himself?

Officer

He is my prisoner: if I let him go,
The debt he owes will be required of me.

ADRIANA

I will discharge thee ere I go from thee:
Bear me forthwith unto his creditor,
And, knowing how the debt grows, I will pay it.
Good master doctor, see him safe convey'd
Home to my house. O most unhappy day!

OF EPHEBUS

O most unhappy strumpet!

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Master, I am here entered in bond for you.

OF EPHEBUS

Out on thee, villain! wherefore dost thou mad me?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Will you be bound for nothing? be mad, good master:
cry 'The devil!'

LUCIANA

God help, poor souls, how idly do they talk!

ADRIANA

Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with me.

Exeunt all but Adriana, Luciana, Officer and Courtezan

Say now, whose suit is he arrested at?

Officer

One Angelo, a goldsmith: do you know him?

ADRIANA

I know the man. What is the sum he owes?

Officer

Two hundred ducats.

ADRIANA

Say, how grows it due?

Officer

Due for a chain your husband had of him.

ADRIANA

He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it not.

Courtezan

When as your husband all in rage to-day
Came to my house and took away my ring—
The ring I saw upon his finger now—
Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

ADRIANA

It may be so, but I did never see it.
Come, gaoler, bring me where the goldsmith is:
I long to know the truth hereof at large.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse with his rapier drawn, and DROMIO of Syracuse

LUCIANA

God, for thy mercy! they are loose again.

ADRIANA

And come with naked swords.
Let's call more help to have them bound again.

Officer

Away! they'll kill us.

Exeunt all but Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse

OF SYRACUSE

I see these witches are afraid of swords.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

She that would be your wife now ran from you.

OF SYRACUSE

Come to the Centaur; fetch our stuff from thence:
I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Faith, stay here this night; they will surely do us
no harm: you saw they speak us fair, give us gold:
methinks they are such a gentle nation that, but for
the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of
me, I could find in my heart to stay here still and
turn witch.

OF SYRACUSE

I will not stay to-night for all the town;
Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 1

A street before a Priory.

Enter Second Merchant and ANGELO

ANGELO

I am sorry, sir, that I have hinder'd you;
But, I protest, he had the chain of me,
Though most dishonestly he doth deny it.

Second Merchant

How is the man esteemed here in the city?

ANGELO

Of very reverend reputation, sir,
Of credit infinite, highly beloved,
Second to none that lives here in the city:
His word might bear my wealth at any time.

Second Merchant

Speak softly; yonder, as I think, he walks.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO of Syracuse

ANGELO

'Tis so; and that self chain about his neck
Which he forswore most monstrously to have.
Good sir, draw near to me, I'll speak to him.
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much
That you would put me to this shame and trouble;
And, not without some scandal to yourself,
With circumstance and oaths so to deny
This chain which now you wear so openly:
Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,
You have done wrong to this my honest friend,
Who, but for staying on our controversy,
Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day:
This chain you had of me; can you deny it?

OF SYRACUSE

I think I had; I never did deny it.

Second Merchant

Yes, that you did, sir, and forswore it too.

OF SYRACUSE

Who heard me to deny it or forswear it?

Second Merchant

These ears of mine, thou know'st did hear thee.
Fie on thee, wretch! 'tis pity that thou livest
To walk where any honest man resort.

OF SYRACUSE

Thou art a villain to impeach me thus:
I'll prove mine honour and mine honesty
Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

Second Merchant

I dare, and do defy thee for a villain.

They draw

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and others

ADRIANA

Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake! he is mad.
Some get within him, take his sword away:
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Run, master, run; for God's sake, take a house!
This is some priory. In, or we are spoil'd!

Exeunt Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse to the Priory

Enter the Lady Abbess, AEMILIA

AEMELIA

Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you hither?

ADRIANA

To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.
Let us come in, that we may bind him fast
And bear him home for his recovery.

ANGELO

I knew he was not in his perfect wits.

Second Merchant

I am sorry now that I did draw on him.

AEMELIA

How long hath this possession held the man?

ADRIANA

This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
And much different from the man he was;
But till this afternoon his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

AEMELIA

Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea?
Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?

ADRIANA

To none of these, except it be the last;
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.

AEMELIA

You should for that have reprehended him.

ADRIANA

Why, so I did.

AEMELIA

Ay, but not rough enough.

ADRIANA

As roughly as my modesty would let me.

AEMELIA

Haply, in private.

ADRIANA

And in assemblies too.

AEMELIA

Ay, but not enough.

ADRIANA

It was the copy of our conference:
In bed he slept not for my urging it;
At board he fed not for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

AEMELIA

And thereof came it that the man was mad.
The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing,
And therefore comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy upbraidings:
Unquiet meals make ill digestions;
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,
And at her heels a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life?
In food, in sport and life-preserving rest
To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast:

The consequence is then thy jealous fits
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

LUCIANA

She never reprehended him but mildly,
When he demean'd himself rough, rude and wildly.
Why bear you these rebukes and answer not?

ADRIANA

She did betray me to my own reproof.
Good people enter and lay hold on him.

AEMELIA

No, not a creature enters in my house.

ADRIANA

Then let your servants bring my husband forth.

AEMELIA

Neither: he took this place for sanctuary,
And it shall privilege him from your hands
Till I have brought him to his wits again,
Or lose my labour in assaying it.

ADRIANA

I will attend my husband, be his nurse,
Diet his sickness, for it is my office,
And will have no attorney but myself;
And therefore let me have him home with me.

AEMELIA

Be patient; for I will not let him stir
Till I have used the approved means I have,
With wholesome syrups, drugs and holy prayers,
To make of him a formal man again:
It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,
A charitable duty of my order.
Therefore depart and leave him here with me.

ADRIANA

I will not hence and leave my husband here:
And ill it doth beseem your holiness
To separate the husband and the wife.

AEMELIA

Be quiet and depart: thou shalt not have him.

Exit

LUCIANA

Complain unto the duke of this indignity.

ADRIANA

Come, go: I will fall prostrate at his feet
And never rise until my tears and prayers
Have won his grace to come in person hither
And take perforce my husband from the abbess.

Second Merchant

By this, I think, the dial points at five:
Anon, I'm sure, the duke himself in person
Comes this way to the melancholy vale,
The place of death and sorry execution,
Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

ANGELO

Upon what cause?

Second Merchant

To see a reverend Syracusian merchant,
Who put unluckily into this bay
Against the laws and statutes of this town,
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

ANGELO

See where they come: we will behold his death.

LUCIANA

Kneel to the duke before he pass the abbey.

Enter DUKE SOLINUS, attended; AEGEON bareheaded; with the Headsman and other Officers

DUKE SOLINUS

Yet once again proclaim it publicly,
If any friend will pay the sum for him,
He shall not die; so much we tender him.

ADRIANA

Justice, most sacred duke, against the abbess!

DUKE SOLINUS

She is a virtuous and a reverend lady:
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

ADRIANA

May it please your grace, Antipholus, my husband,
Whom I made lord of me and all I had,
At your important letters,—this ill day
A most outrageous fit of madness took him;
That desperately he hurried through the street,
With him his bondman, all as mad as he—
Doing displeasure to the citizens
By rushing in their houses, bearing thence
Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.
Once did I get him bound and sent him home,
Whilst to take order for the wrongs I went,
That here and there his fury had committed.
Anon, I wot not by what strong escape,
He broke from those that had the guard of him;
And with his mad attendant and himself,
Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,
Met us again and madly bent on us,
Chased us away; till, raising of more aid,
We came again to bind them. Then they fled
Into this abbey, whither we pursued them:
And here the abbess shuts the gates on us
And will not suffer us to fetch him out,
Nor send him forth that we may bear him hence.
Therefore, most gracious duke, with thy command
Let him be brought forth and borne hence for help.

DUKE SOLINUS

Long since thy husband served me in my wars,
And I to thee engaged a prince's word,
When thou didst make him master of thy bed,
To do him all the grace and good I could.
Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate
And bid the lady abbess come to me.
I will determine this before I stir.

Enter a Servant

Servant

O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself!
My master and his man are both broke loose,
Beaten the maids a-row and bound the doctor
Whose beard they have singed off with brands of fire;
And ever, as it blazed, they threw on him
Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair:
My master preaches patience to him and the while
His man with scissors nicks him like a fool,
And sure, unless you send some present help,
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

ADRIANA

Peace, fool! thy master and his man are here,
And that is false thou dost report to us.

Servant

Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true;
I have not breathed almost since I did see it.
He cries for you, and vows, if he can take you,
To scorch your face and to disfigure you.

Cry within

Hark, hark! I hear him, mistress. fly, be gone!

DUKE SOLINUS

Come, stand by me; fear nothing. Guard with halberds!

ADRIANA

Ay me, it is my husband! Witness you,
That he is borne about invisible:
Even now we housed him in the abbey here;
And now he's there, past thought of human reason.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus

OF EPHEBUS

Justice, most gracious duke, O, grant me justice!
Even for the service that long since I did thee,
When I bestrid thee in the wars and took
Deep scars to save thy life; even for the blood
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

AEGEON

Unless the fear of death doth make me dote,
I see my son Antipholus and Dromio.

OF EPHEBUS

Justice, sweet prince, against that woman there!
She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,
That hath abused and dishonour'd me
Even in the strength and height of injury!
Beyond imagination is the wrong
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

DUKE SOLINUS

Discover how, and thou shalt find me just.

OF EPHEBUS

This day, great duke, she shut the doors upon me,
While she with harlots feasted in my house.

DUKE SOLINUS

A grievous fault! Say, woman, didst thou so?

ADRIANA

No, my good lord: myself, he and my sister
To-day did dine together. So befall my soul
As this is false he burdens me withal!

LUCIANA

Ne'er may I look on day, nor sleep on night,
But she tells to your highness simple truth!

ANGELO

O perjured woman! They are both forsworn:
In this the madman justly chargeth them.

OF EPHEsus

My liege, I am advised what I say,
Neither disturbed with the effect of wine,
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,
Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.
This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner:
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with her,
Could witness it, for he was with me then;
Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,
Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,
Where Balthazar and I did dine together.
Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,
I went to seek him: in the street I met him
And in his company that gentleman.
There did this perjured goldsmith swear me down
That I this day of him received the chain,
Which, God he knows, I saw not: for the which
He did arrest me with an officer.
I did obey, and sent my peasant home
For certain ducats: he with none return'd
Then fairly I bespoke the officer
To go in person with me to my house.
By the way we met
My wife, her sister, and a rabble more
Of vile confederates. Along with them
They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,
A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
A threadbare juggler and a fortune-teller,
A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
A dead-looking man: this pernicious slave,
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer,
And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,

And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me,
Cries out, I was possess'd. Then all together
They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence
And in a dark and dankish vault at home
There left me and my man, both bound together;
Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,
I gain'd my freedom, and immediately
Ran hither to your grace; whom I beseech
To give me ample satisfaction
For these deep shames and great indignities.

ANGELO

My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with him,
That he dined not at home, but was lock'd out.

DUKE SOLINUS

But had he such a chain of thee or no?

ANGELO

He had, my lord: and when he ran in here,
These people saw the chain about his neck.

Second Merchant

Besides, I will be sworn these ears of mine
Heard you confess you had the chain of him
After you first forswore it on the mart:
And thereupon I drew my sword on you;
And then you fled into this abbey here,
From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

OF EPHEBUS

I never came within these abbey-walls,
Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me:
I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven!
And this is false you burden me withal.

DUKE SOLINUS

Why, what an intricate impeach is this!
I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup.

If here you housed him, here he would have been;
If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly:
You say he dined at home; the goldsmith here
Denies that saying. Sirrah, what say you?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Sir, he dined with her there, at the Porpentine.

Courtezan

He did, and from my finger snatch'd that ring.

OF EPHESUS

'Tis true, my liege; this ring I had of her.

DUKE SOLINUS

Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey here?

Courtezan

As sure, my liege, as I do see your grace.

DUKE SOLINUS

Why, this is strange. Go call the abbess hither.
I think you are all mated or stark mad.

Exit one to Abbess

AEGEON

Most mighty duke, vouchsafe me speak a word:
Haply I see a friend will save my life
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

DUKE SOLINUS

Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou wilt.

AEGEON

Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus?
And is not that your bondman, Dromio?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Within this hour I was his bondman sir,
But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords:
Now am I Dromio and his man unbound.

AEGEON

I am sure you both of you remember me.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Ourselves we do remember, sir, by you;
For lately we were bound, as you are now
You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir?

AEGEON

Why look you strange on me? you know me well.

ANTIPHOLUS

I never saw you in my life till now.

AEGEON

O, grief hath changed me since you saw me last,
And careful hours with time's deformed hand
Have written strange defeatures in my face:
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice?

OF EPHESUS

Neither.

AEGEON

Dromio, nor thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

No, trust me, sir, nor I.

AEGEON

I am sure thou dost.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

Ay, sir, but I am sure I do not; and whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him.

AEGEON

Not know my voice! O time's extremity,
Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue
In seven short years, that here my only son
Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares?
Though now this grained face of mine be hid
In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,
And all the conduits of my blood froze up,
Yet hath my night of life some memory,
My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,
My dull deaf ears a little use to hear:
All these old witnesses—I cannot err—
Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.

OF EPHESUS

I never saw my father in my life.

AEGEON

But seven years since, in Syracuse, boy,
Thou know'st we parted: but perhaps, my son,
Thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery.

OF EPHESUS

The duke and all that know me in the city
Can witness with me that it is not so
I ne'er saw Syracuse in my life.

DUKE SOLINUS

I tell thee, Syracusian, twenty years
Have I been patron to Antipholus,
During which time he ne'er saw Syracuse:
I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

Re-enter AEMILIA, with ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO of Syracuse

AEMELIA

Most mighty duke, behold a man much wrong'd.

All gather to see them

ADRIANA

I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.

DUKE SOLINUS

One of these men is Genius to the other;
And so of these. Which is the natural man,
And which the spirit? who deciphers them?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I, sir, am Dromio; command him away.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

I, sir, am Dromio; pray, let me stay.

OF SYRACUSE

Aegeon art thou not? or else his ghost?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

O, my old master! who hath bound him here?

AEMELIA

Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds
And gain a husband by his liberty.
Speak, old Aegeon, if thou be'st the man
That hadst a wife once call'd AEmilia
That bore thee at a burden two fair sons:
O, if thou be'st the same Aegeon, speak,
And speak unto the same AEmilia!

AEGEON

If I dream not, thou art AEmilia:
If thou art she, tell me where is that son
That floated with thee on the fatal raft?

AEMELIA

By men of Epidamnum he and I
And the twin Dromio all were taken up;
But by and by rude fishermen of Corinth
By force took Dromio and my son from them
And me they left with those of Epidamnum.
What then became of them I cannot tell
I to this fortune that you see me in.

DUKE SOLINUS

Why, here begins his morning story right;
These two Antipholuses, these two so like,
And these two Dromios, one in semblance,—
Besides her urging of her wreck at sea,—
These are the parents to these children,
Which accidentally are met together.
Antipholus, thou camest from Corinth first?

OF SYRACUSE

No, sir, not I; I came from Syracuse.

DUKE SOLINUS

Stay, stand apart; I know not which is which.

OF EPHESUS

I came from Corinth, my most gracious lord,—

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

And I with him.

OF EPHESUS

Brought to this town by that most famous warrior,
Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.

ADRIANA

Which of you two did dine with me to-day?

OF SYRACUSE

I, gentle mistress.

ADRIANA

And are not you my husband?

OF EPHESUS

No; I say nay to that.

OF SYRACUSE

And so do I; yet did she call me so:
And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,
Did call me brother.

To Luciana

What I told you then,
I hope I shall have leisure to make good;
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

ANGELO

That is the chain, sir, which you had of me.

OF SYRACUSE

I think it be, sir; I deny it not.

OF EPHESUS

And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

ANGELO

I think I did, sir; I deny it not.

ADRIANA

I sent you money, sir, to be your bail,
By Dromio; but I think he brought it not.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

No, none by me.

OF SYRACUSE

This purse of ducats I received from you,
And Dromio, my man, did bring them me.
I see we still did meet each other's man,
And I was ta'en for him, and he for me,
And thereupon these errors are arose.

OF EPHEBUS

These ducats pawn I for my father here.

DUKE SOLINUS

It shall not need; thy father hath his life.

Courtezan

Sir, I must have that diamond from you.

OF EPHEBUS

There, take it; and much thanks for my good cheer.

AEMELIA

Renowned duke, vouchsafe to take the pains
To go with us into the abbey here
And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes:
And all that are assembled in this place,
That by this sympathized one day's error
Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,
And we shall make full satisfaction.
Thirty–three years have I but gone in travail
Of you, my sons; and till this present hour
My heavy burden ne'er delivered.
The duke, my husband and my children both,
And you the calendars of their nativity,
Go to a gossips' feast and go with me;
After so long grief, such festivity!

DUKE SOLINUS

With all my heart, I'll gossip at this feast.

Exeunt all but Antipholus of Syracuse, Antipholus of Ephesus, Dromio of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, shall I fetch your stuff from shipboard?

OF EPHEBUS

Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou embark'd?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Your goods that lay at host, sir, in the Centaur.

OF SYRACUSE

He speaks to me. I am your master, Dromio:
Come, go with us; we'll look to that anon:
Embrace thy brother there; rejoice with him.

Exeunt Antipholus of Syracuse and Antipholus of Ephesus

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

There is a fat friend at your master's house,
That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner:
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother:
I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.
Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Not I, sir; you are my elder.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

That's a question: how shall we try it?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

We'll draw cuts for the senior: till then lead thou first.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Nay, then, thus:
We came into the world like brother and brother;
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

The Merry Wives of Windsor, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Love's Labours Lost, All's Well That Ends Well, The Comedy of Errors

Exeunt